

Foreword

Rev. Mgr Joseph Galea Curmi

Auxiliary Bishop

It is so fitting that the Faculty of Theology within the University of Malta is publishing this celebratory volume containing interesting articles by diverse contributors on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Charles Jude Scicluna.

The articles are organized in six sections according to their subject matter; the first section concerns the Archbishop directly, and the following sections discuss themes that are intimately connected to his ministry: the word of truth, a journey along the centuries, the value of the human person, the episcopal ministry and, finally, the way the Church should be faithful and true – *fidelis et verax* – which is the motto he had chosen as bishop. The contributions are well suited for this publication in honour of Archbishop Scicluna, since they are the fruit of wisdom and research.

During the past ten years, Archbishop Scicluna's contribution to the Universal Church and to the Church in Malta has been invaluable. In his capacity as Adjunct Secretary within the Congregation (now Dicastery) for the Doctrine of the Faith in the past years, he has been instrumental in the implementation of the reforms that have helped the Catholic Church to respond more forcefully to the cases of abuse by her pastoral operators. Both as Auxiliary Bishop and subsequently as Archbishop of Malta, Mgr Scicluna has continued to build on

Foreword

his years of work in this field in Rome and in several countries. His commitment to this cause has driven the entire Church to espouse a clear and consistent response to allegations of abuse. Both Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have found in Archbishop Scicluna a trustworthy frontliner in their efforts to purify the Church in this regard.

The Church in Malta has benefitted greatly from Archbishop Scicluna's episcopal ministry – from his tireless pastoral work and from his word.

Archbishop Scicluna embraced his mission as shepherd of the Church in Malta with great commitment, and this motivated him to proclaim the Word of God with faithfulness and truth. This is his priority. His word, which springs from his meditation of the Word of God, is rooted in his understanding of the signs of the times and in his appreciation of the human condition. In this way, he demonstrates how the Word applies to everyday life and illuminates society.

From his word and pastoral work emerges a vision of a Church that is continually inspired by the Word of God, as herald of Jesus Christ and, at the same time, is primed to give a valued contribution to society, especially through her social teaching. It is a vision of a Church that is careful not to do this by imposition or by dictating, but by proposing a way forward that encourages solidarity and social commitment.

It is a vision that strives for change immersed in sound spiritual roots. The Archbishop insists on our need for God. This is the golden thread that runs through his homilies. His vision of God is of a God who loves, who is merciful, welcoming, healing, saving, and who gives life to every human being by calling each one of us to come to him with a contrite heart, entirely aware of our fragility, while knowing that we can place our trust in him competently.

Archbishop Scicluna is eloquent and holds your attention with his word which is blessed with a profundity of thought. His word is rooted in reason but touches the heart. It is a word which is grounded in wisdom and is also considerate towards the plight of the human person today.

His word directly strikes at the heart of moral issues; he is known for calling a spade a spade. It is a word that conveys the Church's valid contribution to today's pluralist Maltese society. His word is a continuous appeal for the values that truly build our society, in a spirit of authentic dialogue, without any hint of inferiority.

Rev. Mgr Joseph Galea Curmi

One of the Archbishop's remarkable characteristics is that his word is never superficial. He does not delight in soundbites that fade after one news cycle. His word is measured, not careless; it delves deep into the essentials, and does not ramble on secondary issues; his word is not flighty, but is embedded in the context of the time; it motivates for positive action, and does not weary you down with pessimism.

In his pastoral ministry, the Archbishop chose evangelization and *diakonia* as the two essential binaries of the mission of the Church. He strives to implement the orientation indicated by Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. With the approval of the local document of ecclesial renewal, *One Church One Journey*, Archbishop Scicluna demonstrates how seriously the Church in Malta takes the orientation laid out by Pope Francis.

Archbishop Scicluna is a man of culture who loves art and artistic heritage. During the time he has been bishop, the Church in Malta took concrete steps to safeguard our Maltese heritage and encourage its appreciation, so much so that today we can already enjoy several restored locations and works of art that make our country proud.

Archbishop Scicluna is an accessible person. He communicates with incisive tweets, but is also known for how quickly he replies to emails without delay. He takes consultation seriously; he is not beneath asking for advice, and is ready to shoulder the responsibility of the decisions he subsequently takes.

One can really understand his big heart when meeting him in person. In him, one sees the spiritual father who treasures the people for whom he gave his life in his ministry. Many people who know him personally can realise how the Archbishop lives the prayer attributed to Saint Thomas More, and that Pope Francis recites everyday: 'Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humour. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke and to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.'

We pray to the Lord so that in his episcopal ministry, Archbishop Scicluna will continue to be a light and an inspiration, showing us the joy of the Gospel and thus helping us journey together on the road of faithfulness and truth.

+Joseph Galea Curmi
Auxiliary Bishop