



## In front of the Lennon Wall, Prague, Czech Republic

A normal wall until the death of John Lennon in 1980, it became a place for inspiration for young people and a source of irritation for the communist regime. Located across from the French Embassy, the wall is owned by the Order of Malta which allowed the graffiti to continue on the wall, and is located at Velkopřevorské náměstí (Grand Priory Square), Malá Strana.

President Roman Ciecwierz and his spouse Lisa Lapoint-Ciecwierz.



## Vigil and Investiture in Ottawa, September 13 and 14, 2019

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**National Pilgrimage  
to Lourdes,  
May 2 to May 7, 2019**

# Message from the President

As you read this we will likely have entered into the next cycle of the Church's liturgical calendar. We find ourselves preparing and waiting for the hope that comes as a result of the Lord's passion and resurrection. Service to the poor and the sick, takes on a renewed importance as we focus on preparing our hearts, minds and spirits during Lent.

I had hoped to be able to provide you with an update on the status of the reforms that the Order has undertaken, but following the recent international meeting of national presidents, I find myself with little to report. I can say that following a very long, thorough presentation by the Receiver of the Common Treasury, the financial state of the Order has improved greatly over the past four years.

Much has been done to become fiscally responsible and the Order has for the first time, audited financial statements. Otherwise, the renewal of the first class in terms of spirituality, preparation, and determining what living their vows needs to look like, is with Canon lawyers and the Grand Master. The upcoming Chapter General in May will likely be the catapult to move further reforms forward.

The greatest benefit to such meetings is always found in the interactions with others. I was truly humbled and inspired (with a splash of jealousy) in hearing of the works of my counterparts. Without a doubt the Sovereign Order's depth in history plays a significant role in how they operate to fulfill the mission and charisms of The Order. They run budgets in the 10s of millions of euro and manage separate charitable corporations that oversee dozens of programs and possibly thousands of employees.

The white Maltese cross is so well known and respected that in most European countries the governments give funding and responsibility to the Order to run portions of their social programs aimed at the elderly or disadvantaged. Having said that, there is a certain satisfaction from my Canadian / North American viewpoint.

We certainly have to work harder to self-fund our activities, find the gaps in care to create the activities, and then staff these activities with Knights, Dames and volunteers. This all helps to define us, connect us and strengthen our confraternal bond.

I would like to thank all of you that responded with your generosity to our first annual fall appeal. These contributions have helped the Association to meet many of our commitments to the programs we hold dear. I do ask that you continue to support not only our yearly objectives, but also our longer term goal of building a \$2 million endowment through stock donations, life insurance, bequests or a significant legacy type contributions.

I ask you to pray for our Order and its leadership worldwide. May our Blessed Mother protect it as always and may the Holy Spirit inspire with wisdom and pureness of heart.

I wish you and your families a very Holy and Blessed Lent and a joyous Easter.

In Domino.

Roman J. Ciecwierz, KMOB  
President





# Tuitio Fidei

## Definition

Let us begin by defining the words. *Tuitio* is from the Latin word “tueor”=support, tutor, trusteeship, defence ... Personally, I am not overly fond of the word “defence” because, nowadays, it has a somewhat bellicose, doctrinaire or apologetic connotation. Ex: The *Legion of Mary, The Legionaries of Christ*... Because the SOM is a chivalric order where the sword has accompanied the cross, we must use words prudently. That is why I prefer *support*. Tuitio Fidei: support of the faith.

## What is Faith?

Bernanos wrote: “Faith is 24 hours of doubt, less a minute of hope”. Faith is a conviction, not evidence. Believing is not synonymous with knowing every definition or every answer to life’s enigmas. Believing is not about “proofs”.

Faith is not developed through apologetic arguments, that is to say ready answers to objections. *Apologia* was developed during the 19th and 20th centuries to confound rationalists! During our classical education, we were provided with a thick book of apologetics... to prove that Catholics were as intelligent as the rationalists!

We have moved beyond the era when science & faith were set against each other, soft sciences against hard sciences. There is a cute story on this topic: two persons were walking by the seashore. One was a believer, the other a non-believer. The non-believer found a seashell on which was written: “I do not exist”! Signed GOD. The unbeliever said to the believer: “See, I told you so”!

Faith does not explain the “How”; it answers “Why”. It opens up infinity. In my opinion, it is Thérèse de Lisieux, the little Carmelite nun who lived in Northern France, who drew us out of this sterile confrontation (faith versus science) by identifying faith to trust. For her, believing signified trusting God in everything in spite of everything ... because God can do no wrong. Thérèse had developed a very good relationship with her father, to the extent that she transposed it to God ... who she referred to as her Papa (Abba).

## Conviction & Opinion

Where faith is concerned, it is more important to have convictions rather than opinions. A conviction is like concrete; an opinion is like a drifting cloud in the sky; it forms itself and it unravels. In Quebec, we run a great deal on opinions, so much so that some recover their faith at the moment they overtake a truck in a road curve but lose it in the Western plains! Our convictions are organized around the Ten Commandments. That is solid concrete!

## An Image

Were I to suggest an image to suggest faith, it would be that of a bike, especially one of the old country bikes with wide tires in order to travel on gravel, one of those bikes with a small dynamo fixed on the front tire. You had to pedal hard in order to produce a little bit of light that would shine just far enough to allow forward movement. Going uphill was more difficult since our survival depended on our capacity to pedal!



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# Tuitio Fidei

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## The Relays of the Faith

In Abraham, father of the believers (Genesis 12; Rom 4, 1-25), we read (Gen 12,1): “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you’.” The Hebrew text is even much more precise. It reads: *Lekh Lekha!* Literally: walk towards yourself! Abraham did not have a road map, or a Michelin Guide, or a GPS; he had only his conscience. Walking towards oneself = listening to one’s conscience, i.e. never accepting contradiction.

In Judeo-Christian history there is a myriad of believers, male and female. Some are close to us generationally ... While living our faith, we often refer to persons who are like beacons: Brother André, Jean Vanier, Mother Teresa, Louise Brissette, etc... Others are even closer: relatives, co-workers, writers, etc. Pope John Paul II even said: “Any human being is a path to God”, even the weakest, sometimes the most unpleasant...! Who in your spiritual journey has influenced you the most?

## Learning

Péguy wrote: “There is worse than a perverse soul...a contended soul”!

Faith has substance. Saint Thomas dwells to quite an extent on this notion of the “*intellectus fidei*” – the intelligence of the faith. How, by frequenting the Bible more assiduously, i.e. by reading it. Of course, there are also retreats, sessions, courses ... We become better counsellors when we have knowledge. We must hang on like mountaineers. We do have two excellent handles: the Word of God and prayers. The non-believer lives in nostalgia/the believer lives from memory (in memory of Him...).

## How to sustain the faith

Story of the young, tanned persons.

*“Once, in Marseille, a dozen young professionals decided to holiday on a yacht. Healthy guys and gals. In the middle of the Mediterranean, someone shouted: “Let’s jump in the water”. The water was blue, the sea calm. The anchor was dropped and everybody jumped into the sea... I have often swummed in the Mediterranean. What a feeling of freedom and wellbeing! There is nothing wrong in playing in the sea! After a while, someone wanted to get back on deck. They had overlooked one small detail: the boarding ladder had not been lowered and there was no one on board. There were futile attempts to climb on board but the ship’s flanks were too smooth...The ship was found two days later. They all drowned.”* (Bernard Bro, *La libellule et le haricot*, Presses de la renaissance, Paris 2003, 730 p.)

One of the titles bestowed when we are baptized is that of “prophet”. To be a prophet today is to be a “Sentinel”. “Sentinel, what of the night?” (Isaiah 21.11). A Christian is a sentinel. He ensures that the boarding ladder is drawn...if not, everyone will drown. He watches without supervising...He watches... in the sense of being alert, wide awake, being the conscience of one’s living environment, developing one’s critical mind...The Christian does not organize a sinking just to check the abilities of swimmers! He asks questions...without moralizing! He offers opportunities, creates occasions, supports good causes, etc.

+ Father Gérard Blais, s.m., Marianist, Quebec City  
Conventual Chaplain *ad honorem*



# A Visit Through Time and History



On 8 December 2018 several members and friends of the Order of Malta in the Quebec Region paid a visit to the Ursuline Nuns in Old Quebec and were able to discover their monastery and their museum. This visit was made possible thanks to the benevolence of Sister Lise Munro who welcomed us and acted as our guide. In addition, she allowed us to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Sacred Heart Oratory, an historical chapel erected in 1642, situated within the monastery and which is not normally opened to the public.

The Quebec City monastery of the Ursulines, founded in 1639 by Marie de l'Incarnation with the assistance of Madame Marie-Madeleine de la Peltrie, is the oldest educational institution for young women in North America. Nowadays the convent, which has remained active through the French, British and Canadian periods, still functions as an educational facility through the Ursulines' School that admits boys since 2010.

The chapel where the Eucharistic celebration was held is called the Sacred Heart Oratory because it was in this local that devotion to the Sacred Heart began in Canada.

It is, in fact, the first Ursulines' chapel where Father Barthélémy Vimont, a Jesuit missionary and the 3rd superior of the Canadian mission, celebrated the first mass on 21 November 1642. Important figures in the religious history of Canada have officiated in this small chapel, such as the Canadian Martyrs Jean de Brébœuf and Gabriel Lalemant, but also Bishop Saint François de Montmorency-Laval and Bishop Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevreières de Saint-Vallier.

It is important to recall that the history of the Order of Malta and that of the Quebec Ursulines crossed paths before and at their arrival in New France. For instance, Noël Brûlart de Sillery, knight, Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order of Malta, Commander of the Temple at Troyes, diplomat and a Councillor to the King, is one of those who supported Madame de la Peltrie, notably by means of a letter of support in favour of granting a mission order so that she could be accompanied in New France by Ursulines from the monastery in Tours.

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# A Visit Through Time and History

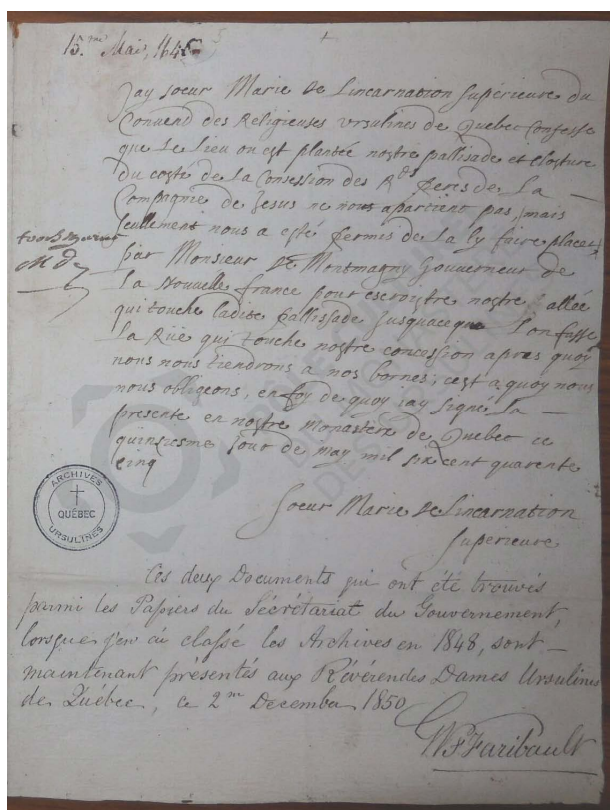
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Once authorisation was obtained, Madame de la Peltrie, Marie de l'Incarnation and two of her colleagues boarded a ship in Dieppe in May 1639 outward bound for New France. Upon their arrival at Quebec, they were greeted by another knight of Malta, Charles Huault de Montmagny, the first governor of New France (1636-1648) who installed them in a private dwelling in lower town, near the harbour. Documents of that period are still preserved in the monastery archives in Quebec City. One is a letter and a statement by Marie de l'Incarnation, dated 15 May 1645 to be found today in the records of Marie de l'Incarnation in the Quebec Ursulines' archives. Pope Francis proclaimed Marie de l'Incarnation a saint in April 2014.

François Caron  
Vice President, Quebec Region



*Tomb of Marie de l'Incarnation*



*Document addressed in 1645 by  
Marie de l'Incarnation  
to Charles Huault de Montmagny,  
Knight of the Order of Malta*



*Father Gérard Blais,  
Conventual chaplain ad honorem*

# An Angel's Dance

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 10 a.m., January 12, 2019.

I am working peacefully in my room at 'La Petite Béquille' (The Little Crutch) when I hear the song "When the sun says hello to the mountains" bellowed at full blast on a tape recorder in the yard.

"When the sun says hello to the mountains!"

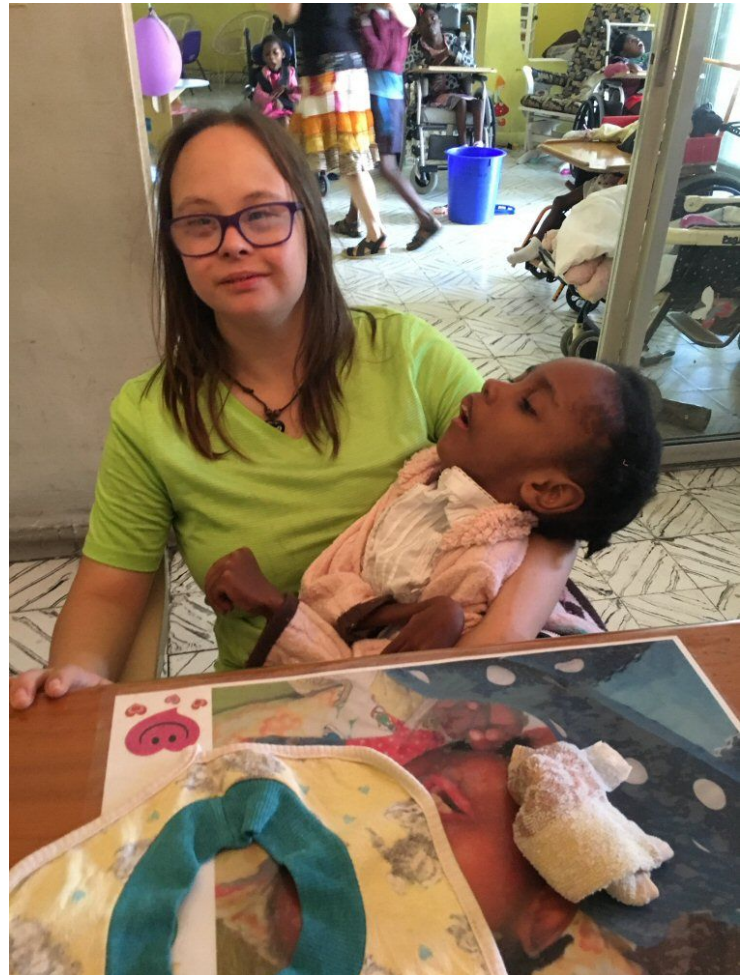
I walk to the balcony to discover below Delphine, Veronique's dedicated helper, who is busy giving gymnastic exercises to the ten disabled children in their wheelchairs. Breakfast is over, now we have to get these children, aged from 6 to 10, moving. Then Delphine takes turns grabbing each of the wheelchairs and, on the run, cross-pulls between the tables and flowerpots, she twirls the handicapped children around, swings them back and forth to the sound of this song that she sings as best she can.

With loud shouts, she improvises a rodeo with one, makes a spinning top with another while cuddling and surreptitiously kissing everyone. For a moment, she deftly pushes a chair into a corner, gives it up until she makes a few quick steps and catches the chair before it crashes into the wall! "When the sun says hello to the mountains!" I am blown away ...

As we adults bemoan the plight of these disabled children, as we claim that the planet would be better off without these unfortunate children who cost the State so much, Delphine, a 15-year old Down's syndrome patient, dances with them under the Haitian sun. This is one of the most beautiful acts of humanity I have ever witnessed!

Gérard Blais, sm

Conventual Chaplain ad honorem of the Order of Malta  
Member of the Board of Directors of 'La Petite Béquille'

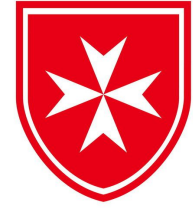
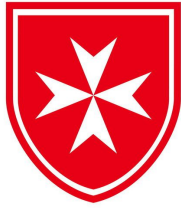


## ***La Petite Béquille***

*In 2013, Canadian Marianists left Haiti in the wake of a double murder. During the same year, they signed a lease with Louise Brissette for the occupancy of their former novitiate in Port-au-Prince. Over the years, and with the approval of the social services of Port-au-Prince, she has adopted ten severely handicapped Haitian children. She has created a corporation called 'La Petite Béquille' (The Little Crutch). Father Gérard Blais, a Marianist and Chaplain of the Order of Malta, sits on the corporation's board of directors. Between two outbreaks of violence, he visited 'La Petite Béquille' from January 7 to January 14, 2019.*



# Remembering the Order in your Will



The Sovereign Military Order of Malta has earned countless chapters in the annals of Roman Catholic Philanthropy. We belong to an Order that unites us directly with people who defended the Faith and served the sick and the poor throughout the last nine centuries. We are inspired by their example and now it is our turn to contribute to the Order in our own time.

A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. This Greek proverb expresses the most noble aspirations of the living for the future. The National Board of the Canadian Association is developing a plan to ensure that the work of the Order will continue beyond the efforts and lifetime of us all. But we need your support.

In coming issues of the Epistula, you will read about how you can donate to the Order. But the focus today is more fundamental: to encourage you to think about your lifetime commitment to the Order of Malta when you develop your estate plan. Your support now ensures that the Canadian Association can inspire and fulfill our mission of service to the neediest in the world of tomorrow.

On behalf of the President and the National Directors, thank you.

Valentine Lovekin





# New Appointments

## **Karol Pawlina** **International Trademark Protection Committee**

Our representative on the Order of Malta's International Trademark Protection Committee, Karol Pawlina, was invested in 2017 and was married in 2018. Karol practices Corporate and Intellectual Property Law as a sole practitioner in Toronto.

He received his Juris Doctor at Osgoode Hall Law School and was called to the Ontario Bar in 2016 as a Barrister and Solicitor. Karol is a Registered Trade-mark Agent in Canada and is pursuing his Patent Agent qualification in Canada. While in law school, he worked at a boutique Intellectual Property Law firm in Toronto. He has an Honours Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering from Ryerson University.

Karol was also a member of the Policy Department at the Office of the Minister of Finance (Minister Flaherty) and worked in Parliament as a Special Assistant to Kyle Seeback, MP for Brampton West.



## **Mike Obrist** **Director of Communications**



Mike Obrist is a Canadian diplomat of Swiss origin currently serving in Ottawa as Senior Desk Officer for West Africa. Prior to his current position he served as Vice-Consul to Canada's Consulate in Guadalajara Mexico. Married with two children, Mike has been with the Order of Malta since 2014 and currently serves as the Canadian Associations Delegate for Communications.

In addition to Canada's two official languages, Mike is fluent in Spanish and German. He holds an MBA from the Telfer School of Management, as well as bachelor degrees in Psychology and German from the University of Ottawa.

# Order of Malta - Sites of Interest



There is a good hotel in the old city of Rocamadour (France). It is one of the houses of Commander Jehan de Valon of our order. He participated in the siege of Rhodes (1480). The name is "Hotel Beau-Site". Here is the link to that hotel:  
<http://www.beausite-rocamadour.com/accueil.php>

In Gavarnie (France), the church is one of our chapel. It was built during the XIVth century and is on the path to Saint-Jacques de Compostelle.

Éric van Blaeren

I went to Rhodes about 25 years ago. I travelled on my own via Athens to the port in Pirraeas to take a boat to Rhodes. The fortifications are still intact and well worth the visit. Near Rhodes is the island of Cos (Kos) the home of Hippocrates for the physicians in the Order.

Robert M. Boyko, KStJ, KMG, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP  
Hospitaller, Toronto and Southwest Ontario Region,  
Canadian Association

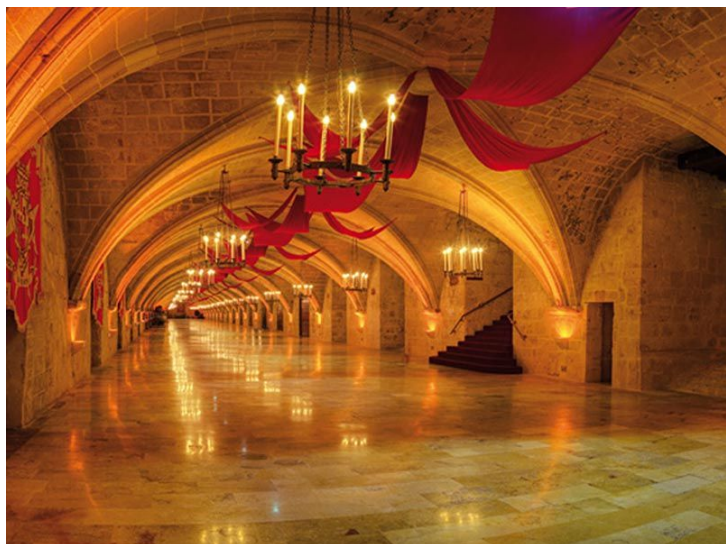


I visited Malta and was deeply moved by the old hospital. In the middle ages, the knights treated every sick person who came to the door in a huge room with marble floors. Every patient had a single bed and food was served on silver plates to protect them from bacteria and infection.

Every morning, the knights looked after the sick, washed them, fed them etc. Some of the surgery used at this time was new. Interestingly some of it is still in use today. When I stood in this room and learned its history I realized the great humanity of the Order of Malta displayed for centuries, and to this day.

I also recommend visiting the cave where St. Paul baptized the population of Malta, including the Roman Governor, when he was shipwrecked on the way to Rome and landed on the Island.

Leopoldina Dobrzensky





# Order of Malta - Sites of Interest

My favourite places in Malta are St. John's Co-Cathedral with its collection of marble tombstones, laid in the floor of the central nave and the fantastic, restored painting by Caravaggio: The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist. Next, I rank Mdina, a walled city and capital of Malta until 1530. In third place, I fondly recall a lunch outdoors, by the harbour at Marsaxlokk.

I used to stop and reflect when I looked at the ruins of the Royal Opera House, which were a silent witness to the WWII bombings.

However, in 2013, Pjazza Teatru Rjal (Royal Theatre Square) was built on the site. I look forward to visiting that transformation and weighing in on the controversial development.

Let me add that I loved getting to places in Malta, on the colourful buses that run everywhere. The residential streets were characterized by charming wooden, enclosed balconies. And don't ignore the little counter fronts that open during the day to sell fresh Pastizzi: my preferred food on the go in Malta.

Valentine Lovekin



Here are some of my favourite spots in Malta.

1. Marsaxlokk: Malta's beautiful fishing harbour. Go for dinner on Friday at dusk. Eat freshly caught and freshly grilled fish with a glass of wine on the patio of a harbour side restaurant overlooking the colourful luzzus (Maltese fishing boats) bobbing in the water.
2. Ghar Lapsi: The most beautiful swimming hole. Bring swimming shoes.
3. Hypogeum (Paola): An underground pre-historic temple of stunning beauty.
4. The Blue Grotto: Go before noon to see the most beautiful water.
5. St. Peter's Pool. A swimming hole unlike anything you've ever seen and a real hidden gem.
6. Ggantija Temple (Gozo): Even more impressive megalithic temples.

Vincent Rodo



# Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, in Lourdes



Designed by architect Hyppolite Durand, the Neo-Gothic basilica was built between 1862 and 1871 and was consecrated in 1876. It welcomes about 8 million pilgrims and visitors every year, including the Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta from all around the world.

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