



Association of the  
Members of the **U3E**

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*L-Għid it-Tajjeb*

LIL KULHADD

# L-ĠĦID 2018

L-ĠĦid din is-sena wasal bikri u daqsxejn stramb għax jum l-ĠĦid ser jkun l-ewwel ta' April, ġurnata li ssoltu tkun marbuta ma xi ċajta li wiehed jipprova jagħmel lil xi membru tal familja jew xi ħabib jew habiba. Hemm min isostni li daċ-ċajt jista' jsir biss sa nofsinhar.

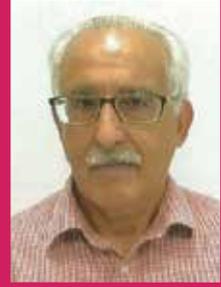
Billi kollox ġie bikri allura anke jum il-bidu tar-Randan ġie f'ġurnata mhux normali għax ġie eżatt fil Karnival li ma tantx jispira lil wiehed biex jingabar u jsum.

Fil-granet ta' qabel Jum l-ĠĦid huwa żmien ta' ġabra fejn wiehed jimmedita fuq is-sagrificċju ta' Sidna Ġesu Krtistu li ħa l-mewt biex jifdina. Huwa żmien fejn wiehed jattendi għal l-esercizzji biex dawn jgħinuh biex jimmedita fuq il-passjoni u l-mewt Tiegħu.

Bħal kull sena l-Assoċjazzjoni organiżżat jum ta' irtir għal membri tagħha fejn l-ewwel saret quddiesa segwita minn "coffee break" u imbagħad saru żewġ taħdidiet minn Father Fitzpatrick, waħda filgħodu u t-tieni waħda wara "buffet lunch". Il-ġurnata ingħalqet b' coffee break.

Din is-sena l-U3A –University of the Third Age ser tiċcelebra għeluq il 25 sena mitt-twaqqif tagħha b-seminar ta' nofs ta nhar li ser isir fl-Istitut Kattoliku f'Mejju. Id-data kif ukoll iktar informazzjoni għal parteċipazzjoni jithabbru iktar tard mis Sur Joseph Said il-koordinaturt tal-Universita'.

*Nagħlaq billi nixtieqkom l-ĠĦid it-tajjeb, lilkom u lil-familji tagħkom.*



Martin Diacono

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*Members of the Association  
Who wish to publish articles,  
Suggestions, comments, etc.  
In the Newsletter are asked  
To submit them to the Editorial  
Board for approval.*

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# L-Omm u l-Miraklu tal-Ħajja

Mary Montebello

Għal xhur shaħ ili nistenna  
Fl-aħħar wasal dal-jum mixtieq  
Faret qalbi ferħ mimlija  
Għax tiegħek huwa t-twelid.

Bħal mibluha bil kemm nemmen  
Mill-mirakli li għaddejt  
Donnu int kont l-ewwel hlejqa  
Li fid-dinja tagħna ġejt

Hawn f'dirgħajja l-ewwel darba  
Nixtieq lilek narak sew  
Inrekknek hekk qrib ma qalbi  
Nistampalek l-ewwel bews.

Il-Ħajja għalija mbidlet  
Irrid naħseb fik ukoll  
Bħal dik il-ħolqa katina  
Ħadd lilek minni ma jholl.

Lehen hlejju daqq ta' l-arpi  
Biex Mulej nagħtik tifhir  
Post ta' qima għandek f'qalbi  
Bħal ma jkun f'tempju l-lampier

X'nista' nagħtik jien b'kumpens?  
Tifhir biss ma jagħmilx sens  
Ħajr inroddlok u kull rispettt  
Int Ħallieq tal-univers.



# Good Friday in the three Cities

Good Friday is a religious occasion observed by Christians to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the Friday preceding Easter Sunday. In Malta the Good Friday procession is a genuine and devotional tradition.

Today Good Friday processions are held in fourteen localities in Malta and seven in Gozo, each of which have their own statues. In recent years this procession has taken the form of a pageant where personages dressed in robes of biblical characters of both Testaments take part interspersed between the various statues.



In Vittoriosa (il-Birgu) the earlier statues that were brought from Spain were the responsibility of Maltese seafarers after seeing Good Friday processions in Barcelona, Spain, with statues dressed in real attire in Spanish style. They were so impressed with the statues that they brought some like them over to Malta.

In Senglea (l-Isla) the procession goes back to at least the year 1714. Till the year 1880 this procession used to be held on Maundy Thursday but after a decree by the Archbishop Carmelo Scicluna addressed to all the parishes it started to be held on Good Friday.

Without doubt the statue of Christ the Redeemer is the most famous not only in Senglea but all over the Maltese Islands. The reference toward this effigy is recorded as early as 1727.





During the plague of 1818 the church authorities of Senglea had vowed to organise another procession around the city on the third Sunday after Pentecost if its population was spared from this disease. This year, after a detailed scientific research the statue was given an extensive restoration. One aspect that came out was the difference in colour of the thorns and the hair of the statue which before the restoration were of the same colour. One also has to note that the thorns were real.

The Good Friday procession in Cospicua ( Bormla) was first organised around 1694. It was always held on Good Friday, An old tradition that was kept on till a few years after the Second World War was that of a flute player accompanied by a boy sounding the drum.

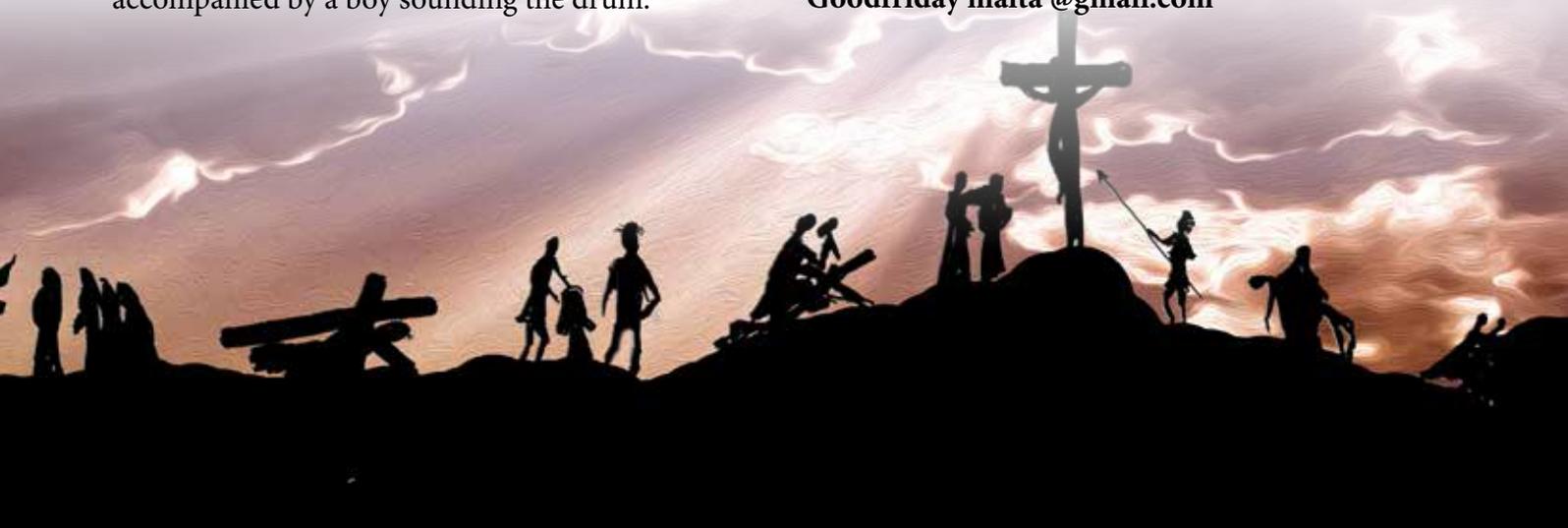
There is no doubt that this sad music added a lot to the solemn atmosphere. In addition to the clergy and members of the Confraternities in the last forty years children and adults representing personages from the bible together with Roman soldiers were added to the defile.

Needless to say, that the devotion towards this annual commemoration is very strong and evidence of this are also the numerous exhibitions and pageants held around the various towns and villages.

**Maria Diacono.**

**Bibliography : Birgu Local Council.**

**Goodfriday malta @gmail.com**



# A thirst for knowledge

**Fiona Vella** interviews Martin Diacono, President of the Association of the Members of the U3E.

**It is never too late to learn something new. Evidence of the benefits of lifelong learning is overwhelming. Feeling connected to life and to others, being eager and motivated to explore different themes, keeping active intellectually, socially and physically are just some of the rewarding factors.**

Martin Diacono has been attending lectures at the University of the Third Age for the past 10 years.

‘It is mostly my thirst for knowledge which urges me to follow these lectures. I even attend the lectures which are offered to the general public by the University of Malta. I have a deep interest in art and these lectures provide me with the opportunity to acquire more information about this subject and involve myself in related study tours abroad explains Diacono.

The University of the Third Age, also known as U3A, was launched in Malta on January 23, 1993 under the auspices of the University of Malta.

”The main aim of U3A is to promote a yearning for knowledge and creativity. Although the lectures are held at university, their purpose is different from those intended to coach students to obtain academic qualifications and find a job. There are no admission requirements and anyone

above the age of 60 may apply, irrespective of the level of education. There are no assignments to work on and no exams to sit for. Lectures are there for the sheer pleasure of learning new things in the company of a group of people who nourish similar interests. The cost for the lectures covering from October to June is €12.”

U3A operates from four centres: three in Malta and one in Gozo.

The Head Centre is at the Catholic Institute in Floriana. Lectures are held from Monday to Thursday from 9am. to 11am. The Sliema Centre is at the Salesian School of St. Patrick’s. Lectures are held on Tuesday and Thursday from 5pm to 7pm. The Cottonera Resource Centre is located in St. Edwards Street Vittoriosa. Lectures are held every Thursday from 9am. to 11am. The one in Gozo is at the Ghajnsielem Day Centre, where lectures are held every Friday from 9am to 11am.

Shortly after the launching of the University of the Third Age, its first members felt the need to establish a foundation in order to organise a number of social activities together.

This foundation eventually turned into a formal association which was named the Association of the Members of the U3E. A statute was set up to define it and a committee was elected democratically. The committee has a term of two years, after which an election is held to form a new one.

“The association’s objectives are to promote and safeguard the aims and activities of the U3E, to establish a point of social contact and support to it’s members, and to organize extra-curriculum activities for its members. Moreover, the association is responsible for the publishing of a quarterly newsletter and for the organisation of a biennial conference on third age learning.”

Membership in the association is only open to U3A members. The membership fee is €3 annually, however members will be asked to pay a nominal fee if they wish to attend to the activities organised by the association.



*During a symposium with guest speaker Prof. Olga Mikhailva from Moscow*



*U3E members on a cultural tour in Sicily*



*U3E members during a cultural visit in Sicily*

Since most lectures are held from Monday to Thursdays, social activities take place on the first and third Fridays of each month.

“On the first Friday of each month we attend mass followed by lunch. Each month we go to a different parish in order to give the opportunity to our members to visit various parishes. Lunch will be booked in a restaurant which is close to the particular area selected in that month.”

“The third Friday of each month is dedicated to a cultural tour, again followed by lunch. The excursions generally consist of visits to sites of historical and cultural interest, both in Malta and Gozo. Guides accompany the members during such visits so that they can appreciate the full value of each place. Some of the places which we have visited in Valletta are St. John’s Co-Cathedral, the Archaeological Museum, the War Museum and Casa Rocca Piccola. Other sites include the Mdina Cathedral and its Museum in Rabat, Malta.”

“From Mondays to Thursdays, further activities are also organized throughout the academic year right after the lectures end. Fitness classes held by qualified persons take place from Mondays to Wednesdays and these consist of keep fit, line

dancing and ballroom dancing. On Thursdays, members of the association’s choir attend to rehearsals under the leadership of Dame Marie Therese Vassallo. This choir performs in the mass which is held on the first Friday of each month, at various homes for elderly persons and also at the national event of the Active Ageing Awards.

“Annual milestones for our association are the Christmas buffet lunch, the Malta round trip boat cruise, and tours abroad. In 2015 and 2016 we organized a day trip to Sicily where we visited different places of interest. In 2017 we went for a five-day tour to Sicily where we visited Palermo and its surroundings. This year we intend to take our members to a five-day trip to Paris.”

For the past four years, Diacono was elected as the president of the Association of the Members of the U3E.

“It is a privilege to be able to form part of the committee of this association which provides so much opportunity to elders to enrich their quality of life and their social development. From 1993 to 2017, this association has worked very closely with Prof. Joseph Troisi who was the director of the University of the Third Age. Since his retirement, we are now looking forward to establish a strong relationship with Prof. Marvin Formosa who is the new director.”

Applications from persons who are interested to attend lectures at any of the Centres of the University of the Third Age and to join the Association of the Members of the U3E open in September. However, one can also register throughout the academic year. Lectures cover a wide range of topics and each module consists of eight lectures.



*First Friday Mass at the University Chapel on the opening of the academic year 2017*

## Learn Something New

Between February and June 2013, the following modules will commence at:

**The Floriana Centre:** Malta Marittima by Dr Timmy Gambin, The British Period in Malta by Richard P. Agius, Government systems in Malta and abroad by Lawrence Grech. Il-Folklor Malti bħala parti mill-Wirt Kulturali (Tieni Parti) by Marlene Mifsud Chircop, Interpretative Perspectives of Maltese History in Constructing National Identity by Dr Charles Xuereb, Voices of U3A members (sharing experiences), Għerf Missirijietna: riflessjonijiet filosofici fuq il-proverbji Maltin by Prof. Joe Friggieri, and Looking into art: How to discuss works of art from different standpoints by Dr Christian Attard.

**The Sliema Centre:** The Constitution of Malta by Prof. Kevin Aquilina, The Medieval Millennium by Vincent Zammit, Historical, Literary and Theological aspects of the Bible by Rev. Dr Stefan Attard, and Understanding Dementia by Dr Anthony Scerri.

**The Cottonera Centre:** Malta During the 19th Century by Vincent Zammit, and Hajti tiegħi naghzel jien! by Marica Mizzi. ,

**The Gozo Centre:** L-izvilupp tal-Edukazzjoni f'Malta by Joseph Xerri, and Ġrajjet Malta u Għawdex: Storja u Letteratura by Kav. Joe M Attard.

For more information, contact the U3E head office at the Catholic institute in Floriana on 21 24 3202 or e-mail [diacstef@onvolnet](mailto:diacstef@onvolnet).

# Addressing Complex and delicate issues

January 26 sees the Hon, Tony Agius Decelis Parliamentary Secretariat for Persons with Disability and Active Ageing embarking on an extended mission to address complex but delicate issues rather than being contented to let such matters be swept under the carpet only to be faced by an ill-prepared future generation.

In organising the first national conference on sexuality and intimacy in later life, the Parliamentary Secretariat is addressing one of many elephants in the room of ageing policy.

Indeed, national politics and programmes often neglect the sexual needs of older adults with healthcare providers often uninformed and poorly trained about the relevant issues, and thus uncomfortable discussing sex and sexuality with their elderly clients. Such programmes are often directed at younger adults of reproductive age.

Despite the fact that sexuality, sexual health and the expression of sexual identity are recognised as central components of quality of life and wellbeing,

older people are simply left out in the cold, research consistently shows that sexuality remains important to adults over 65 years of age.

Moreover, the importance of sexuality for older people, including those living with dementia, is often overlooked or underestimated, and there is even a tendency to accept ageist stereotypes of older people as sexless and undesirable.

Moreover, age does not protect an individual from sexually transmitted diseases. Health promotion on such issues should also be promoted in this age group so that such older persons are adequately informed on risks for diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, hepatitis and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

This policy implementation is especially urgent considering that Malta's rate at new HIV cases among people over 50 in in the top four for European countries. The national conference is certainly not to be missed as keynote speakers include Prof. Trish Hafford- Letchfield from Middlesex University and Prof. Charles Savona Ventura and Prof. David Mamo from the University of Malta. Sexologist Dr Nicholas Briffa will also address the audience.