

The M.U.S.E.U.M.

A magazine of the Society of Christian Doctrine, founded by Saint George Preca



Issue 9 March 2011

Cover

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH GRECH

Mass of Thanksgiving for the Canonisation of St George Preca
St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne - Photograph by Jerry Galea

The

M.U.S.E.U.M.

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The spirit and vision of George Preca

The M.U.S.E.U.M. is issued biannually by the Australian Region for friends and associates of the Society of Christian Doctrine. M.U.S.E.U.M. represents the first letter of a prayer in Latin, Magister Untinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundus translating Divine teacher, may the whole world follow the Gospel.

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This magazine is online at www.sdcprecaoz.org

Most Reverend Joseph Grech

1948 - 2010

*'God does not make rubbish –
there is good in each of us and we have to find it.'*

Bishop Joe always found time for the SDC. He was born and lived in the town of Balzan, Malta where he attended the centre of the SDC there. At that time the centre was run by the previous Superior General of the SDC – Victor Delicata. Bishop Joe had high regard for Victor and the work of the SDC and whenever he could on his regular visits to Malta, would drop in at the Balzan centre.

Prior to a talk by Fr George Preca known as "*Sajda Museumina*"¹ in Balzan, the mother of Bishop Joe, Yvonne Grech, presented him to Fr Preca and asked that he bless him. Fr Preca did so and foretold that he would become a priest. This event was recounted by Bishop Grech in a talk he gave to Members in Malta during a General Meeting. It is recorded in a book by George Borg sdc containing anecdotes about Fr Preca.²

In Australia, we cherish those moments when Bishop Joe shared milestones of our journey. These include celebrating the Mass when St George Preca was declared Venerable in 1999, assisting at the Beatification Mass in 2001 by delivering the Homily. He took part in our 50th celebrations in Australia in 2006, presenting a seminar to the gathered assembly on the influence of the Maltese in the Australian Church. This seminar was well received and highlighted the ever significant influence of the Maltese clergy, religious and ordinary folk in the life of the Church in Australia. In June 2007 Bishop Joe celebrated the Canonisation Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Reverend Karmel Borg, a life-time friend of Bishop Joe and keen supporter of the SDC was present at the final illness of Bishop Joe



Source: Bendigo Advertiser

at St Vincent's hospital, Melbourne on 28 December 2010. Fr Borg recalls that Bishop Joe was a sincere, loving, pastor who was an inspiring and gifted preacher. This influence went well beyond Australia.

Fr Borg recounts that when Joe was appointed as a Bishop, there was great rejoicing among the Maltese migrants in general and when appointed as the Bishop of Sandhurst in 2001, at around twenty busloads of well-wishers attended his installation at the Sacred Heart cathedral, Bendigo.

Bishop Joe understood that the future of the Church lies in how the young embrace Christ's message. His greatest concern was that the young were not lost to the Church and their faith. Always generous with his time

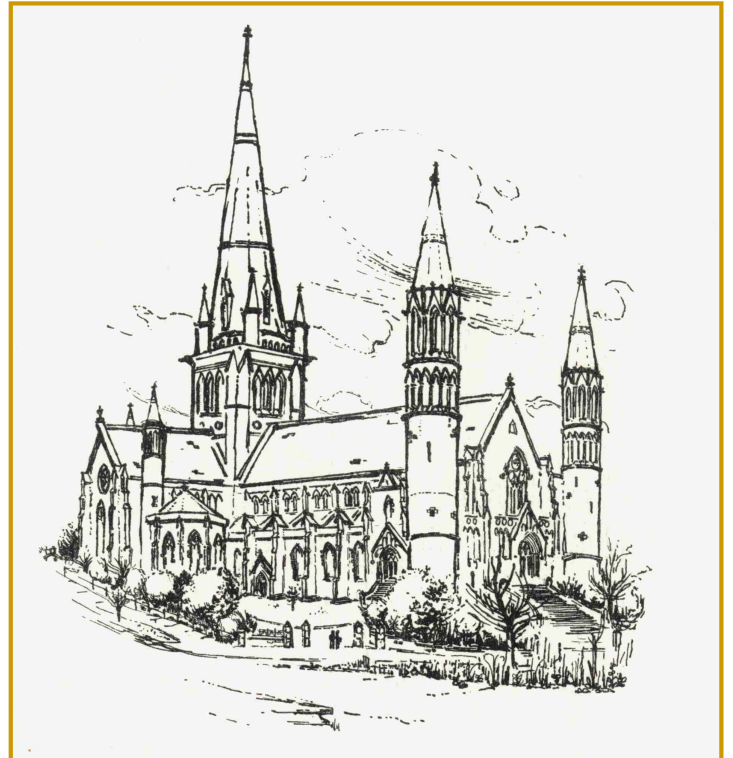
1. "*Sajda Museumina*"- meetings for adults conducted by SDC Members and usually held in town squares.

2. Borg, George. "*Dun Gorg grajjiet godda*": Fr George - new anecdotes. Hamrun, Malta: Preca Library, 2005. 71.



Most Rev. Joseph Grech celebrating the Canonisation Mass of St George Preca, 2007. Photograph by Jerry Galea.

for young people, the last Retreat he conducted for them was called 'Stronger' - gathering young people from across the Sandhurst diocese and the rest of Australia for a common experience - encountering Jesus Christ and the Church. Here they are equipped, empowered and encouraged to impact the Church and the world. We can be assured that the message that Bishop Joe will become known for was conveyed at this Retreat: *'God does not make rubbish - there is good in each of us and we have to find it.'*



Sketch of Sacred Heart cathedral, Bendigo. The building of the Cathedral took 82 years. The main tower and spire (284 feet or 86.6 metres high), was completed in March 1977.

'O happy moment when we shall see your face, which is the delight of the saints.'

St George Preca



Most Rev. Joseph Grech presenting a seminar on the influence of the Maltese in the Australian Church. Photograph by G T Leone

A Tale of Biblical Proportions

Bibles Return to QE Hospital



Marion Seal

After years of being banned from hospitals throughout Australia because of health concerns, the Bible is making a comeback in bedside hospital drawers. Staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide came up with an idea that slewed a giant problem with the aid of a small device. It has taken years to approve but is now being adopted across Australia.

This story of biblical proportions started some years ago when the Gideon Bibles were removed from hospital bedside lockers because of a possible source of infection, in particular that bibles passed on from one patient to another could transmit infection. This was something that was very controversial at the time, said Anglican priest Reverend Ken Bechez, a chaplain at the hospital.

Many staff at the hospital, including nurse manager and project officer Marion Seal, were concerned about the removal of the Bible. Marion has said that patients require the comfort a bible can provide. Not every patient gets to see a chaplain – the bible may be the only tangible source of comfort and spiritual care a patient might receive, at a time when they are in need of this.

Sentiments such as these were voiced at the Chaplains Annual General Meeting. A solution was needed and it came from within the SA Nurses Christian Fellowship Inc – and that was to plastic seal the bibles.

Various staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital developed the idea to hermetically seal brand new bibles that patients can take home. This would solve the problem because the sealed bibles could be cleaned and used across patients if the seal was not broken.

With a viable solution in hand, it was important to then get many of the details sorted in order to receive the tick of approval from the hospital's directors and the Infection Control and OH&S departments. Marion and her loyal group of believers in the project liaised with several bodies, people and hospital departments to make their idea a reality. These included liaising with the Nurses Christian Fellowship who were prepared to pay for the sealing machine, Reverend Ken Bechez who offered to hermetically seal the bibles, the hospital's store who were willing to stock the bibles and distribute them to the ward, the hospital cleaners who would restock the bedside lockers, and Gideons who removed the 'property of the Gideons' signature from their bibles, enabling people to consciously take the bibles home. Gideons were also very generously prepared to restock the bibles even if bibles were disposed of after each patient.



*Rev Kev Bechez, hermetically sealing bibles.
Source: the ABC*



Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide

Upon reflection in having the bibles returned to bedside drawers at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Marion said, "It was all about God's timing and having the right people. From our point of view as Christians, it was patient perseverance – we did not let the issue go – we prayed for guidance and sought an opportunity to revisit the issue following the removal of the bibles. We did not get involved in political correctness. Simply, the bibles had a traditional place in the hospital and were only removed for infection control issues. Keeping it on this level, we pursued a solution to resolve the infection control issue."

The feedback following the return of the bibles has been very positive. Reverend Kev said, "It is important for us to have them there. I think books such as the Psalms offer much hope for healing and are good reading for those stuck in hospitals, particularly those facing a bleak future. It gives them a bit of hope."

A patient who recently had pneumonia and a heart attack and is now diagnosed with lung cancer had this to say, "I get some comfort from the bible, I had a lot of faith before my husband died and lost a lot of it when he did die. And now I have the opportunity to start again."

Although it took several years to achieve their goal, Marion Seal says that there is now potential for many other hospitals to perhaps follow suit and bring bibles back to bedside hospital drawers.

Note: Gideons International (also known as Gideon's Bible) is an evangelical Christian organisation dedicated to distributing copies of the Bible in over 94 languages and 194 countries of the world, most famously in hotel and motel rooms. Founded in 1899 in Janesville, Wisconsin, USA, dedicated to Christian evangelism, it began distributing free Bibles. Nearly 79 million Gideon Scriptures were given out in 2009. Close to 1.7 billion have been distributed since 1908.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideons_International

Never see a need without
doing something about it



Mary of the Cross MacKillop
Australia's First Saint

'Original Rule' 1867, Sisters of St Joseph

Gemma Portelli ©

The Miraculous Medal at rue de Bac, Paris

The international headquarters of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul is located at 140 rue du Bac, Paris. It is a wonderful place to visit, and you will find Sisters of many nationalities who live and work here for a period of time. The chapel is also a place of prayer and pilgrimage because it is a popular pilgrimage. From the accompanying photo, it can be seen that the chapel is always full of pilgrims.

Here the presence and spirit of St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac, the founders of the Daughters of Charity are tangible. Founded in Paris in 1633 the 17th-century St Vincent de Paul congregation are known for those giant hats that extended over the ears like wings. Today their dress is more practical.



From this chapel, St Catherine Labouré, a novice with the Daughters of Charity, in 1830, offered to the world the "miraculous" medal. This simple object, intended for all, sums up the mysteries of Christian faith through its rich symbolism.

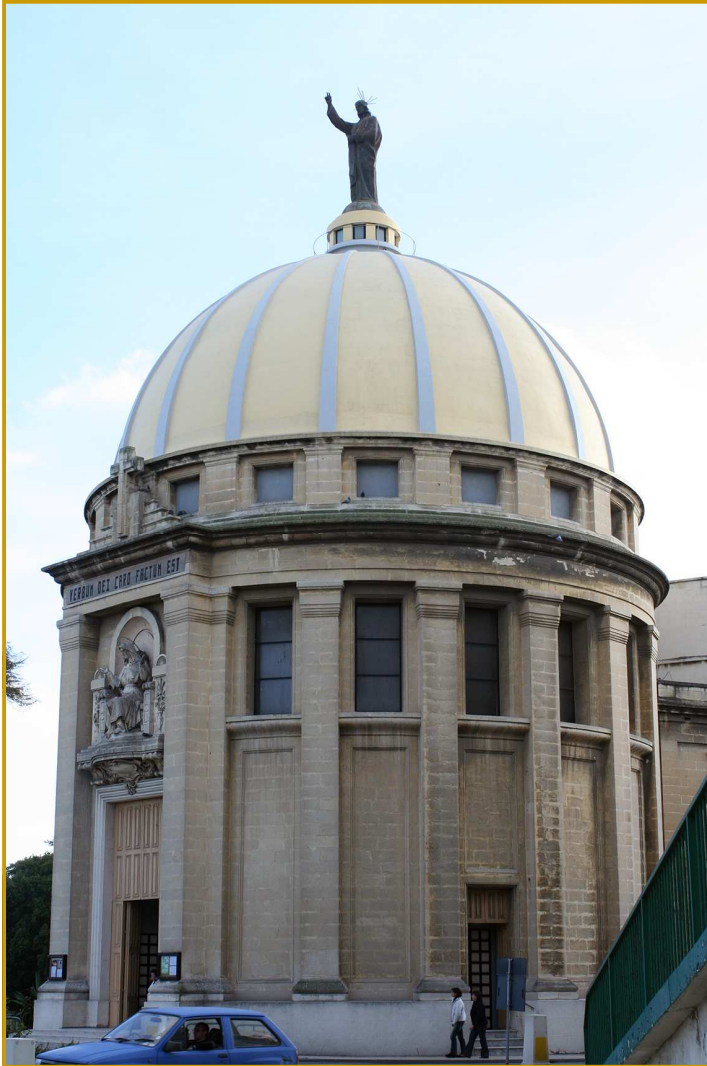
When a deadly cholera epidemic broke out in Paris in February 1832, claiming more than 20,000 lives, the sisters began providing aid and distributing the first medals. Many experienced protection and conversions. The word spread like 'wild fire'. The people of Paris called the medal "miraculous".

The SDC's Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

The Miraculous Medal holds pride of place at the SDC Central House in Malta. St George Preca promoted devotion to the Miraculous Medal through dedicating the chapel at the SDC's generalate to this devotion. Fr Preca often said, "Those who wear this medal are protected from bodily and spiritual evil." He is buried there under the altar.



Banner of St Vincent de Paul at 140 rue du Bac, Paris



St Mary's House of Welcome

"The Charity of Christ Urges Us"

The Daughters of Charity seek and serve God in persons who are poor and on the edge, in a spirit of humility, simplicity and charity. One specific ministry in Melbourne, Australia is the St Mary's House of Welcome which opened in 1960.

The House of Welcome was initiated many years ago by the Daughters of Charity, 'sisters' to St Vincent de Paul society & congregation. It is guided by Sr Roseanne Murphy who is totally at home among the many who seek a safe and welcoming centre which they call home for many hours of their day, enjoying breakfast and lunch daily, from Monday to Saturday.

St Mary's House of Welcome works to further social justice within the community, providing food, social support and a range of flexible services for people in need. St Mary's House of Welcome has three core services:

Day Centre - the Day Centre provides free meals, recreational activities, emergency relief, social work services along with a sense of community for people in need.

SDC's Miraculous Medal Chapel. Photograph by Myriam Thyes, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic



*St Mary's House of Welcome
Photograph by
Arthur Kilpatrick*

Religious Communities around the World

No Limits - No Limits is a day programme for people with mental health issues and it offers a supportive and welcoming environment in which individuals can explore their recovery and rehabilitation through recreation, relaxation and socialisation.

Day-to-Day Living - Day-to-Day Living enables participants who suffer with severe and persistent mental health issues to better interact with their community as well as learn valuable life skills.

I together with two others visited on a Wednesday morning, at the House of Welcome in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. Our initial welcome was from one of the regulars who daily attend this special place. His confidence and sense of 'ownership' had me convinced he was one of the staff! We joined some of those eating late breakfast and became part of their conversation and we had a much-needed coffee. Meg, the coordinator of volunteers, then began our orientation tour.

We discovered an amazing facility, starting with the recreation room where members of the House of Welcome Pool team were eagerly honing their skills for the upcoming

finals tournament against another centre; confident they would win, from their place at the top of the ladder.

The computer and art rooms were a delight, especially to know that many clients of this centre have the opportunity to express themselves in artistic ways, one even becoming something of a prominent artist; while others learn computer skills which assist them discover the world of internet, or prepare for job interviews.

The chapel although small, provides a haven to those who need some quiet time to be still and reflect.

My visit to The House of Welcome was for me a privileged experience acknowledging, "There but for the grace of God, go I", and it reminded me once more how essential it is to be part of the ongoing journey of our brothers and sisters whose lives have been interrupted so drastically, yet whose welcome and company are pure delight.

Peter Judge sdc



Sr Roseanne Murphy welcomes patrons to the House of Welcome. Photograph by Richard Kendall – used with permission.

Mass of Mary MacKillop

It was back in 2008 that I first heard the Roman Missal was to be retranslated into English and that the Permanent Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference were looking for Australian composers to submit new or revised Mass setting incorporating the new text.

I started playing organ and piano at St Columba's, Ballarat North around 1989 when I was about 14; earned my Bachelor of Music from the Australian Catholic University and have been involved in music ever since. I've worked as a teacher, performer, conductor, arranger, typesetter and composer for the last 18 years.

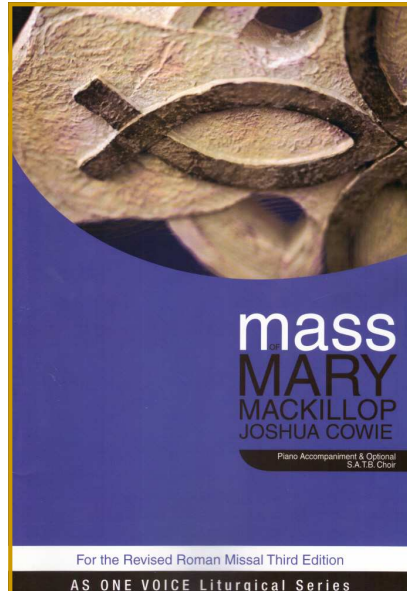
With this background I thought I had something to offer and decided to compose a new Mass to submit to the Bishops.

The Mass of Mary MacKillop was completed on 19 December 2009, the day Pope Benedict XVI approved the miracle that paved the way to Mary's canonisation. It was also inspired by the book *Miracles* by C. S. Lewis, one of last century's greatest thinkers.

When setting out to compose a new Mass, I, like Lewis, wanted to think logically and honestly, and thus create a piece of timeless music that is a realistic choice for the Churches and Schools of Australia.

The first point to ponder was accompaniment. What would the accompanists of the next 30 years want? There will be some who continue the pipe organ tradition, most likely in Cathedrals and city churches. Other Parish Churches and Catholic Schools, if we are honest, will no doubt find it increasingly difficult to find organists and maintain organs.

So I decided on a piano accompaniment full of rich chords and flowing passages. It all fits under the hands easily and should be a welcome relief to amateur pianists used to



adapting organ music for piano.

The next consideration was a melody that congregations would want to sing - easy, memorable, but above all musical. You will notice several motifs that make the music easy to remember.

The choir parts are individually very singable with small intervals and easily in range. When sung together there are plenty of close harmonies to create a full, lush and warm sound.

From over 60 settings received Mass of Mary MacKillop made the short list of 10 and attracted a publishing arrangement in the *As One Voice Liturgical* series with Willow Publishing. It is available in print, CD and multimedia digital download.



Joshua Cowie

Note:
This Mass will be sung at the Annual Mass for St George Preca at Queen of Peace church - Altona Meadows, 13 May 2011

Under the Grill with Robert Falzon



menALIVE is a national catholic ministry to men founded in Brisbane in 2003 'in response to a great need evident in the hearts and lives of men and a great need in the life of the Church'.

menALIVE uses the words of St Ireneaus as its inspiration – 'God is glorified when men are fully alive'. Supported by the Church, Robert Falzon views menALIVE as a missionary group whose purpose is to renew and build up the spiritual development of men. The aim of menALIVE is to minister to men by providing opportunities for them to gather, initially for a weekend and then regularly in small groups if they decide the experience is for them. They do this by specifically targeting missions in parishes.

Since 2003, they have conducted 87 events in 19 Dioceses across Australia and New Zealand, reaching out to over 5000 men. There are 35 events planned for this year, 2011.



1. Robert, menALIVE was founded in Brisbane in 2003 by yourself and Peter Shakhovskoy. What did you base the purpose of the foundation on?

We looked around and saw that men's active participation in the Church was minimal. Where are the men? we often found ourselves asking. This brought a challenge to us: How do we engage catholic men in our time and our world. We could see this happening if men were able to connect the home and family life with the life of the Church.

There is a crisis for men in the Church; often absent and/or not present to the Church process. So menALIVE is called to 'wake the sleeping giant' – the men of the Church.

We believe:

if we can reach the man we will reach the marriage,
and ...if we can reach the marriage we will reach the family,
and ...if we can reach the family we will reach the Church,
and ...if we can reach the Church we will reach the Nation.

We were aware that other catholic groups for men but with another role to play in the Church's life existed. Our group was specifically formed for the integration of men enabling them to experience the best possible outcome in their life; that is, full participation and commitment in everything they do.



2. We read from the letter of Peter: "Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is within you", 1 Peter 3:15. It seems that menALIVE can bring out in men that joy that is within each one of us. How is this expressed ?

I see this as a very good question as we all carry a burden of sin and darkness within us. We must overcome this and rejoice in the goodness of God. This can only be achieved when we realise that we are loved and that we matter to God.

3. We are reminded of one of the mandates from Vatican II, of the challenge in today's world for the relevancy of the Church. Testimonies from those who attend menALIVE functions speak approvingly of the group. It is not only engaging, interactive, but gives much food for thought. We hope and pray that it not only gets people thinking about the way they evangelise in their daily life, but may have the courage to witness in their life daily! Do witnessing and evangelisation form a specific part of the ministry ?

Pope Paul VI said that the 'Church exists to evangelise'. Drawing strength from this statement, menALIVE encourages lay men to rise up and serve with and within the Church. This can be achieved by being faithful and committed to our marriages, families or single life. We believe that if men are genuine to themselves there is a natural flow to their spouses and families.

There is a wonderful offshoot for the menALIVE team who are bringing Jesus to other men of the Church. They are also discovering Christ themselves. The evangelist is being evangelised. A real outcome of evangelical witness is that the preacher is being converted.

4. We are called to holiness, and each to a particular vocation in the Church. How does menALIVE seek and encourage both callings ?

I would prefer to use the word 'mission' rather than 'vocation'. Vocation for me suggests a task whereas mission can evoke a joy in what we do. In our gatherings, we encourage men to pray privately each day and with others regularly. We introduce them to a modified *Lectio Divina*, based on scripture, observation, application and prayer. We strongly believe that if men are authentic to their faith then a participation in and love for the faith will occur throughout the whole family.

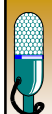
5. Is the group able to cater to those men who are lonely, have had great disappointment, may have lost a partner or need companionship ?

Yes, we do not discriminate. We often have men coming to our events who are in this position and welcome companionship from other men. We make no distinctions, and extend our fellowship to men who are hurting, separated from their partner and those searching. Everyone is welcome and all men have needs.



6. Are there opportunities for men from other religious traditions to take part in your activities ?

While we are essentially connected with the catholic Church, men from other traditions are very welcome. We encourage all men to tell their story to each other, to share the deep reality of their lives.



7. menALIVE is a great concept, fulfilling a particular need. Do you see the possibility of a women's group with the same vision starting up?

We would welcome a parallel group for women starting up with the same vision and mission. However, this men's ministry should retain the original purpose of its foundation and that is catering specifically for men.

For more information on menALIVE, please contact:

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Thank you Robert for sharing these thoughts with us.

We appreciate your time.

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Along the Carriage of Life

PETER KAUFMAN, a member of the Laverton parish, where the SDC maintains a centre, is an adventurous person who loves to travel. A specialist teacher in Religious Education, Peter also drives taxis in the western suburbs of Melbourne. He took up taxi driving in 1990 to fund overseas trips to the University of Notre Dame, South Bend Indiana where he undertook a masters in theology.

Recently while travelling in the ancient city of Yazd, Iran with his daughter, Naomi, he fell ill in the 53 degree heat and was admitted to hospital suffering cardiac arrest, stroke and kidney failure. After 12 days of intensive care and further treatment he was restored to health and arrived home safely.

Taking this event in his stride, Peter viewed his experience in Iran as one of those times in life that allows one to look back and reflect. This is like his experience as a taxi driver where he meets people from many different walks of life who have been through difficult circumstances and have made it through.

Peter drives taxis on weekends and during the school holidays, where he says for him the classroom of knowledge takes on the classroom of life. He enjoys meeting people, learning about them and has often found himself in a trusted position where people pour out their stories to him.

Some of Peter's stories reiterated by him include: *"There was a lovely writer who got in my cab and I inadvertently told her I hated her book and she leaned over and gave me a kiss because I told her the truth."*

He also had three men jump into his cab and told him to drive to Sydney after a big win at the casino. *"They just wanted to see the meter tick over,"* he said. But they were asleep before they'd even hit Seymour.

Some of these events have found their way into a book recently published on Melbourne cabbies. The book is called, *Taxi -The Inside Story*. It may be sourced online at taxiproject.com.

The Taxi Project is a public awareness campaign that aims to build public perception regarding the contribution Victorian taxi drivers make to our society. Taxi Project is headed by Rachael Guthridge, who after hearing yet another amazing story from a taxi driver in July 2008 decided to work out a way to have these stories heard by all Victorians.

Peter definitely falls into the category wherein his life is enriched with meeting face to face those who form part of our wider community. The life of a taxi driver is filled with experiences that provide zest for life.



Rachael Guthridge, head of the project Taxi -The Inside Story with Peter at the launch of the book

Myriam Garcia Abrisqueta

"The poor are the ones who always end up paying for the mistakes of others."

Myriam Garcia Abrisqueta is the current president of Manos Unidas, a Catholic non-government organisation which since 1960 has gathered volunteers to fight against hunger and poverty worldwide.

Myriam, married with two children, was born in Madrid, Spain in 1964. After studying at Complutense University, Madrid, she graduated in Geography and History, specialising in Art History. In 1982, she participated in the Spanish Archaeological Mission in Jordan, and the Archaeological Mission in Veranes (Gijón) the following year. It was in 1999 when she joined as a volunteer at Manos Unidas, first in the Americas Department (Brazil and Colombia) of the Projects Area, collaborating with the Education and Development Area. In June 2006 she began coordination of the Operation Enlace Department under the Projects Area, where she remained until May 2009 when she was elected President of the organisation.

Her mission and vision are one with Manos Unidas. With her many volunteers, Myriam works tirelessly towards fighting hunger, malnutrition, poverty, disease, underdevelopment and lack of education experienced by millions of lives. This work extends not only to relieving the symptomatic plight of these people, but also attempts to eradicate the structural causes that produce them: injustice, the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities among individuals and peoples, ignorance, prejudice, lack of solidarity, indifference and the crisis of human and Christian values.



During 2009, Manos Unidas launched 774 projects in 59 countries across five continents. These projects focused on the development of education, health, agriculture and social advancement. Her vision, which is based on the Gospel and the Church's social doctrine, is that every person, man or woman, by virtue of their dignity and fundamental equality, is capable of being, by itself, the agent responsible for material improvement, its moral progress and spiritual development, and enjoying a decent life.

When world hunger is reaching record highs (1,020 million in 2009 according to FAO), there is no shortage of work for Myriam and her organisation. Some may argue that controlling population growth is the solution to solving world hunger however statistics would show that there are "sufficient resources to feed us all, despite the increase of the population". Myriam has openly stated, "What does not seem to exist is the will to spread those resources fairly among all the inhabitants of the planet: a world in

which 20% of the population accounts for 80% of available resources is simply not sustainable" ¹.

A special concern of Myriam and Manos Unidas since its conception is the plight of women around the world, in particular their promotion and the contribution which they make towards eradicating injustice. The organisation was launched by women and remains part of its charism and way of being. In this year's presentation of the Pope's Lenten Message, Myriam paid special tribute to them saying, "*Women of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, a little over 50 years, uttered a cry of attention to world hunger. On a beautiful expression of feminine genius in the Church, issued a manifesto that bind to a natural desire to master their women and action of God's love in them. So they are driven by nature and as mothers, to give and protect life, and as Catholic women called by Jesus Christ, 'to bear witness to a universal love'. As a result of this, women of Spanish Catholic Action began "Campaign Against Hunger", which became Manos Unidas"* ².

On 21 September 2009, Pope Benedict XVI named Myriam a member of the Pontifical Council "*Cor Unum*". The Pontifical Council "*Cor Unum*" is the agency of the Holy See responsible for guidance and coordination between organisations and charitable activities promoted by the catholic Church. Pope Paul VI created this council in 1971 to help him fulfil the duty of universal charity for a fairer world. Since its founding, Manos has always had a representative on the Council.

Myriam fervently continues bringing the truth of Christ and the Gospel to the world through the mission of Manos Unidas. The love that she and her volunteers express is embodied in the incarnation of the Word, who, assuming the condition of human person, identified with those who have less: 'I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me'. She endeavours, as did Jesus Christ, to stand up for those unjustly treated, reminding us that they too



Myriam meeting Pope Benedict XVI

were 'created in the image and likeness of God'. In a recent interview with the news agency Europa Press, Myriam had this to say about the recent financial crisis that our swept our globe:

"No doubt the economic crisis is a global phenomenon that we are all suffering, but its effects are not felt equally everywhere: the most vulnerable are those in developing countries, where people spend more than 60-70% of their available income available to cover basic needs like food. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "a decline of 3% of GDP of developing countries is the death of between 47 and 120 children per thousand live births." So it is essential, as stated by the President of the World Bank, that this crisis does not repeat the mistakes of past financial crises in Asia, where social spending cuts for education, health and food, led to social unrest, violence and hardship. The poor are the ones who always end up suffering the most, paying for the mistakes of others."

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1. Manos Unides. (n.d.). *News*. Retrieved February 2 March 2011, 2011, from Manos Unides: <http://www.mansunides.org/es/category/tags/myriam-garcia-abrisqueta-0>
2. Manos Unides. (n.d.). *Presentation of Pope's Lenten Message*. Retrieved February 2 March 2011, 2011, from Manos Unides: <http://www.mansunides.org/>

SDC Around the World

Annual General Meeting 2010

The Members of the Australian Region gathered at Aquinas College, North Adelaide, for their 53rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) in December 2010.

The theme of the gathering was "BE TRANSFORMED BY RENEWING OUR MINDS TO DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD" (Romans 12:2); calling SDC Members to discern the will of God for the Region.

Throughout the meeting, SDC Members were encouraged to discuss and review with each another the circumstances, challenges and successes of the various ministries undertaken across several states; where they continue the evangelising spirit of the SDC in a world and culture that seems to be ever more diverse and secular. From these discussions Members brought forward several ideas and proposals to assist the SDC and its Members in renewing their minds, ideas and energy in their continuing apostolate of evangelisation. These opportunities to share and review experiences were achieved through several gatherings including a half day reflection, workshops, and a General Meeting.

Celebrations also featured strongly throughout the week. These included the opening and blessing of the extension to the Adelaide Centre in Brompton; a remembrance liturgy celebrating the life of Maurice Mifsud who died during the year (he was Regional Superior of the Australian Region from 1975 to 1997); a thanksgiving liturgy celebrating 25 years of the SDC apostolate in Queensland; and a commemoration of jubilees for the following Members: Joseph Farrugia and John Grima – 40 years, Anthony Case – 35 years, Mario Farrugia – 30 years, Joseph Micallef and Raymond Debono – 25 years, and Benjamin Brooks – 20 years.



Following the Mary MacKillop Trail – Rev. Charles Gauci and SDC Members at St Joseph's church, Willunga

Reverend Charles Gauci, the SDC's Regional chaplain from Adelaide, was a guest through the week. Drawing on the life and spirituality of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop as a focus for contemplation, particularly her ability throughout her life to discern the will of God for herself and her sisters, Reverend Charles led SDC Members on a pilgrimage of sites linked with her life. This included visiting the church of Mary Help of Christians, Morphett Vale, where Mary received news that her excommunication was lifted on 23 February 1872; and the historical St Joseph's church (the oldest South Australian church still in use) and the Willunga Catholic Parish, situated on the beautiful Fleurieu Peninsula, south of Adelaide, where a school of the Sisters of St Joseph was opened and where Bishop Lawrence Sheil lifted Mary's excommunication prior to his death.

The AGM concluded with an address by the Regional Superior encouraging Members to return to their homes with a renewed mind, heart and vigour to share the Gospel.

Opening and Blessing of the Extension to the Adelaide Centre

Wednesday 29 December 2010 marked the official opening and blessing of the extension to the SDC's Adelaide Centre, in Brompton, South Australia.

SDC Members from the Region, associates and friends gathered for a Thanksgiving Mass at the Immaculate Heart of Mary church, Brompton before processing to the Centre for the formal blessing and a meal.

His Grace, Most Rev. Philip Wilson, Archbishop of Adelaide, lead the Eucharistic celebration, blessed the extension and preached on the Gospel passage, telling all gathered that the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide was grateful for the teaching ministry of the Society of Christian Doctrine. Accompanying the Archbishop was Rev. Charles Gauci, chaplain for the Australian Region, and Rev. Bill Brady msc, parish priest of the Hindmarsh and Flinders Park parishes.

The extension works completed consisted of a two storey extension and renovations to the existing building. Since the establishment of the SDC in South Australia in 1957, the SDC has provided general faith education gatherings for young people. In recent years, this ministry has continued through a 'Come and See' youth and adult programme, family based catechesis and sacramental preparation for young people at local parish venues. The extension and renovations provide space for youth and family based gatherings to be conducted at the Centre. These gatherings will include scripture study groups, adult faith education, prayer and reflection and retreats.

We rejoice with the Adelaide Members in this centre. Here indeed the charism of St George Preca will continue to be lived out: That the whole world may follow the Gospel!



Extended Adelaide Centre



John Micallef sdc, Rev. Charles Gauci and Most Rev. Philip Wilson at the blessing of the Adelaide Centre.

The Friar and the Caravaggio Thieves

Four hundred years after Caravaggio's death, the artist's work and restless life continues to capture the eye and the imagination. Countless tourists and art history students flock to see his paintings, but his work also draws less savoury characters: art thieves and forgers.

Reverend Marius Zerafa, a Maltese Dominican and former museum director, has had his own brush with Caravaggio thieves, after they stole a painting of St Jerome from the Co-Cathedral of St John in Valletta on New Year's Eve 1984. While many stolen paintings disappear forever, Reverend Marius was able to mastermind this painting's recovery.

For two years after the heist, nothing more was heard about the picture. It had simply vanished. Then one day Reverend Marius was approached by a young man who handed him a tape and a polaroid picture of the painting of St Jerome. Over the next eight months he would work ceaselessly towards retrieving the lost painting.

"They gave me a password," he says, "and indicated that I wasn't to speak to the police. They wanted half a million Maltese lire for the painting." At the time Reverend Marius was director of the Museums in Malta and had set up the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta. Today, the Dominican art historian lectures about sacred art at the Angelicum in Rome, hears Confessions at Santa Maria Maggiore during his holidays, paints, sculpts, does some restoration work and continues to be the chairman of the Archdiocese of Malta's Commission for Sacred Art.

Reverend Marius is a born storyteller; he has lived through a lot and seen a great deal. At 15, he joined the Dominican order. After three years in Malta, he moved to the now-closed Hawkesyard Priory in Staffordshire and then to Blackfriars, Oxford,



Rev. Marius Zerafa

between 1948 and 1952. The post-war, pre-Conciliar years in religious life were austere, but Fr Marius remembers his time there with great fondness. He obtained his STL and a Doctorate in Social Sciences at the Angelicum and studied art history at the University of London. He subsequently taught, studied, lectured and wrote with tireless energy. He became assistant curator of Fine Arts in the Museums Department of Malta in 1970 and then curator in 1975 and director of Museums in 1981.

Like many art historians, Fr Marius is attached to his digital camera – or, rather, it is attached to him with a belt so he does not miss an opportunity to snap away. At 80, he is incredibly plugged in and constantly fires off e-mails and digital photographs. It is easy to imagine the energy he must have put into getting the painting back, against the odds, and employing creative thinking to find the Caravaggio again.

Back in 1986, after the first note was delivered, Reverend Marius was worried because he thought the gang might be in cahoots with the police, so he took the injunction not to report the theft seriously. He says he struggled to raise interest in the

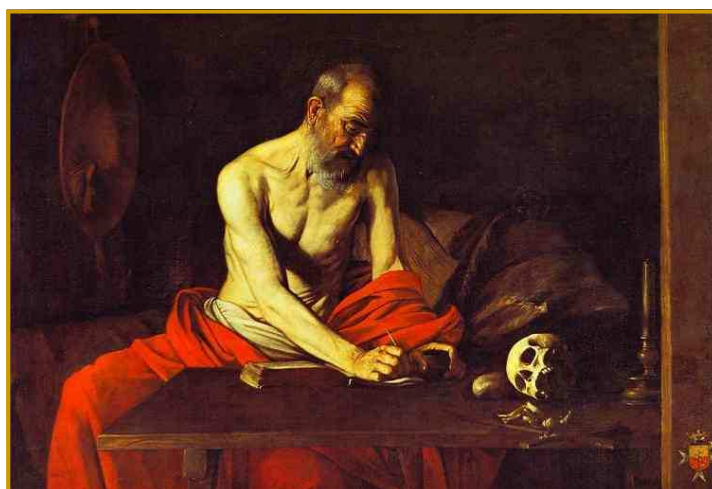
case either among the country's ministers or the leaders of the local curia. He started getting daily phone calls about St Jerome. Then, in the art thief's equivalent of chopping off a hostage's fingers, the gang started sending Reverend Marius little pieces of the precious painting. To keep the band of thieves talking to him, he gave them the impression that he was interested in buying the painting back and started negotiating down the price to a quarter-of-a-million Maltese lire.

Was he frightened? "Well, yes and no," he says. "I was terribly relieved because after two years we thought that we had lost it. What worried me was that at one time I got a parcel and thought there was a bomb inside but there wasn't one. And I was worried that they would come to Confession to me because that would have made it difficult." If they had come to him, he would have been bound by the seal of the confessional, he says, and would have had difficulty retrieving the painting from them.

After eight months Reverend Marius, with the help of a technologically minded young man, managed to trace the calls to a small shoe factory on the island where the thieves were operating. He got hold of their work books and finally passed the information on to the police. It was his first contact with the authorities. A week later he chose the traditional day on which the Feast of St Dominic is celebrated in Malta to be the day on which the painting would be retrieved.

The police arrived with helicopters and cars at the arranged meeting place and they retrieved the Caravaggio and arrested the gang members. It emerged that the gang had paid 5,000 Maltese lire to have Reverend Marius kidnapped during the exchange.

The members of the Caravaggio gang were never brought to justice. They started a constitutional case against the police because of illegal phone tapping. Of the two men accused, one had possibly been given an overdose and died, while the other died as the case dragged on in court.



Caravaggio. St Jerome. c.1607-1608. Oil on canvas. Co-Cathedral of St John, Valletta, Malta.

The painting was quite damaged as a result of the heist. Reverend Marius travelled to Rome in an old military plane without seats to have the painting restored there. He says that it is now in a perfect condition.

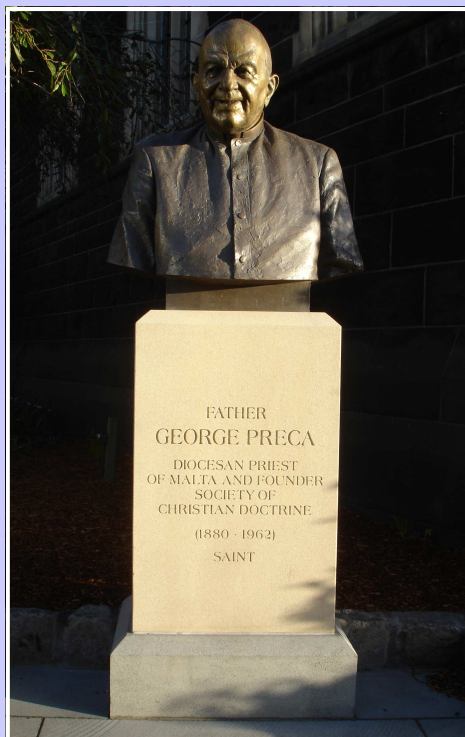
This brush with Caravaggio art thieves was not the first for Malta. In 1989, there was a failed burglary attempt at the Co-Cathedral of St John of The Beheading of St John, the only painting which bears Caravaggio's signature. This left the painting badly damaged and it was Reverend Marius who took the painting to Italy to have it restored in Florence.

The Maltese are very proud of Caravaggio's stay on the island. The disgraced painter fled from Rome to Naples and then to the Fortress Island after he killed a man in a street brawl. The Knights of St John, keen to have the famous artist on the island, granted him asylum on condition he paint for them. He became a brother of the order but soon picked a fight with one of the knights and fled from the island. He is believed to have died of fever on 28 July 1610.

Anna Arco

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CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF GEORGE PRECA



MELBOURNE

George Preca Mass

Friday 13 May 2011
7:30 pm

Queen of Peace Church
Corner of Everingham Road & Queen Street,
Altona Meadows

Eucharist Adoration

Saturday 14 May 2011
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Preca Centre
82 Westmoreland Road
North Sunshine
Come and pray

Pilgrimage to the Monument of St George Preca

Sunday 15 May 2011
Prayer Service following 11:00am Sunday Mass
Monument of St George Preca
St Patrick's Cathedral
1 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne

SYDNEY

George Preca Mass

Friday 6 May 2011
7:00 pm

La Valette Social Centre
175 Walters Road, Blacktown

