Maltese eNewsletter

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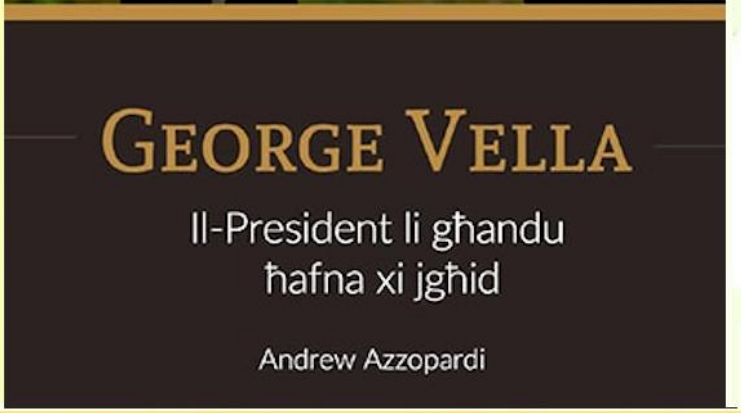

tuitio fidei
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ORDER OF MALTA
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Easter Traditions in Malta

By Sara Ataebi

The Maltese take Easter very seriously. In fact, Easter is a huge holiday in Malta, second only to Christmas in importance to the locals.

Solemn processions and rituals characterise most days before Easter Sunday. However, Easter Sunday is celebrated with grandeur throughout the country.

If you're travelling to Malta during this particular period, you shouldn't miss out on at least some of the traditions. You'll be immersed in the local's life while creating an unforgettable memory to take back home. So, since a lot is happening during this time of the year, we'll be going through some of the things you must do this Easter in Malta.

Attend one of the many processions

Many processions are happening around Malta in the days leading up to Easter Sunday. Some of the most renowned ones are on Palm Sunday, the Friday preceding it (Our Lady of Sorrows), and Good Friday.

Join the Maundy Thursday pilgrimage

Most locals draft their itinerary for their Seven Churches Visitation on Maundy Thursday. For most families, this is a yearly tradition to gather together for this Lenten tradition, where the faithful visit seven churches to pray and meditate. Siggiewi, a typical village in the southern region of Malta, hosts a fascinating tradition too. And that is the pilgrimage to the Laferla Cross.

During this event, attendees walk through a surreal setting—a candle-lit path in the Maltese countryside. This path leads up the Girgenti Hill until they reach one of Malta's most-loved landmarks. Not only is this an unforgettable experience, but it's also a solemn one. Plus, it makes for a unique opportunity to reflect and meditate.

Explore the churches

Regardless of the season you visit Malta, visiting its many churches is a must. However, the Easter period makes it the ideal time to do so.

During this period, not only can you admire their beautiful architecture and works of art, but you'll also see churches clad in their mournful suits during the Holy Week.

You can also spot the Altars of Repose, set up for communion on Good Friday.

Visit the traditional exhibitions

While there are exhibitions throughout the entire year in Malta, the traditional Easter exhibitions are genuinely unique. Scattered around the island, the Last Supper displays in all shapes and forms, made with different materials and resources. Furthermore, there's also a variety of holy statue exhibitions, showing the local skilled craftsmanship and devotion.

One particular tradition depicts religious representations of biblical episodes using salt and rice. These elaborate works are unlike anything you've ever seen. So look out for these exhibitions in various towns and localities around the island!

Join the Easter Sunday celebrations

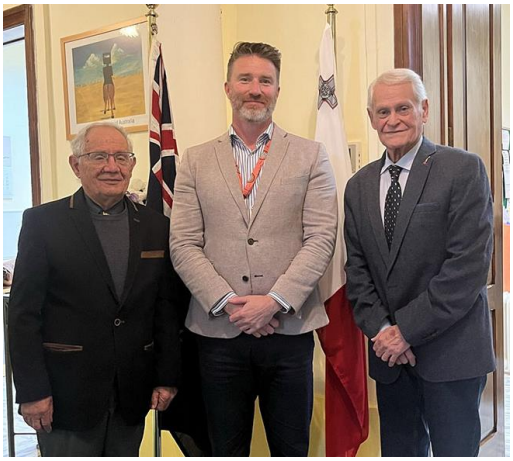
The Maltese celebrate special occasions like Easter Sunday in more than one way!

The sombre mood that characterises most of the Holy Week makes way for a cheerful Sunday. On Easter Sunday, bells ring jubilantly as locals gather with their loved ones for mass and a typical procession. During this procession, attendees join a parade of the Risen Christ in the streets. And, in some towns, it ends with the bearers running with the figure on their backs or arms back to the church. A generous lunch organised at home or in one of the many restaurants around the island follows these celebrations (naturally)!

Locals enjoy a variety of foods and drinks during these lunches. These include the typical Easter lunch consisting of lamb, potatoes and veg, or Maltese and Mediterranean cuisine.

Indulge in the local traditional Easter food

Malta and the love for food go hand in hand, and unsurprisingly, there's a lot to enjoy during Easter in Malta. Perhaps the most commonly known and appreciated sweet is the Figolla. These almond-filled pastry, decorated with chocolate or icing, are among the locals' most-loved traditional foods. You can find figolli in different sizes and shapes. These include lambs, butterflies, cars, or the simple oval shape. One other traditional food enjoyed by Maltese children, and adults, are the traditional Easter Eggs. In short, you'll find plenty of food to enjoy in Malta during this time of the year!



MALTESE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION

The High Commissioner for Australia in Malta, HE Mr Matt Skelly, invited the new President of the Maltese Australian Association, Joseph Cutajar, who succeeded the previous President, Victor Borg, who died on 24th January 2024, and the Hon. Secretary Joseph Xerri, for an introductory meeting at the High Commission in Ta'Xbiex.

During the meeting with Mr Kelly, the main themes of the discussion centred on the Maltese-Australian Association (MAA), founded in 1974, and the ANZAC memorial at the Argotti Gardens in Floriana, with the inscription of the names of victims of the armed forces of Australia and New Zealand who died during World War I in Gallipoli, Turkey on 25th April 1915, and are buried in Malta.

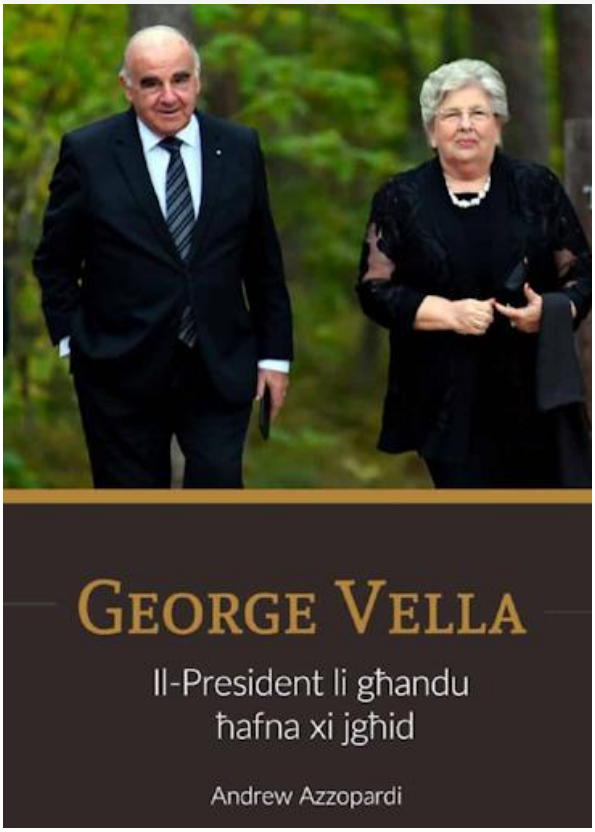
Mr Skelly expressed great interest in the MAA's efforts along with the *Ambjent Malta Department* to restore the names on the monument, which, with time, have become illegible. The memorial, the only one outside of Australia and New Zealand that is dedicated to the ANZACS was erected by the Maltese-Australian Association. Pictured: The High Commissioner for Australia in Malta, HE Mr Matt Skelly, flanked by Joseph Xerri (left) and Joseph Cutajar

The late Nicholas Bonello

Malta's first Anzac memorial outside Australia

On a bright Spring morning on Saturday 25 May 2013 Malta's Foreign Minister, Dr George Vella, and the chairman of the ANZAC Memorial Committee Malta, Mr Nicholas Bonello OAM, inaugurated the ANZAC Memorial at the Argotti Botanical Gardens in Floriana, Malta before a gathering of over 200 guests. The monument designed and built by sculptor Gianni Bonnici commemorates the thousands of Australian and New Zealander servicemen and women killed during the wars. Two figures, one male and the other female, with pleading open arms depicting a struggle for survival while, at the same time, awakening a spirit of victory.

GEORGE VELLA, IL-PRESIDENT LI GHANDU XI JGHID



Few days ago the book 'George Vella - Il-President li ghandu ħafna xi jgħid' was launched. It takes a closer look at Dr Vella's career, encompassing all the positions he has held, including his role of President of Malta since 2019.
With experiences and stories of people who know him inside out, the book gives a more complete meaning of how Dr George Vella contributed to the country.
The author Prof. Andrew Azzopardi conveyed Dr Vella's thoughts and memories from childhood to the Presidency and described the Presidency as a life with many decisions that had to be taken in silence.
During the launch, Mrs Vella shared some of the most beautiful and difficult moments throughout the Presidency while Mrs Claire Micallef Pule, manager of The Malta Community Chest Fund, told an anecdote involving Maltese patients receiving treatment in London and that the quality she most admires in him is that he listens without prejudice. Former Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party, Dr Alfred Sant, and former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Leader of the Nationalist Party, Prof. Tonio Borg, shared thoughts on Dr George Vella

Photo top left: George Vella (right) was deputy leader of the Labour Party along with George Abela (left) when the party won the 1996 general election under the leadership of Alfred Sant (centre)

Photo top right: George Vella with his young family at their house in Żejtun

Photo left: President George Vella pays tribute to murdered journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in Bidnija

The President of the Republic of Malta on an official visit to the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta

25/03/2024

On Saturday the President of the Republic of Malta George William Vella was received by the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Fra' John Dunlap. This is the third visit – in different capacities – of President Vella whose mandate will terminate in April 2024. He previously visited the Grand Magistry as Foreign Minister in 2015 and as President in 2020.

Likewise, many visits on behalf of the Order of Malta's government have taken place, the latest in June 2023 when the newly elected Grand Master Fra' John Dunlap made his first official visit abroad. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1966 there have been 17 visits of Presidents of the Republic and Grand Masters and 6 of Ministers and Grand Chancellors.

Saturday's meeting further witnessed the rooted ties that link the Order of Malta to the Republic of Malta. Relations date back to nearly 5 centuries ago: in 1530, after being forced to leave Rhodes, Emperor Charles V granted Malta to the Order with Pope Clement VII's approval. When Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Malta during his Egyptian campaign in 1798, the Knights were forced to leave. But ties have remained strong.

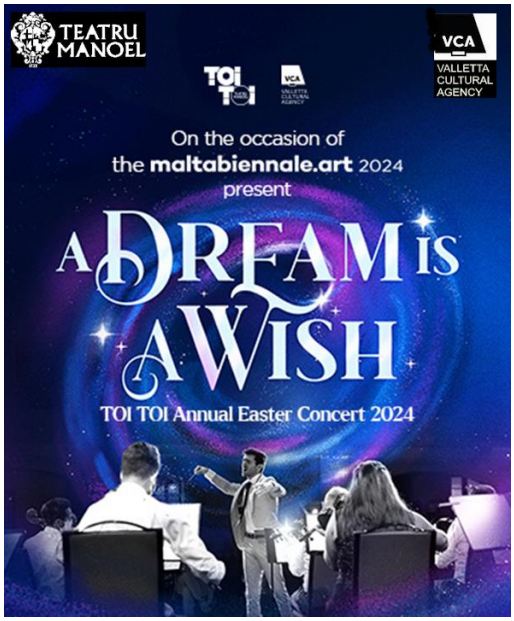
"As your five-year term of office is now coming to an end, I should like to thank you for always being attentive and interested in the works of the Order", said the Grand Master as he addressed President Vella with a farewell greeting. "I am very grateful for your role in the development of our mutual relations, and I wholeheartedly wish you every success in your future endeavours." For his part, the Maltese president hoped for a further strengthening of ties with the Order of Malta aimed at "exploiting the enormous potential for even more deep-rooted cooperation".

During the talks, both expressed concern about the current geopolitical scenarios from wars to terrorist acts to violence.

Over the years the Order of Malta has held numerous gatherings, seminars, and symposia on the island of Malta. The activities carried out in Malta include the distribution of meals to oncology patients, immigrants, homeless and lonely people as well as support to elderly people in retirement homes.

The Order also organizes pilgrimages to Gozo for sick people, outings for young orphans and summer camps for disabled youth. It runs a shuttle service to take wheelchair patients to hospital and a residence for single mothers and children. The Order offers canine Search & Rescue service on emergency events and first aid service at religious events.

Last December the National Library of Malta organised the exhibition 'In the Footsteps of the Hospitallers: 900 years of chivalry, faith and charity', featuring documents from the Order's archives stored at the National Library as well as publications from the library's collections.



A Dream is a Wish Live Concert

Teatru Manoel, in collaboration with the Valletta Cultural Agency, presents A Dream is A Wish - a musical journey for the whole family, taking place on the occassion of maltabiennale.art 2024.

Date: Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st March 2024 **Time:** 6 pm **Venue:** Teatru ManoelMovie and music lovers of all ages are invited to the national theatre for a night of live music from some of the most iconic family movies of all time.

The artist line-up includes Tezara Saliba, Francesco Nicodeme, Michaela Agius, Clara Sciberras, Noel Zarb, Paolo Micallef, Bettina Zammit, and some very, very special surprise guests. Led by Ryan Paul Abela alongside direction and vocal arrange ents by Kate Fenech Field, The Palace String Orchestra takes audiences on a journey through time. This annual TOI TOI Easter Concert is a special treat for people of all ages featuring music by Alan Menken, Pasek & Paul, Phil Collins, Lin Manuel Miranda and many more.

Why Attend: A Dream is A Wish is packed full of singalong moments showcasing music from family-favourite films, you'll be whisked from castles to fjords, islands to jungles and a diversion through a chocolate factory thrown in for good measure!

Ticket Information: Prices: €12 to €20

Book now at teatrumanoel.mt or call (+356) 21246389.

A Dream is a Wish is supported by Bank of Valletta

Seats are limited... don't miss this magical event! Get your tickets today and experience this live concert at Teatru Manoel.

Freedom Day (Maltese: *Jum il-Ħelsien*) is a Maltese national holiday celebrated annually on 31 March. This is the anniversary of the withdrawal of British troops and the Royal Navy from Malta in 1979. On taking power in 1971, the Labour Government indicated it wanted to re-negotiate the lease agreement with the United Kingdom. Following protracted and sometimes tense talks, a new agreement was signed whereby the lease was extended till the end of March 1979 at a vastly increased rent. On 31 March 1979 the last British Forces left Malta. For the first time in a millennium, Malta was no longer a military base of a foreign power and it became independent *de facto* as well as *de jure*. The main events of the activities commemorating this date take place at the Freedom Day Monument at Birgu (Vittoriosa) (designed by Anton Agius) and at the War Memorial in Floriana. In the afternoon the Grand Harbour hosts a competitive regatta. The regatta often attracts thousands of spectators and participants from the three big cities (Birgu, Bormla and Isla), as well as coastal towns.[3] The regatta forms part of two annual rowing race events, the second being on Victory Day.

The Seminary has no recruits for the first time in over four decades

Matthew Xuereb

'The life of a priest is meaningful.' Photo: Shutterstock.com

For the first time in more than four decades, the Archbishop's Seminary has no new recruits to start their journey to the priesthood, as vocations continue to dwindle.

The number of recruits has been on a constant downward trend for several years, dropping from an average of over 30 a decade ago to just a handful in recent years.

It is a common trend in Europe and the US, whereas in Asia and Africa vocations are on the increase.

A reflection of changes in society

Seminary rector Fr Jimmy Bonnici told Times of Malta that the decline was a reflection of changes taking place in Maltese society on cultural and other levels, such as having the lowest birth rate in Europe.

He said professionals had been noting a drop in vocations across the board and not just for the priesthood. The phenomenon was being seen in practically all caring professions, such as teaching and nursing.

"It's the result of the way youths look at wealth, going for money-making careers. They often choose a certain course at university but then opt for something that pays more… the consumer mentality has increased, even through the influence of social media," Fr Bonnici said in an interview.

In Malta, the drop in vocations is not only affecting diocesan priests but also the religious orders. Last month, the Maltese Province of the Carmelite Order decided to end its presence in Balluta and Mdina and focus on the parishes of Fgura and Santa Venera and the national shrine of Mount Carmel in Valletta.

The future of Mdina's Monastery of St Peter, Malta's oldest female monastery, also hangs in the balance as the number of nuns declines.

In 2019, the Xemxija church, run by the Franciscan Capuchins, was forced to stop celebrating Mass during weekdays because of dwindling numbers.

Earlier this year, in an interview with Times of Malta, Archbishop Charles Scicluna suggested that the Catholic Church should revisit its celibacy rules for priests, saying this might attract people to the priesthood while still having a family.

Fr Bonnici believes that people are increasingly coming to the realisation that the materialistic world is not making them happy. Even the increase in substance abuse itself is an indication that people are searching for something else. They are moving away from the thought that science and money can fix things, he said. He said proper research was needed to compare GenZ in Malta with those in the same generation abroad, to shed more light on changes in the Maltese society.

The seminary's vocation centre has formed a focus group with professionals from different areas and with a vast array of expertise who are collecting information and sharing ideas on how the drop in vocations could be addressed.

Asked what could be done to attract more people to the priesthood, Fr Bonnici said: "The image of the priest is something that needs to be addressed. We need to do more to show the beauty of what it means to give your life to God, where you go beyond focusing on yourself and see the deeper meaning of life.

It hurts not to be considered Maltese".

Born in Malta but he is not a Maltese Citizen?

A youth recounts his experience being born and raised in Malta after his parents fled Ethiopia *Miguel Azzopardi Newsbook.com.mt*

Joseph was born 19 years ago, 5 hours after his mum arrived in Malta and two months before he was due. His parents are Ethiopian, but he considers himself completely Maltese.

Following the deportation of Kusi Dismark, Newsbook Malta spoke with Joseph about his life and experiences in Malta, racism, and his dreams and wishes for the future. This site also spoke with Christine, who is his godmother and a family friend.

Joseph stated that his family's journey was a terrifying one. They originally wanted to go to Italy but found themselves in Malta. As a result of the traumatic experience in the desert and at sea, his mum gave birth to him prematurely. **The experience was so traumatic that whenever his mum sees a scene in a film with a desert, she either leaves the room or starts to cry. While for him, the sea does not provoke any particular emotion, his parents still react to whenever the sea is rough.**

Joseph considers himself to be Maltese and was raised like any other Maltese child. He learned Maltese and English at Lija Primary School. Joseph was baptised, did Holy Communion, and Confirmation and attended the MUSEUM. He also served as an altar boy. Till last year, he was also playing football. These experiences all helped him to integrate into Maltese society. He speaks excellent Maltese and Christine says that he even speaks Maltese with his parents. Apart from having friends from many different countries, he also has many Maltese friends. She described him as spontaneous and cheerful.

"It hurts when you aren't considered Maltese," said Joseph when asked about the obstacles he face in his integration. He said that as he grew up, he began to feel different from the others because, although he was born and raised here, he felt he was distant from the others due to his dark skin. "You start to ask yourself 'Why am I not like them?'" although when he got older, he recognised his self-worth. It was at this point that he commented on racism and racist comments on social media and stated that "racism is the worst weapon you can use to hurt someone" and that such should never be acceptable. He added that these comments don't affect everyone in the same way. While today they no longer affect him, he knows that it makes people feel like they need to change and can cause them depression and even commit suicide.

He has never seen his parents respond to racism and doesn't know if they suffered from hateful comments but said that his parents were kind-hearted people who respect everyone.

How did you become Joseph's godmother?

"I began to think of Joseph's family as if they were part of my own" said Christine. She recounted that she became friends with his mother when she had asked her if she can help her children with some homework. They were there for her during difficult times as well as happy ones, and they celebrated birthdays together. She mentioned how when she gave birth to her son, they visited her right after her parents. Today, she also speaks to them in Maltese.

Asked about racism in Malta, she said that she doesn't believe that the majority of Maltese people are racist but that racist voices tend to be louder. Christine noted that there is a narrative being pushed of a divide between the Maltese and immigrant communities but that, in her experience, in reality this divide does not really exist to the degree that is often claimed. She said that perhaps social media may make this divide seem larger than it really is. While being conscious not everyone has the same experience as Joseph, she noted that younger generations are more tolerant. His dream is that his family and future family In Malta are able to live their lives as Maltese citizens, and be able to live and work like other people. "We don't need to cause hassle just because we are not originally from this country".

The Order of Malta in South Africa

The Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta was founded by a small group of only five members in 1992, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard soon developed to become today the largest catholic relief organisation in South Africa.

Based in Mandeni, on the East coast of South Africa, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard provides a comprehensive system of care through a centre that runs health care projects for HIV patients, child-care projects, assistance to the poor, first aid and emergency relief.

Over the past 25 years, the care centre, which is directed by Father Gérard T. Lagleder, has treated one and a half thousand Aids patients, it has assisted over three thousand terminally ill people in the Inpatient Hospice and has treated as outpatients two thousand and six hundred terminally ill people. Furthermore, it has looked after nearly five thousand sick persons and has transported from their home to the hospice over six and a half thousand patients. More than two thousand destitute people were also enabled to start a new life thanks to the relief fund of the organization.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

- is an Association of the Roman Catholic Church (FBO),
- the Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa,
- a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO 18/11/13/2769)
- operated not for profit (NPO).

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was founded in 1992 at Mandeni in the Province of kwaZulu/Natal in South Africa.

We established and provide a comprehensive and holistic system of care through **Blessed Gérard's Care Centre** by running:

Health Care Projects:

AIDS Relief, Hospice, Poor-Sick-Fund.

Child care projects:

Crèche, Children's home, Malnutrition Clinic, Bursary Fund.

Emergency Relief and Social Project:

Emergency Relief Fund

All these services were not developed on the drawing board, but were each a direct and effective response to identified emergency situations which had not been dealt with by others adequately. Our area was often referred to as the AIDS hotspot of the world. That is why we are particularly committed to the fight against AIDS.

Our organisation is named after Blessed Gérard, who founded the Order of Malta in 1099.

The highly anticipated Festa Frawli is almost here!

The annual Strawberry Festival is one of the most popular and delicious days on the Maltese calendar, bringing together local farmers, professional chefs, artists, and musicians. The perfect day out for friends, family, and foodies !

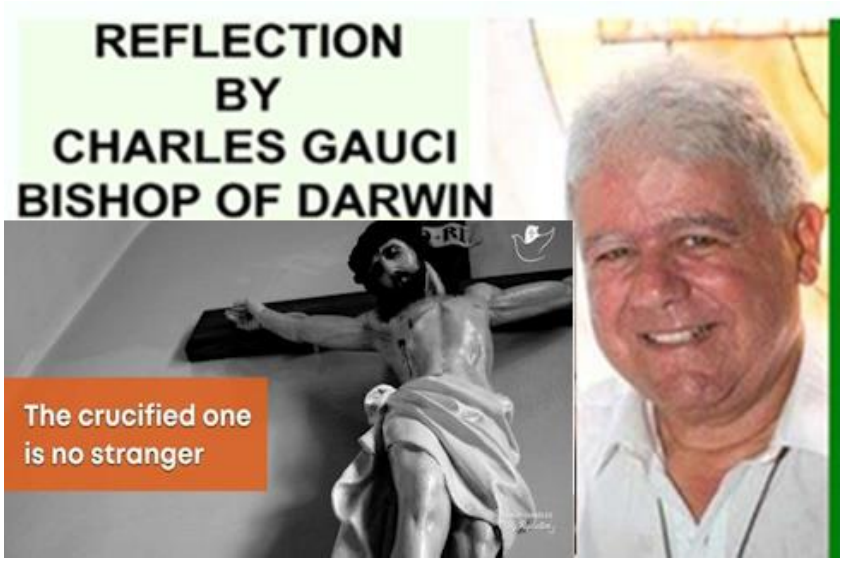
Wander through the beautiful Mġarr village and sample from a banquet of scrumptious strawberry themed snacks, desserts, jams, gourmet dishes and beverages – even strawberry wine !

Relax and be entertained by traditional music and folk dance or browse the artisan stalls and chat with local craftsmen and women showcasing their work.

Kids will be delighted too, with a dedicated team of animators, train rides, painting competitions and more !**Additionally, Heritage Malta is set to be selling tickets at a discounted price on the day for the nearby prehistoric site tours of Ta' Hagrat and Skorba.**

See you on Sunday 7th April to indulge and celebrate Malta's rich agricultural heritage.

Head over to our Facebook page to learn more.



As we continue the journey of the Holy Week we experience so many emotions this week.

It is full of drama. It is certainly about the real story of Jesus. He is at the Centre of this week, the Centre of the drama.

However, it is also the story of every person. It is our drama.

We enter the human experiences of pain, betrayal, rejection, injustice, profound love, death and life. In Jesus God became flesh. He entered fully into our story, our drama so that we can more easily enter into God's story.

THE CRUCIFIED ONE IS NO STRANGER…

He is our brother as well as our God. This week is about profound love.

It is about unconditional LOVE. This week is about a great mystery and we enter into it through love. We cannot always control what happens to us and the circumstances that we find ourselves in. However, we are reminded that we are given the grace to deal with all these realities with Hope. Light overcomes darkness, hope overcomes despair, commitment is bigger than betrayal, and Life overcomes death… LOVE conquers all…

And all of creation is renewed through this drama. All is sacred… rising to its fulfilment

Dear Frank,

On behalf of the Australian American Association, I wish you and your family Great Health, Peace, Love, Strength, and Happiness at Easter.

However, sadly, again, we witness the suffering of innocent children and families in Ukraine and Gaza, the destruction of their homes, and the aftermath of the devastation. At the same time, others worldwide, such as in Africa and Haiti, are enduring, in some cases, the same.

I do not know how you feel, but it scares me! Peaceful men, women, and children are living life and going through their typical day-to-day activities. Truly no different from us. Only thousands of kilometres apart and all within a heart bet, BANG. Their Freedom is gone, their homes destroyed, and their way of life stolen.

Why?? All for what reason? Put simple greed and power. In the case of Ukraine, one person's greed for power. In the case of others, why can't they/we just put their/our hatred, political ideology, religious beliefs, and paybacks aside? Do they/we not know that all life has a beginning and an end, and no one lives forever? Why can we not just live in Peace with one another? Why?

We are so fortunate, and sadly, we take our Freedom for granted. I do not know about you, but I constantly think about how lucky we are and question whether our luck will turn, seeing what is happening in our (own) backyard. Yet, I still think about the people and families in other parts of the world that we seem to forget about, such as Hong Kong, Burna (Myanmar), and Africa, who still suffer today and live in complete fear.

We are fortunate to have our Freedom, Liberty, and democracy. Even though, in many ways, our Freedom of speech or the right to have an opposing opinion is challenged, we at least have the Freedom of travel and democracy.

As we celebrate Easter with our families and friends, let us also remember in our prayers those families in Australia and those around the world, like the Ukrainians, who are not as lucky as we are that they find Peace, some form of happiness, and Freedom during this time.

Please stay safe, keep well, and have a wonderful Easter.

Let us all do what we can to support those in need.
That truth, justice, Freedom, love, and happiness reach all,
That we are not driven by greed and unnecessary want,
Those in power remember that we are all one people,

My goodwill drives our leaders to achieve peace in our world and to do away with self-interest and greed. That the Love of God strengthens us during these times.

SAM MUSCAT KSJ MP
President – Australian American Association - Victoria

Determination is truly the key to success: graduated for a second time at 61!

Meet **Mary Rose Attard**, a 61-year old Gozitan with a visual impairment who recently became a second-time University of Malta graduate while being gainfully occupied and the vital force behind her family of three.

Mary Rose just graduated with a BA (Hons) in Social Wellbeing Studies in November 2023, but she also previously successfully read the Certificate Course in Community Access for Disabled Persons, and went on to the Diploma and Higher Diploma in the same stream.

Her journey was undoubtedly fraught with challenges. Her visual impairment, which made her teenage years difficult to navigate, had forced her to leave school.

This, however, did not stop her from pursuing her passion for music. At the age of 15 she attended guitar lessons at the Good Shepherd Pastoral Centre. Her guitar teacher used to say the chords out loud for her to remember them. At the age of 19, Mary Rose was entrusted with the responsibility for the initiation of a children's choir, a few months later she was appointed director of the 'Fraternitas' choir of the Good Shepherd Church, a position she still holds. Her ambition led her to further develop her talent, and so she did. Mary Rose is a composer and song writer contributing mainly to liturgical music, with her first composition being the 'Our Father'.

At the youth centre where she learned guitar, she met her husband, Raymond, who she's now been married to for more than thirty years, and together, they have a daughter, Raissa.

Raissa and her husband Raymond have been a major motivating force for Mary Rose, who told the Newspoint team that the most memorable moment from her graduation ceremony was being able to share those few moments with her family and other relatives. "That definitely was a highlight - more than having my hands shook, or receiving the scroll, nothing could top the feeling of having my loved ones there supporting me and cheering me on, knowing it was not an easy journey, but at the same recognising that I made it."

The course in Social Wellbeing helps her become better at all the roles she currently occupies - whether on a personal level, or at work. Apart from her job at the CRPD, Mary Rose is also an activist in the disability field, she is one ot the founding members of the voluntary organisations, the Gozo Aid for the Visually Impaired (GAVI), and the Gozo Federation Persons with Disability (GFPD). She is also a member on the 'Kummissjoni Djoċesana Persuni b'Diżabilita - Għawdex'.

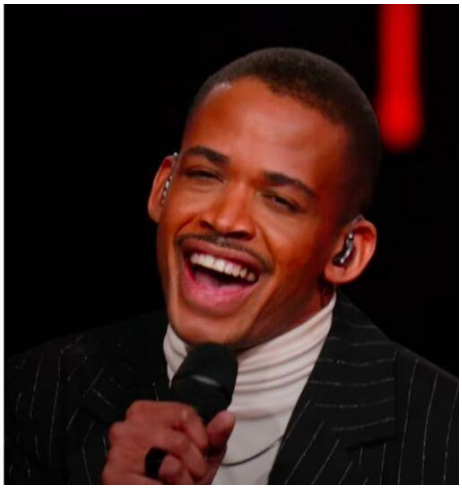
What helped her get through her years as a university student?

She partially credits the technological advancements, which made it possible for her to follow the course material. She could follow most of the lectures virtually, and text-to-speech software also helped her take notes and go through the reading materials. In a way, the pandemic and the University's decision to go online for a while, facilitated this process as well. **But most of all, it was the invaluable assistance from peers, lecturers, and staff at the University, who made sure arrangements were in place for Mary Rose to continue her studies and make it to the finish line.**

"Were there people who questioned my case, or couldn't comprehend why certain arrangements needed to be made for me? Yes. Were there people who maybe stared and didn't know how to strike a conversation with me? Of course. But, the unparalleled support and the University's understanding of my situation, was enough to get me through."

What's next for Mary Rose?

"Who knows? But time and time again, I think I've proven that determination is truly the key to success."



'I Never Felt That I Don't Belong In Malta' – X Factor Singer Sean Kamati

By Tim Diacono

Sean Kamati shot to local fame this year after competing in X Factor Malta, and the Namibian singer has now opened about his experience living in the country.

"Regarding the comments about me leaving the show because I'm not Maltese – yes, I saw them. But let me tell you something… I never, ever felt like I don't belong in Malta. Before or after the show," Sean told The Expatriates of Malta.

He highlighted an experience with a Maltese Bolt cab driver who recognised him from the show.

"One day I ordered a Bolt and the Maltese driver could not stop looking at his back mirror. After a while he summoned the courage and carefully asked 'Are you Sean? The singer from X factor?'. And I just smiled and said 'yeah, you're completely right'."

"Let me tell you, the man flipped. He started calling his family members saying 'you're never going to believe who I'm driving right now. Sean! Sean from X Factor! Your favourite from the show! Turn on your camera, you'll see him!' And that moment, ahh… that moment brought so much joy to me."

"I felt so much love and support and acceptance. One can't really describe it. But it was extremely memorable for many reasons."

The singer has been living in Malta since 2021 and his story has been published by The Expatriates of Malta, a Facebook page started by Barbara Lipovsek to create bridges of compassion and understanding between Maltese locals and expats.

Sean left Namibia due to a "lack of artistic motivation" in the African country and originally moved to the UK to pursue a music career, but the COVID-19 pandemic put a spanner in the works.

While in the UK, Sean met his (now ex) partner and after a year they decided to move to Gozo together.

"I fell in love with Malta the second I arrived here," he said. "I mean – what is there not to love? The weather, the sea, the warmth of Maltese people and their party-like nature. And Gozo? It's a real paradise on Earth if you ask me."

Sean landed a job in catering and started performing at small venues around Malta before eventually applying to compete on X Factor Malta. Despite suffering from bronchitis during the live shows, he soldiered on and ended up in sixth place. The singer also opened up about a horrific experience in Namibia when doctors found out he was bleeding in his brain.

"Ultimately a scary operation was needed, and I vividly remember going to Cape Town for the seven-hour procedure with my mom and dad. I wasn't too freaked out, but one day before the operation, when I saw my dad taking millions of photos of me, I had a sudden realisation that maybe I might not survive this."

"And I got scared. But not for me. I was scared for my family as I didn't want them to suffer such an extreme loss in their lives." However, surviving the ordeal gave Sean a fresh perspective on life and he said he learned to value himself more. "It made me more confident in living my life on my own terms, and made me realise music is my home. It always was. And it always will be."

MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER
BEST OF THE BEST
WE NEED SPONSORS TO KEEP US GOING

L-Għid it-Tajjeb

Qbadt il-pinna sabiex nikteb
Poeżija għal Għid il-Kbir
Għaliex nemmen illi Kristu
Jistħoqqlu l-ogħla tifħir.

Bla dubju din l-akbar festa
Illi ssir matul is-sena
Illi ġabitilna l-fidwa –
Lil qalbna timla bil-hena!

Kristu ssallab fuq injama
Biex jifdina u jsalvana;
Iżda l-bniedem lilu jonqos
Ta' spiss fih jitlef kull tama!

Iżda Kristu dal-fatt jinsa
U mill-ġdid lid-dinja jaħfer
Ta' kull meta dina togħtor
U għaliha qabar tħaffer!

Il-għaliex l-Iben ta' Alla
Hu ta' ħniena infinita
U meta niedma lejh nersqu
Lest li jħallas kull munita

Biex jarana fit-triq lura
Li twassalna għand il-Ħallieq
Li ilkoll dejjem għallmuna,
Hu l-verita', il-ħajja, triq!

Biex thejjija serja jkollna
Għal dil-festa mistennija,
Ir-Randan ngħaddu bil-ħrara
Sakemm tasal dik is-siegħa

Li Kristu mill-mewt jirxoxta
Fil-festa tal-Għid il-Kbir –
Il-figolli nieklu, nqarmċu,
Dak il-Ħadd, Oh xi pjaċir.

Imma qabel purċissjoni
B'Marija Addolorata
Tibki taħt salib ta' binha
B'nisa twajba ikkunslata!

U imbagħad sett statwi oħra
Li jfakkruna fil-Passjoni
Illi Kristu bata w sofra
Biex jarana lkoll unjoni!

F'Għawdex tagħna f'din il-festa
Il-Knisja ma toqgħodx lura;
Imma tagħmel ċerimonji
Ta' kull forma, għamla w sura.

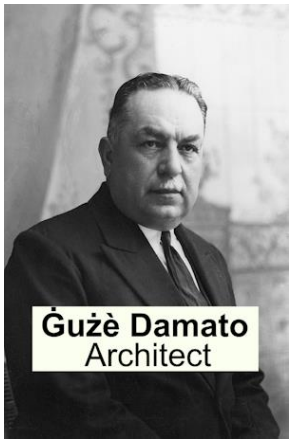
Għandna bosta dilettanti
Li jarmaw bosta wirjiet -
B'Gesu miexi swat ilaqqat
Biex għalina l-fidwa ġiet.

Dat-tagħrif kollu ssibu
Fi ktieb li jasal fi djar
Li għalih il-Ministeru
Fuqu jaħdem lejl u nhar.

Jalla ħbieb ilkoll ikollkom
Festa għażiża u sabiħa
Li ddaħħalna fina nfusna
W il-grazzja toħroġ rebbieħa!

Kav Joe M Attard
Rabat - Għawdex

KRISTU QAM MILL-MEWT



Ġużè Damato

Born on December 12, 1886, died on May 26, 1963

Michael Schiavone

Born in Sfax in Tunisia, Joseph Salvatore Damato was the son of Emmanuele, born in Sfax in 1853, and Carmela Antonia Maria née Spiteri born also in Sfax in 1854. His parents married in Sfax on 21 August 1883. Known better as Ġużè, he received his education at De La Salle Brothers in Sfax and then joined the family's boat-building yard. He returned to Malta when he was 19 and set up his own business. However, architecture was his first love and he dedicated much time to its study and to designing and directing the construction of numerous ecclesiastical buildings, for which he never charged money.

Damato studied naval architecture at Torre Annunziata, near Naples, and, whilst in Italy, he also acquired a good working knowledge of reinforced concrete construction. Since he was not licensed to practise in Malta, an architect had to sign his works for him.

In 1922 Damato drew up the plans for Paola church, his first big commission. The first stone was laid in 1923 when the technique of reinforced concrete was still in its infancy and still regarded with suspicion by Maltese architects. Between 1952 and 1973 he built his masterpiece: St John parish church at Xewkija, Gozo while work on the Carmelite church in Valletta lasted from 1958 to 1981. 'The scale of these three churches', commented Leonard Mahoney, 'reveals Damato's love of grandeur and his ability to deal with the structural problems this created.' Damato was also involved in politics and was for some time president of the PN Paola club. He unsuccessfully contested the 1921 general elections in the PN's interest.

Ġużè Damato married Giuseppina Farrugia on 19 September 1911 and had five children.

Ġnien Dinja Waħda

Go back in time at 'Ġnien Dinja Waħda', at the Tarxien Prehistoric Complex, on Thursday, April 4th.

This unique event invites children over 7 years of age, as well as their families, to imagine and explore the prehistoric landscapes that once surrounded this ancient site, free from the modern urban sprawl. Through a series of engaging activities and discussions, participants will delve into the impacts of urbanization and discover the importance of rewilding our living spaces.

The site's curator will guide the participants' imagination to envision the site's original natural glory, and then introduce the youngsters to the basics of seed propagation, inspiring them to renature their own environments.

Offered at 09:00 (Maltese), 10:00 (English) and 11:00 (Maltese), each tour accommodates a limited number of participants, ensuring an intimate and immersive experience.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore the Tarxien Prehistoric Complex like never before. Purchase your tickets today from our online store Store – Heritage Malta or at any Heritage Malta museum or site, and embark on a time-travelling adventure that bridges the past with essential lessons for our present and future.

Gozo's Ghar Mixta

A view of Gozo's picturesque Ramla Bay from a historic cave is surely not to be missed when in Gozo! Find out how to reach this stunning location here.

L-Għar tal-Mixta sits overlooking the beautiful red sands of Ramla l-Ħamra, on the opposite side of the iconic Calypso Cave on the island of Gozo. Situated a 20-minute ferry ride away from its sister island, Gozo has a whole host of incredible sights to offer for the intrepid explorer that has booked flights to Malta this year.

How to get there

This cave, secluded and far off the beaten track can be reached by trekking north of the ancient town of Nadur. By following a small rock-covered path and negotiating a few steps, one can access the beautiful cavern which is typical of many caves around the island. Alternatively, you can visit Ramla Bay and take an up-hill path from the shore, which will take you around 40 minutes .

Fascinating history

What makes this cave particularly interesting is its name- a cave with a similar name, also on the island of Gozo, was inhabited by troglodytes and the word "mixta" is said to derive from the word "mxett" meaning wintering.

Over the years, lots of Bronze Age pottery has been discovered in and around the cave which have confirmed the fact that they were homes for ancient inhabitants. It is supposed that the cave was created by humans as a way of providing shelter and protection from invaders' vessels, whilst also serving as a vantage point for Gozitans looking to secure their shoreline.

Breath-taking views

Another thing that makes the trek to Għar Mixta

worth it, is the stunning view from the entrance to the cave. The view of Ramla Bay and the surrounding countryside is one of the location's best features and has led to it being known as one of the most beautiful and picturesque places on the island.

If you are spending your holidays in Malta this year, be sure to visit the glorious island of Gozo and to check out all the hidden beaches and caves there that make it such an incredible jewel! What this small Island lacks in size and numbers, it more than makes up for in quality. **The Gozitan**

coast is full of **picturesque beaches** that offer sun-worshippers an unparalleled **Mediterranean experience**. And best of all, the beaches are extremely safe, with virtually no dangerous marine life and life guards patrolling the major beaches in Summer.

WE ARE PROUD OF ALL THE MALTESE ACVIEVERS RESTORATION OF AN OLD CHAPEL IN ZEJTUN

St Clement's Chapel is a 17th-century church in Żejtun, Malta.

This chapel was built as a thanksgiving for a vow that a certain village local did. Clemente Tabone had vowed that should his life be spared from the invading piracy headed by the Turkish army who constantly attacked Malta during the 17th century, he would build a chapel in honor of St Clement to whom he prayed. The chapel was built in 1658. Klement was also responsible for equipping the chapel with all items needed to celebrate services and for the celebration of the feast of St Clement every 23 November with vespers and mass. Klement was also responsible for lighting the oil lamp in the chapel in commemoration of his late wife Dorothy Cumbo and for the celebration of two masses every week.

The titular painting, the work of Stefano Erardi, depicts its founder Clemente Tabone, whose head and prayerful hands can be spotted in the bottom left corner. The painting depicts Pope Clement I, the Blessed Virgin and the child Jesus with several angles. The painting dates from 1662. Another notable painting, by Francesco Zahra, depicts the Pietà.

The minister for National Heritage, Arts and Local Government Owen Bonnici announced the completion of another restoration project, as the chapel of Saint Clement in Żejtun, which was built in 1658, has now been completely restored by the Department for Restoration and Preservation.

Minister Bonnici explained how this is another project from a series of restoration projects that are being implemented by the Department of Restoration and Preservation. He recalled how this project was done through a scheme that was launched back in 2015, and through which more than fifty projects have been completed so far with the involvement of the Local Councils.

"This is another project that we are carrying out hand in hand with our local councils, where we are restoring places that the councils themselves indicate to us through a scheme for this purpose, and in fact the Żejtun Local Council had indicated to us the Chapel of Saint Clement which has been restored," Minister Bonnici explained, reiterating his satisfaction that the project will be enjoyed by the public again during the traditional feast of Saint Gregory.

The Architect in charge of the works, Ivana Farrugia, explained how the works included the restoration of the external structure of the church, i.e. the roof, the outer walls and the parapet of the same church. She went on to explain that among the interventions carried out, the facade was cleaned, the joints were mortared again, the wooden openings were restored, a replica of the cross was made on the bell tower which was found in a bad state, the three steps that give access to the parapet, and works were also done on the existing structure of the roof.

Present for the inauguration of this project was the Mayor Doris Abela together with several members of the Local Council of Żejtun and the Archpriest of Żejtun, Rev. Anton Galea Scannura, who all praised the work done on this project.

MALTESE MAZZIT – blood sausages Application for the Protected Geographical Indication

End of consultation: Tuesday, 9th April 2024 cob

It is hereby being notified that an application for the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) as defined by EU Regulation no. 1151 of 2012 on Quality Schemes for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs was received by the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA). The relevant details of the dossier and further information is given below:

Applicant: 'Mazzit Stakeholders Group' for the following term(s) (in italics): *'Mazzit'*; (Singular = *'Mazzita'*) for PGI status in the Class 1.2. Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)

Brief description of the product to which the terms above apply:

The *mazzit* is a Maltese traditional sweet and savoury tasting meat product, made from swine or male bovine blood. This blood is added to a mixture of local onions, raisins, cocoa powder or liquid chocolate, and sugar, and encased in swine or bovine intestines. In addition to these staple ingredients, producers also add a small quantity of natural sweet flavourings and spices.

The *mazzit* is cylindrical in shape (sausage-like), weighing up to approximately 0.8 kg, brownish in colour, with a semi-translucent intestine casing.

The slices of finished *mazzit* (with raisins, onions, and zest) are visible with a brownish hue and when cold and cut it has a unique moist, solid yet crumbly texture. Prepared for eating, it is often sliced about 2.5cm thick and placed in flour and pan fried from both sides.

Consultation

The consultation period of two months as stipulated in Regulation 7.3 of the Geographical Indications and Designations Regulations of 2004 (SL 427.52) is open until Tuesday, 9th April 2024 close of business.

If there are no comments, objections or representations forwarded to the MCCAA, transitional national protection will be placed on the term(s), until the dossier is submitted to the European Commission and assessed by the European Commission and Member States of the European Union.

Any interested stakeholder may comment, or object to the application in writing by means of a formal letter addressed to the Director General, Technical Regulations Division, MCCAA, also stating the nature of their interest, within the two-month period of consultation.

A justification, including supporting documentation, is to be provided in case of objections.

Any objections received after Tuesday, 9th April *cob* will not be considered.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the MCCAA via email: consultations.mccaa@mccaa.org.mt or telephone no. 2395 2000.

A Special Cancellation Handstamp, to commemorate the inaugural flight of KM Malta Airlines, will be used on Sunday, the 31st of March, at the Malta International Airport.

MaltaPost said that its airport branch will be open between 6am and 8am, to process mail cancellation impressions of this new handstamp. No other postal services will be offered from this post office on the day.

A limited number of "Inaugural Flight Commemorative Covers," signed by the flight captain and by the executive chairman of KM Malta Airlines, will be available for sale as from the 1st of April.

Subject to availability, orders for the Cancellation Handstamp and the Inaugural Flight Commemorative Cover will be accepted by the MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau at 305, Triq ?al Qormi, Marsa, MTP 1001, online at www.maltaphilately.com , via e-mail – info@maltaphilately.com or by phone on 2596 1740.

Africans in Malta and numbers about recent census

Malta, although located in close proximity to Africa, has a relatively small African population, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa. Let's have some numbers from the recent census collected as of November 2021.

Malta's final resident population stands at five hundred nineteen thousand, five hundred sixty two, (519,562) with one hundred fifteen thousand, four hundred forty-nine (115,449) non-Maltese persons residing in the country, which makes 22.22% of residents being foreigners. That number includes British citizens.

What is even more interesting is that the Census revealed that 58% of non Maltese identify as Caucasians. Then 22.20% who identify as Asians, that is Indians, Bangladeshi, Filipinos, Nepalese, etc. 6% who identify as Arabic, (North Africa and the middle east).

4.5 % identify as Latino, that is South America and just 6.3% identify as Africans, that is Black people. At the national level, from a total population of 519,562 , 3.6% identify as African and Arabic types. It is always good to have numbers, in order to inform, mostly racists, ignorant people, who spread unnecessary hatred.

For Africans living in Malta, and for anyone interested in all things Africa, it can sometimes be difficult to find specific products for their cooking and personal care, such as specialized hair products for afro hair or ingredients for authentic African recipes. However, there are places on the island where it is possible find a variety of African products. But there places in Malta where you can eat, where you can buy electronic accessories, fix a broken phone or computer, and where you ladies can style your hair.

HAPPY EASTER 2024

As we head into the long weekend, we wish you and your communities a safe and peaceful Easter celebration.

For Christians, Easter is the holiest time of the year, marking the end of the spiritual journey of Lent and commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

While Easter rituals and traditions vary around the world, this blessed occasion unites people from diverse cultures and communities in a celebration of renewal and great hope.

In this spirit, we wish you and your friends and loved ones a joyful Easter break and all the best for the year ahead.

Peter Malinauskas
PREMIER

Zoe Bettison
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

A TRADITIONAL MALTESE GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION WITH CLAY STATUETTES

CARMEL FARRUGIA

The public is encouraged to visit Il-Ħaġar Museum at the heart of Victoria, Gozo, to see the local handcrafted figurines (pasturi) exhibited in the typical Good Friday procession incelebration of the current religious Lent period. Parishioner Mr Carmel Farrugia from Victoria is the creator of this curious exhibit at Il-Ħaġar portraying scenes from the Via Crucis. One has to appreciate the attention he has devoted to detail especially when considering that he is handling miniature-sized clay statuettes.

IL-ĦAĠAR | HEART OF GOZO MUSEUM

Pjazza San Ġorġ, Victoria, Gozo, Malta

17 February - 7 April 2024

Monday to Sunday, 09:00 - 17:00

Level –1

GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO AND PLANNING

Cultural Heritage Directorate

Malta Fireworks Festival returns April 20 - 30

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) is thrilled to unveil the eagerly awaited 2024 edition of the Malta International Fireworks Festival. Synonymous with April, this cultural extravaganza is full of vibrant colours, lights, and sounds promises to captivate audiences from around the globe.

Scheduled to illuminate the Maltese skies from April 20th to 30th, with a special pre-festival night on April 13th at the Granaries in Floriana, this year's edition promises to be an unforgettable experience. Celebrating Malta's rich history and tradition of fireworks, the festival pays homage to centuries-old customs integral to local festivities. Other locations include Valletta, Marsaxlokk, Nadur and Mellieħa, with the grand finale at the Grand Harbour on the last day of the month.

Featuring competitions among fireworks teams from various localities in Malta, the festival adds an element of excitement and camaraderie as participants vie for awards based on creativity, colour, music synchronization, and technique. With events over ten days, attendees will have ample opportunities to explore the Island and witness spectacular displays of iconic Maltese landmarks.

From mechanical ground fireworks display to showcases in harbours, traditional village festivals with local band marches and delectable Maltese cuisine, the festival offers diverse experiences for all ages. The grand finale promises entertainment for the whole family, ensuring an unforgettable conclusion to this cultural celebration.

Minister for Tourism Clayton Bartolo said that fireworks are part of Maltese identity and should be cherished. He added that the Fireworks Festival is held not only for tourists but also for the benefit of Maltese and Gozitan families and is also an example of a diversified tourism product.

MTA CEO Carlo Micallef stated that the Fireworks Festival is now one of the key events in the Maltese Islands calendar, bringing magnificent shows to different localities on seven nights. MTA's investment in the Fireworks Festival ensures that Maltese traditions are preserved and promoted along with the Island's rich cultural heritage, beautiful climate and diverse tourism products.

The Fireworks Festival is promoted overseas around Europe and the rest of the world, and it attracts a lot of attention as few other destinations can offer such fireworks displays of high quality. It is also an opportunity for visiting tourists to mix and enjoy the show with the locals, taking home beautiful memories of their time in our Islands.

Recipe: Maltese Ravioli - Ravjul Malti

Maltese Ravioli, also known as Ravjul Malti, is a traditional dish from the Mediterranean island of Malta. These delicious ravioli are filled with a tasty mixture of ricotta cheese, parsley, and nutmeg, and served with a rich tomato sauce. They are a popular dish for special occasions and family gatherings in Malta.

Ingredients

For the Dough

- 200 g plain flour
- pinch of salt
- 150 g semolina
- 2 beaten eggs

For the Filling

- 400 g ricotta
- salt and pepper
- 2 beaten eggs
- 4 tbsp grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley

How to prepare

1. To make the dough, mix the sieved flour, semolina, and salt carefully. Add the eggs and knead until the dough is elastic. If it is too stiff, add a drop of cold water.
2. Rest the dough for 1 hour, then prepare the filling.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the ricotta, beaten eggs, cheese, parsley, salt, and pepper. Mix everything well.
4. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and roll each piece into a long, thin strip. Dampen the edges with water.
5. Place small balls of ricotta about 2 cm from the edge of the pastry, spacing them 4 cm apart.
6. Fold one edge of the pastry over the other and press to seal. Use a ravioli cutter to cut out the pastry, about 10 cm away from the filling.
7. Allow the ravioli to rest for 10 minutes.
8. Boil the ravioli in salted water until they are soft.

Variations

- Try filling the ravioli with butternut squash and sage for a seasonal twist.
- Add cooked ground meat to the filling for a heartier dish.
- Experiment with different herbs and cheeses to create unique flavor combinations

Amali Parnis decorating figolli

A TRADITION PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

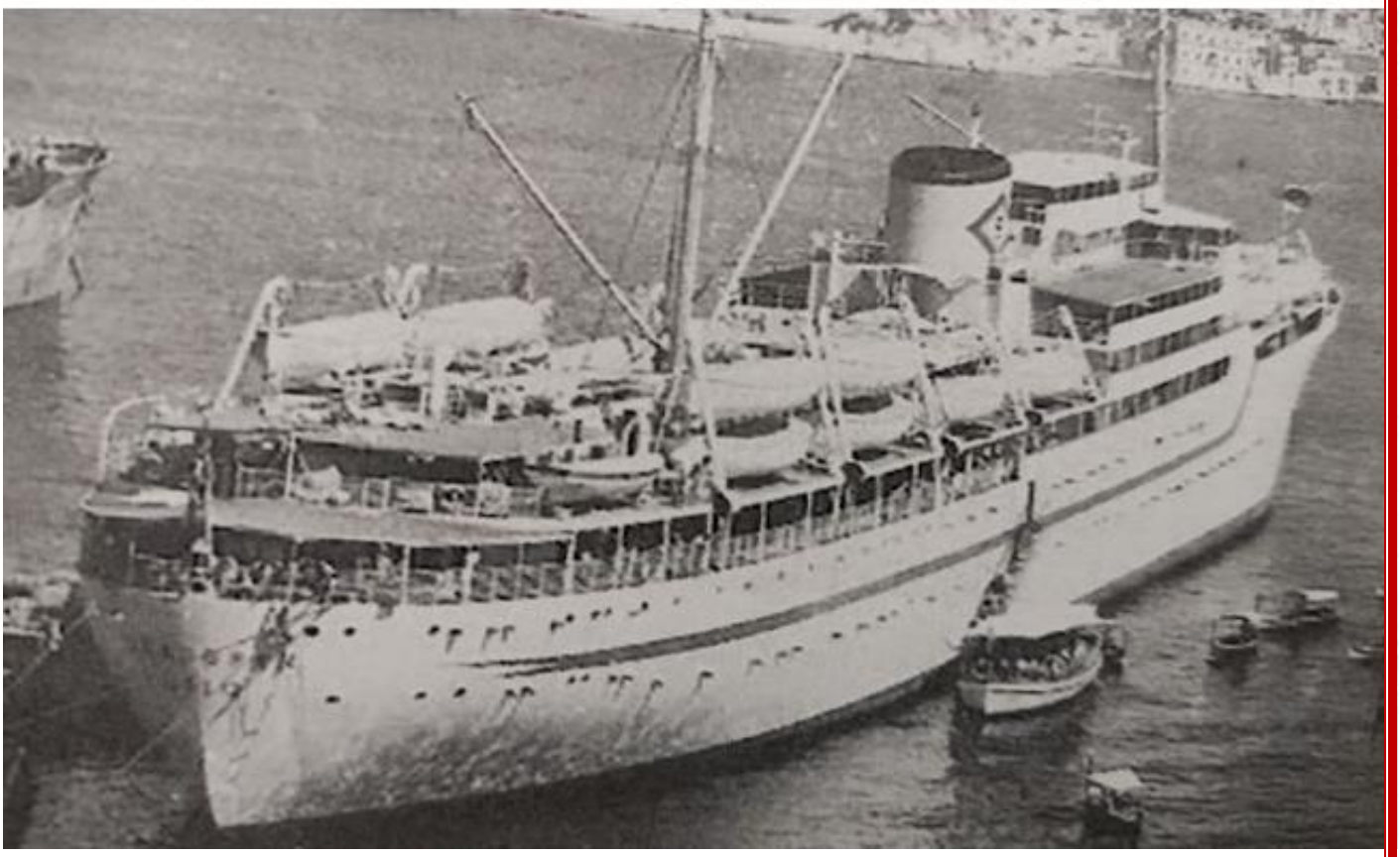
Part of the tradition of making figolli biscuits is that it's a bit of a family activity. Everyone can get involved in decorating their own special biscuits, so i thought i'd get the members of my family involved and see what they could create… Their biscuit decorating skills may need a little more practice, but they had a lot of fun making them.

The making of figolli goes back to my childhood. In the 60's when I used to live in Marsa, Malta I do not remember eating chocolate, biscuits or sweets during Lent but got fond memories of only eating bread up until Easter Saturday. On Easter Sunday we , as children used to run along the streets of our the village with the figolli in our showing off and compare our figolli..

I, Louis Parnis, live in Wollongong NSW but was born in Marsa, Malta. My mother always retained the tradition of making figolli at our home. We all would help mum in baking these special biscuits and as a ten year old I would carry the unbaked figolli from Marsa to Hamrun common bakery because at home like all other families we did not have a stove or an oven.

My wife Lina after we got married started helping my mum with the making of figolli and soon after a few years Lina started making the figolli too. Today it is pleasing to watch my granddaughter Amali helping her nanna as they exchange tips how to make them taste good and give nice presentation. Amali's brother Sullivan is less enthusiastic but love to decorate his own figolla each year.

So, with your kids, get your work station ready. It's not a hard recipe to make. Just time consuming so I suggest you divide the work over a few days. We usually start with making the dough and the filling, forming the figolli and baking them on day 1. then leave the decorating for day 2. Then wrap them on day 3! And best part is eating them on day 4! They will vanish like magic…you'll see!!

Happy Easter to All.

THEY LEFT THEIR HOMELAND, FAMILY, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS TO SEEK A BETTER FUTURE IN FAR AWAY COUNTIES