



Maltese eNewsletter

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MALTA HAS A NEW PRESIDENT



MYRIAM SPITERI DEBONO

MALTESE LIVING ABROAD WELCOME THE NEW PRESIDENT OF MALTA



Societa Filarmonica Nazionale La Valette celebrates 150 years

END OF AN ERA



Air Malta's Last Flight March 31 after 50 years

THE ONLY JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD IN AUSTRALIA



Anthony Mamo



Anton Buttigieg



Albert Hyzler



Agatha Barbara



Paul Xuereb



Censu Tabone



**Ugo Mifsud
Bonnici**



Guido De Marco



**THE PRESIDENTS OF
THE REPUBLIC
OF MALTA**



**Myriam Spiteri
Debono**



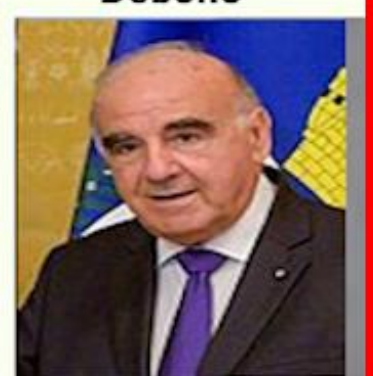
**Eddie Fenech
Adami**



George Abela



**Marie-Louise
Coleiro Preca**



George Vella



Myriam Spiteri Debono is the 11th President of the Republic of Malta

some of which we've already started to

Myriam Spiteri Debono has taken the Oath of Office to become the country's 11th President, as George Vella's five-year Presidential term came to an end on Thursday afternoon.

On 27 March this year, Parliament unanimously approved her nomination to the post. During the Parliamentary session, Prime Minister Robert Abela had described it as a historic day, as it was the first time that a constitutional reform implemented in 2020 was used.

Under this reform, the President of the Republic had to be approved by a two-thirds majority of Parliament, meaning that cross-party consensus was necessary. Previously, only a simple majority was required. This meant that – while the last three Presidents all had unanimous backing of Parliament anyway – the government of the day could choose whoever it liked as President without any consequence.

Both Abela and Opposition Leader Bernard Grech praised Spiteri Debono before the vote was taken. "She is a person who has never feared progress," Abela said of Spiteri Debono. He noted how she had always opened her doors to students for placements in order to qualify as notaries, and was a good teacher, and a kind-hearted person who helped the vulnerable even by providing services for free. "I have no doubt that her Presidency will be a point of reference, as was her work for the emancipation of women. She helped everyone, but more so women in a vulnerable situation," Abela said.

Grech had quoted part of Spiteri Debono's speech in 2021 on the occasion of Victory Day: "We must redeem ourselves anew. We need to come together, as we have in the past, to make necessary changes,

make." He said that these are words which, as soon as he heard them, he thought to himself that she has the qualities – "even because I knew of her integrity, precision and studiousness – to serve in a high position of authority as approved by this Parliament." He said: "She has empathy, knows how to love by helping, by teaching, and by listening. So I augur that those words which she said less than three years ago mean she will be the President to help us redeem ourselves again... that she can be the person to unite us."

A notary by profession, Spiteri Debono served as Malta's first woman Speaker during the Alfred Sant administration between 1996 and 1998.

Today's ceremony started with a mass at St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta, celebrated by Archbishop Charles Scicluna at 10am. Spiteri Debono then made her way to the Grand Master's Palace in St George's Square. The general public was invited to greet the President on her way to St George's Square, but the attendance on the day was quite low.

She officially took the Oath of Office at 12.20pm in a special parliamentary session held in the Throne Room at the Grandmaster's Palace, following which she will deliver her first address as President of Malta. Afterwards, she will greet the public from the Palace balcony.

The new President, alongside Prime Minister Robert Abela and their respective spouses, then walked into St George's Square. She inspected the Honour Guard and was given a national salute, during which time a fly-past conducted by the Armed Forces of Malta Air Squadron flew over the grandmaster's Palace..

KM MALTA DROPS MALTESE LANGUAGE



Many criticised the decision to drop the national language as a requirement

Giulia Magri

KM Malta Airlines cabin crew are not required to speak or write in Maltese. Photo: Matthew Mirabelli

Malta's new national airline, KM Malta Airlines, has dropped the Maltese language as a requirement for its staff because it expects "more than 80 per cent" of its customers to be foreign, according to the airline spokesperson.

After 50 years in operation, Air Malta packed

The staff of ITA are required to speak Italian
The staff of Lufthansa are required to speak German
The staff of Air France are required to speak French
The staff of Iberia are required to speak Spanish
The staff of Emirates, Qatar are required to speak Arabic
The staff of KM Malta are NOT required to speak Maltese

its bags and was replaced by KM Malta Airlines which flew its maiden flight to Catania, Sicily, on Sunday morning.

The Sunday newspaper *Ilum* reported that KM Malta Airlines will not require applicants for cabin crew positions to speak Maltese, unlike its predecessor, where cabin crew were required to speak and write both English and Maltese.

A KM Malta Airlines spokesperson told *Times of Malta* its decision to not make the Maltese language a requirement for its cabin crew reflected the reality of the passengers who will be boarding their flights.

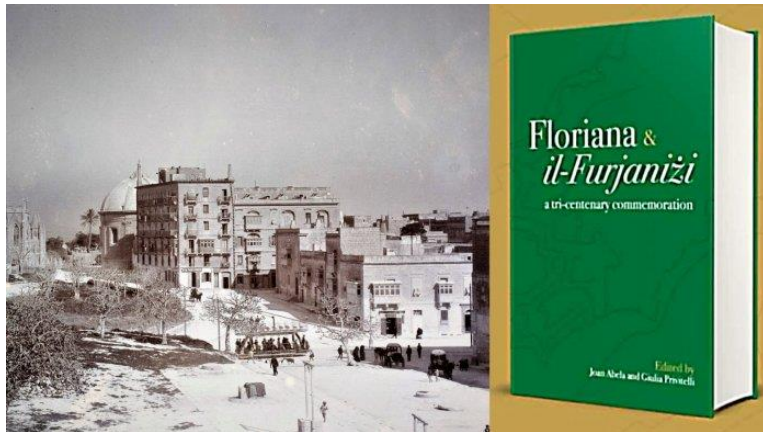
"It is expected that more than 80% of customers flying on KM Malta Airlines will not be Maltese nationals and it was therefore considered that knowledge of written and spoken Maltese should no longer be considered as a mandatory requirement for employment," she said.

The spokesperson said currently all cabin crew have knowledge of the Maltese language. She added that safety and other messages on all KM Malta Airline flights will still be made in Maltese and English.

"Within a cabin crew operating team of 4-5 staff, KM Malta Airlines will always have crew who have good knowledge of spoken Maltese, but the airline may on certain routes, decide to enhance its in-flight language skillset for the benefit of its many foreign customers."

The spokesperson explained this is a "trend" seen across the wider hospitality forum in Malta, as tourism and hospitality markets gear themselves toward service standards for important tourist segments that visit the island.

"As the National airline, KM Malta Airlines is totally committed to adopt the Maltese language as its first language and together with *Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali Tal-Ilsien Malti* it is developing a clear and updated Language Policy so that bilingualism is standardised throughout its different media of communication as is done by all other airlines".



“Floriana & il-Furjanizi” 300 years of history in 600 pages

A new book about Floriana published by IL-FURJANA Publications

On May 9 the suburban town of Floriana will be celebrating its 300 anniversary (1724-2024). On that date, three centuries ago, the Portuguese Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena and the Knights of Malta Ruling Council endorsed the document giving the green light for residential buildings to be built in the area outside the fortified city of Valletta, within the bastions that the Italian architect Pietro Paolo Floriani had built, the area to be known as Floriana.

To mark this special anniversary, IL-FURJANA Publications has published a book which covers various aspects of these three centuries of history of this small suburban Maltese town. ‘Floriana & il-Furjanizi – A Tri-Centenary Commemoration’ includes contributions by a number of leading Maltese academics and experts.

A number of Florianese, through their written memoirs, gave this publication a touch of the social life in Floriana of yesteryears. ‘IL-FURJANA Publications’, the publishers of the book had in mind to include also a piece by the late Prof Oliver Friggieri who was always the mentor of the present administration of ‘IL-FURJANA’, of which Friggieri was also the editor for a short time.

When Prof Friggieri was first contacted on June 2020 and informed about the project to publish a book about Floriana on its 300 anniversary, he was very delighted and promised to contribute with a paper. This promise was not fulfilled because he died a few months later.

This was a hard blow for the publishers. But some time later, this blow was somewhat minimised by the acquisition of the services of another Florianese who like Friggieri hails also from Balzunetta. She is Dr Joan Abela who accepted to be the Editor of this publication. Dr Abela is the Head of the Notarial Archivers in Malta. Ms Giulia Privitelli was assumed as Proof Reader but later,

joined Dr Abela as co-Editor. Together they produced an excellent product worthy for this special occasion. Privitelli is involved very much in local publications regarding local art and history. After nearly four years of hard work by the administration of the local gazette ‘IL-FURJANA’, the launch of this new book was held on Friday March 15 (2024) at the Refectory of Casa Manresa, which houses the Archbishop’s Curia in Floriana. An iconic building which was built before Floriana itself.

The launch included an introductory speech by Freddie Tonna on behalf of IL-FURJANA Publications. While Professors Emmanuel Buttigieg and Paul Sant Cassia, both from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Malta reviewed the book. Short messages were also delivered by the two co-Editors.

The evening, compered by Jordan Muscat and Elisa Cassar Saliba featured also music by the couple, pianist Ramona Zammit Formosa and flautist Silvio Zammit. Edward Camilleri read excerpts from the Kantata ‘Hodon Fjuri lil San Publju’ written by the late Prof Oliver Friggieri,

This book is the third one that the administration of ‘IL-FURJANA’ published during these last 9 years. The previous two were, ‘Il-Knisja ta’ San Publju fil-Furjana – Storja u Arti’ published in 2015, and ‘L-Ark ta’ San Publju tal-Furjana – 1899-2019’ published in 2020. ‘Floriana & il-Furjanizi – A tri-Centenary Commemoration’ was designed and set by Kite Group and printed by Print.It.

All those interested in obtaining a copy of this book or for further information can phone 79339649 or 99821494 or by sending an email to sanpublju@gmail.com or annofre@gmail.com. The postal address is ‘IL-FURJANA’, 44, Triq il-Kapuċċini, il-Furjana FRN 1033. The selling price of this book is €95. The price does not include postage fees. Freddie Tonna

Bloody dagoes – why don't you go back where you came from?



Photos of Maltese from Mackay, Queensland, in the Australian army during WWII (left to right): Andrew Frendo, John Vella and Paul Deguara. Such images were used to show the courage of the Maltese during the war. Courtesy: National Archives of Australia

Before World War II (WW2), Queensland was home to a small community of Maltese migrants, who worked mainly on the sugar cane fields around Mackay and Innisfail. Although small in numbers, this community was controversial due to negative racial and class-based prejudices which derided the Maltese as 'dagoes', threatening Australian wages and standards of living. These prejudices resulted in significant restrictions on Maltese migration, despite the Maltese being British subjects like Australians. WW2 presented opportunities for the Maltese in Australia to challenge this discrimination and

change perceptions about their suitability as migrants. Whilst Malta's heroic wartime defence against Axis attacks played a major part in this, the Commissioner for Malta and Mackay's Maltese community also actively attempted to reshape the narrative, for instance, by promoting images of Maltese serving in the Australian military. This can be seen as attempting to break down cultural distance and negative stereotypes between the Maltese 'out group' and the Australian majority. Although the impact of specific initiatives cannot be measured, and some pre-war prejudices lingered, the war and new 'populate or perish' immigration policies which emerged from it represented a turning point in perceptions about the suitability of Maltese migrants. Indeed, the '1948 Australia - Malta Assisted Passage Agreement' officially recognised them as preferred migrants.

This little-known reality was recently illustrated in a *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* article about racial boundaries, discrimination, and restrictions against Maltese migrants during the war. The article was researched as part of the National Archives of Australia's commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Malta-Australia migration agreement.

The first Maltese to arrive in Queensland sugar cane fields in the 1880s shared British nationality with Australians; however, they were usually bracketed with Italians and other southern Europeans as "dagoes" who were "dirty and lazy."

In the local newspapers, the Maltese were meanwhile portrayed as being hot-tempered, quarrelsome, and violent, allegedly drawing knives during brawls. "The most rabid opponents of Maltese migration even questioned whether they were European. They claimed the Maltese were 'coloured' or like 'Gypos' (Egyptians).

In one particular incident in the 1920s, the *Truth* newspaper grouped the Maltese with other 'mixed races of indefinite breed' allegedly 'sweep[ing] into our open ports, sans character, morals, principles, health, and frequently, cash', and 'ignorant of all sanitary precautions... animal-like in their tastes; brutal in their relationships... grossly superstitious and illiterate'."

The trade unions were among the earliest and fiercest opponents, considering Maltese migrants as 'cheap labour' threatening jobs, wages and standards of Australian workers.

"The most rabidly racist sections of the press gleefully acted as a megaphone for such sentiments, periodically publishing dire warnings of a 'Maltese invasion', 'Maltese menace' and a 'flood' of cheap Maltese 'coolies' into the country... *The Brisbane Worker* even described the Maltese as a 'black menace'.

The Maltese workers in sugar cane fields were considered as 'mostly uneducated', while the Maltese standard of living was 'inferior to that of the British or Italians'.

In 1927, tensions turned into physical violence against Maltese workers at the South Johnstone Mill during an industrial dispute. Some Maltese were assaulted and hospitalised after being accused of attempting to cross the picket lines. "The incident was used to further stoke fears that the Maltese would undercut the wages and standard of living of Australian workers. Indeed, the *Brisbane Truth* portrayed the Maltese as parasites and a 'despicable' race, 'many of whom seem to revel in a betrayal of their workmates'.

“Foreign cane cutting gangs which continued working during the strike were xenophobically derided as: ‘low grade Maltese and Sicilians, whose general physiognomy betrayed their recent descent, not indeed from the organ-grinder man himself, but rather the grotesque Simian that shuffled on top of the organ.’”

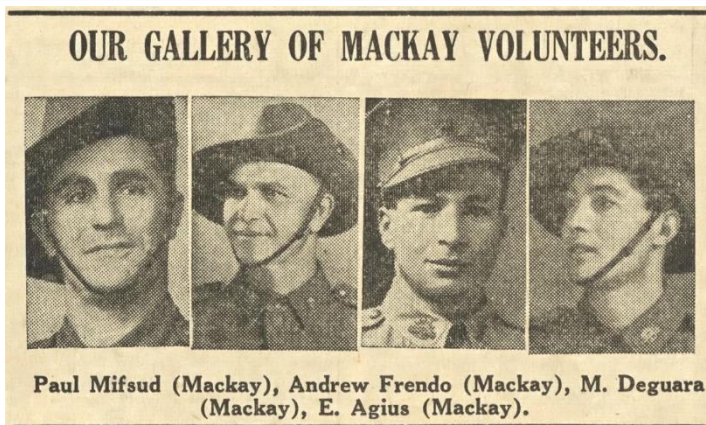
The press did not make things any easier for the Maltese who, due to being from a British colony, challenged their exclusion from employment quotas for British nationals, insisting they too were British.

“Equality with the Australian, if given to the Maltese, must be given also to Cingalese [Sinhalese], the Hindoo, the native of Palestine, the negro of British Africa, or the Indian of British Guiana,” the *Truth* put it bluntly.

The Australians were so reluctant to allow the Maltese to identify as British, that when in 1936, the Maltese again challenged their exclusion from the cane cutting quota, the court ruled that ‘British’ referred to people born in the British Isles or Australia, but specifically “not Maltese or men born in Europe who have become naturalised British subjects”.

Faced with continued restrictions on Maltese migration, Commissioner for Malta Captain Henry Curmi was among those who took steps to change the perception of the Maltese, giving talks and lectures, writing newspaper articles, and making radio broadcasts highlighting Malta’s heroic wartime defence against Axis attacks.

By September 1943 the threat to Malta had passed, so he shifted his attention to promoting photos of Maltese migrants serving in the Australian military. Commissioner Curmi organised an exhibition of photographs of Maltese serving in the Australian forces at his Melbourne office in a bid to overcome “misunderstandings” about the Maltese.



Earlier, the *Mackay Daily Mercury* had similarly published photographs of Maltese who had enlisted under the headline ‘Our gallery of Mackay volunteers’. All the soldiers in the photographs were Maltese migrants.

The authors note that in the exhibited photos, the Maltese “were indistinguishable from Australians and far removed from pre-war depictions of them as lazy, ill-disciplined, untrustworthy, even threatening foreigners”.

Mackay soldiers, all Maltese migrants. These images helped break down cultural distance and perceived differences between the Maltese

and the wider Australian community. Photo: Daily Mercury, Mackay, June 23, 1941, Courtesy: State Library of Victoria

By the end of the war, the Australian government agreed to place Maltese migrants on the same footing as British migrants from the UK, citing Malta’s heroic contribution to the war effort.

The war had acted as a watershed moment: Henry Berry, of the Warrego Graziers’ Association, proposed a free flow of Maltese migrants, as they were “a people second only to the British” who would help maintain a “white Australia”. And the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women proposed preference be given to migrants of “British and Nordic stock, and to the Maltese”. In spite of over 40,000 Maltese received assisted passage from 1948 to 1970, prejudices remained part of the lived experience of Maltese migrants.

‘No Giuseppis wanted’

The Maltese: hard workers, but undesirable by some

When in the late 1920s Charles Farrugia came across a job vacancy poster that read ‘No Giuseppis wanted’ he changed his surname to Ferguson. Since Ferguson sounds nothing like a Maltese or Italian surname, he managed to secure a job at the Sydney wharf.

Charles was not the only migrant to change his name to fit in a society where prejudice against non-locals was rife. And the darker the skin, the harsher the derogatory labels, such as ‘wog’ and ‘dago’.

The Maltese who travelled to Australia at the beginning of the century stood out – they spoke an unintelligible language, walked in groups with other Maltese, wore working-class clothes and walked barefoot.

An agreement drawn up in 1948 saw around 10 per cent of Malta’s population migrate to Australia.



AUTHOR OF HORROR STORIES - ANTON GRASSO

became very popular with readers and Maltese radio listeners. His interest in horror stories aroused the interest of many and he developed in cult in this genre.

In 1978, Grasso started reading his stories on Radju Malta with the programme Stejjer tal-Waħx which remained popular for over 20 years. For some months, he also read his stories on television. In 1981, he started working as a television programme director with the national station until 2004.

Th story writer Anton Grasso was honoured by the State on Republic Day of 2021 with the 'Midalja għall-Qadi tar-Republika'.

Anton Grasso was born in Paola in 1952. Between 1975 and 1981, he taught Religion, Maltese, and English at the Trade School in Senglea, and then at Ta' Bighi School in Kalkara. From an early age, Grasso was already renowned by the Maltese, having already written several novels, essays and poems which were published in local newspapers. He was also a regular contributor in newspapers and with works published in magazines. Grasso was the author of several books.

Grasso is the author of a number of books. The first one, 'Iljieli bla Qamar', was the first volume of horror stories in Maltese published in 1974 and again in 1997. Most of his books were quickly sold and re-published. His books include novels, translations, essays, poems, twenty-seven volumes of stories and an autobiography.

Enigma is one of his many works consisting of a study of the paranormal which was published in 1987 and twice more in 1994. It was such a great success as a television series that another new series was produced. Anton Grasso's favourite subject is horror. He wrote more than 1,000 novels, most of them horror stories which

At the age of 22, Grasso contacted Ira Levin to give him permission to translate her classic novel, Rosemary's Baby, in Maltese. He also translated works by Fred Mustard Stewart, H.E. Bates and William Katz. In 2018, Horizons publishing house published a number of his stories, poems, photographs and also excerpts of 10 authors who gave their views on the literary career of Grasso. The book is entitled 'Anton Grasso... 40 sena ta' waħx u aktar'.

Grasso published the second volume of the best horror stories world-wide that include Anton Grasso's work, translated to English by Dr Joseph Camilleri.



**SEND US
YOUR
STORY
WE LOVE
TO READ
IT**

Welsh rugby star Louis Rees-Zammit turns to NFL and signs with Kansas City Chiefs

NBC NEWS MARLENE LENTHANG AND ALEXANDER SMITH

Louis Rees-Zammit, the wicked fast Welsh rugby star and fan favourite, has made an extraordinary crossover to American football, signing a deal with the Kansas City Chiefs, the team announced Friday. The 23-year-old Welshman announced in January that he was departing from his sport and homeland for his long-shot dream at the NFL — much to the dismay of fierce rugby fans in the U.K.

And it looks like his efforts paid off as the 6-foot-3, 212-pound star known for his ferocious speed has minted a deal with the Super Bowl's latest winners, the Chiefs.

Rees-Zammit path across the pond started with the NFL's International Player Pathway Program, or IPPP, a bid from the NFL to increase the league's player base beyond North America and attract around-the-world talent. In January he flew to Florida for 10 weeks of intense training capped by a March showcase day before NFL club scouts.

A daunting task to change sports and country, Rees-Zammit said he had to do it.

"It's definitely a narrow chance of success," he told NBC News in January. "Boys in America play the sport when they are 5 years old, they go through the ranks in high school and college, and they get to know the game from pretty young."

"For me, I've got to try to learn the game at 22 years old," he said, weeks before his 23rd birthday on Feb. 3. "Obviously the odds are against me."

The star said he "came to the real realization that, if I don't do it now, I'll probably regret it for the rest of my life."

Wales' wing Louis Rees-Zammit is tackled by Argentina's flanker Marcos Kremer during the France 2023 Rugby World Cup quarter-final in Marseille, France, on Oct. 14, 2023. (Christophe Simon / AFP - Getty Images file)

It's a major feat for Rees-Zammit, who is one of the world's top young rugby stars, as successful rugby-crossovers are very rare. Perhaps the most prominent success prior to this was Jordan Mailata,

who left Australian rugby to join the Philadelphia Eagles as an offensive tackle.

his rugby career, Rees-Zammit — often cheekily referred to by fans as "Rees Lightning" — has played as a winger for Wales, as well as the English club side Gloucester, and international super team the British & Irish Lions.



Il-bewsa tan-nanna ta' Anastasju Cuschieri

Waqf li Toninu
kien qiegħed jaqra
b'qattus magenbu
u kelb daqs naqra,
dahlet in-nanna
inkiss inkiss
u tatu bewsa,
'ma kif imiss!



Ajma zaqqi kemm tugghani
Kilt il-gheneb mhux misjur
Iddendilt mal-kannizata
Qiesni kelb tal-kaccatur

Maltenglish monstrosities

Maltenglish refers to the phenomenon of code-switching between Maltese, a Semitic, and English, an Indo-European Germanic language with Romance superstrata.

Both Maltese and English are official languages in Malta, and about 88% of the Maltese people can speak English as a second language. Various Maltese social groups switch back and forth between the two languages, or macaronically mix lexical aspects of Maltese and English while engaging in informal conversation or writing. The term *Maltenglish* is first recorded in 2007. Maltenglish can also refer to English loanwords in the Maltese language.

We are doing a huge disservice to both the Maltese and English languages, which are also our two official languages. We have reached rock-bottom, and nobody seems to care in the least. A spate of English words, with which we have been familiar for...

Alfred Palma, Żabbar 2 min read

We are doing a huge disservice to both the Maltese and English languages, which are also our two official languages. We have reached rock-bottom, and nobody seems to care in the least.

A spate of English words, with which we have been familiar for years, are now being given a silly Maltese oral twist: **tiffrajja** (to fry, when the proper Maltese word is taqli), **tibbejkja** (to bake/taħmi), **tibbojlja** (to boil/tgħalli), **tikkwescinja** (to ask/tistaqsi), **tiddixxernja** (to discern/tagħraf ċar), **timmersja** (to immerse/tgħaddas), **tifhendilja** (to



handle/timmaniġġa), **tittowja** (to tow/tiġbed)... the list is endless. And many beautiful Maltese words are being mauled and killed in the process.

Furthermore, English words in phonetic Maltese are begetting an enormous number of monsters which are being churned out like the traditional pastizzi. Words like **fajerekstingwixer** (fire-extinguisher), **akkawntant** (accountant), **dresingawn** (dressing-gown), **batrum** (bathroom), **buz** (boots), **ajskrim** (ice-cream), **stafrum** (staffroom), **awtbord** (outboard), **mejkapp** (make-up), **hendbegg** (handbag), **woterpruf** (waterproof)... again, the list is endless.

Ġużè Aquilina, in his Maltese/English dictionary, was one of the perpetrators of such a ridiculous misuse of the English language, and his example caught on (and how!) to the detriment of both languages, which have now merged into one grotesque and tragi-comic hybrid of a language, which is neither Maltese nor English. I firmly believe that since we have two official languages, both should be respected (in written or spoken form); Maltese words should be used whenever available; when not, English words (with exceptions, of course) should be written in English. We are still in time to save face and our students.

Flea Market	Suq tal-briegħed	A cheesy film! -	Film tal-ġobon
Stop picking on me! -	leqaf aqbad fuqi	Closed for good	Mgħalluq għal-tajjeb:
Pulled pork -	Ħanzir miġbud	Bell peppers -	Bzar tal-qanpiena
I'm still getting into the swing of things!....	Għandi nidhol fil-bandli ta l-affarijiet		
Lazy bones -	Għadam Għazzien	I got an ear bashing!	Il bieraħ qlajt swat tal widna
Can I fill you in? -	Nista nimlik?		

Cuppa with a Deacon: Deacon Roderick Pirotta – Sacred Heart Parish, Mt Druitt South

By Mary Brazell, 3 April 2024
Catholic Outlook Magazine.

Deacon Roderick (Rod) Pirotta has just celebrated his fifth anniversary of ordination to the permanent diaconate and shows no signs of slowing down.

Growing up in Malta as the fourth of six children, Deacon Rod entered religious life with the Jesuits in his hometown of Naxxar at aged 21 with the intention of becoming a Jesuit brother, rather than a Jesuit priest.

Leaving the Jesuits and his beloved homeland behind, Deacon Rod began his next vocational calling to nursing. He studied for four years in Dublin, Ireland, and lived and worked in England before arriving in Australia in 1991, where he specialised in mental health and dementia care for the elderly for 35 years.

When his mother passed away in 2012, Deacon Rod had a “mid-life crisis” (at aged 50) where the spark of vocation returned, and it led him to the permanent diaconate.

“As a religious brother, I felt that I was called to a vocation that was ‘behind the scenes’, not being ‘front of stage’, and as a deacon, I feel comfortable in this supportive role to the priest and community,” he said.

“I feel that priests have a vocation of taking us to Heaven, but as a deacon, I have a role of bringing Heaven to Earth and experiencing Heaven on Earth in what we do, through our devotions and how we express our love for Christ.”

In February 2019, alongside three other men, Deacon Rod was ordained to the diaconate at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Parramatta.

‘Bringing Heaven to Earth’ in Mt Druitt South
He has been Pastoral Director at Sacred Heart Parish, Mount Druitt South, for close to two-and-a-half years.

“I have brought all of my life’s skills, gifts and talents that God has given me into this role – 35 years of nursing, 30 years of marriage, 20 years of supervision of nurses, many years of



counselling and teaching, eight years of religious community life – and I use them every single day in how to run the parish,” he said.

Deacon Rod is honest in his sharing of some of the challenges he faced of coming into the parish whose parish priest – the late Fr Carl Ashton – had just retired after 43 years in ministry.

But as he settles in, he can see a shift in people’s perspectives and sees a new vibrancy emerging.

“In a way, I feel that I am returning the parish to the people. One parish priest told me, ‘it’s not your parish, it’s their parish’.

“Being pastoral director is an all-in-one role and I love all of it. I get great encouragement when people say, ‘you’re doing a great job, Deacon Rod. Keep going’.

“I thank God for a core group of people in the parish that whatever you ask of them, they’ll go and do it, and those parishioners who contribute financially to the parish. I’m also grateful for the Samoan Catholic Community, the Legion of Mary, the Neocatechumenal Way, the Handmaids of the Lord and the Young Adult Faith Formation group who are a huge gift to the parish.

“I like preparing liturgies and preparing the environment of the Church for the liturgies. I’ve introduced things like the singing of the Divine Mercy chaplet every month, and on Holy Saturday, I introduced the Liturgy of the Hours, which parishioners hadn’t experienced before.

“We’ve established a beautiful relationship with the Sacred Heart primary school and now the students come every week for Mass or when they

have a religion lesson, they come to the church to learn. The kids know us very well now.

“We’ve also seen the resurgence of young families coming to Mass and asking for the sacraments for their children. The Church is getting fuller and fuller.”

Honouring his partner in ministry

As much as Deacon Rod does in his ministry, he couldn’t have done it without the loving support of his wife, Kathryn Fitzgibbon. Together they celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary in November.

“One of the beautiful joys of the ministry as a couple is the witness that we give to the parishioners,” he said.

“We share the decision-making, the experiences, the successes and the disappointments in the ministry, and she often spends a few hours a week helping me at the parish as well.”

Contemplation in action

When asked about where he felt called in his ministry in 2024, Deacon Rod hoped that the

parish continues to strive to be welcoming, not just in words, but in action.

“As we approach Easter, we need to remember not to separate the Passion from the Resurrection of Christ because there’s no joy without that sacrifice.

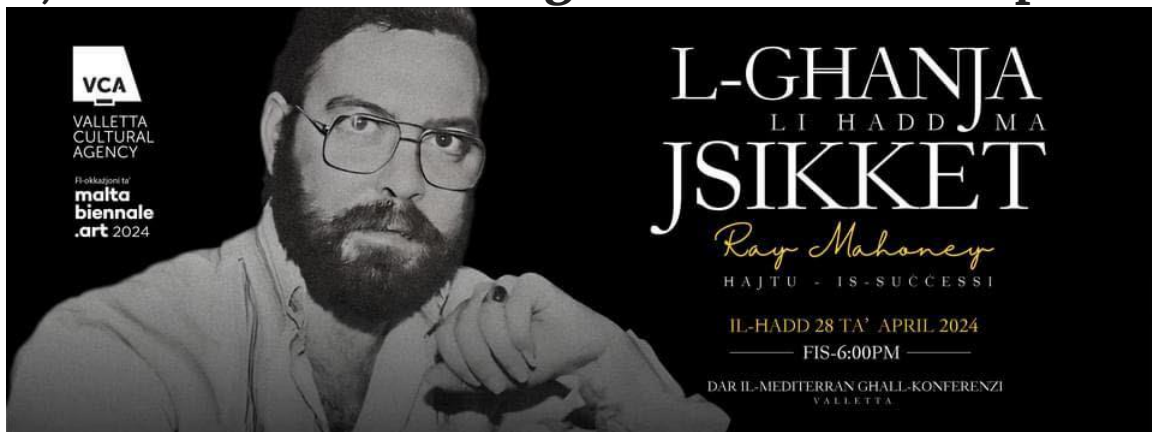
“If we don’t put our faith and devotions into our daily lives in loving our neighbour or serving our communities, we’re not bringing Heaven to Earth.

“If the mark of my time at the parish is encouraging people to live contemplation in action, as the Jesuits describe, and people’s faith pushes them to go out and do something, then I’d be very happy.”

This article was originally published in the 2024 Easter | Autumn edition of the *Catholic Outlook Magazine*.



Music, Visual Arts and Design in Valletta this April



This April, the Valletta Cultural Agency pays homage to the legacy of renowned lyricist Ray Mahoney with *L-Ghanja li Hadd Ma Jsikket*, an evocative commemoration capturing the essence of his creative spirit. As part of this month's cultural tapestry, join us in viewing the thought-provoking exhibition *Simple Expressions of Complex Thoughts*. If you're into music, Kevin Abela and Carl Bee are sharing their talent in a live concert at Teatru Manoel. Meanwhile, a lot is happening at the Valletta Design Cluster! Don't miss the opportunity to join us in our engaging workshops and studio sessions.

L-Għanja li Hadd ma Jsikket: Ray Mahoney

28

Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta

April

On the occasion of the maltabiennale.art 2024, the Valletta Cultural Agency is commemorating Ray Mahoney, a luminary in Maltese music and poetry, etched his name in the annals of artistic brilliance. Renowned for his contributions to literature, music, and culture, Mahoney's legacy includes the groundbreaking "Ġensna" (1982), a patriotic Rock Opera that masterfully blended realism, emotion, and triumph. His creative journey continued with ten more musicals, such as "Bastilja," "Uljed in-Nanna Venut fl-Amerika", "Manwel! Manwel!" and "It-Tfajla tal-Palazz".

Kevin Abela and Carl Bee LIVE: A Musical Journey



10 April 2024 Teatru Manoel - Valletta

Kevin Abela and Carl Bee are teaming up for a collaborative project, showcasing their musical prowess and 15-year friendship. This historic event at Teatru Manoel features a unique 90+ minute Live Concert, where the duo will be joined by 30 musicians from the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, directed by Abela. With two skilled vocalists and Bee's Live Hybrid Setup, the concert promises an unparalleled experience. Enhanced by a 4D sound system and lighting show, attendees will be treated to a full sensory journey. After the performance, guests can mingle with the artists in Valletta. Don't miss this unforgettable event, supported by the Valletta Cultural Agency, on the 10th April, 2024, at Teatru Manoel.



Sometime before Easter, I had the privilege of doing the ceremony of washing feet with the young people at Dondale Detention Center – Darwin.

I went in with a team of men and women from our community.

My message to the young people was that they are good. That there is goodness inside them. I acknowledged that they had made mistakes. We all make mistakes.

These mistakes did not negate that they were good in themselves.

The biggest mistake that we can make is

to make mistakes and then stop trying to do what is right.

I explained what the significance of the washing of feet ceremony was all about. I said that I was offering it to them because they mattered, that they were important.

I also explained that participating was voluntary. They opted to participate.

I found it a powerful experience. I believe that it was also significant for them. I could see it in their demeanour and faces. We all need to believe in the goodness within us. Jesus saw this goodness in people. He reached out to them and called them to a fuller life and to know that they are unconditionally loved by God...We all are even though sometimes we forget this.

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR MALTESE ACHIEVERS



1730 Stradivarius the star of anniversary concert

Societa Filarmonica Nazionale La Valette celebrates 150 years

Conductor Mauro Ivano Benaglia

The *Società Filarmonica Nazionale La Valette AD 1874* is holding a choral and orchestral concert on the occasion of its 150th anniversary at the St Paul Shipwreck collegiate church, Valletta, on April 26 at 7.30pm.

Conducted by Mauro Ivano Benaglia, *Uno Stradivari per la Filarmonica La Valette* will star violinist Lorenzo Meraviglia on a historic 1730 Omofobo Stradivarius, the Accademia Concertante d'Archi of Milan, Italy, the Coro Città di Rivarolo (Torino, Italy), directed by Maria Grazia Laino and the Schola Cantorum 'Ars Nova' of Cerro Maggiore, Milan.

The programme includes Bach's *Concert BMV 140 in a Moll* for violin soloist and strings, Schubert's *Mass in G major, D. 167* for soli, choir and string orchestra and Mozart's *Sancta Maria, Mater Dei K 273*.

The concert is being held in collaboration with the collegiate church. For more details, visit the society's Facebook page.



Maltese Welfare NSW

What a great info talk this morning organised by the [Maltese Welfare NSW Inc](#). Moving into Aged Care.

Useful information for anyone, not just for the elderly Maltese but to anyone caring for elderly parents or family members, or anyone looking at moving into aged care in NSW.

Mrs Marie Louise Muscat CFP, DipFP representative of Fiducian Financial Services Pty Ltd was the guest speaker, answering also questions from those present.

This event was held at La Valette Social Centre Blacktown. For more information call Maltese Welfare NSW Inc on 0404 462 344 Mrs Marie Louise Muscat, Fiducian

Financial Services Pty Ltd 02 9231 2133



DOUGLAS CHARLES MIZZI

Hi All, I'm a Maltese Elvis Tribute Artist from the Sunny coast (the other one lol) I've been doing a lot of shows From Gympie to Brisbane, Looking at some shows on the Goldie, wanted to know the interest for doing a show for the Maltese community.

I have a complete professional show that I take on the road. We do many theme shows from Hawaiian, Xmas, Xmas in July, Valentines etc . I have some dates available after August with a possible date for Fathers day in September if that's of interest. If someone wants to contact me feel free. Here's my website. please leave a message or DM me. www.dougcharleseta.com.au

The first swim of the year held during the Traditional feast of St Gregory - Żejtun



Many locals and tourists flocked to Żejtun and Marsaxlokk to celebrate this feast which combines religion with the historical account.

Celebrations for the feast of St. Gregory takes place on the first Wednesday after Easterl.

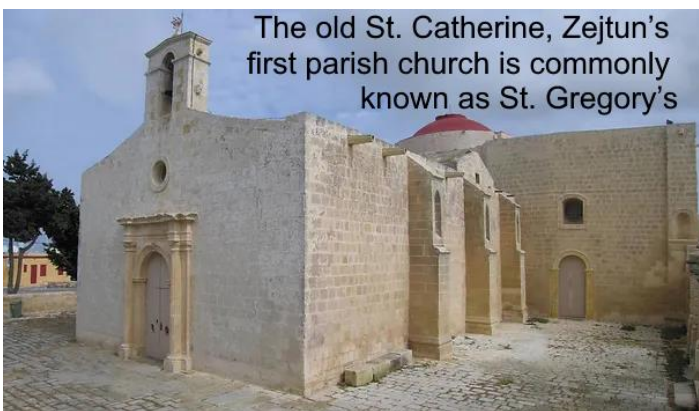
The tradition has been kept alive by many who first attend the pilgrimage in Żejtun and then go down to Marsaxlokk, where some brave the cold sea and also take to jumping in the sea for their first swim of the year.

In 1543 the first pilgrimage was made

from Mdina to the church of San Gregor in Żejtun.

It originally started at the Mdina Cathedral and proceeding all the way to what was then Żejtun's parish church, the old Church of St Catherine that is perhaps more commonly known as St Gregory's Church as a result of the pilgrimage. The first time it was held as a vow and as a sign of gratitude that Malta had avoided the catastrophic effects of the plague.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna led the traditional pilgrimage of St Gregory on Wednesday, in fulfilment of an annual tradition that goes back no less than 500 years.



The modern pilgrimage route, however, starts and ends in Żejtun, starting near the Chapel of St Clement – a 17th century church on which restoration works have just been completed – and ending at St Gregory's Church, with a quick stop for prayers at the Church of St Catherine that became Żejtun's new parish church after its construction in the late 17th century.

The feast also traditionally marks the beginning of Malta's swimming season, with many bathers converging in nearby

Marsaxlokk, once part of the Żejtun parish.

Cultural events are also organised in both Żejtun and Marsaxlokk, organised by the two local councils and by the Culture Directorate.

It is one of the three main feasts of Malta, St Gregory was the first, along with Imnarja and Our Lady of Victories where the Maltese from all over Malta used to attend.

It is also the holiday where the Maltese take their first swim.

One of the locals said "My grandmother has been dead for 14 years, she always put us in a van and took us with her to this feast, she loved the music and made us bread with oli, tomatoes and anchovies; we have beautiful memories of this day.

During the day some play bingo, listen to some Maltese folklore music, meet some people we haven't seen for a while. Certainly this feast has become an annual event, which many anticipate greatly, keenly enjoyed by all Maltese and tourists alike, regardless of their age and social class.



MALTESE GHOST STORIES

Matthew Camilleri

A Troubled Soul - Żurrieq

This story takes us to Żurrieq, and the cemetery dedicated to Pope St. Leo I. Every morning at around 3 am, a local farmer known as 'Ta' Ćoqq' would load his mule-driven cart with produce to sell at the centre of the town. On his route, he always had to pass from in front of the cemetery, and almost every time he was being bothered by a very strange experience. As he approached the gates of the cemetery, a young lady dressed in

white would emerge from within and approach the cart. She would grab hold of the mule's head and stop him from proceeding any further.

The farmer used to get irritated, for this made him lose a lot of time, but despite urging the mule forward, the beast would not budge until the girl let go and returned to the cemetery. Eventually, 'Ta' Ćoqq' got fed up with this business, so he went to a priest and told him what was happening. The priest asked to accompany him on his next trip, in order to see for himself what was going on. Sure enough, as they approached the cemetery the following morning, the girl appeared as usual. Upon seeing this, the priest climbed down from the cart, took the girl's hand, and let her back inside, while the farmer looked on.

A few days later, the local undertaker removed a girl's corpse from her grave and reinterred her elsewhere. It seemed that the young lady had lived a very good life, and been buried with an immoral man. After the change, 'Ta' Ćoqq' never saw her again.



An Unexplained Mystery - Senglea

Many years ago, a Mrs. Mangion from Senglea used to make it a point to attend daily the first mass of the day at St. Philip's Church. Although the service started at 5 am, she was usually quite early, something she did not mind as she would chat with other churchgoers while they waited for the sacristan to open up.

One morning she arrived earlier than usual however; it was still dark when she got there. Despite this, the church was surprisingly already open, so she decided to wait inside

for her friends. Upon entering, she realised that there was nobody else there, not even the sacristan. The only light came from two lit candles on the altar, which was prepared for mass. She was even more surprised when a priest appeared and approached the altar to start the service, despite the fact that it was at least half an hour too early. The lady could not see the priest properly because of the lack of lighting, but she thought there was no harm in listening to another mass, so she stayed until the end of the service. It was only then, when the priest turned to face her, that she was shocked to realise that where his face should be, there was only a skull!

Trying hard not to scream, she felt herself going faint, just as keys could be heard unlocking the church door. The sexton and the rest of her friends were shocked to find her already inside the church. Upon looking back towards the altar, the lady realised that not only was there no sign of the priest, but everything had also gone from the altar, and even the two candles were still waiting to be lit!

The Phantom Hitchhiker - Burmarrad

Late one night, two friends - John and Paul - were in a car, driving from St. Paul's Bay to Mosta. On reaching Burmarrad, near the parish church, they saw an old man standing in the middle of the road. He seemed to be in no hurry to cross, and just stood looking at the car as if unaware of the danger of being hit.

Paul, who was driving, stopped near the man, to ask him if he needed a lift. But there was no reply, and the man just stared at them as if he had not heard, so the two men drove on. But they had hardly gone a few metres, when they saw the old man again right in front of them, in the middle of the road as before. Both men thought it strange, as Paul this time swerved round him and drove on. John tried to bring up the subject, but at this point realised that Paul had started accelerating rapidly, and soon the car was flying along. "Why are you driving so fast? Do you want to get us both killed?" John exclaimed. But Paul took no notice of his friend and simply kept speeding on, only stopping the car when they finally reached Mosta.

"What's going on with you? Why were you going so fast?" John exclaimed. "It was the old man. Did you not see him?" Paul said. "Yes, I saw him both times." "No, not that" Paul replied. "After we saw him the second time, an instant later I saw him again in the driving mirror. He was sitting on the backseat right behind us, and only disappeared when we reached Mosta!"



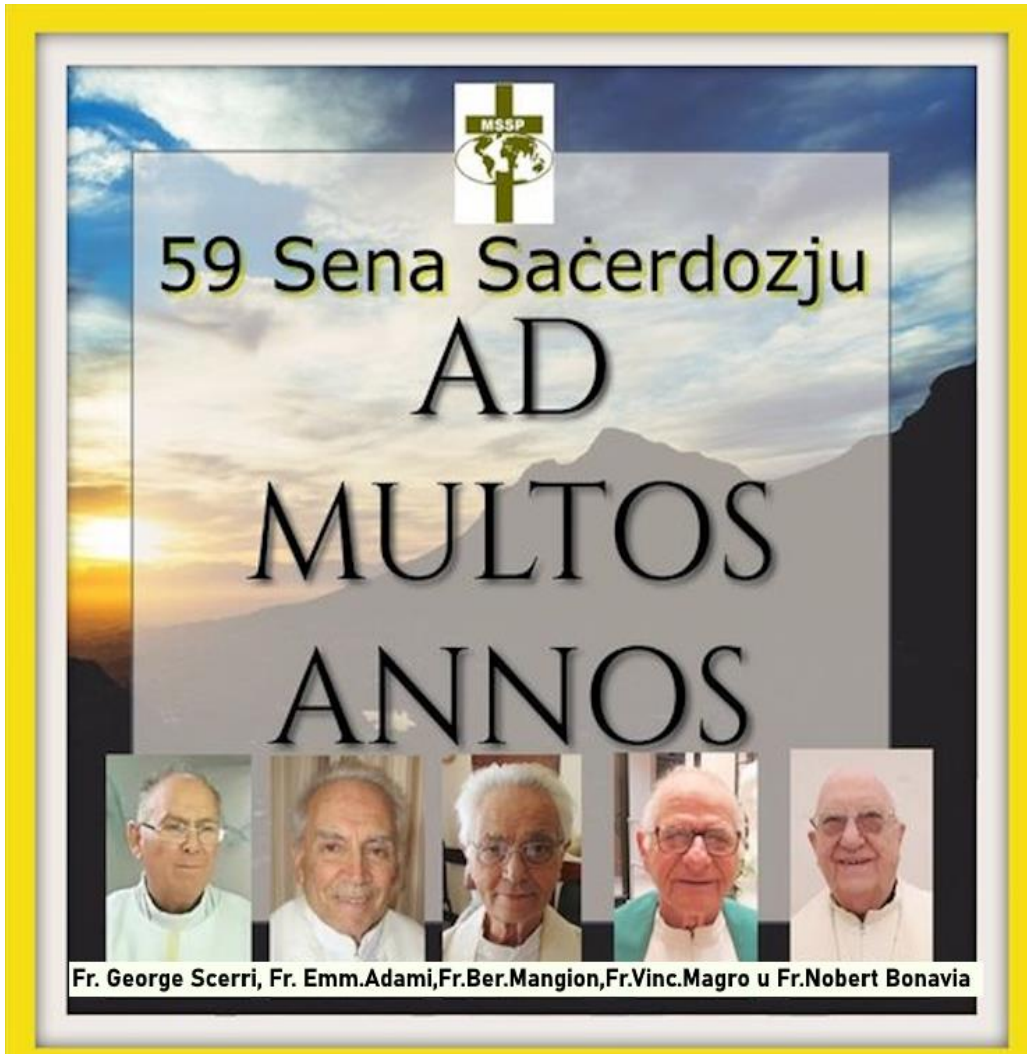
The Haunted House - Gozo

In a quiet Gozitan village, there was an old, long-abandoned house that everybody stayed away from, especially after dark, as the building was reputedly haunted. The story was that it had once been lived in by two brothers; the younger one was quiet and gentle, but his older sibling had a very jealous nature, and always got what he wanted, one way or the other. The younger brother eventually fell in love and started spending a lot of time with his new girl, while his older brother looked on, his jealousy growing at the fact that she could never be

his. With time, his jealousy turned to hate and he decided to get rid of his sibling. The story goes that he threw his brother into a well, having first chopped off his hands to make sure that he could not climb back out. His girlfriend, oblivious to the truth, waited for him for a long time, but eventually gave up, and in the meantime ended up becoming close with the older brother, whom she eventually married. One day soon after, however, she woke up to find her husband dead, strangled while he slept. That was when the house was abandoned.

Many years later, some locals drinking at a nearby bar were overheard talking about the house by a foreigner, who claimed that their stories were mere superstition. In fact, he bet them that he would spend a whole night in the building on his own, and nothing would happen to him.

Well, the night got off to a good start, so much so that the man soon fell asleep, only to be woken up some hours later by a strange sound. Getting up off the floor where he was lying, he looked out onto the stairs where the sound seemed to be coming from, only to see a pair of severed hands coming up. They went into the room where he had been sleeping a few moments before, no longer looking empty. The room now appeared to be fully furnished, including a bed on which a sleeping man was lying. The hands wrapped around the man's throat, and he could see him struggling, until he was choked to death. The terrifying apparition then disappeared in front of his eyes, and he was again in an empty room. Needless to say, he made a hasty exit from the building.



We thank our correspondents, Social media and several individuals who send us news and information to use in our journal which is sent free to thousands of readers all over the world and keep them connected to their homeland



MALTESE CHAPLAINCY FESTIVITIES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Hello Everyone - We hope you and your loved ones are all doing well. A few reminder announcements for those based in South Australia...

MASS IN MALTESE (2nd Sunday of the Month) This coming weekend (10th September) to be celebrated at Lockleys Christ the King at 2.30pm.



MONTHLY COMMUNITY GET-TOGETHER for craft/cards/chitchat session will take place before Maltese Mass (10th September from 1.00pm) in the Lockley's Christ the King Parish Hall. So, make sure you pop in and say G'day! Guys – Gals - all welcome!



SAVE the DATES - QUEEN OF VICTORIES FEAST

Celebrations for this treasured traditional feast will take place over three days (29th, 30th September and the 1st October). Please save the dates. It's going to be so much fun!! Full details to follow soon!



IF YOU LOVE THIS ONLY JOURNAL FOR MALTESE LIVING ABROAD SUPPORT IT SHARE IT AND SEND US AN ARTICLE ADVERTISEMENT POEM OR YOUR STORY PUBLISHED FREE

Happy Parenting – Malta (For Happier Children) met Police Commissioner Angelo Gafa



In a meeting at the Police Headquarters in Floriana, Happy Parenting – Malta (For Happier Children) raised several issues in a discussion with Police Commissioner Angelo Gafa in the presence of some of his assistants.

Mary Gauci (President) and Anthony Cauchi (Founder and PRO of Happy Parenting – Malta For Happier Children) expressed their concern about the psychological harm that is

increasingly being caused particularly in cases of Parental Alienation. Parental Alienation is another form of domestic violence. Agreement was reached about the way domestic violence should be presented in the social media and in posters.

The second issue that was raised was the urgent need for Court notifications to be conducted digitally, as is the case in certain departments. There is at present unreasonable delays and court cases are unnecessarily taking too long, often with serious consequences.

The third issue concerned the need for reform in family law, in the sense that an agency should be established to examine cases before they are aggravated further. The objective is to prevent as much as possible such cases from reaching the courts, as the place of children and the family is not in court. For this reason, access and maintenance should be decriminalized. Accordingly, related clauses should be removed, namely, 338LL and 338Z.

Certain lies under oath (perjury) uttered in court should not be tolerated and should be addressed by the Judiciary. It is not fair for those affected innocently to have to go to court to clear their names from maliciously fabricated lies.

Mary and Anthony explained their intensive work in Prevention, Support and Therapy for family well-being. Among others, they organize annual international conferences and participate as guest speakers in conferences abroad. Presently preparations are underway to organize the next conference around the theme: **Happier Children through Healthy Shared Parenting**

The main speakers in this conference will be judges, psychotherapists and a lawyer. It will last over two days: **Friday 26th April is aimed at professionals in the field.**

Saturday 27th April is aimed at professionals and other interested parties.

Commissioner Gafa welcomed Happy Parenting's invitation to send a number of police representatives to this upcoming International Conference.

The Police Commissioner noted with appreciation the work Happy Parenting are doing and he demonstrated his support for a wider discussion towards a more effective system.

The Maltese Journal acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future
Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the
continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander peoples





The fabulous Carmen was born in Marsaxlokk, Malta in 1946. She looks amazing for her age, don't you think?

Carmen travelled to Australia with her parents and siblings when she was 16 years old. She met the love of her life Joey at a dance. Joey boldly approached Carmen whilst she was dancing with another man, and said "Joey and Carmen go together like birds of a feather ta"! Carmen responded, "How you know I love birds"? Carmen knew instantly he was the one.

Together they have two children, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Carmen loves life, her family, making pastizzi, cleaning, the bingo and the clubs. Carmen

loves making people laugh, her motto in life is; "You might as well laugh and have some fun, because one day we're all going in the ground ta"!

The fabulous character Carmen has been created by Australian actress Deborah Barrese.

Deborah has studied acting in Melbourne and Los Angeles, appearing in TV series, films, commercials, and voicing children's animated characters. Specialising in character work and accents, Deborah thrives on bringing life to any character. Deborah grew up in Melbourne, Australia, with Maltese blood running strong through her veins. She gained inspiration from her parents and grandparents who were born in beautiful Malta. Having spent Summer vacations with family in Malta, Deborah loves the Maltese culture and traditions and has always found the Maltese humour hilarious, and from a young age began impersonating her grandparents at family events.



"I had no idea Carmen would be such a hit! The fact that I was able to bring joy to people during such a challenging time, motivated me to keep going and develop Carmen's character. To be honest, Carmen helped me, as much as she helped others get through 2020"

For bookings and collaborations, please go to her webpage or Facebook page www.facebook.com/carmenthemaltese and Carmen will get back to you when she finishes her cleaning!



**I THANK THOSE WHO SENT A DONATION
TOWARD THE PRODUCTION OF THIS JOURNAL WHICH
I HAVE BEEN PUBLISHING FOR 8 YEARS VOLUNTARILY.**

**If you wish to send a donation here are the details
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ST. NICHOLAS FESTA COMMITTEE
PLUMPTON NSW

PRESENTING A







VARIETY NIGHT

Saturday 27th April 2024
6:30pm to 11pm
At The Good Shepherd Hall
136, Hyatts Road Plumpton NSW 2761

Featuring: -
Charlie Muscat, Martin Vella,
Victor Mifsud, Natasha Tatarinoff & More

\$10 Entry Donation & Kids U/12yrs - FREE
For tickets please call: -
President: - Emanuel on 0405 677 064 or
PRO: - Stella on 0414 188 226



**GEORGE CROSS FALCONS
COMMUNITY CENTRE
CRINGILA NSW**

**ANZAC Commemoration
Saturday 20 April 2024
at 10.00 am**

**ALL WELCOME TO ATTEND
Refreshments after the
ceremony**

The Maltese Community Council of Victoria
is proud to host the annual

MOTHER'S DAY HIGH TEA

Where: Maltese Community Centre
477 Royal Parade Parkville

When: Sunday 5th May 2024
Time: 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm
Cost: \$40

Glass of sparking upon arrival, sweet and savory food, tea, and Coffee.

Please contact MCCV.
on 9387 8922 for further information.
Tickets can be purchased from our Office.

Seeking musicians!



**We are on the lookout for
trumpeters to join our
Concert Band!**

Rehearsals
Wednesday nights from 7:30pm - 9:30pm
6 Helene street Ardeer.



For more information or to register your interest, message
us on facebook or email mmgconcertband@gmail.com