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CONSULATE OF MALTA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER
FRANK L SCICLUNA - LINKING THE MALTESE DIASPORA

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The Prime Minister's message for the New Year 2015



2014 was the year in which we continued living up to our plan. An ambitious plan, which some doubted would fail, but has until now succeeded, and this is proven by statistics and international agencies. International agencies have noted that Malta's economy is striving forward.

But it is the public who can provide for the best review. Families and businesses remain optimistic. Things have improved. More jobs are being created, as unemployment levels decrease. Utility bills have

decreased, and will do so for businesses in the upcoming months.

But I will not focus on what we've achieved in the past year. Instead, I want to focus on the future, and on how we plan to improve governance by learning from our mistakes.

Creating jobs will remain a priority. Malta stands at the forefront of EU member states in creating jobs and decreasing unemployment. We will not be satisfied by what we have achieved, but rather we will strive to achieve more. We will continue to induce measures allowing the private sector to be involved in major projects. We first need to create opportunities, before distributing wealth.

We want to reward those who work hard and help those who genuinely need help. This is the social justice we believe in. We will help them through education and social services measures – allowing for the development of a new middle class.

In 2014, the introduction of civil unions represented another milestone for equal opportunities. We have chosen to assist minority groups. Soon, we will conclude the discussing the decriminalization bill, and in 2015, we will be allowing 16-year-olds to vote.

Equality – this will guide our work in 2015. We will ensure people with special needs have more work opportunities, through legislation which had been drafted years ago, but never truly implemented. Those who provide a service to the government will be paid as much as those doing the same work.

The need for more equality between men and women. We need to ensure that more women are involved in decision making. The president, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, serves as an inspiration for thousands of Maltese women.

You are well aware of what we have achieved, and the correct decisions we have taken. But we need to also acknowledge our mistakes. There were moments when the government gave the impression that it is arrogant, and not ready to listen. I will not justify it. There were times when we hurried to introduce certain measures, and as a result we did not listen carefully enough. We need to be humble enough to acknowledge this.

We need to improve our governance system, and ensure that decisions taken will benefit all.

There us the need for more talks with environmentalists, ensuring a sustainable environment for all. We need to regain the public's trust in the national police force – the public expects much more than what was evident in the past few weeks.

Malta still faces the issue of illegal immigration. In 2014, a number of immigrants were relocated in other countries, however the challenge is still there. We need to be open to discussions, we need to improve detention conditions, and listen carefully to all those involved.

There are challenges. But I remain optimistic. Because during 2014, I have witnessed our country succeed in unimaginable ways, and Malta is now internationally respected. The results have started developing a new middle class; results have created more equal opportunities, because Malta is ultimately, for all.

We have our defects. But I remain optimistic – and we will ensure these defects are corrected.

I wish you all a prosperous and healthy new year



LEARN MALTESE IN VICTORIA FOR TRAVEL, PLEASURE OR WORK

Join us and embrace our beautiful culture and language
Classes open to both adults and adult-accompanied children

Registration for Maltese Language Classes is now open. The Maltese Language classes, sponsored by the MCCV at the Maltese Community Centre in Parkville are available on Thursday nights. Students pay a nominal enrolment fee. Families pay a heavily discounted fee.

Ms Edwidge Borg, a past President of the MCCV coordinates the Maltese language classes in Parkville. Other teachers include Ms Laura Schembri and Mrs S Sciberras. Classes provided at three levels: Beginner, Intermediate and Conversation Classes. All tutors are qualified LOTE Victorian teachers and attend regular professional development training in Victoria and interstate.

The MCCV Education Committee overseeing the classes is composed of qualified LOTE tutors, class coordinators as well as an independent advisor Mrs Frances Bonnici. The Co-ordinator of the Maltese Language classes, Ms Edwidge Borg, is also the delegate to the [Federation of Maltese Language Schools Inc.](#) (FMLS) and President of the FMLS. She has attended various meetings with interstate Maltese Language schools teachers in Australia to organise and attend professional development for Maltese Language teachers in Australia as well as visited Maltese Language Classes for foreigners in Malta.

MCCV MALTESE LANGUAGE CLASSES 2015

BEGINNERS (B1) CLASS: 6.00 PM – 7.00 PM

ADVANCED (B2) CLASS: 6.00 PM – 7.00 PM

CONVERSATION (C1) CLASS: 6.00 PM – 7.00 PM

WHEN: Thursdays from 5th February 2015 – 11th June at 6.00 pm

WHERE: Maltese Community Centre, 477 Royal Parade, Parkville, VICTORIA

Courses are intended to provide participants with a basic knowledge of reading, writing and speaking Maltese. Courses run for one semester.

Lessons coincide with school terms. A token fee of \$80 per semester covers some expenses. The tutor will advise student of other resources that are appropriate. The classes run for one hour extended to 0.5 for student queries. Students receive guided self-learning activities equivalent to 1 hour. The total Unit context hours are 2.5 hours per week.

Adults wishing to learn Maltese and require further information should contact the Maltese Community Centre during business hours 9387 8922 and leave a contact phone number or email: admin@mccv.org.au. Children accompanied by adult can attend these classes.

Victorian School of Languages

The Victorian School of Languages also provides Maltese Language Classes. Currently classes are available on Saturday mornings between 9.00 and 12.30 at Taylors Lakes Secondary College. Expansion of classes in other metropolitan areas will occur if a viable number of students enrol.

Or contact: Edwidge Borg edwidgeborg@excite.com

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS IN MALTA

The southern European nation of Malta, which is officially referred as The Republic of Malta, celebrates its New Year on the date of January 1, following the Georgian calendar system. A day before, i.e. on December 31, which is popularly called as New Years Eve all over the world, is the day of major celebrations all over Malta. New Years Eve is an important time in the lives of the natives of Malta, as it brings in enormous amount of happiness and celebration time. The celebrations in Malta are high on spirit and energy, which justify the title of the 'the wildest party destination in the entire European continent' as conferred to Malta.

Celebrations on New Years Eve in Malta



On New Year's Eve in Malta, people in huge numbers make a visit to city restaurants, clubs, and pubs to be a part of the community celebrations. Most of these restaurants and party clubs start aggressively promoting and advertising their places and the parties scheduled to happen on New Years Eve, well before the arrival of New Years Eve. Also, they ensure to pull as much crowd as possible to cash in the celebration time, by offering luring packages, and by putting special arrangements of celebrations in place.

With feasting and drinking being an internal part of celebration tradition in Malta, every public party place ensure to have the best menu on the platter for the evening, well accompanied by finest o champagne and wine. During the time of New Years Eve, one gets to see the best of Maltese cooking, which is an amalgamation of the original cooking of the inhabitants of Malta, and those who come out of other place to get settled in Malta. Many of the Maltese dishes are Sicilian or Moorish in origin, and their consumption during significant times such as on New Years Eve, reflect the influence Malta has gained over the years from foreign territories.

Valletta: The biggest New Year's Eve event on the island is happening at the capital. It's open to all, with free entrance and a range of attractions to suit all kinds. The heart of the action will be St George's Square, where the main stage will feature Malta's top performers and the greatest hit music of the year for the entire evening. The previous years' events were a huge success, and everyone loved the buzzing atmosphere and great entertainment.

Whispers about plans for the big climax involve pyrotechnics, fireworks and an enormous audiovisual 3D countdown, so it's safe to assume that this year's show will be quite spectacular. Head to the Teatru Rjal for a hilarious show by Malta's top comedians or to the kid's area in De Vallette Square to keep the young ones happy. Firework displays over the Grand Harbour, Sliema and Floriana will have the entire city looking skyward, so if crowds aren't your thing, you can find a quiet spot at a bar or restaurant on the bastions and enjoy a quiet drink with breathtaking views.

The transport system is offering special night bus tickets to get you home from Valletta, which is probably a good idea if you hate parking your car miles away. You can get tickets in advance from all the usual spots. And that's the end of 2014! Where will you be when the world is counting down? Tell us in the comments, or visit our Facebook page to join the conversation. And wherever you are, whatever you do – Happy New Year! (Is-Sena t-Tajba!)

A look back at some of the year's major developments

Another year just passed, and what a year it was! A surplus of notable events took place in 2014, and one can only hope that 2015 will come with with even more interesting events in two. The current year will be long remembered with the multitude of its important and noteworthy events. Some of them were good, others - not so much, but odds are that many of these have successfully stricken a chord in most of you.

2014: Year in review. Conflict, disease, human rights abuses and food insecurity combined to make 2014 a year marked by untold human misery. From the rise of violent extremism to the spread of Ebola, from war in Gaza to unrest in Ukraine, UN peacekeeping, diplomacy and humanitarian capabilities were pushed to the limit.



This year has seen a tonne of watershed moments, from Scotland's historic vote for independence to the moment humans landed a probe on a comet for the first time ever. In 2014, we also celebrated the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize recipient, poured buckets of ice water over our heads, watched Kim Kardashian try to break the internet, and saw Alex from Target become an online sensation. Some of the news from 2014 was incredibly sobering. Ebola wreaked havoc in West Africa, Ferguson, Missouri became an epicentre for racial tension, Sony Pictures got hacked in what's been described as an act of cyber warfare by North Korea.

Thousands protested the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, who were both black, unarmed, and killed by police officers. (Brown was shot, and Garner died after being put in a chokehold.)

Hackers backed by North Korea launched a cyberattack against Sony Pictures in retaliation for "The Interview," which portrayed the assassination of that country's dictator.

Things You Must Eat In France

by [Alex Conomos](#)

France has a tradition of setting the culinary bar high. Take an adventure to this picturesque country and whatever you do, make sure you try everything on this list, and more than once!



today, France has a tradition of setting the culinary bar high. It's no wonder that French cuisine was declared a 'world intangible heritage' by UNESCO in 2010. We're lucky that Australia is full of French restaurants, brasseries and cafés, but nothing beats eating from the source. Each region of France has specific traditions and specialties however many dishes and ingredients can be found country wide. Be sure to try everything on this list.



Crème brûlée - Any French experience requires the Amelie moment; that satisfying crack when your spoon hits the toffee crust of your [crème brûlée](#), revealing a smooth, vanilla-scented custard underneath. First referenced in a 1691 French cookbook, this iconic dessert literally means ‘burnt cream’. It’s almost always served in individual ramekins so everyone can experience that special moment for themselves. You might come across variations with fruit, nuts or other spices but trust me, the original is the best!



Cheese - With 400+ French cheeses and counting, you won’t have to look far before you literally trip over mountains of delicious, oozy, smelly (in a good way) cheese. The French don’t just eat [cheese](#), they revere it. An entire course, nestled between main and dessert, is dedicated just to cheese. This is a tradition at home and in restaurants that you don’t want to miss. Try a selection that includes a soft white cheese (like a Camembert or the washed rind and pungent Munster), a blue cheese (such as the famous Roquefort) and a hard cheese (perhaps Comté or Abondance). Typical accompaniments are slices of fresh crusty baguette (not crackers), fresh and dried fruit.



Crêpes - [Crêpes](#) are simple to prepare but an unquestionable pillar of French cuisine. In Paris you will find a crêpe stand on every corner while restaurants will often feature them in the savoury and sweet sections of the menu. Ordering a freshly made crêpe (never allow the server to take one from a pre-prepared stack!) that is oozing with Nutella, lemon and sugar or confiture is a rite of passage and very affordable. Look out for crêpes made with buckwheat flour called galettes. These are slightly more textured and match perfectly with savoury fillings such as ham, cheese and spinach.



Snails - While Aussies call on frozen meat pies and fish fingers for last minute dinners, the French, like the Maltese, pull escargots out from the freezer. Yes, really! This restaurant staple is also a popular dish at home and trays of frozen snails filled with garlic herb butter can be bought from supermarchés all over the country. So even if expensive restaurants are out of your budget, you can still enjoy this delicacy. And the taste? The sauce steals the show here and the flavour of the snails is buried under the rich garlicky butter and herbs. Which might be a relief for some people!



Baguettes - An obvious addition to the list but one that cannot be overlooked. Baguettes are bought daily by practically all French people and it's not unusual to find a couple poking out from handbags, backpacks and cars all over France. No meal is complete without one; it comes out with the entrée and stays on the table until dessert. Bread is bought on a daily basis and anything left over is served at breakfast the next day. Even the most budget conscious traveller can afford one to enjoy with some slices of jambon and fromage for a simple and delicious lunch.



Croissants - Looking for a ham and cheese croissant? You won't find one, not in France anyway. The French take their croissants plain, or with chocolate as a pain au chocolate, and like bread, they always buy fresh. If you're lucky to step into a boulangerie as a fresh batch is leaving the oven then you'll never settle for anything less again. Real croissants are made from butter but there are producers who cut corners by using margarine. Butter has a higher melting point than margarine so look for a slightly darker coloured croissant which will usually be the tell tale sign that it contains butter. Take your croissant like the French do –dipped in coffee or chocolate chaud for breakfast.



Steak tartare

This dish always polarises. A little like Vegemite, you either love it or hate it. I love it! Nothing says French chic to me like a delicate mound of minced raw steak, topped with an egg yolk and surrounded by condiments such as finely chopped onion, capers and thin toast. The idea of eating raw meat may turn some people off but if prepared correctly with the finest quality beef it is perfectly safe. Fresh meat has a lovely delicate flavour that is enhanced by the rich umami in the condiments. This is a bistro

staple that you simply must try (preferably in Paris for maximum effect).



Charcuterie Vegetarians are advised to look away now!

Charcuterie is the art of preparing various cured meats, in particular pork, and covers everything from bacon, ham and sausages to terrines and pâtés. Charcuterie is a speciality that developed in the Middle Ages to preserve meat, often with the use of salt. If you see a charcuterie platter listed on a menu – order it! You can also work up a DIY charcuterie platter by simply visiting a charcuterie or market and selecting a range of your favourite cured sliced meats alongside cornichons and pickled onions. BON APETIT

YourSay™

where your opinions matter most

- ❖ . Happy New Year 2015 to YOU . Your family, friends and readers of this NEWSLETTER from Father Frank Buhagiar Parish Priest. St Andrew's Werribee Victoria. Fr Frank
- ❖ Thanks for the info that I received from you and I would like to ask you if you have by any chance the pension dates from Malta for the coming year. Maybe too early but I am just asking you consulate. Thanks and regards from my family.vvRegards Kindlyv Anthony Saliba
- ❖ Every newsletter has been interesting and a pleasure to read and to admire. We wish you and your loved ones a safe, happy and prosperous New Year. Armando and Maria Catania
- ❖ A VERY HAPPY 2015 LOVE YOU ALL Best Regards, Salvinu Caruana.
- ❖ My family and I wish to thank you for your good wishes for Christmas and 2015. A friend and I attended outdoor Mass which was held as St. Ignatius College Athelstone, Adelaide on Saturday evening, I have attended in past years and it is such a pleasure to listen to the choir and to the Mass surrounded by Gum trees and listening to the birds. Our Christmas day was spent with family, as always it is a joy to have a beautiful family that love each other and get on so well together. Thank you so much for all the Maltese Newsletters that I receive, I read them with much pleasure. We hope that your Christmas was most enjoyable, and that you and family have a peaceful, healthy & safe 2015. Regards, and may God bless you all. Mireille Daw, Adelaide Australia.
- ❖ Thank you, A Happy New Year to you, your Family and all the readers of your News letter.
- ❖ Inselli ghalik hafna, SAHHA Henry Berry.
- ❖ Thank you for all your interesting and informative Newsletters throughout the year. Trusting you had a lovely Christmas, we wish you and all your Family a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year 2015. Regards - George & Lucy Brimmer
- ❖ I'm just reading your newsletter - in fact I only recently found out about the heart operation performed in Malta during WW1 - and one interesting fact to add to your story is that owing to surgical limitations at the time, blood was transferred directly from the donor to the soldier during the operation, so the surgeon wasnot only performing a very delicate op, but he was having to hurry as much as possible, and in fact by the end of surgery, the blood donor was fainting through loss of blood. Wishing all your readers a happy and prosperous new year kind regards RosANNE (United Kingdom)
- ❖ Grazzi hafna ta' l "Maltese Newsletter" li tipproduci regolament. Niehu pjacir hafna meta nircerviha u naqra kollha kif niftaha. Dejjem insiba informativa fuq suggetti varji Xewqat Sbieh Ghal Sena ohra ghal "Maltese Newsletter" Lilek u lil-Familja tieghek u lil Shabna Maltin li jaqraw din l-"NewsLetter" "Sena Gdida ta' Risq Paci Hena u Sahha" Grazzi Dejjem Rosemary Attard Melbourne

THE MALTESE NEWSLETTERS ARE DOWNLOADED ON
www.ozmalta.page4.me/
READ THEM ALL

Chocolate map of Malta & Gozo in the Museum of Chocolate, Modica - Sicily



The Speaker of the House, Dr Anglu Farrugia, inaugurated a room dedicated to Malta in the Museum of Chocolate in Modica, Sicily. The main exhibit is a large map of Malta and Gozo all done in chocolate.

In this space dedicated to Malta there will be other information about Malta. Historically the city of Modica always had very strong cultural and commercial links with Malta. It is best known as a baroque city but is also famous for its chocolate which is still made in a traditional

way.

During the ceremony the Mayor of Modica, Ignazio Abate, spoke about links between Malta and Modica. Also present was Dr Ray Bondin who has been asked to prepare the nomination dossier for the intangible World Heritage List of UNESCO and the President of the Consortium of Chocolateers in Modica Nino Scivoletto. The city of Modica has become closer to Malta with the inauguration of a direct air link between Malta and Comiso.

Maltese among top users of private cars



Despite having the shortest distances in the EU, the Maltese are among the highest users of personal cars, according to the latest EU survey.

A Eurobarometer survey shows that 70 per cent of Maltese respondents said they used their cars daily to travel around. Only 21 per cent used public transport and seven per cent said they usually walked.

In the EU, while the percentage of those using public transport is at the same level as Malta – an average of 19 per cent – those using their car account for 54 per cent. The only other member states with a higher use of private cars for daily travels than Malta were Ireland (73 per cent) and Slovenia (71 per cent). Walking is preferred by 14 per cent – twice as much as Malta – and eight per cent said they commuted by bicycle.

42% of Maltese respondents said they do not use public transport due to lack of punctuality and inadequate routes. About 35 per cent named frequency. 82% of Maltese respondents mentioned traffic congestion as their biggest daily headache compared to 60% in the EU.

Istrina 2014 marathon collects almost €3.20 million



Just over €3.2 million has so far been either pledged or collected during Istrina 2014 events in Malta and Gozo.

Istrina 2014 Feast of Solidarity, is underway at the Mediterranean conference Centre,

and was opened by President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca.

A dance number by the resident dance school YADA was the first act to perform at the opening, which also included statements by the Prime Minister, Dr Joseph Muscat and the Opposition Leader, Dr. Simon Busuttil. The event is being televised on the main channels. The Bank of Valletta

presented the sum of €135,000 during the live broadcast of L-Istrina representing funds collected through the L-Istrina BOV Piggy Bank Campaign which were then doubled by the Bank.



BOV CEO Charles Borg, accompanied by a number of children holding BOV piggy banks, presented the donation to The President HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca and Mr Edgar Preca during the live broadcast. HSBC Malta

Foundation donated €50,000 to L-Istrina at the start of the 12-hour national fundraising marathon at Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. As one of the main sponsors of I-Istrina and the Malta Community Chest Fund, HSBC Malta Foundation supported the initiative through the donation.

In addition to the €50,000, HSBC Malta presented other donations from events organised by the Bank's staff members for a total of €4,000 from the sale of Poinsettias, and yet another €2,500 raised by HSBC's annual Triathlon.

The Bank's contributions were presented to President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca by HSBC Malta's Head of Commercial Banking Michel Cordina. Gozo Istrina events are being held from now until late evening, at the parking area adjacent to the Arkadia Complex in Victoria. Istrina 2014 raised the record amount of €3,414,386 in the 12-hour telephone marathon.

www.gozonews.com

Maltese mountaineers raise €65,000 to build Ethiopian school



18 Maltese adventurers will attempt to scale Mount Kilimanjaro after managing to raise over €65,000 to construct a kindergarten school in Ethiopia in honour of the late Nirvana Azzopardi

Kilimanjaro Challenge team before jetting off to Tanzania (Photo by Ray Attard)

An 18-man strong team of intrepid Maltese mountaineers have jetted off to Tanzania where they will attempt to scale Mount Kilimanjaro

after successfully raising over €65,000 to construct a kindergarten school in Gambella, Ethiopia.

The kindergarten will be named after Nirvana Azzopardi, a TV presenter who passed away last year after losing a two-year battle against breast cancer. Seasoned adventurer Keith Marshall, the coordinator of the Kilimanjaro Challenge 8, was a close friend of Azzopardi before she passed away.

“I got to know Nirvana at university over 20 years ago and we remained friends since,” Marshall told MaltaToday. “She was a very nice person with a very philanthropic heart. She used to really care about people, particularly children. All the Kilimanjaro Challenge members agreed that Nirvana’s legacy should live on through this school. We see it as appropriate that her memory will continue shining through this project.”

The €65,000 was raised over 50 fundraising activities held between July and December. Before the group set off, they presented the final €10,000 cheque to Father George Grima, founder of the Gesu fil-Proxxmu missionary movement. Grima, who for the last 25 years managed hundreds of projects involving the poorest of children in Brazil, Kenya and Ethiopia, approached Marshall eight years ago for assistance in funding a project.

WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

First of all I would like to say thank you for emailing the Maltese newsletter to us. We love reading about Malta and the times gone by.... it reminds me also of when we were very young after the 2nd. World War. We are also proud of what the generations before us did to improve the standard of living the Maltese are enjoying now. Frank keep this going as far as you possibly can and, me and my wife wish you and all your family a healthy and a very Happy new Year 2015. .

Joseph & Lorenza Gauci - Australia



LOURDES DAY MASS CELEBRATED IN MELBOURNE

By: Denis Fitzgerald

The Order of Malta's Lourdes Day Mass, on the first Saturday in December, is well established on the Melbourne calendar. Again this year, on Saturday 6 December, thousands of people gathered in St Patrick's Cathedral, many of them infirm or aged, to pray, to celebrate the Mass, and to open themselves to God's grace.

We would all welcome healing from the afflictions that are part of life, but for many their main prayer is for the peace of mind and soul that Christ offers; and all welcome the faith, hope and love that are nourished by the liturgy and the Eucharist. The Order of Malta is honoured to join with many from the Archdiocese of Melbourne in organising the event each year.

The Development Office, the Dean, priests and staff of the Cathedral, the musicians, ground staff, etc. are all needed to give life to an event of this nature. Members of the Order, students from Newman College, Genazzano, Loreto Mandeville Hall, Xavier College and De La Salle College also contributed.

The hard work that goes into the day bears spiritual fruit, as worshipers gather from all parts of Melbourne to pray for those who are sick or infirm, to strengthen their faith in the Divine purpose that underlies all life, and to thank God for the blessings that have been showered on each one of us. Archbishop Denis Hart again led the celebration of the Mass, supported by chaplains from the Order of Malta, priests of the Cathedral and Fr Tony Kerin, Episcopal Vicar for Justice and Social Service.

After blessing the congregation with Lourdes water before the final blessing, the Archbishop and other celebrants gathered outside the Cathedral after Mass to offer individual blessings – there were long lines for these. Many also took the opportunity to congratulate Bishop-elect Monsignor Terry Curtain, a chaplain of the Order. Participation in the Mass was enriched by the music – Marian hymns resonated throughout the Cathedral; harpist Peter Roberts set the tone before Mass, and the cantor's *Ave Verum Corpus* and *Panis Angelicus* were heard in respectful and enriched silence.

Helen Burt and Sr Toni Matha ibvm, joined members of the Order of Malta in the offertory procession. Members of the Order of Malta and their chaplains will again be organising Lourdes Masses in aged care residences throughout the year, but these celebrations do not seem to reduce the interest in the annual Mass at St Patrick's.

Not everyone can visit Lourdes, where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette in 1858, but many in the Melbourne Catholic community are keen to share in the blessings that flow from that time and place.

Colegio Anthony Zammit' High School in Santa Rosa, Peru



Reader's Letter My name is Yadira, I am the Mayor (ess) of the class in the High school 'Colegio Anthony Zammit.' Santa Rosa, Peru. Last year Fr. Anthony a Missionary priest from Gozo told you of a new school in Santa Rosa in Peru. Well, the students of last year are now in the other High school since it was impossible to run two classes but we will go to second form in Colegio A.Z. because now with the presence of Fr. Zammit the school is going extremely well. Next year there will be 70 new students because Fr. said that there will be two First Year classes.

It is a great school and we were given the school uniforms for free, the first year book of Mathematics and today Fr. gave us these new Physical Education outfit. He is also giving us a daily Vitamin pill called Complejo B. and even a daily meal at school!



The life at the school is great and all the father asks of us is that we study and get good marks. I on behalf of the other 34 students would like to thank all those who financially help father Anthony who in return is able to help us.

God Bless you all.

P.S. we all have a Godfather or Godmother sponsoring us whom we send emails from time to time. Mine is from a town called Marsaxlokk. The Confraternity of St Peter and St Paul in Australia also helps us.

Protecting dolphins and turtles in Maltese waters



The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) secured €1 million in funds to embark on a project aimed at significantly improving the protection of the bottlenose dolphin (id-denfil ta' geddumu qasir) and the loggerhead turtle (il-fekruna l-komuni) in Maltese waters.

Although both species are protected by EU legislation as well as numerous other multilateral agreements to which Malta is a party, conservation policies and measures only become effective when quality data is made available. At present, there is a lack of comprehensive information regarding these species and the type of habitat around the Maltese waters that are essential for their survival.

The project, which is being co-financed by the European Commission's LIFE fund, will result in the collection of important marine data which should close knowledge gaps about the conservation status of these two species and any important areas for the continuation of their life cycle. The project should also lead to the identification of potential feeding areas or important migratory routes for these species, if found to be present in Malta, following which these important sites will become protected.

For this project, MEPA has teamed up with KAI Marine Services (Spain), a marine conservation firm that will be contributing financially towards the project and sharing its extensive expertise in helping to identify the crucial areas for these species. This project, which will span over three years, is also being co-financed by the Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment and Bank of Valletta.

MEPA will also be involving the general public including boat owners and other sea users who would like to participate in this conservation initiative.

TO ALL OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS AROUND THE WORLD – READERS OF THIS NEWSLETTER – WE WISH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES A PEACEFUL, BLISSFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2015

MALTA, GOZO, AUSTRALIA, UNITED STATES, CANADA, UNITED KINGDOM, ITALY, BRUSSELS, GERMANY, FRANCE, PERU, CUBA, ARGENTINA, SOUTH AFRICA, ALBANIA AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE MALTESE DIASPORA



The Knights of Malta The Order of Malta is one of the few Orders created in the Middle Ages and still active today. It is also the only one that is at the same time religious and sovereign. This is due to the fact that most of the other Orders of chivalry lacked the hospitaller function which characterises the Order of Malta, so they disappeared as soon as the military purposes that represented the reasons for their existence ceased.

The Knights of Malta The knighthood nature explains and justifies the maintenance of the noble nature of the Order, as most of its Religious Knights came from chivalrous and noble Christian families. Today the majority of Knights of Malta belong to all classes of society. The members of the Order may be defined as Catholics enlivened by altruistic nobleness of spirit and behaviour. All Knights of Malta must meet the traditional requirement for the bestowing of knighthood: distinguish themselves for special virtues. The knighthood nature of the Order has kept its moral value, characterised by the spirit of service, sacrifice and discipline of today's Knights of Malta. Battles are no longer fought with swords, but with the peaceful tools of the fight against disease, poverty, social isolation and intolerance, as well as witnessing and protecting the faith.

Wherever they settled, the Knights Hospitallers always established first a Hospital and Hospice and then, if necessary, built defence fortifications. In the Third Millennium being a Hospitaller means dedicating oneself to easing suffering and to bringing the balm of Christian charity to the sick, anywhere in the world, not only in hospitals but also in private homes and nursing homes in the shantytowns of destitute populations. The Order does not only dedicate itself to the sick, but also to the socially isolated, the victims of persecution and the refugees of any race and religious faith.

All the 13,500 Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta shall conduct themselves so as to give Christian example in their private and public lives, thus putting into effect the tradition of the Order. It is incumbent on them to collaborate effectively in its hospitaller and social works.

Membership Membership of the Order of Malta is by invitation rather than application; each person wishing to join must be sponsored by two members. The qualifications for membership and the spiritual and other obligations are set out in the Code and Regulations of the Order. The main qualifications sought in those invited to join are to be a Catholic in good standing – to be verified by Church authorities – and to be committed to meet the spiritual and other duties of membership. In addition, membership reflects standing as a person of integrity and demonstrated concern for others.

Each new aspirant to membership is required to engage in a twelve-month probation before membership is finally submitted to Rome. During this period, an aspirant is encouraged to inform himself or herself about the history and objects of the Order and to participate in its activities.

Pope Francis gifts 400 sleeping bags for the homeless

Birthday boy ... Pope Francis waves to the faithful on his birthday. Picture: AFP Source: Getty Images



Pope Francis has marked his 78th birthday by ordering the distribution of hundreds of sleeping bags to homeless people in Rome, Vatican officials say.

Konrad Krajewski, the archbishop in charge of the Pope's charity work, led an operation in which a minibus packed with 400 sleeping bags carrying a papal ensign toured around the Italian capital on Wednesday evening looking for people to give them to. "This is a gift for you from the Pope on the occasion of his birthday," the Swiss guards who helped in the distribution were quoted as telling the recipients.

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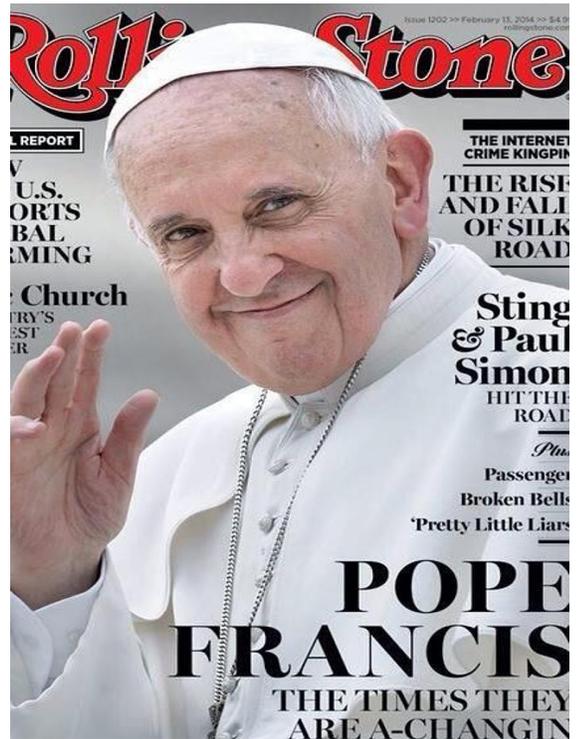
Celebration ... Pope Francis blows candles on a cake during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. Picture: AP Source: AP

A total of 300 bags found takers on the streets on Wednesday and another 100 were given to a homeless group to be distributed at a later date. Francis turned 78 and eight homeless people were among the people he greeted at the end of his audience in St Peter's square.



The Argentinian leader of the world's Catholics has made concern for the poor one of the defining themes of his papacy.

**THE POPE
OF THE
PEOPLE**



The Irresistible Hobz Biz-Zejt (BREAD WITH OIL SNACK)

No bread compares to the traditional Maltese loaf and I'm sure that many out there agree with me. It's so wholesome and tasty and yet so plain! As in many other places, what was poor man's fare is now rich man's favour. Not that one has to be rich to acquire such food. Many Maltese still eat it as a snack or as part of their



supper. Both the stonecutter in the quarry and the farmer in the field, as well the family relaxing by the seaside on a delicious Summer evening, all love to dig their teeth into this tasty meal. It satisfies the taste buds and fills the stomach in the simplest and most complete way. It is inexpensive and easy to prepare, but it is true that richer foods and faster food have replaced most of what today can be considered as traditional food.

In the past, the manual workers used to take lunch which consisted of half a loaf of our excellent bread, hollowed out and filled with tomatoes, oil, olives, anchovies and accompanied by a glass of wine. They then wrapped it up in a cloth for freshness and then sliced it up with a penknife at the time of eating. It was very filling and practical especially for outdoor workers. This tradition is unfortunately giving way to the more regular sandwich.

When one passes in front of a bakery the heavenly smell of baking bread evokes memories of when mum or dad used to come from work carrying with him/her a freshly baked bread still crackling hot. We kids used to make a feast with a simple loaf of bread. Mum sliced the bread and we siblings were left free to prepare our Hobz biz-Zejt the way we wanted. I was usually allowed to have the round crusty part (il-genba) from which I dug out the middle and filled it up with all the stuff that I could get hold of.

The term 'Hobz tal-Malti' makes me conjure up images of this delicious snack eaten on the sand, watching the sun set, with the salty sea smell lingering on one's skin. Hobz biz-zejt somehow always tastes better eaten at the beach – did you ever realise that? So what exactly is this hobz biz-zejt? If I had to translate this term it would literally mean "Bread with oil" which up to a certain extent is true because drizzled oil is one of the basic ingredients but it has more than just that. And what goes on in this Hobz biz-Zejt?? Here is the list of ingredients:

Butter beans marinated in garlic and oil, olives, marinated vegetables, lettuce, anchovies, tuna, onion slices, peppered cheeselets (gbejniet), capers, marjoram, mint, basil, pickled onions, bigilla, sundried tomatoes, cucumber slices, artichoke hearts and even ham. Yes!! I was told that the Qormi people like having their hobz biz-zejt with ham!



St Thomas Bay in Marsascala



In the outskirts of Marsascala, one finds a large, natural inlet with small sandy banks and shallow water suitable for bathing. This is St Thomas Bay, known as 'Ir-Ramla' to the locals. St. Thomas Bay is on the outskirts of Marsascala. In fact it's very close to the village of Zejtun.

The bay is very large; however it only has a small sandy beach. Cliffs surround the majority of the bay. Its shallow waters and small sandy banks make the bay suitable for bathing especially for children. It is also popular with local holidaymakers. The bay is ideal for windsurfing. Now with the official opening of the new bypass Marsascala has become more accessible to all. There are some cafes and snack-bars beside the bay. The bay is used also by many Maltese fishermen.



Hail and rain overnight as Met Office forecasts coldest New Year since '88 Heavy hail in Gozo, flooding in Msida

Weathermen are forecasting New Year's Eve will be the coldest December day in Malta in

26 years. The Meteorological Office is predicting temperatures to dip to a minimum of 4°C tomorrow night because of a spell of cold weather heading towards the Mediterranean from Scandinavia and Russia.

(left) There was enough hail on the roads in Xlendi this morning for this young girl to enjoy making a snowman. Picture - Josianne Xerri



(Right) Msida Valley Road flooded this morning, with a number of stalled cars. Picture Hamody Zedan facebook/times of malta



The Maltese Islands got a taste of what may be in store with a hailstorm overnight as well as heavy rain and thunder. The last time temperatures went below 4°C in December was in 1988 when it dropped to 3.7°C. On the continent, cold snaps combined with showers usually result in snow. .

“The temperature needs to get close to 0°C for snow, and that is something which has never happened since 1922 when meteorological records started being kept.” He explained it was next to impossible to see snow in

Malta since the island is too far south and surrounded by sea. At 18°C, the sea is still warm and not predicted to go below 15°C.

However data produced by Nadur weather station last night shows that the temperature actually did slip below zero for a brief moment at -0.6c. (courtesy Andrea Muscat)



Sydney celebrates the New Year

While in Malta and many other countries they are still hours from the New Year, Sydney has celebrated the coming of a new year.

Millions of people watched the spectacular show on the ground while more than a billion viewers have watched on television.

This spectacular fireworks show is estimated as one of the most seen shows on television during the New Year around the world.

The show has costed the Australians \$7.2 million this year.

See you again !!!!!

Niltaqghu 'l quddiem !!!!!