

## Christmas 1983

Issued: 6th September 1983

Designer: Norbert Attard

Watermark 7



## Christmas 1984

Issued: 5th October 1984

Designer: Luciano Micallef

Watermark 6 - 2c + 1

Watermark 7 - 8c + 2

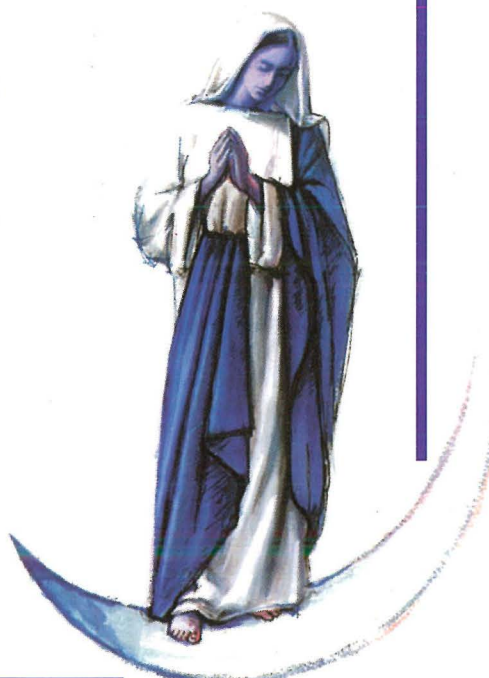


## Christmas 1985

Issued: 10th October 1985

Designer: Sanni Bonnici

Watermark 7



Painting by Amadeo Brogli, Loreto Sanctuary, Italy

### *Christmas 1983*

This Christmas set was issued by the Malta Postal Administration on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1983. It consists of three stamps, depicting reproduction of miniatures found in a 15<sup>th</sup> Century French Book of Hours. This Prayer Book which once belonged to the French Bali de Breteuil Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and Malta, is treasured at the National Library of Malta. The Knight de Breteuil served his Order as an Ambassador to the Holy See.

The 2c+1c stamp depicts the Annunciation of the Birth of Christ by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. The 8c+2c value shows the Nativity of Christ, while the 20c+3c shows the Adoration of the Magi. The size of each stamp is 29mm x 47mm and the perforation is 14 x 14.

The set was printed in sheets of 40 stamps by Printex Ltd, using the Lithography process. The design of this set was prepared by Norbert Attard and the stamps are watermarked with Maltese Crosses.. The 8c+2c stamp was also reproduced by the Postal Administration as Maximum Card number

### *Christmas 1984*

On the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1984, the Malta Postal Administration issued its twenty-first set in the Christmas series. The set consisting of three stamps was printed by Printex Ltd. of Malta and watermarked with Maltese Crosses. The stamps were printed in sheets of 40 and designed by Luciano Micallef.

The image of the Virgin Mary adorns all three stamps. The 2c+1c stamp depicts The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. This stamp is a reproduction of a painting by the Maltese artist Pietru Pawl Caruana. The other two stamps are also a replica of two paintings, the *Epiphany* (8c+2c) and *Jesus among the Doctors in the Temple of Jerusalem*. These paintings are the work of Caruana's son, Rafel. All three paintings are on display at the church of Our Lady of Porto Salvo in Valletta. A bozzetto of *The Visitation* is on exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta.

### *Christmas 1985*

Only one of the 1985 Christmas three stamp set features the figure of the Blessed Mother, the 8c+2c value. The stamp represents the Virgin Mary holding up the Child Jesus to be seen by all the nations of the World. In fact Mary is seen on top of the Globe with the Sun at her back. It recall the singular sequence found in the Book of the Revelations by St. John: "*And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun...and upon her head a crown of twelve stars... she brought forth a male child, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and His throne (12, 1-5).*"

Issued on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1985 this set features a polychrome terracotta relief modelled by the well known Maltese sculptor Ganni Bonnici who also designed the stamps. They were also printed by Printex Ltd using the Lithography process, while the stamps were watermarked with Maltese Crosses. As had become customary 1969 these Christmas stamps carried a small surcharge of which Maltese Charitable institutions were beneficiaries.

A Postal card having the three stamps joined together as one picture was also issued by the Malta Postal Administration to commemorate its participation in the *ITALIA 85, World Philatelic Exhibition* which was held in Rome from 25<sup>th</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1985.

### *Christmas 1986*

One of the most prolific Maltese artist of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was Giuseppe D'Arena. He was born in 1633 and died at the venerable age of 86. The set issued for this year's Christmas features two of his paintings which are found in the sanctuary Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Valletta.

The set is made up of three stamps: the 2c+1c stamps showing the "Nativity"; The 8c+2c stamp depicting a detail from the painting of the first stamp and the 20c+3c stamp featuring the "Epiphany".

The set was designed by Luciano Micallef and printed with the lithography process by Printex Ltd. Malta in sheets of 40. Watermark No. 6 of the Maltese Cross was used for the first stamp and watermark No. 7 for the other two stamps.

### *Christmas 1987*

This is the twenty-fourth Christmas set of stamps issued in Malta. The stamps depict a reproduction of three illuminated initial letters taken from a choral book which was owned by the Co-Cathedral of St. John, Valletta.

The initials, and so the stamps show "The Visitation of the Virgin Mary to St. Elizabeth", "The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ" and the "Adoration of the Magi". So in each stamp there is the figure of Our Lady.

There is the probability that these Choral Books were a gift of the Grand Master Philippe Villers de L'Isle Adam to the Church of St. Lawrence in Vittoriosa during which time this was being used as the Order's Conventual Church.

The Set of stamps was designed by Richard J. Caruana and printed by Printes Ltd. in sheets of 40 stamps. The watermark used was that of Maltese Crosses (J.B. Stamp Catalogue No. 7).

*Anthony Grech*



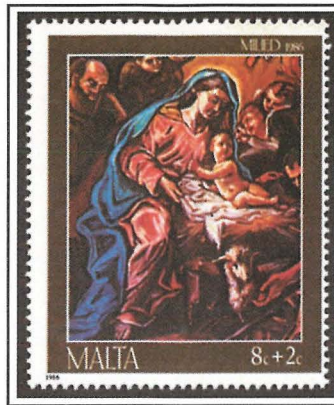
# Christmas 1986

Issued: 10th October 1986

Designer: Luciano Miccallef

Watermark 6 - 8c + 2

Watermark 7 - others

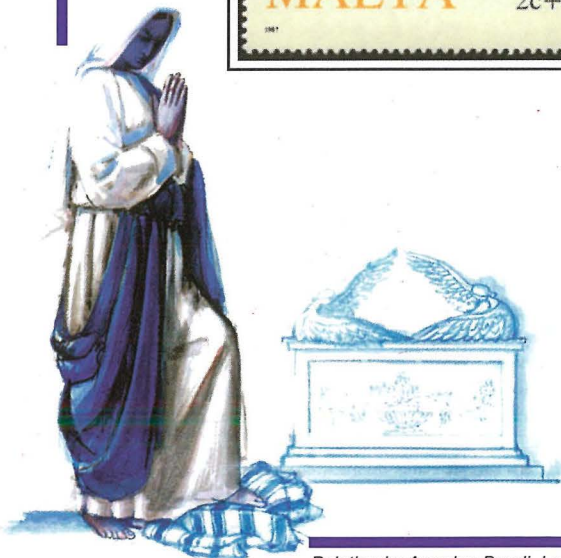


# Christmas 1987

Issued: 6th November 1987

Designer: Richard J. Caruana

Watermark 7



Painting by Amadeo Brogli, Loreto Sanctuary, Italy