



Pilgrimage at the Canadian Martyr's Shrine, in Midland

On Saturday, 14th October, the Toronto Region organized a mini-pilgrimage to the Canadian Martyr's Shrine in Midland, Ontario, a little more than an hour north of Toronto. This national shrine commemorates the martyrdom of the Jesuit Jean de Brébeuf and his companions in 1649.

Despite being closed for the winter, the Director, Father Michael Knox, sj, opened the site for us and guided us through a discussion, mass, a communal meal, and a visit to all parts of the shrine, explaining the meaning and the need for a true commitment to Christ, as well as the history of the original Jesuits at Midland. Very few churches can concentrate the mind like the simple clearing in the forest at St-Ignace, where the martyrs were tortured and died for their faith and their parishioners.

Many of us felt this five hour pilgrimage to be as intense and more personal than even Lourdes.....and yet many Canadians do not know of it. Definitely a repeat for all concerned !

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**National Pilgrimage to Lourdes
from May 4 to May 8, 2018**

Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum

**Vigil and Investiture
in Ottawa
on September 7 and 8, 2018**

Message from the Past President

THANK YOU !

I am very happy to report that the last Lourdes pilgrimage was a resounding success. It was our second national pilgrimage and this year more than 36 volunteers and 5 malades from all regions of the country took part in a unique spiritual experience. We prayed every day and meditated together under Mary's protection. By praying and reflecting on our fragile humanity, we accomplish an act of humility and we find in Lourdes the joy to serve the malades that we encounter every day.

I must underline the presence of Archbishop Prendergast, of Ottawa, a chaplain of the Order, of Father Kerslake of the Archdiocese of Ottawa and of Father Francœur, c.s.v., of the Archdiocese of Montreal and also a chaplain of the Order. Bishop Raymond Poisson, Principal Chaplain sent his regrets because he was detained in Rome during working sessions with the Holy Father. In Lourdes, we prayed for unity within the Order. The presence in Lourdes of the new Lieutenant Grand Master was an occasion to rejoice by both the malades and pilgrims.

A short time after the pilgrimage, I went to Rome to attend the international colloquium of the International Association of Catholic Bioethicists. This colloquium was an opportunity to reflect and work towards a consensus to place a patient and his or her family at the centre of the relation between patient and caregiver in mutual respect. Our discussions were directed towards the importance of respecting the medical personnel's free conscience in the framework of the care to be given to the sick.

Shortly after my return to Canada, the Order gave me the responsibility of a task force to reform the governance of the Order, the Constitution and the Code. I am dedicating myself to this task with a committee composed of colleagues from the world over.

This is the last occasion I have the privilege of writing to you as President of the Association. So much ground has been covered during the six years I have served the Association in a spirit of harmony, unity and respect.

I leave in the knowledge that the Association is in good health, united and respectful of both official languages of the Association, English and French.

This road travelled, these accomplishments, our advances on the national and international scenes, I owe them to the members of the Board under my chairmanship. Our lively spirituality is the fruit of the work accomplished by our Principal Chaplains whom I thank gratefully, firstly Father Andrea Spatafora followed by Bishop Raymond Poisson.

I warmly thank the members of the Board during these past years for their dedication, their efforts, their advice and suggestions. I also thank all our volunteers who bear the cross of Malta passionately in the service of the poor and the sick. I wish full success to the new Board which, under the leadership of Mr. Roman Ciecwierz will pursue the work already begun and will make the Association prosper. My prayers go out to them in view of this important responsibility they will shoulder.

To each and everyone that I had the privilege of interacting with in Canada and in Lourdes, I say thank you for your deeds and for yours prayers in the service of the poor and the sick.

André A. Morin

Knight of Magistral Grace in Obedience

Message from the New President

I am truly honoured to be bringing to you my first message for Epistula as your President. To say that I feel humbled would be an understatement. I am aware that this message will for many of you, especially those that don't know me well, set the tone for how you will see me in my new role. I certainly have a clear picture of myself, my motivations and my goals, but then we never really are so certain that others see us the same way. I hope that my conveyance will reflect my intentions.

To begin, I do want to, once again, thank our past-president, André Morin for his dedicated service to the Order over the last six years. He has laid a very strong foundation for the Canadian Association as we move towards achieving the next great milestones in our history.

The first annual 'National Pilgrimage' of the Canadian Association was held on Saturday October 14th and it truly was a very fitting occasion to be my first official activity. A small group of Knights, Dames and family members met at the Martyrs' Shrine in Midland Ontario, and though the numbers were meek the impact was great. Fr. Michael Knox, the Jesuit Director of the Shrine welcomed us with a wonderfully crafted introduction that included the close ties between the Knights of Malta and the Jesuits since the beginnings and establishment of Canada. His knowledge and reflections drew us all in. The very intimate mass we celebrated in the sanctuary; the blessings he gave us and all the members of the Order and their families, on sacred ground and near relics; and the short tour of the grounds, all contributed to a day filled with deep meaning. Naturally laughter and good conversation pervaded our lunch break. Father Michael chose the location of the relics of Saint John Brebeuf to provide the end of mass blessing to all in attendance and he extended a special blessing to me as I venture into my term as President – very moving and humbling! All agreed that this Pilgrimage must continue and grow. I want to thank Bruce Adams for organizing this day and creating such a memorable event.

The word that has permeated my world since the election is 'humble'. That feeling has been following me endlessly and therefore, has caused much reflection. As a knight "in obedience" I, along with all others in the second class, have taken special vows that distinguish ourselves – not for veneration or added respect, and certainly not to be grander than others – but to be of greater service. The distinctive clothing and insignia are not intended to elicit greater reverence, but rather they mark who it is in our midst that we can turn for special care or service.

Those in 'Obedience' have promised to set aside personal goals and objectives for the sake of others. They have promised to live in obedience as a way of life – a life with a focus on the sacred duty to be of service to the sick, to the poor, and to our fellow knights and dames.

Humility has become my cornerstone more and more as I serve. It has manifested in New Orleans in home rebuilding for the poor, in visiting those in prison, in serving food and clothing to the homeless, and naturally in witnessing the power of faith in Lourdes. The Order of Malta gives us the perfect vehicle to put our faith into action and in return our God humbles us and prepares our path to Christian perfection.

Of course all this follows directly to and through our Holy Patron, St. John the Baptist. It seems to me that members of the Order can find no better figure to emulate in a culture whose values sometime run counter to our own Christian precepts. In a society in which image can be superficial but still count for everything, John the Baptist as patron offers a powerful example for those who elect to integrate service to the sick and the poor into a witness to the vitality of Christian faith.

The spirituality of the Order is built on service. To serve is to put the needs of others first. Humility is the key by which this service becomes God's work and not our own, and for that reason it is the hallmark of the life of a member of the Order of Malta. I ask that all of you, knights, dames, and friends of the Order, stay on message with your lives. Walking on the path with Jesus is sometimes a joy and sometimes a challenge. Sometimes we even wander off the path. But it is important that through our prayer and reading and service we call ourselves back to the right path. Together we can do "many small things with great love".

Your humble servant,

Roman J. Cieciewicz, KMOB



Message from the Principal Chaplain

Advent 2017

The period of Advent is a time for oneself and not only one to prepare for Christmas. Especially during the liturgical year that starts with Advent, it is the ending that interests us rather than the start; that is to say the coming of the Lord by taking flesh among us and by his definitive return begun with his Resurrection.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son” (Jn.3, 16), “God did not spare his own Son” (Rm.8, 32). Thus we are invited during these four weeks of Advent to consider the magnitude of God’s gift: with Jesus taking flesh among us and through his sacrifice, God creates a new Alliance under the seal of a love folly. As a consequence, our baptism makes us witnesses committed to the service of God and human hood, on a par with God’s love folly for us.

The texts recounting Jesus’ ministry are not just memories to be recalled, however good they are. The Saviour’s actions light up our present by inviting us to realise, in return, the promises contained in Christ’s sacrifice: the promise of a better world already inaugurated by the Resurrected, of which the Church is the living proof.

As members of the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta, each and every one of us take part in implanting this better world among the poor and the sick. Seen in isolation, our action is minimal, but within this great universal family that the Order of Malta is, a multiplicity of gestures and attitudes manifest God’s love folly for human beings and, in particular, to the least important among us. Christ is well and truly at work! If the Advent period lasts only four weeks, the mission it conveys nonetheless lasts during the entire life, “my entire life”!

+ *Raymond Poisson, Bishop of Joliette*
Principal Chaplain of the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta





IN MEMORIAM



Fra' John Alexander MacPherson (1931-2017)

Fra' John Alexander MacPherson, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Bailiff Grand Cross of Justice of the Order of Malta, quondam President of the Canadian Association of the Order (1988-1992), died on September 19, 2017 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He had been admitted as a Knight of Magistral Grace in 1973 promoted to Grace and Devotion in 1976, and became a Knight in Obedience in 1982. In 1992, he became a Novice Knight of Justice who professed his simple vows in 1993. In 1996, he became a professed Knight in solemn vows and was promoted to the rank of Grand Cross of Justice in 1991. In June 2004, he was promoted a Bailiff Grand Cross of Justice and, in 2009, he was awarded the Order's Grand Cross *Pro Pio Melitensi*.

From 1994 to 2009, he was a member of the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta, and from 2001 to 2010, he was President of the Committee for the protection of names and emblems of the Sovereign Order of Malta. During his tenure as President of the Canadian Association, he hosted, in 1992, the visit to Canada of H.M.E.H. the late Fra' Andrew Bertie, 78th Prince and Grand Master of the Order.

Born in Windsor, Ontario, June 1, 1931, but with deep ancestral roots in Nova Scotia, he began his teaching career at Xavier College, Sydney, NS, in 1955. He then enjoyed a long association with St. Francis Xavier University where an uncle, Reverend Dr. H.A. MacPherson, had been President from 1906 to 1936, first as an Associate Professor in 1961, and then as a full Professor in the Department of English until his retirement in 1995. He specialised in Shakespeare and Renaissance literature. Doctor MacPherson served as University Ceremonial Officer from 1965 until 1995.

During his long and distinguished service to the Church and to the Order, Fra' John was awarded several high distinctions, chief of which were Gentlemen to His Holiness, Grand Officer of the papal Order of Saint Gregory the Great, and a Cross of Merit of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. He was also a Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of Italy and a Grand Officer of Spain's Civil Order of Merit. He served on the Supreme Council of the Sacred and Military Constantinian Order of Saint George.

The funeral was held in Saint Ninian's Cathedral in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, presided by the Very Reverend Donald MacGillivray, CD, Rector of the Cathedral. An imposing number of members of the University faculty attended *en corps* and robed.

The following Knights of Malta received the body the Cathedral's entrance and were situated in the sanctuary during the funeral mass: the Honorable Noël A. Kinsella, Knight Grand Cross, outgoing Chancellor of the Canadian Association led the delegation composed of Rev. Dr. Marc A. Smith, csc, Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*, Fra' Matthieu Jacques Dupont, Knight of Justice in simple vows, Dr. Robert Pichette, Knight Grand Cross in Obedience and former Chancellor and an Honorary Pallbearer, Mr. James Wilson Gogan, Knight of Magistral Grace and Mr. James Richard Gogan, Knight of Magistral Grace.

Fra' Matthieu Dupont placed Fra' John's stole as a professed Knight on the casket as it was brought into the Cathedral. He also read the Order's Daily Prayer after the Eucharist. Doctor Kinsella read the First Reading (Wisdom 4:7-15), while Doctor Pichette read the Second Reading (Romans 14:7-9). The Homily was given by the celebrant, Father MacGillivray, a former student, who developed the theme of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). The final commendation was presided by Reverend Doctor Marc Smith in choir habit of Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*. Burial followed in the Catholic cemetery of Antigonish.

Predeceased by his parents, and a sister, Dorothy MacPherson, he is survived by a brother, Neil MacPherson, Montreal, Knight of Magistral Grace of the Order of Malta, a sister, Helen Wainman (Gordon) of London, ON, and a niece Megan Wainman (Kerry Ambrose) of Toronto.

Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Lieutenant Grand Master, sent the following telegram to the President of the Canadian Association: "It is with great sadness that I have learned of the passing away of our dear Confrère, H. E. the Venerable Bailiff Fra John MacPherson. Please accept the heartfelt condolences of myself and the Sovereign Council together with our prayers for the happy repose of his soul."

When Fra' John was granted a coat-of-arms by the Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1975, he unsurprisingly but aptly chose as a motto Bear free and patient thoughts, from Shakespeare King Lear, Act 4, Scene 6. This motto truly summarises Fra' John's life of service to the Church, the Order and the University.

Requiescat in Pace

Academic Internships in Africa

In December of 2014, the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta and the University of Montreal (Faculty of Nursing) created the Blessed Gerard's Fellowships. The program consists of an internship in a hospital managed by the Order of Malta, in Africa. It was established under the initiative of our colleague Christian Samoissette, and is managed by the Montreal region.

For the first year of the program, two meritorious students of the University of Montreal's Faculty of Nursing, Valérie Bissonnette and Julie Lapointe-Grenier, were given grants of 1,500 dollars each to stay at the Hospital of the Order of Malta in the city of Dakar, in Senegal. This hospital was founded in 1967 by the Order of Malta-France as the Applied Leprosy Institute of Dakar. It is now part of the National University Hospital of Fann.



The students spent two months there, from February 23 to April 23 2016, and had the opportunity not only to learn about leprosy, but also to exchange knowledge in medical practices with nurses and physicians of the place. They also visited the Siné Saloum health centre (on Mar Lodge Island) and the village of Touba Peycouck, where those suffering from leprosy can get medical and social rehabilitation after the treatments.

Each year, a fundraising diner is held in Montreal to support the program, and the grants have been raised to 2,500 dollars for the second year.

In the Spring of 2017, student Julie Maurice was flown for a two-month internship at the St-Jean-Baptiste Hospital, in the city of Tiassalé on the Ivory Coast. She was the only student who met the strict academic criteria for the Fellowship of the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta.



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Annual Retreat of the Montreal Region



2017 Vigil and Investiture in Ottawa



Summary of Malteser International's Activities



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