

Ta' Pinu Shrine

Our Lady, Queen of the Family

A CALL TO PRAYER

"Being and Becoming a Pilgrim"- Special Lenten Edition

AN ADAPTATION OF THE ARTICLE WRITTEN BY FR DOMINIC SULTANA FROM 'MADONNA TA' PINU' PERIODICAL

A Pilgrimage is a journey, a search, with a moral or spiritual meaning. Typically, it is "a journey to a shrine" or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith. Many religions attach spiritual importance to particular places: the place of birth or death of founders or saints or to the place of their "calling" or "spiritual awakening", or of their "connection (visual or verbal) with the Divine" or to "locations where miracles were performed or witnessed". Such sites may be commemorated with shrines or temples that devotees visit for their own personal spiritual benefit, to be healed or have questions answered or to have some other spiritual benefit.

A person who makes such a journey is called A PILGRIM.

THE WAY TO TA PINU SHRINE: Ta'Pinu Shrine is one of those sites that attract thousands of pilgrims each year. The origin of these pilgrimages to Ta'Pinu goes back to 1883, the year of the call of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu to Karmni Grima and Frangisk Portelli, two locals who experienced the hearing of the voice of the Blessed Virgin coming out of the image of the Assumption of Our Lady: a relic still intact and exposed for veneration exactly in the same location where this happened. A relic that gives to Ta' Pinu a singular importance to Ta'Pinu when compared to other Marian Shrines like Lourdes and Fatima. While at these places, an apparition had happened, we are left merely with the message, at Ta' Pinu, the image from which the voice of our Lady was heard still exists.

BEING A PILGRIM : Being a pilgrim is not a modern invention, it is as old as Christianity. When Rome lay in ruins, humbled and humiliated by Alaric's nomads— St Augustine jotted down the following observation: "it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, while Abel, as though he was merely a pilgrim on earth, built none" *"The True city of the saints is in heaven-here on earth, Christians wander as "if on pilgrimage through time looking for the Kingdom of eternity".*

For pilgrims through time, the truth is elsewhere; the true place is always at some distance, sometimes away. Wherever the pilgrim may be now, it is not where one ought to be, and not where one dreams of being. The distance between the true world and this world here and now is made of the mismatch between what is to be achieved and what has been. The glory and significance of the future destination humbles the present and makes light of it.

We are pilgrims whatever we do, and there is little we can do about it even if we wished. Earthly life is but a brief overture to the eternal persistence of the soul. Only few would wish, and have the ability, to compose that overture themselves, in tune with the music of heavenly spheres— to make their fate into a consciously embraced destiny. These few would need to escape the distractions of the town. "The desert is the habitat they must choose."

PILGRIMS IN A DESERT: The desert of the Christian hermit was set at a distance from the hurly-burly of family life, away from the town and the village., from the mundane, from the city. The desert means putting a distance between oneself and one's duties and obligations, the warmth and the agony of being with others, being looked by others, being framed and moulded by their scrutiny, demands and expectations. Here in mundane quotidianity, one's hands were tied, and so were one's thoughts. Here, horizon was tightly packed with houses, markets and church towers. Here, wherever one moved, one was in a place, and being in place meant staying put, doing what the place needed to be done. The desert on the contrary, is a land not yet parcelled into places, and for that reason it was the land of self-creation. The desert is a space where one step gives away to the next which undoes it, and the horizon means hope for a tomorrow which speaks. You do not go to the desert to find identity but to lose it, to lose your personality, to become anonymous... And then something extraordinary happens: **YOU CAN HEAR SILENCE SPEAK.**

Ta' Pinu as indicated by its location as well as by the experience of Karmni Grima, is such a place. Ta' Pinu is the place where Karmni Grima heard the voice of the Blessed Virgin, a place where her mind was not engaged with vocal prayers but where she was praying silently in front of Her sacred image. The desert experience of silence is still a leading experience that precedes the personal encounter of God's peace claimed by millions who visit Shrines each year: 'an experience of sacred silence that has to be safeguarded so that those sacred places continue to be a pilgrim's haven, and an oasis in the middle of the peaceful countryside.

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Painting of the original chapel



"THE POWER OF THE KEYS"

After his Resurrection, Christ sent his apostles "so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations." The apostles and their successors carry out this "ministry of reconciliation," not only by announcing to men God's forgiveness merited for us by Christ, and calling them to conversion and faith; but also by communicating to them the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, and reconciling them with God and with the Church through the power of the keys, received from Christ

The Church has received the keys of the Kingdom of heaven so that, in her, sins may be forgiven through Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit's action. In this Church, the soul dead through sin comes back to life in order to live with Christ, whose grace has saved us.

There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. "There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest. Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin.

983 Catechesis strives to awaken and nourish in the faithful faith in the incomparable greatness of the risen Christ's gift to his Church: the mission and the power to forgive sins through the ministry of the apostles and their successors:

The Lord wills that his disciples possess a tremendous power: that his lowly servants accomplish in his name all that he did when he was on earth. Priests have received from God a power that he has given neither to angels nor to archangels.

God above confirms what priests do here below.

Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation. Let us thank God who has given his Church such a gift.

- The Creed links **"the forgiveness of sins"** with its profession of faith in the Holy Spirit, for the risen Christ entrusted to the apostles the power to forgive sins when he gave them the Holy Spirit.
- Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins: it unites us to Christ, who died and rose, and gives us the Holy Spirit.
- By Christ's will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized and exercises it through bishops and priests normally in the sacrament of Penance.
- "In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface our sins and give us the grace of justification" (RCC, I, 11, 6).

A PILGRIM WITH A CLEAR DESTINATION: Being a pilgrim, one can do more than walk—one can walk to. One can look back at the footprints in the sand and see them as a road. One can reflect on the road past and see it as a progress towards, an advance, a coming closer to, making a distinction between 'behind' and 'ahead'. Then plot the road 'ahead' as a succession of footprints yet to pockmark the land without features. Destination, the set purpose of life's pilgrimage, gives form to the formless, makes a whole out of the fragmentary, and offers continuity to the episodic. This sense of direction is part of the essence of the Call of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu. The Call of Ta' Pinu starts by the command **"Ejja, Ejja, Ejja...Come, Come, Come..."** A command that leads Karmni Grima to move towards Ta' Pinu Chapel, and in there after reciting her prayers, in a moment of sacred silence, the heavenly voice of the Blessed Virgin proclaimed: **'Recite three Hail Marys in remembrance of the days during which my body stayed in the tomb'.**

An invitation that provides direction. A reminder that all our thinking, being and acting ought to have a destination, Similar to Mary who was assumed into heaven after her earthly pilgrimage, the same is our call:- one to be one day with God forever in heaven.

Even though we are different and start our pilgrimage at different standpoints, the message of Ta' Pinu acts as a cross road that reorientates to this ontological destination, It is a place where Mary calls thousands of people "Come, Come" and then set them back on track: that of **AIMING TO LEAD ONE'S LIFE TOWARDS THE UNION WITH GOD HERE ON EARTH AS WELL AS TOWARDS THE ETERNAL UNION WITH HIM FOREVER IN HEAVEN.**

A PILGRIM ON EARTH: Because life is a pilgrimage, the world at the doorstep is desert-like, featureless, as its meaning is yet to be brought into the wandering which would transform it into the track leading to the finishing line where the meaning resides. The pilgrim and the desert-like world one walks acquire their meanings together, and through each other. Both processes can and must go on because there is a distance between the goal and the present moment. The question that the pilgrim ought to face in this desert is: **What might help and hinder in reaching my goal?**

During this journey, the pilgrim who desires to reach the union with God seeks above all conversion to Jesus Christ., full and sincere adherence to his person, and the decision to walk in his footsteps, and a personal encounter with Him making of oneself a disciple of Christ.

This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived. Contd... page 4



Arab Christians on the banks of Jordan River.

Lenten Celebrationss for March 2016

Date	March Events
WED 2ND MARCH	ST JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS
FRI 4 TH MAR ENDS SAT 5 TH MAR	24 HRS FOR THE LORD (OVERNIGHT ADORATION VIGIL STARTS AFTER 5 P.M. MASS
SAT 5 TH MARCH	10a.m Way of Cross (in French) by the Mauritians From 2.00 p.m. Holy MASS of OUR LADY OF SORROWS Rosary procession with the statue of Our Lady followed by Conclusion of 24 Hrs for The Lord Event at the Door of Mercy for the plenary indulgence
SUN 6 TH MARCH	10.00A.M. ST BRENDAN PARISH WAY OF CROSS THE FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS (IN ITALIAN) 2.00P.M INDONESIAN COMMUNITY HOLY MASS & WAY OF CROSS
WED 9 TH MARCH	10.30 A.M. ST JAMES PARISH, SEBASTOPOL- BALLARAT WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS
THURS 10 TH MARCH	10.30 ST JAMES PRIMARY SCHOOL- HOPPERS XSING WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS
FRI 11 TH MARCH	10.00 A.M. AIRPORT WEST CHARISMATIC GROUP WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS
SATURDAY 12 TH MARCH	10.00A.M. SLOVENIAN COMMUNITY WAY OF CROSS THE FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS (IN SLOVENIAN) 10.30 A.M. ST PETER'S, THE APOSTLE PARISH WAY OF THE CROSS & FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS 2.00 P.M. MELKITE CATHOLIC GROUP WAY OF THE CROSS AND HOLY MASS
SUNDAY 13 TH MARCH	9.30 A.M. SRI LANKAN CATHOLIC ASSN. WAY OF THE CROSS & HOLY MASS 11.30 A.M. ST BENEDICT PARISH BURWOOD WAY OF THE CROSS THEN HOLY MASS IN CHAPEL OF MERCY 1.45 P.M. OUR LADY OF GOOD HEALTH, VAILANKANNI CONFESSION, ROSARY, BENEDICTION HOLY MASS AND DIVINE MERCY
MONDAY 14 TH MARCH	11.00 A.M. SYRIAC CATHOLIC COMMUNITY WAY OF THE CROSS THEN WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR OF MERCY
THURSDAY 17 TH MARCH	10.30 A.M. ST PETER & ST PAUL MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY WAY OF THE CROSS THEN WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR OF MERCY
SATURDAY 19 TH MARCH	SOLEMNITY S^T JOSEPH 10.00A.M POLISH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS (IN POLISH) AND ADORATION 2.00P.M ALLIANCE OF THE HOLY FAMILY HOLY HOUR, WAY OF THE CROSS AND HOLY MASS (IN ENGLISH) 6.30A.M. OUR LADY OF GOOD HEALTH VAILANKANNI: PILGRIMAGE WALK FROM TOOLERNVALE CONCLUDES WITH ADORATION
SUNDAY 20 TH MARCH	PALM SUNDAY
MONDAY 21 ST MARCH	MONDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK 10.30A.M ST MONICA PARISH COMMUNITY WAY OF CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS (IN ITALIAN)
TUESDAY 22 ND MARCH	TUESDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK OUR LADY OF LEBANON MARONITE COMM. GROUP 10.30 A.M. WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS
WEDNESDAY 23 RD MARCH	WEDNESDAY OF THE HOLY WEEK SEMINARIANS FROM CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE 10.30 A.M. WAY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY HOLY MASS Mother and Child Oratory Wednesday Novenas at 8.00p.m
FRIDAY 25 TH MARCH GOOD FRIDAY	9.30 A.M. SYROMALABAR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY HOLY MASS FOLLOWED BY WAY OF THE CROSS 2.30P.M LITURGY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ADORATION OF THE CROSS FOLLOWED BY THE GOOD FRIDAY ASSN. PAGEANT ORGANISED BY BACCHUS MARSH GOOD FRIDAY ASSN.
Sunday 27 th March	EASTER SUNDAY
Sunday 3rd April	DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY Service to be led by Bishop Em Hilton Deakin



JUBILEE OF MERCY
MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER



PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY
written by His Holiness Pope Francis

Lord Jesus Christ, † you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, † and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
† Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; † the adulteress Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; † made Peter weep after his betrayal, † and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:

† "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: † let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: † Let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Come to the Shrine and Walk through the "Door of Mercy"

Since 8 Dec 2015 and through to Nov 2016 the Shrine will be living to the rhythm of the Extraordinary Holy Year desired by Pope Francis to celebrate Mercy. Thousands of pilgrims are expected to visit the "Our Lady Ta Pinu Shrine- All Nations Marian Centre" So come and join them to experience, with Mary, the grace and mercy of God!

The following events have been selected to be celebrated at the Shrine to mark this Jubilee Year

4th- 5th March 2016 24 Hours for the Lord
A Lenten Experience with Mary: concludes with *Holy Mass of Our Lady of Sorrows*
Sun 3rd April 2016 Divine Mercy Sunday
Sunday 2nd October 2015 Marian Jubilee
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary
Sunday 13th November 2015

Closing of the "Holy Year of Mercy"
Enter and Receive the Indulgent Love and Forgiveness of Our Merciful God

My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me???

Come & join in

The 32nd Commemoration of Our Lord's Passion

Principal celebrant: Bishop Vincent Long OFMConv DD
Msgr Benedict Camilleri & other members of the Clergy

Friday 25th March 2016

Liturgy 2.30 p.m. Followed by Adoration of the cross & The Bacchus Marsh Good Friday Association
Passion Pageant

Ten life-size statues, Biblical characters and ornaments

If you still wish to be part of the pageant, you may still do so.
Just come along or for more information,
please contact Mr. Lewis Stafrace
Mob 0418 176 912 lewisstafrace@bigpond.com

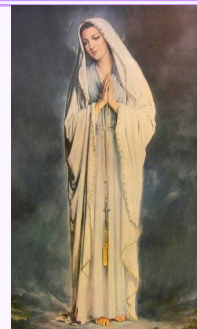
Way of the Cross Booklets

are available at the church for use by those Groups and individuals who wish to walk the "Way of the Cross" prior to the "Liturgy of the Cross"

Pope Francis:

Do not be afraid to ask for God's forgiveness. He never tires of forgiving us. Like the father who loves us. **God is pure Mercy**

MARY AS TEACHER, MOTHER AND MODEL: Within the environment at the Chapel of Ta' Pinu, even though dominated by the Miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin, the focal point where one's eyes settles down is the shiny door of the tabernacle underneath the image: the home of the Blessed Sacrament, the place where Christ is really present in the Eucharist. It is as if the entire environment is leading you towards the encounter with Christ and to contemplate Him.



In this context of contemplating Christ, the pilgrim can find in Mary, an incomparable model, because in a unique way the face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed, receiving from her a human resemblance which points to an even greater spiritual closeness.

No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ, as faithfully as Mary.

The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when HE was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When she gave birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she "wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger" (Lk 2:7)



Thereafter Mary's gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him. At times, it would be a *questioning* look, as in the episode of the finding in the Temple "*Son, why have you treated us so?*" (Lk 2:48). It would always be a *penetrating* gaze, one capable of deeply understanding Jesus, even to the point of perceiving his hidden feelings and anticipating his decisions, as at Cana (cf. Jn 2:5). At other times it would be a look of sorrow, especially beneath the Cross, where her vision would still be that of a mother giving birth, for Mary not only share the passion and death of her Son, she also receive the new son given to her in the beloved disciple.

On the morning of Easter, hers would be a gaze radiant with the joy of Resurrection, and finally on the day of Pentecost, a gaze of fire with the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1:14)

Thus *as Mary looked at Christ with a special gaze, depending on the actual circumstances, following her example, the pilgrim is invited to allow oneself to look at Christ with a sincere gaze: A GAZE REFLECTING ONE'S ACTUAL LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES.*

In addition, Mary is not only the perfect model of contemplating Christ; she also helps every pilgrim to think, act and feel like Christ. As she made present to humanity the mystery of Christ, she still continues to do so, producing in the children the spiritual characteristics of the first-born Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, if the pilgrim at the moment is experiencing any difficulty or disorientation during one's journey, one could always turn to Mary, not merely to learn from her example but also to ask her help. ***One can always trust her, because she delivers!***

BEING AND BECOMING A PILGRIM: Some visit on a daily basis. Some come over with an attitude of a tourist, always on the move, moving from one place to another, thirsting for new experiences. Others come over looking for a favour or thank God for a favour received. While still others come looking for external as well as internal peace, maybe by seeking a moment of sacred silence or reconciliation with God through the Sacrament of Penance.

Whatever the intention is, We are all pilgrims! Pilgrims on earth journeying towards somewhere... Some have, or at least think, have a clear purpose. Others feel like vagabonds, lacking any sense of interior or exterior destination. Still others they know their destination, however they are scared that they will ever make it to the end.

WHATEVER THE SITUATION IS, EVERYONE IS A PILGRIM



Procession and Eucharistic Adoration during the Lenten Pilgrimage led by H. E. Bishop Mario Grech along the Via Crucis on Ghammar Hill, Gozo, Malta

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