



## Ceremony for the Renewal of Fra' Mathieu Dupont's Vows

On July 15, our national chaplain, Mgr Raymond Poisson, bishop of Joliette et coadjutor bishop of Saint-Jérôme, has received the renewal of the vows from Fra' Mathieu Dupont, Knight of Justice, during the mass of 10:30 AM at the Saint-Charles-Borromée Cathedral, in Joliette.

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**Vigil and Investiture  
in Ottawa,  
September 14 and 15,  
2018**



**National Pilgrimage to Lourdes**

# Message from the President

The 2017 election resulted in a big change in the composition of the Association's Board of Directors. We have all worked hard since to get to know each other, to develop closer working relationships, to review where we are as an Association and where we could be. On an international level much work has been done on defining key strategic reforms to allow the Order to successfully grow and meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

In May, we elected a Grand Master, Fra Giacomo Dalla Torre, to lead the charge of reforms and to provide stability to the process. This will be an important point as the Order prepares for possible changes to Sovereign Council at next year's regularly scheduled Chapter General.

Even though this is now my 10th year on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association, the 'view from the top' has unexpectedly added a new perspective. It has become clear that it is time also for our Association to undergo change if we are to make the kind of impact we all know is possible.

As we celebrate our 65th anniversary in 2018, taking the time to envision what the Canadian Association could look like in 2028 has become a key element for the creation of a plan that will get us there, and beyond. Financial stability and sustainability are two cornerstones we must solidify. The Board is in the process of deliberating these very questions.

Significant Membership growth, the creation of an endowment fund and getting a good grasp on meeting our annual financial targets through fundraising, grants and donations, will all definitely be parts of the plan. Of course, this will need to include the involvement of each one of you, our friends and members.

We can all do something, be it hands on work, recruitment, organized prayer, prison ministry through a virtual rosary group or becoming a pen pal, calling or visiting our home bound or elderly members, donating, including the Order in planned giving and bequests, or seeking donations on behalf of the Order. I have asked Fra Mathieu to head a Spirituality Committee to address some of these items, and Prison Ministry Chair Patrick Portelli is in contact with prison chaplains to find easy and meaningful ways for member participation.

In the words of Mother Teresa, we don't all need to do great things, but we can all do small things with great love. Please let me know if there is a particular way you are able to contribute your time, talent or treasures.

Lastly, I want to welcome our new knights and dames, Paul Fields, Paul Golini, Armand La Barge and Theresa Wang. At this point your journey has included your sponsor and the Holy Spirit. Following the investiture all of us will journey together in service to the sick and the poor. I have always looked forward to this annual ceremony of investiture to witness and support the humble acceptance of new members of their commitment to our faith and our beloved Order. It also serves, for me, as a wonderful renewal and reminder of the promises I made fifteen years ago and a perfect time to take mental stock of my actions to serve the mission of the Order in the prior year, leading to that life long journey of Christian perfection. I look forward to seeing a great number of you on September 14/15th in Ottawa.

Roman J. Ciecwierz, KMOB  
President  
Canadian Association



## Message from the Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross ad honorem

In our Canadian context, autumn feels like the beginning of the year. So it is that usually each early autumn the Canadian Association of the Knights of Malta in conjunction with its Annual General Meeting celebrates the investiture of new members. At the outset of their investiture the candidates are asked simply, “What do you seek?” and they respond “I ask mercy of God and seek investiture in the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.”

Let us not take too lightly the request to receive the mercy of God. Jesus Christ in his mission from the Father shows us the face of God which is mercy. For our human weakness and intentional sinfulness we thirst for God’s mercy. Before investiture, we ask for the mercy of God. In the context of the initiation ceremony, God’s mercy is a gift which the Knights and Dames are expected to share. As Pope Francis reminds us, all members of the Church are to announce the mercy of God which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person.

Indeed, mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life. In her preaching, her pastoral activity and her worship the tenderness and healing of God is the core. In the strongest and most consistent terms Pope Francis insists that in our time the Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.

Seeking the mercy of God is the continuous desire of all the members of the Order so that they may serve our lords the sick.

The second part of the opening response at the ceremony is requesting investiture. Formed by centuries of tradition in the Order the vesting or assuming the habit of the Order is the outward sign of the inner commitment. Central to the vestments is the Cross of Malta. This distinctive eight point cross, of course, represents the Beatitudes. When he

gave us the Beatitudes, Jesus gave us the Christian’s identity card. They are how anyone is to recognize a follower of the Lord. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount.

Thus, each and every member of the Order of Malta in the first place seek God’s mercy and the grace to live in concert with the meaning of their eight pointed cross. The meeting point of these two realities is the cross of Jesus where the fullest expression of mercy is proclaimed. At the foot of the cross, Mary, our Mother, witnessed this ultimate act of mercy. As the Lady of Philermo, may her intercession protect and deepen the commitment made at your investiture.

† John A. Boissonneau  
Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto  
Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross ad honorem



# Renewal of Fra' Mathieu Dupont's Vows





# Biographies of New Members

## Paul Fields

Originally from North Carolina, USA, Paul Fields has been living in the Greater Toronto Area for almost 20 years.

After retiring from the US Armed Forces in 2000, Paul joined the US Department of Justice's Immigration and Naturalization Service and was sent to work in Canada.

Paul also worked for six years as an international law enforcement advisor under contract to the US Departments of State and Homeland Security in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

He currently works in the security industry as a personal protection specialist, private investigations and special event security management.



## Paul Golini

Having spent the majority of his career in real estate Paul has had the fortunate experience of being part of many facets of the industry. From sitting on boards and steering committees of industry regulatory bodies like Tarion and EnerQuality, to his leadership role as Chair of one of our industries most influential organizations, Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), Paul's vast array of experience in both his professional and personal life has led to many opportunities of leadership, research and consultation.

His continued passion in areas of health sciences, arts and city building are also evident in his involvement in the Humber River Hospital, the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Italian Contemporary Film Festival, Director on the Toronto Region Board of Trade and most recently appointed as Chair of Tarion.



# Biographies of New Members

## Armand Paul LaBarge

Armand is a long-time parishioner of St. Peter-in-Chains parish in Peterborough and he is the Vice Chair of Trent University and a member of the Aboriginal Education Council. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of Sacred Heart College and the Immediate Past Chair of the St. John Council for Ontario.

Armand is the retired Chief of York Regional Police; Past President of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and he is a past Board Member of York University and the Past President of Special Olympics Ontario. He and his wife Denise, who is also a retired police officer, are active in inter-faith and inter-cultural work here in Canada and abroad.



## Theresa Wong

Theresa Wang was born in Hong Kong and came to Canada as a student. Her working career has been in Canada and she now resides North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Ms. Wang is a Eucharistic Minister in her parish church and a member of the Hospital Ministry; visiting the sick once or twice weekly. She sings in the Latin choir at Holy Rosary Cathedral in Vancouver, beside being a choir member in my parish church.

She has been to Lourdes with the Canadian Order of Malta in 2017, and this summer has been volunteering at the Shrine of La Salette in France during the months of June, July and August.



# Roundtable on the Persecution of Christians

The Canadian Association of the Order of Malta was invited to attend a round table discussion on persecuted Christians in Africa and the Middle East. The event was held at the Ottawa offices of Cardus, a non-partisan faith-based think tank, and united faith-based organizations of all three Abrahamic religions, the diplomatic corps, and members of parliament. Moderated by the Order of Malta's own Dr. Andrew Bennett, Program Director of Cardus Law, the round table featured, among others, David Anderson, M.P. for Cypress-Hills – Grasslands and founding members of IPPforB, an informal network of parliamentarians and legislators from around the world committed to combatting religious persecution and advancing freedom of religion or belief, and Dr. Thomas Farr, President of the Religious Freedom Institute in Washington.

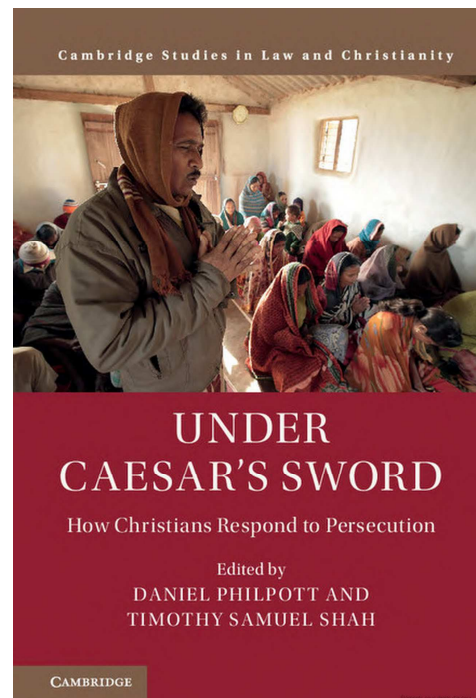
The discussion highlighted that over 50% of people facing religious persecution globally identify as Christian, making Christians the most persecuted people of faith in the world today. The flight of Christians from the Middle East was also discussed, showcasing Lebanon where in 1910 Christians represented 3/4 of the population, one hundred years later that number has inverted with Christians accounting for less than 1/4 of the population.

The panel went on to question why this topic is not more widely discussed and why there was an apparent lack of desire to address it. The lack of action or receptiveness by the Catholic Church was remarked upon repeatedly, with anecdotes relating to some priests being unwilling to add prayers on behalf of persecuted Christians into the prayers of the faithful during the Mass. The lack of a response to this issue was attributed to ignorance and/or apathy. The solutions of which were to educate people on the issue. One such project that aims to study and educate on the subject of Christian persecution is the University of Notre Dame's Under Caesar's Sword project.

Click here (<https://player.vimeo.com/video/187841772>) to watch an informative documentary (runtime of 26 minutes).

Given the Order of Malta's history as protector of pilgrims in the Holy Land and its role today with Malteser International assisting refugees (faith-based or otherwise), it was well-suited to participate in this event. In addition to Dr. Bennett, two other members of the Order were in attendance (Rev. Andrea Spatafora and Mike Obrist) and our presence helped build awareness of the Order. The round table was followed by a reception which allowed for connecting with members of parliament, the diplomatic community, and other faith-based organizations. In the coming weeks our President will be following up with several of these organization to further awareness and influence of the Canadian Association.

Mike Obrist, KM





# Statement of a Pilgrim at Lourdes

I was born on 5 May 2018.

I had listened with great interest to the accounts of my Vice President who had been encouraging me to travel to Lourdes.

35 years in France and yet I had never felt the need nor the urge to go there.

But, if I must, I would go.

However, should I go, I want to be accompanied by my brother so that together we would tackle our sufferings.

Therefore, I prepared for this pilgrimage in all humility, promising my wife that I would only go this once ... a promise that now seems impossible to honour.

Because if you've never been to Lourdes, you do not know.

You do not know that each moment, each vibration, and each exchange with the combined groups of pilgrims from all over the world is a saga of the most exceptional interactions.

You do not know that the majestic beauty of the premises will embrace you.

You do not know that you will create strong friendships that will forever be engraved in your heart.

You do not know that on 5 May 2018, immersed in the baths with your brothers and sisters at your side, you will be reborn within the Order, determined to remain faithful to its traditions while practicing charity towards you neighbour, but above all towards the poor and the sick.

Now, I know and I shall return.

Gautier Genevet





# Statement of Another Pilgrim at Lourdes

Hello,

My name is Bernard Genevet and for the past 18 years, I have been schizophrenic.

My brother is a member of the Order of Malta and he suggested that I accompany him on a trip to Lourdes.

He flew to Marseille from where we drove during four hours to Lourdes. It was raining when we arrived at the Hotel Christina where we joined the other members of the group. During five days, there were masses, prayers and meetings.

We were given a programme and an hymnal on which was written, "Do everything he will tell you", meaning God. In the course of my illness I heard voices that told me to do different things. I did everything I was told to and sank in madness and ravings. But the pilgrimage made me understand "Do everything he will tell you" from another angle. Seeing so many ill persons confined in one place touched me deeply.

The miseries of the world are more easily understood when seen on a daily basis. The streets of Lourdes were teeming with people during those five days; members of the Order, men and women, dressed in their distinctive uniforms, and by the malades pulled in their blue carts. Our hearts are touched when one sees human suffering at close range and this suffering is an incentive.

The word that best describes this pilgrimage is: Hope. Everyone arrives in Lourdes with hopes and, failing a cure, one leaves with a strengthened faith. These masses attended by thousands of people are never-to-be-forgotten moments. God gathers his own so that they have an opportunity to meet and know each other. He has chosen to gather them there in this hodgepodge of international cultures.



United and reunited around those who are more ill than one is, they teach us that everyone must carry his or her cross. Every one of us carries his or her cross even if it is less visible when borne by the more able bodied. This journey brought me the joy of a renewed faith, fresh as a torrent inundating my heart. And I thank the Order of Malta Canada for allowing me to live such an experience.



# 2017 Investiture





# 2018 Pilgrimage, Lourdes





## **In the Next Issue:**



**Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Chevreières de Saint-Vallier  
1653-1727  
Bishop of Quebec City, Knight of the Order of Malta**

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