



6th October, 2010

115/2010

FINANCIAL AND PASTORAL REPORT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MALTA FOR THE YEAR 2009

A new vision regarding pastoral work

The latest Pastoral Plan for the Church in Malta, launched by His Grace the Archbishop Paul Cremona in 2009, invites Christians to distinguish between living their faith merely as part of their tradition or to live their faith out of conviction, as a conscious choice. Within the context of a culture that is constantly evolving, the Church is compelled to pledge itself to a new way of evangelization.

The Church in Malta is planning its pastoral strategy with this vision in mind. This will lead to the strengthening of its infrastructure, which will be supported by Christians who are convinced of their faith. Meanwhile, the Church will continue to be of service in other areas of society.

In order to implement the above Plan, the Church requires adequate financial means. Its funds are largely due to the generosity of Maltese Christians, who also offer their support by undertaking various other pastoral initiatives, through their talents, in their respective professions, and by their vision of the Christian way of life.

It must be noted that the pastoral objectives of the Church are much wider than those highlighted in this report, which does not include the contribution of religious institutions, lay groups and others, since these are administered autonomously.

The Church's mission revolves around the following two main areas:

- Pastoral formation

An important priority is the formation of pastoral operators within the Church. This has led the Church in Malta to invest €154,000 annually in the Foundation for Theological Studies, which also caters for the academic formation of priests. Besides, this amount covers the wages of some of the lecturers of the Faculty of Theology, which contributes to the formation of priests and lay Christians, who are consequently able to offer pastoral services of a high standard. Similarly, there is the Institute of Pastoral Formation, which offers several courses to lay Christians. Around 165 persons graduate annually from this Institute.

- **Pastoral work**

During 2009, the Church in Malta invested €530,000 in pastoral services which are provided by nine secretariats and 16 commissions, which animate and coordinate all the pastoral work within the Archdiocese of Malta. These secretariats and commissions cater for different aspects of social life – from pastoral work among youths (who are given priority - €43,000 were invested in this field), to support offered to those immigrants who live among us (the Church in Malta is providing suitable accommodation for around 400 persons); €8,000 was invested in an awareness campaign aimed at making people more aware of their responsibility to safeguard the environment; €170,500 was invested in efforts to strengthen marriage and the family – preparation courses for marriage offered by the Cana Movement, ongoing support for married couples through the organization of conferences, seminars, meetings, retreats, which contribute to accompany couples through their difficult moments.

- **The elderly, children and persons with disabilities**

The Church in Malta has subsidized – to the amount of €242,000 – a number of homes and Id-Dar tal-Providenza. In the latter, a loss of €486,000 was registered when compared to last year.

- **Ecclesiastical Tribunal**

In order to facilitate the mission of the Tribunal, it was necessary to increase the personnel who staff this institution. This meant an increase in expenses, including professional fees. The Central Fund has invested €505,000 in order to support the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. This reflects a 15% increase since 2008.

- **Means of Social Communication**

It is important for the Church to have adequate means of disseminating its message. For this reason €351,000 was allocated in order to support RTK Radio, the TV unit and *Gensillum* online.

- **Priests**

Our priests dedicate their lives to fulfilling the pastoral mission of the Church in Malta – this is a service which is much appreciated by the Maltese people. The mission of these priests is supported by means of a Fund which partly receives contributions from parishes; this covers 70% of the salaries of parish priests and vice-parish priests. The remaining salaries are paid out of Church funds. It is good to note that the salary scale of parish priests and vice-parish priests is on a scale 13/14 when compared to civil servants' wages. During the last few years, the clergy fund contributions were insufficient to cover all the salaries paid out to priests. In 2009, this fund went under by €485,000. It was topped up by other funds from the Finance Department of the Church

- **Pastoral services in parishes**

There are 70 parishes in the Archdiocese of Malta: 54 run by the diocesan clergy and 16 run by religious orders. The diocese is responsible for the finances of the parishes which are run by the diocesan clergy. The parish environment is where the presence of the Church is mostly experienced and where much of the Church's pastoral work takes place among

several categories of people, such as children, youth, married couples, the elderly, disabled persons, etc.

Naturally, in order to be able to support and continue all this pastoral work done in parishes, such as the liturgy, catechesis, *diakonia* and community building, many lay volunteers are required. These require formation and the appropriate tools to carry out their tasks; they need the physical space in which to operate and for this reason, churches and parish centres are a must. These buildings all require general maintenance on a regular basis, which is rather costly – they need to be restored and kept up to date. The Church also requires suitable means to put its message across and so for this reason, professional people are brought on board to transmit the Church's teachings effectively, etc.

At this point in time, one must highlight the fact that the Maltese people are very receptive to the Church's ministry and, consequently they contribute very generously to the Archdiocese through donations and money collections which are held in parishes. So much so, that the total amount collected during 2009 was € 4,519,000. This registers a slight increase from the total of the previous year and for this generosity, the Church is extremely grateful. However, the overall balance was 52% less when compared to that of the previous year.

- **Looking ahead**

While the Church firmly believes that all its efforts are aimed towards the good of the Maltese people, it is aware that it cannot ignore the reality of the situation and its present financial limitations.

The financial report for 2009 takes into consideration more than 110 different entities and the resulting deficit incurred by the Church amounts to €870,000; and this despite the contributions of the State to different entities. This imbalance is due to several major factors, among them the overall increase in general expenses, a decrease in the interest paid on fixed income investments and the ever-increasing costs required for maintenance and restoration of historic buildings which form part of the patrimony which was bequeathed by our forefathers at great personal sacrifice.

In order for the Church to continue to be as effective at a pastoral and social level as it is being today, it is necessary that Maltese Christians acknowledge these realities and commit themselves to provide their service and support to the Church in every possible way, including through financial means.

- **Your help is solicited**

We wish to bring this report to the attention of all those who hold the Church close to their hearts. We wish to hear your ideas, your suggestions and to listen to your advice. We wish to hear opinions which arise out of a genuine love of the Church and which are directed at the different tasks which are carried out, both pastorally and socially. You may e-mail us on: rapport@maltadiocese.org

Mons. Charles Cordina, *Pastoral Secretary*
Mons. Anton Portelli, *Administrative Secretary*
Mr. Robert Agius, *Financial Controller*