

SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM
OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Journal of Spirituality

Order of Malta
Fundamental Directions
for a Renewal

ROMA 2008

N. 9

Index

Foreword	
Reflections of H.M.E.H. the Grand Master	
Vocation	
<i>Card. Pio Laghi</i>	7
The Origins of the Vocation	
to the Knights of St. John	
<i>Msgr. Cosimo D. Fonseca</i>	17
The Vocation to Knight of Justice	
<i>Rev. Bruno Martin</i>	27
Renewing and Promoting the Religious Life	
of the Order	
<i>Rev. Andrew Wadsworth</i>	37
The Class in Obedience:	
Realities and Perspectives in the USA	
<i>Fra' John Dunlap</i>	45
Wearing the Armour of Light	
<i>Fr. Costantino Gilardi, O.P.</i>	63
The Visibility of the Faith in a Secularized Society	
<i>Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi</i>	77
New Challenges for the "Obsequium Pauperum"	
<i>Albrecht von Boeselager</i>	89

Pope Benedict XVI's Teachings for the Young <i>Msgr. Ettore Balestrero</i>	107
The Order of Malta: Identity and Future <i>Archibishop Angelo Acerbi</i>	115
New Strategies: The International Seminary of 2009	125
<i>Winfried Henckel von Donnersmarck</i>	

Foreword

The 9th number of the “Journal of Spirituality” is coming out earlier than usual, because some of its themes are on the Agenda of the International Seminar of the Order of Malta which will be held in Venice next January: this issue can be a useful documentation for those who will attend that Meeting. It offers subjects suitable for all members of the Order.

H.M.E.H. the Grand Master Fra’ Matthew Festing graciously accepted to write for our Journal some reflections which, no doubt, will be pondered and appreciated by the readers. To Him our sincere thanks.

A.A.

The Grand Master's Reflection

The First Class of the Order

Because the present number of Knights of Justice are so few it is unsurprising that most members of the Order are ignorant of what is involved in being a member of the First Class. This situation must change and, indeed, all members of the Order, particularly those in positions of authority, must encourage vocations to the rank of Knight of Justice.

All of us are familiar with the priesthood and most of us are equally familiar with the concept of being a monk without being ordained. There is, therefore, no reason why we should not be equally familiar with the idea of being a member of the First Class of the Order – “a monk in the world” – a layman who has dedicated himself to the life of the Order and the service of God and the Church through the Order. Any confirmed bachelor who is familiar with the twin mottoes of the Order – *Obsequium Pauperum* and *Tuitio Fidei* – should ask himself “Should I try my vocation as a Knight of Justice?” Instead of there being a bare fifty Knights

of Justice, most of them relatively elderly, there should be, and I hope fervently, will be many more. There are few hurdles to jump – you do not have to live in community; you can pursue your career if you wish; you can live in your own house. All you have to do is to love the Order and be prepared to live your life as a proper Catholic gentleman setting aside a small part of each day for prayer and reflection. Nothing could be easier and it remains a mystery to me that we are not overflowing with vocations!

My vision of the future of the vocation as a Knight of Justice will not, however, be realised without help from the Grand Priors, Regents and Presidents around the world and without the support of the Chaplains of the Order who should actively promote vocations. Action from the Grand Magistracy too is required – a programme of formation for candidates and a welcoming and encouraging attitude to those who are considering taking this step. It is my firm intention that action in these two areas should take place.

Tuitio Fidei and Obsequium Pauperum

When we join the Order we are all aware of the

service to the poor and the sick rendered by the Order whether on pilgrimage to Lourdes and elsewhere or in the poorer parts of the world. We must, however, also be aware that we are required to nurture the Faith for that is what *Tuitio Fidei* means. To this end we all must be fully aware of Catholic principles and the teaching of the Church. Above all, we must be loyal and supportive of our Holy Father the Pope. This means that we must be sure that our own conduct causes no scandal and that, when we are questioned about our Faith, we know what answers to give.

Harmony within the Order

The Order of Malta is made up of many parts – Grand Priories, Sub Priories, Associations, delegations, aid organisations, hospitals, foundations, trusts and other institutions. All must work together in unity. No one part must be jealous of the position of another. All must cooperate with each other. I am acutely conscious of the fact that this is not always the case particularly with regard to the relationship between Priories and Associations and

between Associations and Delegations. No one issue causes more upset than the proposal and approval of candidates for the Order. I wish to see a spirit of cooperation and unity prevail particularly in this area.

The Order has much to achieve and we will only serve Almighty God and the Church if we all work together in unity and peacefulness.

The Strategy Conference of the Order in Venice – January 2009

We should be aware of the importance of the meeting in Venice in the new year. It will enable us to discern the future of the Order and its works. I expect all the agencies of the Order to come together in a spirit of cooperation and partnership to ensure that our discussions are fruitful. This will only happen if proper preparation of the delegates takes place and I hope very much that those attending will pray diligently for the success of the Conference.

Summary

Much has been achieved in the last few years,

during the periods of office of my two beloved predecessors Fra' Angelo de Mojana and Fra' Andrew Bertie. We now need to build on their achievements and, above all, foster vocations to the First Class of the Order. Let no one be frightened of trying their vocation as a Professed Knight. They will be welcomed with open arms and in a spirit of charity. It remains for all members of the Order to pray fervently that this aim should be achieved.

H.M.E.H. The Prince and Grand Master
Fra' Matthew Festing

Vocation

(Translated from Italian)

The term “vocation” has various meanings in contemporary culture according to prevailing trends but, in different ways, it always places the person in the centre. First of all, “vocation” means the life plan that each of us elaborates from the multiple experiences of our existence. And this term is closely linked to the individual maturation process, underpinned by personal values.

In a broader sense, the term “vocation” can be used to indicate an inclination towards a determinate job or career: a collection of aptitudes and qualities that lead the individual towards specific choices. Thus “vocation” can also mean the role, or task or mission that a person or group of persons consider they are called to perform for the benefit of others. This common meaning is however somewhat elementary and vague. It does not adequately illustrate what a vocation is at a human and Christian level.

In a religious and Christian sphere, and in the light of the Word of God, “vocation” indicates the action by which God calls someone, on his loving initiative, and the response of that person in a dialogue

of loving and responsible participation. In this sense God is indicated as "He who calls": He calls us to life, to existence, to perform a role in the history of salvation, "*according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 1:9).

In his call, God reveals himself, makes himself felt and known, He gives himself and enters the life of every individual: He invites people to a familial dialogue with him, to enter his house as a member of his family, and acquaints them with his plan of salvation. The religious vocation, precisely because interpersonal, has two very different aspects: God's initiative and a person's full acceptance. These are two aspects of a single situation, bound by awareness and freedom.

God's initiative mainly concerns natural gifts and human characteristics: it is not the illogical demonstration of a will imposed as a despotic imperative: in his call to assume a specific role in his plan of salvation, God dialogues with us. Our acceptance always implies a free, personal decision, prompted and driven by faith. In this sense, precisely because personal, vocation follows the fundamental lines of the human and religious personality's development. It is continu-

ally proceeding towards the gradual discovery and understanding of its own mystery.

But we have to ask ourselves: how many Christians, today – and especially how many young people in our secular society – have a “sense of vocation” in the religious meaning? John Paul II in his Message for the XXX World Day of Prayer for Vocations, noting the “lack of a sense of call” hoped that a “new culture of vocation in young people and in families” would be encouraged. In this context, the Pope added that: “the unease felt by young people, also in the new generations, highlights their pressing questions about the meaning of life, confirming that nothing and no-one can stifle in people the demand for meaning and the desire for truth: for many this is the terrain on which a vocation is sought”.

The “new culture of vocation” fostered by John Paul II is a component of the new evangelization he so fervently promoted: it is a culture of life, of the significance of living and also of dying. It is also part of the ability to dream and desire on a grand scale; of amazement before beauty, choosing it for its intrinsic value, because it makes life attractive and

real; that altruism that is not only solidarity in emergencies, but which comes from the discovery of the dignity of all our brethren and moves us to help them and to alleviate and treat – when necessary – their sufferings.

Card. Pio Laghi
Cardinalis Patronus

The Origins of the Vocation to the Knights of St. John

(Translated from Italian)

Considering the vast semantic range of the term “vocation”, it is helpful first of all to define the institutional and spiritual values underpinning the choice of the Order of St. John as a state of “normal life” for the Knights of Justice or as an “aspiration” to Christian life for all members of the Order of Malta whatever their status.

A recent initiative, unarguably helpful for the Knights of Justice and Knights of Obedience novitiates, has peremptorily accredited a regulatory text that provides precepts for good governance and general behaviour as the basis of the vocation and spirituality of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. This is the rule of St. Benedict, the father of western monasticism, of which some chapters of undoubted moral and religious character have been cited partly - but only partly - corresponding to the Order’s aims and its members’ vocation.

It is true that, in the Order of Malta’s historiography, the issue of a rule does not seem to have been examined with suitable interpretative tools and with

adequate methodology. Very often, the *rule* has been confused with the *statutes* and with the *constitutions*, referring with equal and not always appreciable insistence to the original Order's vocation as *obsequium pauperum* and *tuitio fidei*, that is its hospitaller activity and military commitment, considering them to be the inspiration of the knights' *status vitae*. It would thus be useful to study three crucial points that provide some guidelines and a new perspective on the meaning of the vocation to the Order of St. John.

The first point concerns the adoption of the Benedictine rule when the *fraternitas* was established under its *institutor Girardus* to serve the poor and house pilgrims in the hospice, placed near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and initially connected to the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria Latina erected around 1070 by some Amalfi merchants. There is no document regarding Gerard's experience that refers to the "*regula Benedicti*", starting with the famous papal privilege that Paschal II granted in 1113, in which the pope confirmed the Hospital's property and listed the pilgrim hospices (*Xenodochia*) and hotels for the poor (*Ptochia*) scattered around "the western parts". The term used to indi-

cate the position held by Gerard, "*Praepositus*" and not "*Abbas*" or "*Prior*", seems to exclude the monastic-Benedictine nature of the foundation (P. L. 143, 314-316).

The same terminology is found in Callistus II's bull of 19 January 1118 (P. L. 163, 1102). Even more significant elements are found in the bull *Quam amabilis Deo* of 1130 with which Innocent II invited archbishops, bishops, abbots, etc. to support the *Xenodochium Hierosolimitanum* in helping the poor, the infirm and pilgrims visiting the Lord's Sepulchre. The terms used by the Pontifical Chancery are those of "*fratres eiusdem loci*", of "*hospitalitatis domus*" or of "*fraternitas*", not connected with the Benedictine rule (P. L. 179, 77).

The non-Benedictine and generally non-monastic imprint is very evident in the bull of Anastasius IV of 21 October 1154 *Christianae fidei religio* concerning the *Hospitalis domus hierosolimitanae*, in which the term *collegium* is introduced to indicate the community as a whole, referring to the institutional nature of the *fratres* steadfastly living in personal poverty to perform their hospitaller and assistance service (P. L. 188, 1078-1080). This is not to deny that there were

initial relations between the *fraternitas* established by the *praepositus Girardus* and the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria Latina. In fact, there is nothing to say that chapter 53 (*How Guests Should be Received*) did not constitute a kind of inspiration for the members of Gerard's community.

Two circumstances marked the end of this relationship with the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria Latina: the first was that, after 1099, following the creation of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the college of canons serving the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, the Hospital came under the charismatic and jurisdictional system territorially answerable to the Hierosolymitan patriarch; the second was that, with Paschal II's bull of 19 June 1112, *Apostolice sedis auctoritate*, the hospitaller mission of the monks of Santa Maria was declared concluded, since it had been definitively assumed by the Hospitallers of St. John (Holtzmann 1955). Hence the aforesaid privilege of the same pope of 13 February 1113, which declared the independence and autonomy of the fraternity of blessed Gerard and approved the eminently hospitaller and welfare aims of this institution.

What I want to say is that the documents do not

provide any valid element to prove that the *Fraternitas* established by *Frater Gerardus* adopted the Rule of St. Benedict, in fact some specific terms refer to a different spiritual model.

The second point of this brief reflection, after excluding that the rule of St. Benedict is the original tract for the vocation and spirituality of the *fraternitas* of Brother Gerard's Hospitallers, refers to the collection of laws on which the regulatory observance of the Knights of St. John is based. It should be pointed out that, up to the period of the government of the hospital by the immediate successor of brother Gerard, Raymond du Puy (1120 -1160), defining himself as "servant of the poor and custodian of the Hierosolymitan Hospital", there was no other systematic, regulatory tract that spelt out the life of the community and inspired its religious choice. Furthermore, that of Fra' Raymond, considered as a "rule" from a technical-juridical point of view, is presented as a statutory *corpus* issued by the Hospital's supreme authority "*cum consilio totius capituli clericorum et laycorum fratrum*".

Albeit the terminology of western mediaeval legal texts is rather generic, if not ambiguous, two

aspects are worth examining: the first is that the *regula* concerns general principles and objectives, unlike the *consuetudines* and *statuta* that translate the regulatory guidelines contained in the rule into concrete situations; the second aspect is that the *fratres* of the Hospital were fully aware that Raymond du Puy's collection of regulations was a rule to all effects and purposes, or rather their rule, as testified to by the long tradition of the Order of St. John.

This is eloquently proved by Lucius III's bull *Quanto per gratiam Dei* of 4 November 1184, addressed to Roger des Moulins, eighth Grand Master (1177-1187), and to the brothers of the Hospital. In this bull the pope, at Roger's request, confirmed the *regula* that Raymond had composed and that Eugene IV had in turn confirmed (Beltjens 1999).

But it should be stressed that Lucius III issued the papal privilege at Fra' Roger's request ("*vestris postulationibus clementer annuimus*"): a request that assumed that the documents on which the papal bull was based had been presented to the Pontifical Chancery. The "*regula vestre observantiae*" was, thus, in the tradition of the Hospital brothers, that issued by Raymond du Puy. Moreover, this awareness of

Raymond's collection of regulations being the "rule" *par excellence* of the Knights of St. John was based on Lucius III's bull that gave it the same status as the Rule of St. Augustine, granted and adopted by the canon laws of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre Chapter. And it is precisely this papal bull that makes us even more convinced that the reference text for the vocation and spirituality of the Knights of St. John, after recognising the value of "*regula*" that the members of the Hospital gave to Raymond du Puy's "*praecepta*" and "*statuta*", was in all likelihood the rule of St. Augustine and not the rule of St. Benedict. Moreover, the question of an actual "rule" of St. Augustine was only to be raised during the second half of the 11th Century, covering a broad geographical area ranging from Spain to France, Germany and Italy.

There is a last point which we should examine and it concerns the values deducible from the regulatory tools defining the inspiration and distinctive features of the vocation and spirituality of St. John's army. In Raymond du Puy's rule, emphasis is given to the vows of chastity, obedience and poverty – this latter expressed with the classic formula of the 11th and

12th centuries *sine proprio vivere*” – and service to the poor. It thus concerns an individual choice of poverty and not of the community, which instead can possess assets, receive donations and collect tithes as long as they are for the purposes of hospitaller work.

However the poor are the catalyst of the religious commitment of the *fratres*: they are sometimes called “*sancti pauperes*” or “*domini pauperes*” to corroborate the specific vocation of the Hospitaller Brothers and, at the same time, to extol the holiness of destitution, impotence and marginality within a feudal society where very different values, inspired by power, the predominance of wealth and the force of weapons, existed.

In this context, the rules of conduct listed by Raymond du Puy: humility of sentiments, honest habits, humble clothing, respect for others, the duty to collect alms, seven-day fasting, confession of sins, silence, emendation of faults, intercession for the deceased, obligations to the infirm, the pondered and probative use of accusations against other brothers and modesty with regards to women.

Also striking in the inner organization is the extreme simplicity of the community’s governance:

the Master of the Hospital, the highest authority of the *fraternitas*, was flanked by the Chapter and by the Procurator who was probably responsible for the running of the house and the dispatch of economic and everyday business; the same applies to the other *domus* in the various places.

If we move on to the *Regula Augustini*, now a spiritual heritage of the Hospital as demonstrated by the aforesaid bull of Lucius III, the basic values present in Raymond du Puy's regulatory text are similar, starting with harmony among the brothers and the exercise of poverty: "*propter in unum estis congregati et unanimes habitetis in domo, et sit vobis anima et cor unum in deo, et non dicatis abquid proprium, sed sint vobis omnia communia et distribuatur unicuique vestrum a praeposito vestro victum et tegumentum, non aequaliter omnibus, quia non aequaliter valetis omnes, sed potius sicut opus fuerit, sic enim legitis in actibus apostolarum quia erant in eis omnia communia et distribuebantur unicuique sicut opus erat*".

And it is from these two cardinal points – harmony among the brothers and poverty – that all the other obligations laid down in the Rule descend: humility, prayer, fasting, charity, mutual comprehension, humble clothing, modesty especially with

regards to women, fraternal correction, accusations and admonishments, control of emotions, obedience, duties of superiors (Verheijen 1967). There are undoubted differences between the two regulatory texts: in that of Raymond du Puy, individual perfection is directed towards hospitaller activities and looking after the poor; that attributed to St. Augustine is a guide for the clergy in their office of looking after souls.

However in both texts, albeit with their different purposes and functions, there are the original features of a renewed spirituality that the great reformers of the 11th Century promoted by exhorting a return to the model of the early church of which the Hierosolymitan community was considered the emblem and image.

Msgn. Cosimo Damiano Fonseca

Academic of the Lincei

Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross *a.b.*

The Vocation to Knight of Justice

(Translated from French)

Although we do not know the precise date and circumstances, it is certain that the Order of St. John of Jerusalem was initiated the day on which Blessed Gerard and his companions, after they had taken their vows, placed themselves at the service of the poor. All the elements that had always characterised religious life were confirmed by this act, which was to be subsequently recorded with the bull *Piae Postulatio Voluntatis*. It involves a permanent commitment, expressed by taking vows, to aspire to the perfection of Christian life; the consecration of oneself to a specific task that constitutes the Order's charisma – in this specific case, *obsequium pauperum*; and the formation of an authentic fraternity among those who, animated by the same ideal, have taken on the same obligation.

It is essential to understand that the Order's future depends today on how these elements, belonging to every form of real religious life, are lived within it. More explicitly: without the vocations of the Knights of Justice – who are the only religious in the full sense of the word – the Order would not longer be a religious order. In a more positive sense, it is just

as important to understand that the vocation of the *Professed* pervades the entire Order, and that the ideal expressed by the call to become a Knight of Justice enables all members, whatever their level of commitment in the Order, to understand better their own vocations.

Religious Vows

These are mentioned in the first Rule of Raymond du Puy: “*Firstly, I ordain that all the brethren, engaging in the service of the poor, should keep the three things with the aid of God which they have promised to God, that is to say, chastity and obedience, which means whatever thing is commanded them by their masters, and to live without property of their own*”¹. It is interesting to note that, of the three vows, the initial rituals of the Profession emphasized the importance of Obedience². This was obviously for practical reasons:

¹ Cf. Beltjens (A.), *Aux origines de l'Ordre de Malta*, Brussels, 1995, p. 281.

² “*Be sure that when you want to eat, you will have to fast, and when you want to fast, you will have to eat; when you want to sleep, you will have to stay awake, and when you want to stay awake you will have to go to sleep; you will be invited everywhere, in places and positions that are not at all comfortable, and you will have to go. And in the same way you will have to give up your will for that of others.*” Ritual in Occitan, XIV Century.

fighting in the Holy Land, just as later in naval manoeuvres with the galleys, required strict discipline. And service in the hospital, like military actions, also required the faultless and immediate execution of commands.

We can also find a great spiritual dimension here. St. Thomas of Aquinas points out that the vow of obedience is the most important of the three, because it makes a sacrifice of the highest good, our free will; and moreover it positively leads to the final aim of religious life – Christian perfection – whereas the other two vows only remove obstacles to its achievement³. Vatican Council II also stressed the spiritual importance of Obedience: *“In professing obedience, religious offer the full surrender of their own will as a sacrifice of themselves to God and so are united permanently and securely to God’s salvific will. After the example of Jesus Christ who came to do the will of the Father and “assuming the nature of a slave” learned obedience in the school of suffering, religious under the motion of the Holy Spirit, subject themselves in faith to their superiors who hold the place of God. Under their guidance they are led to serve all their brothers in*

³ *Summa Theologica* IIa IIae, qu. 186, art.8. Text cited by *Regulations and Commentary*, 1969, p. 21.

*Christ, just as Christ himself in obedience to the Father served His brethren and laid down His life as a ransom for many*⁴.

These lines explain the essence of religious life: a gift of oneself to God to fulfil His will, a gift that involves the “*profession of obedience*”. Obedience is not just one of many qualities: it is a determinant element of Christian perfection, the inner disposition with which we try to imitate Christ, who perfectly obeyed His Father’s will. And the imitation of Christ leads us, like Him, to serve all our brethren, because He himself became the servant of all⁵.

The Order’s Charisma

In every religious family, one gives oneself to God to achieve a certain aim that constitutes the “charisma” of every order. The early Rule of Raymond du Puy declared it by saying that the brothers engage in the “*service of the poor*”, followed by the expression “*and the defence of the Catholic faith*”, up to

⁴ II Vatican Council, Decree on Religious Life *Perfectae Caritatis*, n°14.

⁵ The “in obedience” promise finds its justification in this provision: with their promise, the Knights and Dames in Obedience enter into for “*sacrifice themselves*” more intensely. And the simpler pledge of the third class can also be strengthened by this spiritual perspective.

the twofold promise that identifies our Order, *obsequium pauperum et tuitio fidei*. An ancient ritual of Profession uses a characteristic formula: “*we ourselves make yet another promise that is not made in any other religion [religious order], because we promise to be servants and slaves of our lords the sick*”⁶. These are words that express an ideal of absolute devotion, of commitment to a specific service that, to be experienced fully, requires religious vows to bind totally the person who pronounces them to the service.

Today the existence of these vows means that the Order of Malta is not just another organization of volunteers, only differing from others because it is older. The vocation of the Professed testifies that service to the poor is not just another action that could change in the future; it represents the Order’s specific and essential call. It is only because some people – the Professed – accept, through their religious vows, to *consecrate themselves* totally to God for the Order’s particular mission that the Order can state that it is *consecrated* to this mission.

The Order can evolve, as it has many times during the course of its history; implementing rules can

⁶ Ritual in the Occitan language, XIV Century.

change, and it is possible to find oneself facing totally new situations today. Notwithstanding, ever since its origin the vows of the Professed have always expressed the Order's profound *raison d'être*: to consecrate oneself to Christ, to serve Him in the poor and the sick. Not that the Professed have the exclusiveness for this service since all the Order's members are required to perform it, each according to his or her means, as well as all those who share the Order's ideals and mission, the multitude of volunteers, without whom our work would be impossible. But it is the vocation of the Professed that testifies in a no replaceable manner to the meaning of this action: to serve Christ in the poor, it is worth to devote to it oneself totally and irrevocably.

A Real Fraternity

The commitment through vows to a specific kind of life and action creates the feeling of belonging to a true religious "family". The ancient documents are very explicit here: "brothers", *fraternitas*... are the words used to designate the community established by Blessed Gerard and his companions, that

well represent the strong bonds existing among those first Hospitallers. Nonetheless, community life is not, as in the Benedictine monastic tradition, a fundamental element of the Hospitallers' religious life; it is instead subordinate to the good performance of their service mission. History shows us that the Order's Professed have experienced this aspect of their vocation in various ways. Still today the call to Knight of Justice does not necessarily mean living in community; it does involve, however, a profound awareness of forming an authentic *fraternitas* with the other Professed. This "*fraternitas*" will be lived in a different way according to the characteristics of the relative Grand Priory, Sub Priory or National Association, and according to each person's actual possibilities.

There are certainly initiatives that could demonstrate more visibly, where it is possible to do so, a certain form of community life⁷; and some specially chosen schemes would equally be of great use for discerning vocations and training novices. However, the sense of the fraternity that links the Professed who have pronounced these vows must not isolate them:

⁷ This was ensured on Rhodes and Malta by the establishment of the "*Convent*".

on the contrary, the fraternal ideal must be reflected throughout the Order. It is precisely because there is a group of baptised at the heart of our Order who, linked by the same vow, have become *brothers*⁸, that all the other members of the Order can call themselves *confreres*.

These rapid and brief reflections want to stress the importance of the Professed's vocation for our Order. Each member of the Order, whatever his or her position or level, must feel called, if not to become a Knight of Justice, at least to help, to support and promote these vocations, especially among the young. Without the Knights of Justice – that is people who with vows bind themselves absolutely to following Christ to serve others – the Order cannot fully express its character. In exchange, the existence of the Professed invites every member of the Order, whatever his or her status, to go a little further in their commitment to serve. This is the hope that we must embrace: the more the Professed fully live their vocation, the more each member will feel driven to go further along the path of Christian life. In the same way, the more the members of the Second and Third

⁸ This is what their traditional title of *Fra*' signifies.

Class live their baptismal consecration by serving their brethren in the spirit of the Order the more the particular vocation to Knight of Justice can come forth and grow.

Rev. Bruno Martin
Conventual Chaplain *a.b.*

Renewing and Promoting the Religious Life of the Order

At a recent conference for priests in England, I was asked to explain the various categories of knights present in their church dress for one of the solemn liturgical celebrations. The priest who had enquired was amazed when I explained about knights of justice remarking “I never knew that the Order of Malta was a religious order and that there were knights in religious vows!”. This caused me to reflect on how the Church seems to have forgotten this essential fact of our identity and there is a reason for this – the order is often a secret, even to itself. It is not so hard to understand why this should be as the loss of conventual life (so universally recognised as an identifying characteristic of religious communities) has led to an obscuring of this essential quality of the order, which entered into what is in some senses an anomalous situation following the loss of Malta. This is exacerbated by the fact that it has not always been possible for the order to speak of itself in the way that other religious communities do and use a common language of the religious life that has been

increasingly understood throughout the Church since the Second Vatican Council. In this, the Order is a victim of its own history and development over the past a hundred and fifty years.

At the present time, we have a wonderful opportunity to challenge this negative appraisal of our situation occasioned by a great flourishing of the religious life and particularly as the result of the phenomenon described as New Religious Movements. A characteristic of such movements is multi-faceted membership which ranges from spiritual or practical association to a commitment that is either expressed in religious vows or a commitment to the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience that is equivalent to the vowed state. This characteristic, which seems such a innovation, is already possessed by our Order *par excellence* and has been ever since the time a more recognisably normative experience of the religious life (such as the knights lived in Malta) has no longer been a possibility. It allows us the possibility of speaking confidently in a new way about the nature of our religious life.

From the time of his election, His Most Eminent Highness The Grand Master has spoken of his desire

to strengthen the religious life of the order, particularly through the promotion and formation of the vocation to justice for knights and the vocation to obedience for knights and dames. The realisation of this desire will engage us in an exciting adventure of spiritual renewal which will benefit the entire order in all its undertakings. But how can we embark upon such a project? I believe there are certain principles that can serve to establish a greater understanding of who and what the Order of Malta is. In some senses these ideas have emerged from observing the life of the Order throughout the world, in other cases they are the direct consequence of our experience in the British Isles.

1. We all have a responsibility as members of the Catholic Church to seek to grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Christian Life. As members of the Order of Malta that basic commitment has the added characteristic of affiliation to a religious order.
2. Those who are responsible for spiritual formation within the order, namely our superiors and chaplains of the order who offer us spiritual direction have the challenge of presenting

the religious life of the order in fidelity to its tradition and in conformity with the mind of the Church regarding the formation of religious and those who collaborate with them.

3. We must all renew our commitment to the spiritual maxims of the order as the fundamental characteristics of our life and work. In this way, the humanitarian works of the order (*obsequium pauperum*) will be more clearly identified as an expression of our religious life (*tuitio fidei*).

In recent years, the Grand Priory of England has promoted projects which seek to fulfil the above criteria. Our increasing understanding of the implications of this has been the consequence of a number of factors:

- the *desire* to promote the vocations to justice and obedience as the most intense experiences of the charism of the order, offering candidates for these vocations the necessary formation in Christian Doctrine, Scripture, Prayer, Moral Theology, Liturgy, the History and Spirituality of the Order

- the *recognition* of our need to create opportunities for an experience of community through regular Masses, pilgrimages, retreats, days of recollection, the communal celebration of Holy Week and more recently monthly weekends which offer the possibility for prayer, formation and just spending time together
- the *need* to coordinate programmes of formation that are understood by chaplains and others with responsibility for formation. In this we have been greatly assisted by the members of communities (notably the Benedictines, Franciscans and Oratorians) who offer the insights of their lives as an enrichment of our understanding
- the *duty* to promote a more tangibly Catholic ethos in the hospital under our protection, its chaplaincy and our other public apostolates so that the religious character of the order is more widely experienced and understood
- the *joy* of drawing many people outside the order and most particularly the sick and the young into an experience of the order as a vibrant expression of living the Gospel.

Possibilities will largely depend upon local resources but small initiatives often have great consequences. More recently, we have benefitted greatly from the scholarly insights of our confrère, Mgr. Giovanni Scarabelli whose epic work, "*Culto e Devozione dei Cavalieri a Malta*" (University Press of Malta, 2004) offers a great insight into the traditions of the order based largely on the liturgical observances of the knights in Malta. Scarabelli reveals many interesting facts but there are, however, two principles which emerge from his writing and would seem to particularly pertinent to the order at this time:

- For any religious community, the quality of its liturgical life is the greatest indicator of its spiritual vigour, undergirding all other activities.
- There was provision made for recollection in the *Camerata* (a sort of retreat house of strict observance alongside the Hospital in Valetta) where the knights had the opportunity to withdraw from their usual commitments to seek spiritual renewal and refreshment.

It is my sincere belief that any strategies for the deepening of the spiritual life of our order should

address these two fundamental principles. This is made possible by the establishment of regular meetings which have as their focus the religious formation of knights and dames. Furthermore, the provision in Rome of a residential Institute of Spirituality for the Religious Life of the Order would be a marvellous means of coordinating this work and giving it real importance and direction for the future. I commend this to your prayers and the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Philerme.

Rev. Andrew Wadsworth
Magistral Chaplain

Obedience: Reality and Perspectives of an American Sub-Priory

There are currently two Sub-Priories operating in the United States, the only Sub-Priories in either North or South America. The Sub-priory of Our Lady of Philermos, founded in 2002, and whose territory is that of the Western Association of the Order of Malta and, my Sub-Priory, the Sub-Priory of Our Lady of Lourdes, which was founded in 2006 and whose territory encompasses that of both the American and Federal Associations. The Sub-Priory Council is made up equally of members of both associations. The Presidents of both associations serve as members of the Sub-Priory Council.

What is a Sub-Priory? With the development of the Second Class, Knights of Obedience, in the 1950's, the Sub-Priory was created to serve the spiritual needs of the Knights and, after 1998, also the Dames in Obedience together with any Knight of Justices present within its territory. Before the fall of Malta in 1798, there were many Priories in the Order, and since then six have been restored. But priories are different in purpose and scope and are not within the

scope of this article. A Sub-Priory does not substitute for the administrative or charitable operations of the national Association, but is only for the development of the spiritual lives of its members. Only members of the First and Second Classes of the Order belong to a Sub-Priory. There must be at least nine Knights in Obedience and/or Knights of Justice in a jurisdiction in order to petition the Grand Master for the creation of a Sub-Priory.

The Sub-Priory of Our Lady of Lourdes is unique in the Order of Malta in that its jurisdiction covers the territory of two separate Associations. This could have required some adjustment given the personalities or characters of the two Associations and given the fact that most of the members of the two associations do not necessarily know each other.

The reality is that things have worked out much better than ever could have been expected. There have been very few problems, if any, in assimilating members from either Association. All members now meet several times a year either on retreat or in Lourdes where we generally have a holy hour followed by a reception and luncheon for all members of the Sub-Priory. Sub-priory events are often sched-

uled around the annual investitures of both Associations. I personally believe that this has done much to foster even better relations between the American and Federal Associations and might serve as an example of how Knights and Dames in Obedience from smaller Associations might band together to form joint sub-priories in the future.

As one can see, both American Sub-Priories are of recent date. The Western Sub-Priory has forty-three and the Sub-Priory of Our Lady of Lourdes has fifty-five members including four Professed Knights of Justice. The Knights of Justice are spread throughout the territory of the Sub-Priory, one in Washington, one in Boston, one in Chicago and I in New York. Sub-Priory membership is growing at a steady but reasonable rate. At present, it is only about two percent of the approximately seventeen hundred members of the Order in the American Association and the eight hundred in the Federal Association.

A member interested in pursuing Obedience begins by writing to the President of his or her association requesting permission to go forward. The application includes a letter from the knight or dame stating the reasons he or she wishes to proceed and

must outline his or her involvement with the Order. We have informed both Associations that we will only consider applications that meet the guidelines set forth in 2007 by His Excellency the Grand Commander. These guidelines state that a Knight or Dame must have been a member of the Order for at least five years, have been active in the Order and have made a minimum of three pilgrimages as a Knight or Dames either to Lourdes or somewhere else with the Order. The application must be accompanied by a detailed *Curriculum Vitae* outlining the applicant's involvement with the Order and with the Church in general. There must also be a letter of recommendation from the person's Bishop together with a signed consent from the applicant's spouse, if married. Baptismal and Marriage documents are also required.

Once the application is complete, it is placed on the agenda of the Board of Councillors of the Association to which the applicant belongs. In practice, it is usually reviewed by an *ad hoc* committee of members of the sub-priory who also happen to be members of the sub-priory. The whole Board votes on whether to forward the application to the

Sub-Priory. If approved, the President of the association forwards the entire application to the Regent together with a letter in support of the application from the President. After the Chancellor of the Sub-Priory vets the candidate and the matter is placed before the Sub-Priory Council. If approved, the Regent then writes a letter supporting the application and forwards the whole petition to the Grand Commander in Rome where it is eventually put before the Sovereign Council. Once we have received approval from the Sovereign Council, the applicant can undertake the first period of spiritual exercises to begin the year of preparation.

Although there have been Knights in the Second Class since 1956, the concept remains somewhat of a novelty in America. The Class of Obedience was created as a direct result of the decreasing number of Knights of Justice. The number of Knights of Justice was very low at that time and this new Class of knights was to fill positions which normally required a professed knight. Knights and Dames in Obedience occupy a special place in the Order and are meant to be leaders in the Order. Members of the Third Class, the vast majority of members of the

Order, are up to a point comparable to “Oblates” of monastic orders or “Tertiaries” in mendicant orders. Those in Obedience have a stronger commitment or bond to the Order. Article 94 of the Code states that Knight and Dames in Obedience “oblige themselves by a special promise, which binds in conscience, to a life leading to Christian perfection in the spirit of the Order and in the sphere of its works.” It goes on to say that “they must diligently observe the 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 the Holy Church.” Knights and Dames also undertake to utilize their temporal goods according to the spirit of the Gospel.

In theory that is all very well and good but what does it really mean in practice to live a life leading to Christian perfection in the spirit of the Order, especially in the materialistic world in which we live? How can we know what Christian perfection is unless we are taught? What is the spirit of the Order? How can we know unless we are taught? This, in my mind, is the essence of Obedience. It is a process of learning and development that should begin with the opening retreat of one's year of preparation and

continue throughout the rest of one's life.

Members of the Order of Malta are almost always serious Catholics. They practice their religion faithfully and normally have a better than average knowledge of their religion. As an immigrant to the U.S., I have noticed that Americans in general tend to go to church more regularly than people in other countries. They take their faith seriously. A large majority of Americans believes in God and is not ashamed to declare publicly their beliefs. My own parish in New York City for instance has seven masses each day and the church is generally filled with people!

Those who seek to enter into Obedience need to learn about the "life of Christian perfection". The Catholic Encyclopedia defines Christian perfection as the "supernatural or spiritual union with God which is possible of attainment in this life, and which may be called relative perfection, compatible with the absence of beatitude, and the presence of human miseries, rebellious passions, and even venial sins to which a just man is liable without a special grace and privilege of God". Now, this is where our Chaplains come into play. Chaplains play a large role in the

process of Obedience and it is important that they take seriously the role given to them in developing new Knights and Dames in Obedience. First, they must make sure that the candidate is doing this for the right reasons. Then they must then guide the candidate through the learning process by meeting regularly with the candidate, assigning spiritual readings, growing the prayer life of the person and deepening the knowledge both of the Church and the Order.

Chaplains in the Associations need to be trained in the history of the Order, in its spirituality and in its works. Some Chaplains, unfortunately, know very little of the Order. We have two Chaplains in the sub-priory, one from each Association. One is located in New York and one in Washington, D.C. Both are well-versed in the history and spirituality of the Order and provide great service to our members. Due, however, to the great distances between members in the United States, we are forced to rely on the services of Chaplains from both Associations and, sometimes in places where they are not available, upon non-chaplains who may not know much about the Order. In these cases, we request that a Knight of Justice or another member in Obedience be

assigned as an Assistant in order to give the candidate greater knowledge of the Order.

As with anything, Obedience is what one chooses to make of it. Once the year of preparation is finished and the Promise of Obedience made, the person is on his or her own to strive for the life of Christian perfection. The sub-priory offers support by providing prayer sessions, retreats, Masses and the like but, basically it is up to the individual. The obligations are not too onerous, at least on paper. Members are bound to recite daily the *Credo*, one *Pater*, *Ave* and *Gloria*, attend Mass regularly, avail oneself of the sacraments and undertake a three day spiritual retreat once a year.

The reality is that most of our members remain daily communicants and more and more recite the Divine Office on a daily basis. This universal daily prayer of the Church unites us worldwide with other Catholics in glorifying God and listening to his revealed word as well as to words of the Church fathers. Our Knights of Justice have been busy teaching as many members as possible to recite "The Liturgy of the Hours". When together on retreat, all members recite or sing the Divine Office together.

Groups meet on a monthly basis to attend Mass together, to pray together and to discuss religious readings assigned from the month before. Members are also encouraged to pray at the same hour on the same day every week so they will feel the solidarity of common prayer although separated by miles. We keep in touch with the members on a regular basis via email. We send out regular communications on the saints of the Order, on the commemoration of important dates in the Order and on various aspects of the functioning of the Order. Prayer lists of the sick and deceased are also circulated via email. The sub-priory also hosts days of recollection at least twice a year usually during Lent and Advent. On the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes we host a Healing Mass for members and *Malades* both in New York and Washington, D.C. Each member is asked to pray daily for vocations to both the First Class and Obedience.

Our Vice-Regent is helping prepare a series of educational pamphlets which we hope to distribute to members of the sub-priory and to members of both Associations explaining various aspects of the Order in general such as the Council Complete of State and the Chapter General. We have plans for expanded

programmes, but we are still limited by time and small financial resources.

Each year the Sub-Priory organizes a spiritual retreat for all members in Obedience and for those who may be interested in pursuing Obedience. All our Knights of Justice also attend and extend their stay to fulfill their yearly requirement for spiritual exercises together. This year's retreat was held in Pennsylvania which was chosen as a convenient location for members of both Associations. The retreat master was Abbot Placid Solari, O.S.B. who spoke on Benedictine Spirituality. This is a theme that was proposed by our late Grand Master of blessed memory.

Almost all members of the sub-priory have other positions of responsibility in their respective Associations. Many are Area Chairpersons, Area Board Members or Members of the Board of Councillors of their Associations. I myself am an Area Hospitaller in the New York City Area. In this way, members can continue their journey to spiritual perfection through the exercise of charity towards our lords the sick and the poor within the charism of the Order. All hospitaller activities are carried out through the works of the Associations.

As mentioned above, members in Obedience are required to use their temporal goods in the spirit of the Gospels. The reality here is that Americans tend to be very generous people. Members of the sub-priory, for the most part, come from very comfortable backgrounds, many some having run very large enterprises with hundreds of employees. Many are successful businessmen who still find time to work with the sick and the poor. Americans are used to being asked to donate for any number of charities. This is not the same in other countries in which the governments tend to provide all welfare assistance. The sub-priory itself does not solicit funds for charities as this is done by the Associations. We do charge a modest annual fee for membership which helps defray the expenses of the sub-priory. Both Associations have been most generous in helping defray the costs of establishment and installation and some office services.

Every member of the Order of Malta when he or she accepts the Cross of the Order should understand that it imposes both duties and sacrifices. Every member on the day of his or her investiture obliges himself or herself to use all their energies for the benefit of the Order. The vast majority of mem-

bers of the Order nowadays do not pronounce vows; they are, nevertheless, members of a lay religious order of the Roman Catholic Church. The spirituality of the Order is rooted in its ancient religious and chivalric character and in its hospitaller tradition.

The reality is that some, perhaps more than a few, in the Order of Malta look at Obedience as a promotion or an honour to be sought or received. Nothing could be further from the truth. To stress that Obedience should mean greater service the Code now states in Article 94, Paragraph 3 that “Knights and Dames in Obedience do not enjoy privileges or precedence with respect to other members of the Order.” The scapular which a Knight in Obedience wears was originally just an apron to protect the clothes of agricultural and manual labourers. Saint Benedict said that the purpose of the scapular is solely of a spiritual nature, namely like an “apron” to be a sign of the wear’s readiness to serve, in this case that of the workman in the service of God. The donning of the scapular represents the wearer’s readiness to do God’s work.

The Knight’s breast Cross of Obedience is a further sign of the extra burden of striving for spiritual

perfection one has undertaken. It is similar to Cross of Profession worn by Knights of Justice and represents the extra commitment Knights in Obedience make to the Order. Dames in Obedience wear an enhanced Maltese Cross on their cape as a reminder of their enhanced responsibilities to the Order and its works.

We should do well to listen carefully to Saint Paul's declaration: "*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*" (Gal. 6: 14)

Those who think that donning the scapular represents a promotion should listen to the admonition of Saint John Chrysostom in his homily on Matthew where he says:

"Do you want to honour Christ's body? Then do not scorn him in his nakedness, nor honour him here in the church with silken garments while neglecting him outside where he is cold and naked. For he who said: *This is my body*, and made it so by his words, also said: *You saw me hungry and did not feed me, and inasmuch as you did not do it for one of these, the least of*

my brothers you did not do it for me. What we do here in the church requires a pure heart, not special garments; what we do outside requires great dedication.”

Knights of Malta have always been people of action. As Father Eric Hollis, O.S.B., a Magistral Chaplain in the Western Association, noted in his paper “*Living in Obedience: Leaven for the Order*”:

“Until more recent efforts, I think it is safe to say the Order of Malta has always lacked a fully articulated spirituality, and there are lots of good reasons to explain this. Part is due to the emphasis on action, since service to the poor and the sick was a hallmark of the Order from the very beginning. This bias toward action has been paramount for centuries, and by default the Order has never evolved a vibrant intellectual tradition. It simply wasn’t designed for that, Fra Gerard, despite a life of stellar service, never left a corpus of writing that outlined a coherent spiritual program. Subsequent Grand Masters and knights had

other things that they worried about; and while they certainly prayed, they never were known as great spiritual leaders. Their later focus on military exploits became characteristic of the Order, but we can also say that military activity never displaced the fundamental commitment to the care of the sick and the poor. Nor did it put aside the quest for God and personal sanctification”.

If Knights of Malta are people of action, American Knights and Dames of Malta tend to be super activated. I am constantly amazed at the amount of good works in which Knights and Dames are involved both personally and through their local Malta area organizations. Those in Obedience are often more involved, in fact, often as leaders of these works for our lords the sick and the poor. I am convinced, however, that the preparation one receives as a Knight or Dame in Obedience helps one to keep focused on that quest for God and personal sanctification and on carrying out the ancient charisms of the Order. I also believe that these Knights and Dames in Obedience can and should serve as exam-

ples to the Knights and Dames of the Third Class. Obedience was created to provide leaders and lead they should by example.

One glaring need in our sub-priory is interest in Obedience by younger members of the Order. Although Regent, I am the youngest in the sub-priory, probably by ten years. If we are to continue to grow and develop, we need the participation of our younger members. Both Associations are slowly beginning to admit younger members and I pray daily that once these members qualify for Obedience that they will decide to deepen their spirituality and commitment to the Order by petitioning to begin the year of preparation for the Promise of Obedience.

We also need more young vocations to the First Class from Knights of both associations. It is important that these younger professed knights remain in the world while continuing to exercise their chosen professions, witnessing to Christ in the world and serving as examples to others of the fact that the Order continues to be a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Order has existed for over nine hundred years and has adapted to all forms of trials and tribu-

lations. It may have been the first religious order to bring its men out of the monastery and into the world to use their skills to help the poor and the sick. We can see that from its beginning the Order has been open to change and adaptation to the world in which it finds itself. The reality is that there are now new sub-priories in the New World which are helping prepare Knights and Dames to live their spiritual lives in the spirit of the Order and its founder, Blessed Gerard.

Fra' John T. Dunlap
Regent of the Sub-Priory
of Our Lady of Lourdes

Putting on the Armour of Light

(Translated from Italian)

*To carry out this "mission" well,
endeavour, as St Paul instructs us in the Second Reading,
to "put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:12),
which consists in the Word of God, the gifts of the Spirit,
the grace of the Sacraments, the theological and cardinal virtues;
fight evil and abandon sin that darkens our life.*

Homily of Pope Benedict XVI
Magliana Hospital

After the *Rule* of Raymond du Puy, the editions of the *Stabilimenta*, first handwritten and then printed, carry the "*Customs*" set down by the Chapters General and bearing the name of the Grand Master who promulgated them.

One of the first of these customs is entitled *De receptione fratrum* and expands the short chapter on the Profession in the *Rule* that, with great essentiality, prescribed the three vows to take before the priest and on the book¹ of the Holy

¹ "In primis iubeo ut omnes fratres, ad servitium pauperum venientes *tria*, que promittunt Deo *per manum sacerdotis et per librum* teneant cum Dei ausilio, scilicet: *castitatem et obedientiam*, hoc est quodcumque precipitur eis a magistris suis, et *sine proprio vivere*, quia hec tria requirit Deus ab eis *in ultimo certamine*" J. DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem*, 4 vol., Paris 1894-1906, vol. I, pp. 62-63.

Scriptures².

The texts of the Rite of Profession in use for some centuries before the accepted edition of the *Code of Roban* contained, at the beginning, this forceful and illuminating directive:

“He who intends to make the Profession must know that he has to put on a new person”³.

From the very beginning, the *Ceremony to be observed in giving the Order's Habit* was rooted in the Word of God: it means much than simply putting on a habit or a uniform, it signifies “*putting on a new person*”, “*putting on Christ*”⁴, “*putting on the armour of light*”⁵, “*putting on the armour of God*”⁶ and the *breastplate of faith*⁷, getting rid of the *old self*, fighting against evil and darkness.

² “Et continuo post haec levet manus a sacris scripturis”, in J. HASECKER – J. SARNOWSKY, *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum militum. Die Statuten des Johanniterordens von 1489-93*, Göttingen 2007, *De receptione fratrum*, pp. 104-105.

³ “Qui enim professurus est, sciat novum hominem se induere”, *ibid.*, p. 104.

⁴ “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14); “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

⁵ “Let us then throw off the works of darkness (and) put on the armour of light” (Rom. 13:12). See also Eph. 5:8-14.

⁶ “Put on the armour of God” (Eph. 6:11).

⁷ The first letter to the Thessalonians takes up the metaphor of the breastplate of faith and the helmet that is hope for salvation (1 Thess. 5:8).

What the Rite of Profession proposes for the Knights of Justice it also proposes for the Second and Third Class.

The new person

The expression “*new person*” used in the *Ritual* is taken from the letters of St. Paul⁸ and testifies the assiduous meditation on the New Testament of the first generation of Knights.

The apostle Paul, whose bimillenary we are celebrating this year, in his letters often speaks both of a *new self* as opposed to an *old self*⁹, and also of an *outer self* and an *inner self*¹⁰, as well as a *natural person* and a *spiritual person*¹¹.

⁸ *Eph.* 2:15; 4:21-24; *Col.* 3:9-12.

⁹ “We know that our *old self* was crucified with him [Christ], so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin” (*Rom.* 6:6). “So whoever is in Christ is a *new* creation: the *old things* have passed away; behold, *new things* have come” (*2 Cor.* 5:17).

¹⁰ “For I take delight in the law of God, in *my inner self*” (*Rom.* 7:22); “Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our *outer self* is wasting away, our *inner self* is being renewed day by day.” (*2 Cor.* 4:16); “For this reason I kneel before the Father [...] that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the *inner self*” (*Eph.* 3:14-16).

¹¹ “Now the *natural person* does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God [...]. The *spiritual person*, however, can judge everything” (*1 Cor.* 2:14-15).

According to the Biblical conception, the person is *flesh* and *spirit*: *spirit* because animated by the spirit of life, by the Spirit of God; *flesh* because a natural person, not animated by God, is mortal. Instead, in Greek philosophy, the person is *body* and *soul*, where the soul is superior to the body, even considering the soul a *prisoner* of the body. The Bible then adds another new and more profound conception of the person; it introduces a notion of man in a theological perspective, considering the person *before God*, of Whom he is the *image*. Humanity is not only inserted in a natural and closed world, but is part of a story in which the leading actor is God himself, who has created man and who became man to redeem him.

The story of the book of Genesis tells us that the creation of man is the crowning achievement of the universe: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*" (*Gen.* 1:26).

Man, created in the image of God, can enter into dialogue with Him; he is not God, but has a relationship with Him similar to that of a son with a father (*Gen.* 6:2). The image of God in man has however been offended and diminished by Adam; when God questions him, Adam accuses his wife, betraying

their trust (*Gen.* 3:12). The following chapters of Genesis show how this initial division is repeated between Cain and Abel and between the people in Babel who no longer understand each other (*Gen.* 11:1-9). The biblical story is one of divisions, a series of wars between people and between nations, between members of the same population and between rich and poor, but the promise of victory remains, an aurora in the night, and the prophets never cease to announce the prince of peace who will reconcile people.

Adam, that is all people, cannot again become fully “*in God’s image*” if they do not increasingly let themselves be formed in “*Christ’s image*”, the image of the crucified man conquering death.

The *new person* is first of all Christ Himself, but also every believer in the Lord Jesus. A person’s existence is no longer dominated by the natural, carnal man, but is introduced into a *new* perspective that the New Testament calls the victory of the Spirit over the flesh, that is over the carnal, natural person not animated by the grace of the Spirit (*Gal.* 5:16-25; *Rom.* 8: 5-13).

United to Him who took a “*fleshly body*” (*Col.*

1:22), the Christian's wretched body is gradually transformed into a glorious body, into a "*spiritual body*": "*all of us [...] are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit*" (2 Cor. 3:18).

The divisions and troubles that afflict humanity throughout history are not ignored or underestimated in either the Old or New Testaments, but are placed in relationship to a *new* being, in a new perspective, a being in Christ, which helps us to overcome evil and darkness, *already* begun but *not yet* fully achieved in history and only to be fully achieved during the last days, when *Christ will be all in all* (Col. 3:11).

Grace

The apostle Paul forcefully sets the *new law* against *the old law*, that is the Mosaic covenant, and affirms that the letter brings death and the Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). Paul compares the new Spirit with the obsolescent letter (Rom. 7:6): "*you are not under the law but under grace*" (Rom. 6:14)¹².

¹² St. Augustine, *Lo spirito e la lettera*, in *Opere di S. Agostino*, Città Nuova, Roma, 1981.

St. Thomas Aquinas, in his comment to the Letter to the Romans, asserts that the law of the Holy Spirit is the *new law* that is “principally the grace itself of the Holy Spirit”.

The new law, continues St. Thomas, is identified both with the person of the Holy Spirit and with the action that the same Spirit exercises in us; thus the apostle Paul wrote that it is *spiritual* (Rom. 7:14), that is “given by the Holy Spirit”, a law that the Spirit fulfills in us, not an external law but a principle of action, a new, inner dynamism¹³. Jeremiah had already asserted: “*But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts*” (Jer. 31:33).

Whenever St. Thomas Aquinas evokes the New Testament and the New Law he uses the same expressions: “it is God who acts within the soul and in this way the New Testament was obtained, because it is infused by the Holy Spirit”. And again: “the Holy Spirit is the New Testament that produces love, the fulfillment of the law, in us”¹⁴.

¹³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commento al Corpus Paulinum*, vol. 1, *Lettera ai Romani*, Bologna 2005, pp. 496-497.

¹⁴ *Somma Teologica*, I-II, q. 106, art. 1. Questions 106-108 are devoted entirely to the New Testament law or new law. See Rom. 7:6; 8:1-16; Gal. 5:16-25.

The apostle Paul asserts: *“for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments [...] are summed up in this saying, (namely) ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [...] love is the fulfillment of the law’”* (Rom. 13:8-10), and St. Thomas comments: *“So it was necessary to give us a law of the Spirit, which would produce love in us and revitalize us”*.

The apostle Paul calls the action of the Holy Spirit in us *grace*. The evangelical tradition, like the Synoptics, does not recognise this term, but fully expresses the same reality that Paul calls grace. For the Synoptics, Jesus is also the supreme gift of the Father to us (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; Lk. 22:19).

This grace given *“from above”* never fails: it is always *“enough”*, even in the most difficult situations, because it is precisely then that it manifests its power: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness. I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong”* (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

The Spiritual Fight

Grace is God's initiative that precedes all human responses and for the apostles it is the inexhaustible source of all their activity (*Acts* 1:8; 5:32; 15:28); it makes Paul all that he is, it affects everything he does, so that all that is most personal in him, "*I am what I am*", is the work of grace (*1 Cor.* 15:10); the grace is in him, the principle of his transformation and action, requiring his cooperation (*1 Cor.* 3:9), always careful to obey grace and to respond to it.

Grace is the initiative and gift of God but it needs our cooperation: each *gift* has its corresponding *engagement*.

Human cooperation to the grace has a positive, constructive and edifying aspect as the words of the New Testament cited earlier demonstrate, but cooperation also entails a struggle, it is also getting rid of the *old self*.

The Rule of Raymond du Puy, in the chapter on the Profession, evokes this struggle in its final moment, at the end of every human existence, when we present ourselves to our Lord: "*because God will ask to them to answer on these three things [the three vows] at the Last Fight*"¹⁵.

¹⁵ "Quia hec tria requiret Deus ab eis in ultimo certamine" (J. DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem*, 4 vol., Paris 1894-1906, vol. I, p. 63).

In some letters, to make us understand what it means to get rid of the old self, the apostle Paul uses the image of battle and fight¹⁶: “*Let us then throw off the works of darkness (and) put on the armour of light*” (Rom. 13:12).

The most intense words in terms of spiritual battle are to be found in the sixth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians (6:10-18) and could be the subject of assiduous mediation by the Order’s members¹⁷.

¹⁶ See notes 5 and 6 above.

¹⁷ “Draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. *Put on the armour of God* so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. *For our struggle* is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. *Therefore, put on the armour of God*, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins *girded* in truth, *clothed with righteousness as a breastplate*, and your feet *shod* in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all (the) flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the *sword* of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:10-18). This text could be used as a reading in the Eucharistic Celebration for the Investitures and for the Professions, as could the texts regarding *putting on Christ* and the *new self* given here, whereas for the Promise of Obedience, the following could be used: Gen. 26:1-5; Eph. 24:1-7; Phil. 2: 6-11; 2 Cor. 10: 1-5; Heb. 5: 4-10; Heb. 11: 8-12; 1 Peter 1: 1-2. 13-23; Mk. 4: 35-41.

Gradually, day by day (2 Cor. 4:16)

Paul speaks of renewal with regards to the *gradual sanctification* of the faithful: “*our inner self is being renewed day by day.*” (2 Cor. 4:16). The baptized must clear out the old yeast, to become a fresh batch of dough (1 Cor. 5:7) and live a *new* life (Rom. 6:4). The example to *imitate* is Christ, *image of God*¹⁸: to restore in us the *image* of the Creator¹⁹ is the same as *putting on* Christ.

The *new person* is called to progress continually, letting himself be formed by the *image* of the real man, that is Christ, and in this way you “*have put on the new self [...] in the image of its creator*” (Col. 3:10).

The human intellect is renewed, transformed by the Spirit of Jesus, which makes it able to judge and assess what constructs and what instead demolishes the authentic person desired by the Father (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:15; Phil. 1:10).

The person in Christ is no longer a simple mortal because faith has placed in his heart a germ of immortality, but not fully, not totally. Precisely because of this a person is gradually, “*day by day*”, required to nourish *the*

¹⁸ 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15.

¹⁹ Gen. 1:26-27; Col. 3:10.

new self, in union with Jesus Christ, abolishing what disfigures the authentic human face created in God's image and gradually "*day by day*" developing the *new* life.

In his letter to the Ephesians the apostle Paul asserts that, in imitation of Adam, the *new person* is recreated *in justice and in the holiness of truth*; Paul closely links the *knowledge of Christ* with *listening* to his word of truth and acting on this word by *putting away the old self* and *putting on the new self*²⁰.

The first instrument of this transformation is *pure spiritual milk*, the milk of the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2), the truth that prompts justice and holiness, generating faith.

Through Christians the work of renewal must extend to all the universe. Christ has reconciled everything with God; all creation awaits redemption (Rom. 8:19-24), but this universal restoration, albeit already begun, will not be fully achieved until the end of time, in the "*new heavens*" and in a "*new earth*" in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13).

I conclude with some concrete indications for *putting on the new self* and for *putting on the armour of light*

²⁰ [...]that you should *put away the old self* of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and *put on the new self*, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:22-24).

taken from the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians and the homily of the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, at the Magliana Hospital.

Writing to the Colossians, Paul urges them to:

“Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the *old self* with its practices and have put on the *new self*, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, *heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another*, if one has a grievance against another; *as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do*. And over all these put on *love*, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the *peace* of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And *be thankful*.” (Col. 3:9-15).

The Holy Father, Benedict XVI, in his homily at the Magliana Hospital on 2 December 2007, addressing the doctors, nursers and volunteers who work in the Hospital, but especially every member of the

Order, gave these specific guiding principles:

In every sick person, whoever he or she may be, may you be able to recognize and serve Christ himself; make them perceive with your acts and words the signs of his merciful love. To carry out this “mission” well, endeavour, as St Paul instructs us in the Second Reading [first Sunday of Advent, year A] to “**put on the armour of light**” (Rom. 13:12), which consists in the Word of God²¹, the gifts of the Spirit²², the grace of the Sacraments²³, the theological and cardinal virtues²⁴; fight evil and abandon sin that darkens our life²⁵.

Fr. Costantino Gilardi, O.P.

Spiritual Assistant of the Pilgrimages
of the Ven. Langue of Italy

²¹ The new birth occurs first of all through the Word of truth (Jas. 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23), that is through the faith that is a gift of the Spirit (Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 5: 1.4). See the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*.

²² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1830-1832.

²³ See the Constitution of the Holy Liturgy, chapter III; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The Seven Sacraments of the Church*, 1210-1690.

²⁴ Regarding the theological and cardinal virtues, see SMOM, *Journals of Spirituality*, 8 (2008), devoting several articles to this theme.

²⁵ *Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI during the Eucharistic Celebration at the Hospital of St. John the Baptist*, in SMOM, *Journals of Spirituality*, 8 (2008), p. 119-125.

The Visibility of Faith in a Secularized Society

(Translated from Italian)

“The bell rings. Kneel down! They are administering the last sacrament to a dying God”. This powerful image by the 19th Century German poet Heinrich Heine seems to anticipate the long list of statements by philosophers and even theologians on the death of God, as well as the profile of today’s society, defined – maybe a little too hastily – as a post-Christian one. The belief that it is no longer worth fighting God, as militant atheists used to do, has gradually developed, for it is sufficient to know that God has become powerless and removed from our world. So a climate of indifference has been created, typical of modern cities that live neither with nor against, but simply without God. As the contemporary Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor has noted, if a man of today, in our streets deprived of religious symbols, were to come across God, at best he would ask to see his identity papers.

Thus we have entered a period of history that has witnessed the end of metaphysics and the meta-narratives that interpreted and comprehended the history of mankind. The global visions that defined

the scope within which we live, move and operate, and the utopias that tried to pass its boundaries have given way to navigation on sight, to a sort of *drifting along* following the fluctuating norm of the will in contingent situations. The cultural uprisings of 1968 and the dramatic fall of the Berlin Wall have not managed to bring about a stronger humanity; they have only managed to push men and women into an anti-institutional subjectivism, tied to the humour of the moment and an a-moral life attached only to the here-and-now, immersed in the vanity of words and actions with no interpretative or operational efficacy. As pilgrims seeking a meaning that is able to reunite the fragmented states of the itinerary of life, we have been transformed into homeless people, drifting along the road with no goal, guided only by a frenzy which produces – as one French author has put it – an “on-the-spot exodus”, a static exodus without a promised land.

Within this horizon, at the heart of the analysis this International Seminar of the Order of Malta is elaborating, I would like to express my thoughts on just one aspect, that of the visibility of faith in a secularized society. We will start from a well known

Gospel passage: “Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight; and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops”. These words of Jesus reported by Luke (12:3) and also reflected in Matthew (10:27) entwine two opposite positions: the esoteric nature of a secret, initiation-ritual disclosure intended for the restricted community of believers, and the exoteric nature of an outbound announcement proclaimed from the *dómata*, the roofs of ancient Palestinian homes (hence the translation “housetops” that seems to suit so well the antennas and satellite dishes of modern television appliances).

Indeed, in the Gospels we may notice at first sight a counterpoint that, over the years, has sometimes been simplified into an artful concordatism and at other times converted into an extreme clash. On one hand, Jesus Christ invited his disciples to gain an explicit standing in history, a true *martyría*, i.e. a visible and even provocative testimony. The images and words we find in the “Sermon on the Mount”, often referred to as the *Magna Charta* of Christianity, are crystal clear: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a

lamp and then puts it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp-stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine in the sight of men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:14-16). Christians are supposed to be publicly “visible”, not least because Jesus himself had entrusted his followers with a missionary duty: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (28:19).

On the other hand, however, the Gospels report words by Jesus Christ that show awareness of the radical diversity of the religious event: “My kingdom does not belong to this world”. Jesus said to Pilate (John 18:36): “If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here”. On the contrary, Jesus chose small, almost invisible symbols to represent this “kingdom”, such as a grain of mustard seed, which “is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth” (Mark 4:31) or a little flock of sheep, and reprimands and condemns without hesitation all forms of religious exhibition: “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues

and on street corners so that others may see them. [...] But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.” (Matthew 6:5-6). Jesus disdainfully rejected the hypocrisy of magniloquent religious publicity. While he had recommended a visible testimony (“that they may see your good works”) he harshly criticized visibility as an end in itself, self-promoting and spectacular: scribes and Pharisees act so that “all their works are performed to be seen” (Matthew 23:5).

In brief, if we were to summarise these two profiles into a symbolic diptych, we might paint Jesus’ solemn entry into Jerusalem, hailed by the crowd with hosannas and waving of palm and olive branches on the one hand, and his sharp reaction against theocratic temptation on the other: “When the people saw the sign he had made [the multiplication of bread], they said, “This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world”. Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.” (John 6:14-15). Therefore, there is a delicate balance that excludes a merely intimist idea of faith, incomplete because man is by his nature body and soul, inti-

macy and communication, privacy and sociability, and also an idea with political tendency, that deeply mingles the lay and the sacred. It is a hard route to follow if we want to maintain this balance, as the history of Christianity has taught us. However it is essential if we are to be true to the very heart of the Christian proclamation, that is *Lógos* and *sarx*, to say it in the words of St. John: "And the Word became flesh" (1:14). In the Christian view, transcendence and history, the absolute and the contingent, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal do not exclude each other, but are tied together.

Let us now focus more closely on visibility and try to explain its necessity and value, being aware however that we will always be prone to the risk of abuse of the "sacred", and obviously the secular temptation to trample on the free expression of faith (an anthropologic - and hence public - factor). In terms of theological categories, the authentically sacred (better said, the "holy") will not oppose nor wish to cancel the profane, but it seeks to dialogue with it; it is questioning it and is questioned by it, it enriches it and draws value from it in a process of osmosis, which is quite different from "confusion".

The sacred and the lay are not antithetical, even though they are radically different. On the other hand, sacralism aims at consecrating the lay, considering it as negative in itself, erasing its identity, just the same way as secularism seeks a systematic elimination of all religious signs as illegitimate and contemptible. Therefore, “sacralism” and “secularism” are in absolute conflict with each other. Constantine and Diocletian, while experiencing diverse events, proceed along parallel paths.

Along the line of a correct connection between the “sacred” and the “lay”, genuine Christianity has self-consciously and consistently carried out a decisive public task as a leaven in society. Just think of what Christian anthropology did to promote equality and fraternity among people in early communities, with their sharp differences between free men and slaves, between males and females. There is a famous statement that St. Paul twice repeated: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11). Yet, the Apostle Paul never offers an alternative political design; quite the opposite, he finds a place

within the Roman Empire, as is evidenced in the famous paragraph on fiscal ethics in the Letter to the Romans (13:1-7). The one and only “political” statement formulated by Jesus is enlightening: “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mark 12:17).

This statement is not neutral and isolationist as far as faith is concerned because if “the portrait” of Caesar is on a coin that represents politics and therefore recognizes its autonomy, the “portrait” of God, according to the Bible (Genesis 1:27), is in man. Therefore, ethics is very important to protect human dignity, to set clear limits to the autonomy of politics and economy. But if we were to further simplify the precious and irreplaceable impact of Christianity in the public horizon, culture would be a major chapter. For centuries the Bible has been “The Great Code” of Western civilization, as Northrop Frye called it in his famous essay. It has been so in terms of ethics: just think of the importance of the Ten Commandments or of such concepts as *agape*, *caritas*, Christian love, or the prominent value attributed to the person and life. And it has been so, above all, in terms of art.

Chagall admitted that “painters have dipped their brushes for centuries in that colourful alphabet of hope that is the Bible”, so much so that religious knowledge is necessary to understand not only the pictorial representation, the symbols and the language, but the very historical and cultural identity of the Western world. The traditional European town has always had its centre in the cathedral, around which the urban structure is weaved with its different expressions. The town of the dead, the cemetery, is characterised by the eschatological view of Christianity. Crucifixes may indeed have their background in the sacral development I have mentioned above, but they have become, in their symbolic function, a far more ecumenical and cultural reality. As Natalia Ginzburg wrote in 1988 in the newspaper *Unità*, in reaction to one of the early attempts to remove crucifixes from public premises (the article was entitled *Do not take that crucifix away!*), “It stands there, speechless and silent. It has always been there. It is the symbol of human pain, of the solitude of death. I know no other sign capable of conveying the sense of our destiny so powerfully. The crucifix is part of the history of the world”.

Besides, it is peculiar that one of the essential issues of early anti-Christian polemics was precisely the concept of a crucified God, which was considered unworthy by a culture that hated dead bodies, let alone used them as symbols. Yet that symbol has pervaded the language, the imagery, our collective understanding of it, simplifying its theological value and turning it into a living and universal symbol of sorrow, death and hope, as Ignazio Silone wrote in his novel *The Secret of Luca* (1956): "During the questioning, Luca was staring at the wall above the President's head. 'What are you looking at?', the President shouted. 'At Jesus on the cross', Luca replied, 'is that forbidden?'. 'You should look in to the eyes of the person speaking to you', the President snapped. 'Excuse me', Luca replied, 'but he is speaking to me as well; why don't you shut him up?'. "

The risk that Christian symbols be erased from the public environment would represent, apart from historical "forgetfulness", a social and cultural deprivation. This is something Georges Bernanos feared back in 1944, when he wrote in his essay *France Against the Robots*: "A civilization does not collapse like a building; it would be more correct to say that it is

gradually emptying its very self until it is left with no more than the skin”. This is the risk run by a civilization that rejects one of its structural matrixes. Having said that faith is something inner and personal and that there should always be a controlled separation between Church and State, as is recommended by the doctrine of the Gospel itself, we should not erase a profound and fertile identity. One of the greatest poets of the last century, Thomas S. Eliot, reminds us: “A European citizen may not believe that the Christian Faith is true, and yet what he says and does springs forth from the heritage of Christian culture. Without Christian culture there would have been no Voltaire or Nietzsche. If Christianity goes, our whole culture goes”.

Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi

President of the Pontifical Council for Culture

New Challenges for “*Obsequium Pauperum*”

Introduction

The following text is based on the thoughts of five hospitallers¹ who have observed new challenges arising for the works of the Order, with regards to the second pillar of the mission statement “*Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*”.

The relevant questions and findings below are structured as follows

1. Internal Challenges

- a. How to persuade members to become (more) involved in – and to develop – the Order’s charitable work?
- b. How to persuade members to give more time and more money to support the Order’s charitable work?
- c. How to persuade members to make the Order the preferred channel for their charitable activities?

¹ Martine Baronne Jonet, Belgian Association; Thierry Comte de Beaumont-Beynac, French Association; Johannes Freiherr Heereman von Zuydtwyck, German Association; Joseph G. Metz, American Association; Timothy G. Orchard, British Association.

- d. Does the Order's quota system of noble grades hinder efforts to expand its charitable work? In other words, does the insistence on nobility prevent the Order from recruiting the right people?

2. External Challenges

- a. How to deal with the new sufferings of today's society?

Children and youngsters

People with no medical insurance, migrants

The homeless

The dying

People in mourning

The elderly and lonely

Supplementary Questions

How to deal with anti-Christian legislative frameworks?

3. Internationality

4. Spirituality

- a. As a need for members of the Order
b. As a need for staff members and volunteers

c. As a need for the beneficiaries

1. Internal Challenges

As an ever-growing entity, the Order comprises both younger and older Associations, Associations with substantial institutional charity and others with less established works, where the idea of *obsequium pauperum* has not been developed much beyond the level of individual acts of charity.

This diversity leads to challenges to *obsequium pauperum* arising within the Order itself.

a. How do we persuade members to become (more) involved in – and to develop – the Order’s charitable work?

Over time, the solution could be very simple: those considering membership of the Order must be told clearly what will be expected of them once they join, with regards to both hospitaller work and spiritual activities. This is not yet the case in all Associations.

In the meantime, each hospitaller should have an “inventory” of the Association’s members at his or her disposition in order to find out, firstly, how much each person is prepared to do; secondly, what their charitable interests are, and, thirdly, what particular

skills or contacts they can offer. This would be considered no more than “standard operating procedure” for any well organised charity. Moreover, a regularly updated “inventory” would allow for varying levels of charitable commitment according to each member’s personal circumstances.

b. How do we persuade members to give more time and more money to support the Order’s charitable work?

The Order cannot know how much it can reasonably ask from each member until it knows what they are prepared to do (as per the “inventory” suggested above). Once armed with that information, however, national Associations should be less shy about asking their members to give time and (if possible) money to support the Order’s works.

c. How do we persuade members to make the Order the preferred channel for their charitable activities?

Perhaps it is neither reasonable nor necessary to make this a requirement of membership. But, if it is reasonable, then it should be quite straightforward for the President of an Association to ask its members to divert most of their charitable giving

to charities of the Order, national and international.

d. Does the Order's quota system of noble grades hinder efforts to expand its charitable work? In other words, does the insistence on nobility prevent the Order from recruiting the right people?

The question is whether the Order's insistence on a strict quota for non-noble members (though not in all countries) restricts the "pool" in which to "fish" for new members. It would be interesting to know whether those Associations that do not observe such a quota system are more productive or prolific in their charitable activities. If they are, can this be attributed to their freedom to recruit from a wider "pool" (of Catholics)?

2. External Challenges

How to deal with the new sufferings of today's society?

Next to the Order's "classical" fields of work like the Lourdes pilgrimages, emergency aid or catastrophe prevention the Order is confronted with new sufferings and the poverty of our society today. There are those who are left alone (i.e. school children) or those who are isolated by loneliness (i.e. the

old, the dying, the imprisoned, refugees). There are people who hide away because they are afraid of being punished not only because they are not able to pay for their medical insurance, but also because they are immigrants, illegals, homeless people; there are people who are harassed and organisations who are persecuted for no other reason but their Christian conviction.

Children and Youngsters

- (a) The numbers of children and youngsters with distress syndromes, psychological pathologies and addiction problems are growing dramatically. Associations deal or could deal with these needs through
- Residential care and treatments for adolescents with mental disorders
 - Residential care and treatments for drug dependent people (adolescents, young adults, adults)
 - Training and re-integration centres (restaurant, woodwork)
 - Centres for children with disabilities and their parents
 - Multi-generation centres

- Day centres for children from broken families and parents dealing with alcohol addiction
 - After-school activities and help with school homework
 - Emergency aid by and for school children (“School Medics”)
- (b) With family structures failing in today’s society, education at school is gaining in importance. Churchly Orders are lacking vocations and are gradually backing out of the business. This field could become a key responsibility for the Order.

At present, the works of the German Association, for example, have taken over management of the Catholic high school St. Bernhard in Willich, NRW (1,200 pupils; 75 teachers). Albeit a pilot project, the strategic aim for now is to hold three such schools by 2012.

- (c) In addition, the Order is and could be more involved in
- General youth work as an afterschool / weekend activity, a key service to keep youngsters away from streets and drug or alcohol abuse.

People with no medical insurance, asylum seekers, migrants

To deal with these needs, the Order is and could engage more in

- Residential camps for asylum seekers
- Offices specialised in counselling regarding possibilities of a voluntary return to home countries
- Online networks for therapists specialized in helping traumatised migrants
- Offices offering emergency aid and first medical consultations for people with no medical insurance, a service that is especially important for pregnant women
- Legal clinics for asylum seekers and migrants

The Homeless

The Order has a genuine responsibility to care for homeless people. Looking back on the roots of the Order, this service corresponds with the attitude of the Brotherhood of the Blessed Gerard who opened its hospices not only to those needing medical assistance but also to pilgrims who were stranded and homeless in the Holy Land.

With this history, the Order could set the following minimal standard: if it is not possible to give housing or shelter, all members of the Order and all volunteers involved should at all times at least be able to direct homeless people to other/affiliated institutions offering specialized assistance, housing and over-night shelters (leaflets with addresses etc.).

Today, some Associations already offer regular assistance to homeless people, providing food, medical assistance, second-hand clothing, pedicure services, showering possibilities and most importantly enough room to chat with volunteers.

The Dying

To this day, people are often doomed to die in inhumane and merciless conditions because nobody dares to sit at their bed, give straightforward answers regarding their fate, and accompany them to the end. Stopping this development has become a key duty for some Associations and could grow in importance throughout the Order. The goal should be not to prolong the last hour of life but to prolong life in the last hour.

- (a) The Order has already and could establish more

- Ambulatory Services (i.e. general or specialized in palliative care for children, for those suffering from HIV/AIDS, patients with cancer and motor neurone disease)
 - Stationary Services (i.e. palliative wards in Order of Malta hospitals)
- (b) However, special attention needs also to be given to the training of volunteers and full-time personnel. The Order should establish a single Quality Management System, both for stationary and ambulatory Palliative Care.
- (c) Feasible general positions regarding Hospice and Palliative Care:
- Nationwide Palliative Care should be available in excellent quality
 - Palliative Care should be part of the National Health System
 - Quality Standards and progress in Palliative Care/Medicine require shaping of opinion, research and education
 - Christians should not be afraid of death but should feel responsible to care for those who are dying. Voluntary work should be encouraged accordingly

- Actively assisted suicide/euthanasia stands in conflict with Christian ethics

People in Mourning

Another growing need lies with the care and support of family and friends mourning for their dead. These new “poor” are mostly physically healthy but suffer from traumatising experiences.

The Elderly and Lonely

The number of elderly and infirm people is constantly rising. More than half of the residents in cities live in single-households. It could become a major responsibility of the Order to assist this growing fringe group.

To deal with their needs, the Order could engage more in

- Voluntary visiting and accompanying services
- 24-hour call service
- Management of residential homes for the elderly (with a special focus on the needs of those suffering from dementia)
- Professional ambulatory nursing services

Supplementary Questions

- Is each national Association doing enough to find and care for these new “poor”? How can the dignity of these new “poor” be safeguarded? Should the Order promulgate minimal standards on the question of dignity?
- Besides, should each Association specialize (in order to avoid spreading its resources too thinly)?
- Should Associations ally themselves with / join other charities that are already active in particular areas (rather than trying to start from scratch in each new area of work)?
- Does it matter that the Order concentrates its efforts on different types of sick and needy people in different countries?
- Does this variety bring with it diseconomies of scale that ultimately damage the Order’s charitable credentials?

How to deal with Anti-Christian legislative Frameworks?

How can we reconcile the Order’s Catholic beliefs with the need to obey a country’s laws? Can those beliefs even co-exist with an increasingly anti-

Christian legislative framework? For example in Great Britain, the Order had recent experience of how national law can clash with Catholic belief and doctrine (viz., the new doctors' practice at the Hospital of St John & St Elizabeth). Looking at the wider legislative and moral landscape, there have been other very high-profile battles fought (and lost). For example, the Catholic adoption agencies are now condemned to close because of their (now illegal) refusal to offer children for adoption by same-sex couples. And the "pro-life" lobby (including the Catholic Church in England and Wales) was comprehensively defeated in its attempt to block the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (which abolishes the previous legal recognition of a father for every foetus, clears the way for much more extensive use – and abuse – of embryos and much else besides). Another example is the way Governments deal with migrants and illegal people in Belgium. Should the Order protest against children being kept in restricted centres and DP Camps or not?

All in all, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that many fundamental beliefs of Christians – and of Catholics in particular – are now in direct conflict

with an aggressively secular and amoral social and legislative climate. How long will it be before, say, the Order's hospices are forced to choose between assisting euthanasia and closing down?

The question is how militant the Order should become when faced with already existing laws that explicitly contradict Catholic teaching. Should the Order stand and fight? Or should it retreat to areas of charitable work that are less exposed to legal intervention? If so, what might these areas be?

Given the Order's binary creed, it is hard to see how it would be able to withdraw from morally "controversial" areas of work (and hard to see why it would want to withdraw). An Order of Malta that ran away from moral and ethical conflict would not be worth much, surely. This suggests that the Order – in certain countries, anyway – must ready itself to fight. It is not clear what form such a fight would take or in which arenas (the media, the courts?).

3. Internationality

On an international level, the Order faces two major challenges: a) the need for a stronger international cooperation among Associations regarding

international works of the Order, i.e. Malteser International, Holy Family Hospital Bethlehem etc. and b) the need for a stronger international positioning and presence of the international works of the Order.

4. Spirituality

The Order's (Christ-centred) spirituality is and should be the vital motor of all its work. However, linking our place in the Order to our personal spirituality could be one of our greatest new challenges, especially in today's advanced technological society.

With this in mind, it could be necessary to offer a special formation to all Chaplains of the Order, other spiritual tutors and people who are in charge of passing the spirituality of the Order on to the groups named above.

In any case, spirituality is a particular need for the following three groups: a) the members of the Order, b) staff members and volunteers, c) the beneficiaries.

As a need for members of the Order

In order to remain in and go deeper into the Order's spirituality both in daily life and at work with

“Our Lords”, the poor and sick, members of the Order should be encouraged to:

- Assist Holy Mass regularly and, if possible, prayer hours, preferably with other members of the Order
- Take part in spiritual retreats or “days of recollection”
- Seek regular spiritual assistance with Chaplains of the Order

As a need for staff members and volunteers in the works of the Order

Both volunteers and staff members coming to work for the Order, no matter if on a short- or long-term basis, need to be made familiar with the spirituality of the Order. This responsibility of the Order is especially important so as to distinguish our work from other humanitarian activism.

Of course, the actual service of staff members/volunteers and the example of others, especially members of the Order, serving the poor and the sick is the concrete and exceptional opportunity to strengthen their faith and spirituality.

Nevertheless, it is important to make further efforts such as:

- Establishing an Ethical Charta, i.e. standard guidelines for everyone involved in the works of the Order
- Ethic Committees in the hospitals and other institutions of the Order
- Publication of position papers concerning patient decrees (organ donation), plastic/aesthetic surgery etc.
- Regular seminars, training, case work for volunteers and staff members
- Welcome Mass for all new volunteers
- Benediction of office rooms, stations and vehicles
- Pilgrimages, spiritual retreats etc.
- Preparatory weekends for new volunteers and staff members about the Order and its spirituality
- Offer Family programs (Easter program, holidays for families with handicapped children etc.)

Besides, headquarter offices of the Order could set the following standards:

- Every important meeting begins with a prayer
- Offer Angelus every day at 12:00 noon

- Offer regular Holy Masses for staff-members
- Offer regular prayer hours like Lauds on Mondays
- Offer Adoration every first Friday of the month in honour of His Sacred Heart

c. As a need for the beneficiaries

It has become a rare tradition to pass on religion and faith within a family, from generation to generation. Today, materialism has replaced an orientation in life based on sustainable values. That is why evangelisation has become an important, if not the most important challenge. Here, the focus should especially be on youngsters.

To deal with these needs, the Order could engage more in houses like the Malteser Kommende Ehreshoven in Germany. Besides offering spiritual retreats and other possibilities to deepen one's spirituality, these houses could be true centres with a homelike atmosphere, bringing together not only members of the Order but also volunteers and professionals engaged in the works of the Order.

Albrecht von Boeselager
Grand Hospitaller

Pope Benedict XVI's Teaching for the Young

(Translated from Italian)

In Australia, at the climax of the latest World Youth Day, the dialogue with which the Lord Jesus, through his Vicars, has led the Church through the vicissitudes of history for over two millennia continued in a new and fruitful manner. With the words of Pope Benedict XVI, Jesus addressed the youth of today gathered in Sydney from vastly different backgrounds and experiences.

In a certain sense all young people, whether Catholic or simply seeking a meaning in their lives, were represented in Sydney. Thus the Pope's message could not have left them indifferent. And this applies especially to those who, like the Knights of Malta, are engaged in defending the faith, who are called to live for it and who consequently receive the teaching of the Supreme Pontiff with gratitude and in a spirit of filial obedience.

It's good to be young but it's not all roses! Everyone wants to be young today, even when the time of youth has visibly past. Why is it good to be young? Because youth has all its future before it and is full of promise. Yet for many the future is also dark

and full of menace, which makes it all the more important to choose true hope and authentic promises that are open to the future, even with sacrifices. In their old age, those who choose God still have a boundless and bright future before them. So it is important to choose well if we are not to destroy the future. And the first, fundamental choice must be God. This choice offers us steadfast companionship along our path, because He never abandons us. He also provides us with guidelines for other necessary choices.

In this spirit, Pope Benedict XVI reminded the young of the meaning and purpose of life. It “*is a search for truth, goodness and beauty*”, not to be found in a choice that itself becomes the good, where novelty usurps beauty and subjective experience displaces truth. Only Christ is Truth and this is why only He can be the Way and therefore the Life.

The Pope has often repeated to today’s youth that only Jesus brings renewal; they will never tire of him since only He is capable of transforming their lives and changing the course of history.

This thought, as simple as it is fundamental,

should become the common heritage of all those who are attempting to live by faith. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life for young people from any latitude and culture, whatever their experience: whether painful, through abuse of drugs and licentiousness, or at least negative, through maltreatment, debauchery and laziness; or positive, through a close friendship or a pure and sincere love.

If Christ is the truth, the way that leads us to him is the life of the Church, our mother and teacher. All young people must thus be humbly proud of belonging to her and sufficiently strong not to be influenced by an “anticonformist conformism” or by their peers who often, out of superficiality or weakness, deride a mother they do not know or a teacher to whom they have never wanted to listen.

Instead, the Knights of Malta, who are such out of personal motivation, rejoice in their visible, and in a certain sense “manifest” link with the Church: this membership connotes them, gratifies them and becomes their main boast. And this membership helps Benedict XVI’s words to spread throughout the world, starting from the distant Australian continent.

Christ expects loyal and effective witness from all young people who, in the Order of Malta, have found a sure path for following the way of salvation and, in it, have encountered that fullness of truth that alone can fill human life. Only God, in fact, offers everything, sharing himself in Christ, as love, in the Holy Spirit.

Referring to St. Augustine, Pope Benedict XVI taught that “*the two words “Holy” and “Spirit” refer to what is divine about God; in other words what is shared by the Father and the Son – their communion*”. Thus, in the Holy Spirit the Father and the Son totally give themselves to each other and to humanity. It is in the Holy Spirit that each person enters into communion with God: one can thus well understand the reason why the Pontiff proposed the Holy Spirit as the protagonist of this World Youth Day.

The fullness and totality with which the Lord shares himself with humanity clearly shows us the limits and desolation of ephemeral sharing, of encounters that gratify only for an instant, even if they can dramatically deceive us for an entire lifetime. Moved by the Holy Spirit, young people are called to become, in a certain sense, its voice and hands, that is

its witnesses even to the ends of the earth. The Pope thus urged them to: *“let unifying love be your measure; abiding love your challenge; self-giving love your mission!”*. This is a great demand, which is precisely why it should become the golden rule for all Christians, especially if they are as committed as the young Knights of Malta must be.

To love in a unifying manner means, for example, being profoundly convinced of the equal dignity of the person, including those who are sick, poor or without education or nobility, who have no distinguished positions and who lack particular appeal. In Sydney, the Pope said that *“true unity could never be founded upon relationships which deny the equal dignity of other persons”*. These are words that vivify the *“obsequium pauperum”* so dear to the Order’s tradition.

To love in a unifying and generous manner means giving oneself completely, that is entering into communion with the other person. It means responding to the Spirit’s invitation to give oneself unreservedly in patient and respectful listening, in the mature acceptance of one’s brethren, despite their inevitable defects, in loyal help, heedless of effort. Only an abiding and constant love dispels uncertain-

ty, drives away solitude, overcomes the fear of betrayal and kindles the desire for eternity, the nostalgia for God. And it is in the light of eternity that we can work fruitfully and joyfully in time.

This is the “high” measure of Christian charity! This is the Pope’s invitation to all the young and, in a certain sense, to all young Knights, so that their membership in the Order and its service can be really evangelical and enable them to bear witness effectively to Christ’s love.

But how can we love or even become friendly with someone we do not know? Knowledge leads to love and love stimulates knowledge. And this applies also to Christ. To find Christ as a companion for one’s life, one has first of all to get to know him, to enter into a personal relationship with him, with prayer and participation in the sacraments. Only in this way can one announce him and be his witness to the ends of the earth. When, instead, one neglects God, when prayer becomes listless and participation in the sacraments only sporadic or even purely formal, then human coexistence becomes difficult and society breaks down.

These are some brief considerations prompted by the Pope's teaching to the participants of the XXIII World Youth Day. It is now up to the young to cherish them and put them into practice, demonstrating their truth with the witness of their life. The world listens little to teachers but is attracted by witnesses. So let us be witnesses, so we become not simply believers but also believable!

Msgr. Ettore Balestrero
Counsellor of Nunciature

The Order of Malta: Identity and Future

(Translated from Italian)

In recent years the Order of Malta's International Conferences in recent years have examined the progress of its institutions, in terms of both its internal life and external developments. This has prompted the creation of a Spirituality Commission, that is currently collecting basic elements, updates and directives in a document in order to help members achieve a better understanding of their role in the Order of Malta and their relative duties.

The coming Venice Seminar also aims to study some aspects of the Order's future. In this regard some tenets of the Order of Malta's identity should be pointed out and borne in mind in the initiatives to be taken.

1.- **An eye to its origins.** An assessment of the Order's fundamental elements at its beginning can be very helpful. Prof. Msgr. Fonseca, in his article, highlights the essential aspects of a Knight of Malta's vocation during the early years of our Order.

The founder of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Blessed Gerard, wanted his community to be both "religious and hospitaller". Assistance to pil-

grims to the Holy Land, at a time when Christians were barely tolerated by the Muslims, constituted an active protection of the faith. Subsequent events, during which the hospitaller order also became a military order, put emphasis on its defence of Christendom, first in Palestine and then on Rhodes and Malta.

The Order's charisma, "*tuitio fidei*" and "*obsequium pauperum*", grew from these roots. The defence of the faith by force of arms disappeared and it is now done in the manner that its members' zeal and competence can achieve in modern secular society. The "*obsequium pauperum*" is carried out in the many health institutions pertaining to a hospitaller Order and also in the various forms of charitable assistance.

2.- **The fundamental**, and thus identifying, **elements** of the Order of Malta are set down in its Constitutional Charter and Code. Before the 1997 reform, in 1965, the document "Regulations and Commentary", approved by a Special Chapter General, deeply examined some aspects of the Order's classes structure. Finally, as mentioned earlier, a Spirituality Commission, set up after the International Conference of Malta in 2004, has been

entrusted with the task of updating these topics (the First Class will be the subject of a future study).

How aware are those who receive investiture of the Order's identity as expressed in its history and essential aspects? The answer to this question mostly depends on the member's preparation and training. Situations vary according to the different Priories and Associations, but a progress can be seen in the requirements for the admission of new members. Generally, those entering the Order of Malta are aware that it is a religious Order with the aims of defending the faith and assisting the sick and needy. The more active and intense this awareness, the more visible the Order's identifying characteristics.

It is very important for society to perceive the Order's nature through the coherent behaviour of its members. In this context, progress has been made in recent years but there are still situations that fall short of the ideal paradigm: this involves a self-examination for individuals and for each of the Order's institutions.

3.- **The Venice Conference** (15-18 January 2009) will offer a good occasion for reflection on the Order's development prospects over the next ten

years, starting from the current situation. If this reflection is to be fruitful, we have not only to consider some current aspects of the Order's life but also the challenges that await it, without losing sight of its basic features.

a) A priority in this survey is **the First Class**. According to Canon Law, **the Knights of Justice**, who solemnly profess the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, are religious in the full sense. They form the base on which the Order of Malta's nature as a religious order rests. They are therefore a key factor of the Order's identity.

In 1956, the falling numbers of Knights of Justice prompted the establishment of a Second Class of members "in Obedience", accepted in the Constitution of 1961 and later reformed with the Constitution of 1997. Members of the Second Class can occupy positions formerly reserved for the Knights of Justice. In November 1997, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life approved the amendments the Chapter General had made to the Constitutional Charter and Code. In the document of approval, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation

pointed out “the duty to do as much as possible to increase the number of Knights of Justice, with the aim of ensuring that the Order strengthens its religious characteristics” to the Order’s Grand Master.

His Highness the Grand Master Fra’ Matthew Festing gave substantial support to the promotion of vocations to the First Class and it is natural that this topic will also be considered in the Venice Conference.

It is to be hoped that vocations to the First Class can flourish in number and quality. Only time will tell what functions these members will be asked to perform, without prejudice to the duties that the Constitutional Charter and Code already ascribe to the Knights of Justice. Vocations to such a high and demanding status must be motivated by a desire to serve rather than by a spirit of superiority: “*Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mt. 20:26-28). It seems to me that this aspect is very important for discerning vocations.

Obviously, a vocation to the First Class implies

not only aspiring to Christian perfection in the profession of the three vows, but also assiduous commitment in activities consistent with the Order's charisma, and in particular in personal service to the poor and sick. On this latter point a reflection on the formation of new vocations and those who are already members of the First Class could be useful.

The Knights of Justice, who are placed at the base of the Order of Malta as a religious Order, must also (through their example) be a sign for all to be looked up to on the way to Christian perfection.

b) In recent times there has been a considerable growth in the **second, “in Obedience”, class**. This is also being studied by the Spirituality Commission and again the Journal devotes two articles to the subject. Vocations to the Second Class are motivated by the aspiration for a high level of Christian life in the spirit of the Order. Happily, the “*fumus*” of careerism that was sometimes attributed, rightly or wrongly, to those entering the Second Class is disappearing.

Members of the Second Class must also bring an exemplary and dynamic contribution to the Order's spiritual initiatives and their personal participation in its welfare activities, with particular empha-

sis on personal formation in doctrine and catechetical teaching. The Order of Malta expects much from the progress of the Second Class. It should develop, hopefully avoiding the creation of power centres, into a harmonic group in the different regions, albeit with the legitimate differences in environment and traditions. Although the “in Obedience” class has only been in existence for some 50 years, it is now seen as a constituent element of the Order of Malta.

c) The large and growing numbers of **the Third Class** mean that particular attention must be paid to both their choice and ongoing training. Although the work of the Order’s Chaplains is important for the first two classes, their pastoral attention is mainly addressed to members of the Third Class. Knights of Malta in this class have a special task of making faith visible in a secular society. In his article Msgr. Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, explains how this visibility is achieved. The Order of Malta must also follow the teaching of the Gospels: of the little seed that grows without ostentation and becomes visible through coherence in behaviour as well as by the quality of the service rendered to the poor and the sick.

4.- An almost millenary Order of Knighthood that **looks to the future** while attentively following the evolution of society **must remain firmly anchored to the tenets** that constitute its identity: the most important of these is its condition as a religious order; it asks of its members absolute fidelity to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, even in controversial ethical issues; they must aspire to perfection according to the Gospel, defend the faith and help others. The faith is defended by bearing courageous witness, if necessary against conformist attitudes and behaviour, whereas serving others covers a vast terrain that also includes the new forms of poverty. This service must be performed in a spirit of evangelical charity, the spirit that prompted Blessed Gerard and his companions to tend the sick and needy.

Devotion to the Virgin Mary is another point to be kept firmly: the Order venerates her under the name of Mount Philermus, a devotion that achieves its highest aspiration in the annual international pilgrimage to Lourdes.

When looking to the future we have to consider the Order of Malta's youth groups. They merit much attention and trust. There is an article in the Journal

on the teaching of the Pope for the World Youth Day celebrated in Sydney this year. It is the young who are most aware of the signs of a society in movement. Their formation is a guarantee of continuity for the Order.

We will surely need the aid of the Holy Spirit in the decisions that are to be taken and implemented on the important themes for the Order's life over the coming decade. The Journal also serves as an invitation to pray for this intention.

While its members' thoughts and actions must be inspired by the parable in the Gospels of the little seed that grows silently, the Order of Malta can also be compared to a city set on a mountain that cannot be hidden and to a lamp set on a lampstand where it gives light to all (*Mt.* 5:14-15). The coming Venice Conference has the task of feeding this source of light.

+ *Angelo Acerbi*
Prelate

New Strategies: The International Seminar of 2009

The Contributions to this 9th Journal of Spirituality show, with consistent clarity, that there is a need for the Order of Malta to draw on both the Teachings of the Gospel and the Church, and the millenarian Traditions of the Order in order to develop a common Strategy of Renewal for its advancement and survival in the 21st Century. For this purpose the Government of the Order has decided to focus the thematic orientation of the International Seminar of 2009 on a vision of the Order's future position in the next 10 to 20 years.

Members from all Classes, Institutions and geographical regions will gather in Venice to debate the principal aspects of the life of the Order and how to enhance its charismas on a worldwide basis. Particular emphasis will be given to the intimate connection between our spiritual mission of protecting, teaching and living our Faith and our obligation to improve the misery of the Sick and Poor by giving them our love and care in the most direct and dedicated way possible.

The work of the Seminar will among other things, concentrate on the following principal aspects, all of which encompass the above mentioned subjects and try to address the Young in particular:

The Revival of the First Class – Attracting Members and Cultivating Vocations

The Seminar will seek to examine the state of the First Class and articulate the challenge of introducing men discerning their vocation to the Church inside the Order. It will discuss various approaches for assisting those interested in learning more about the role of the First Class and the process for becoming a Religious member of the Order of Malta.

There is evidence that the Order, both at the center and throughout the world, must improve on its introduction, recruitment and education of men who are in a position to consider a vocation to the Order. The number of Professed Knights, although stable in recent years, is quite insufficient when considering the vital significance of this class for the future survival of the Order.

Fifty Years of Obedience

The Seminar will assess the situation of the class of Obedience in today's Order, looking at its historical development, and projecting its significance and position into the future.

The Second Class, commonly known as Knights and Dames in Obedience, was introduced approximately fifty years ago. The Second Class was a means for distinguishing those members interested in deepening their spiritual and practical commitment to the Order. Seminar discussions will attempt to discern the extent to which the original intent compares with the actual situation. They will seek to recommend developments and alterations. They will further consider how to clarify and strengthen its purpose.

The Order Providing and Spreading Christian Education

The Seminar will work to provide an overview of projects and educational programs that are offered by Pories and Associations around the world. It will make recommendations regarding the need for further development or investment in this area, and determine whether this should become a

core competency of the Order in the near future. There is a broad range of knowledge and spiritual formation amongst members and non-members. This disparity is greater in some countries than in others and greater in some generations than in others. It is generally agreed that in order to protect or promote the Faith, we must first know it. Once we know it, we can protect and promote the Faith through education and reasoned dialogue. However, Christian education should not be understood as limited to theological knowledge or spiritual formation. It includes enhancing Christian culture. It also includes educational activities like running schools, youth activities etc. The question needs therefore to be explored as to whether educational projects and activities should be part of our charism of *Tuitio Fidei*.

“Put on the Armour of Light”: The Pope’s Direct Appeal to the Order

The Holy Father has spoken directly to the Order at the Magliana Hospital during a visit in December 2007 and indirectly through his Encyclicals on love and hope. Using these documents, the Seminar will develop a set of practical

recommendations for responding to the appeals of Pope Benedict XVI.

The Pope spoke directly to the members of the Order as well as to doctors, nurses and all those who render service to the Sick and Poor when he cited St. Paul (*Rm.* 13:11-12) by saying: “It is time to awaken from sleep! To put on the arms of the Light to fight the evil and sin which darken our existence.” He furthermore specifically linked this appeal to our mission in recognizing Christ in the needy whom we serve. In this spirit he addressed his Encyclical *Spe Salvi* (‘In Hope we are Saved’) to the Order and to all those who are in direct contact with suffering.

From the Pope’s words we can learn that our mission in the future will draw its inspiration from the inseparable link between our two charisms.

Promoting Christian Culture in the Secular World of the 21st Century

Pope Benedict XVI has spoken of the new moralism which exists today and whose key words are justice, peace and conservation of creation - words that call for essential moral values of which we are in real need. But this moralism remains

vague and thus slides, almost inevitably, into the party political sphere. It is above all a dictum addressed to others, and too little a personal duty of our daily life. In fact, what does justice mean? Who defines it? What contributes to peace? (Sources: Speech given by Cardinal Ratzinger, April 1, 2005, Convent of Saint Scholastica, Subiaco, Italy; The new document on Social Justice published by the Papal Council for Justice and Peace)

The Seminar will address the question: How can the Order, as well as its individual members, effectively work to build the city of God?

Obsequium Pauperum: Focus on the Social and Spiritual Victims of Modern Society

The Order's organizations are working on a broad range of initiatives that focus on alleviating the suffering of the Poor and the Sick. Many of these activities concentrate on classic hospitaller projects, which require increasingly professional training not readily available amongst the majority of members of the Order.

Looking to the future, do we need to create more focus on new areas of social distress? These arise

from the growing polarization of modern society, which creates ever-greater gaps of wealth and education and leaves many of its members in loneliness and poverty and other outcast situations. Often we can see this happening in our own local communities and in the midst of our highly-developed Western societies. Will charitable activities in these areas be better adapted to the willing volunteers amongst our members who do not have professional training for the more sophisticated projects? The Seminar will try to identify such potential areas for implementation throughout the Order.

Originating as We Do from Many Traditions, Our Need to Join in a Single Culture of the Order

Over centuries the Order has had to build a distinctive spiritual and charitable culture of its own in order to unite its members coming from many different languages and traditions. In today's world of global aspirations it is more important than ever to cultivate an environment in which all members of the Order, Knights and Dames of all Classes, as well as the many volunteers engaged in

its works, will feel at home and share in a set of common customs and traditions with which they will be able to identify and therefore feel consciously united in pursuing our given charisms.

The Seminar will consider the characteristics of the Order, and highlight the need for a joint religious culture adapted to the 21st Century and attainable by everyone. It will offer recommendations as to how individual members and organizations of the Order can be strengthened genuinely to feel as if they are part of one Order.

Enhancing Highlights in the Life of the Order: International Pilgrimages

The Order attracts ever-increasing numbers of members, volunteers, malades and companions for its annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. Many view Lourdes as the “glue” that holds the Order together, since it is the sole contact members have with the Order. Given the importance of this annual journey, the Seminar will assess the opportunity to maintain, cultivate and develop this important pilgrimage, as well as other similar local and international events.

Lourdes, the Holy Land, Rome, Malta, the

International Summer Camp, the Youth camp in Lebanon— these are all examples of recent International Pilgrimages. Additionally, there is increasing international representation for national Association sponsored trips in Germany, Italy, France and other countries. These are excellent opportunities for enhancing the life of the Order and building fraternal relationships through prayer and service. In addition to this, events of this kind are an outstanding opportunity to portray the life and charism of the Order to the international media and by means of this to the world at large.

Thus it is to be hoped that the discussions of the forthcoming Seminar will serve both as a catalyst and as strong encouragement to the Order as a whole and its individual members to aspire for the creation of the *New Man* in following the example of Christ. Much prayer from all of us who love our Order will be needed to achieve this goal.

Winfried Henckel von Donnersmarck
Member of the Sovereign Council

Finito di stampare nel mese di novembre 2008
dalla Tipografia Mariti - Via di Monteverde 66/a
00152 Roma - Tel. 0668801736 - 06538653