Senglea’s statue of Jesus the Redeemer in pilgrimages outside the city

July 9, 1944: The statue of the Redeemer being carried through Victory Street, Senglea, towards Porto Salvo church as it arrived from Paola.

The miraculous statue of Jesus the Redeemer at Senglea Basilica is an old and venerated effigy. Unfortunately, due to the lack of sound and clear documentation, it is difficult to say who made it and when. But since its arrival in Senglea the statue has undeniably excited great chartists and attracted much devotion.

Along the years, it started attracting thousands of people seeking support or solace for their needs. This led the Confraternity of the Holy Cross in Senglea to decide to build an adequate niche in its church in front of the Annunciation where prayers were recited. Then, the pilgrimage continued to Senglea following the same route.

At the onset of World War II, it was obvious that Senglea was going to be a prime target due to its proximity to the dockyard. Following heavy aerial attacks, especially those that occurred on January 16, 1941, the statues of Maria Bambina and Jesus the Redeemer were taken for safe-keeping to St Heiler’s college church, Birżebbuġa. When the war was practically over, on July 9, 1944, the statue of Jesus the Redeemer was brought back to Senglea.

“God heard their prayers and the plague did not break the walls of Senglea. These processions have been held ever since”

At first, the statue was privately transported to the church of Christ the King, Paola. Three days of prayers and special services were held there as an act of thanksgiving. The statue was then carried in procession to Senglea. Since then, it has been a tradition carried on yearly on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II declared a Holy Year in commemoration of the 1576 centenary of the Year of Redemption—the year Jesus died. As part of the spiritual preparations for this special year, on October 2, 1982, a pilgrimage with the statue of Jesus the Redeemer was held. In the same year, the statue was also carried in procession to Valletta. The pilgrimage started from the church of Our Lady of Porto Salvo and ended at St John’s Co-Cathedral Square where the Via Crucis was prayed.

Hundreds of Malta Drydocks workers spent their lunch hour on April 8, 1998, in prayer, taking part in the Way of the Cross. After a request made by the Malta Drydocks Council and its subsequent approval by the Curia, the workers carried the statue of the Redeemer during the Via Crucis event. The organizers of the workmen themselves and the prayers were written by the yard’s deputy chairman Vince Azzopardi.

Similarly, on April 3, 2007, the shore mentioned two organizations held a national Via Crucis at Mount Carmel Hospital in Attard at which the statue of the Redeemer was carried shoulder high. This event of prayer was led by Archbishop Paul Cremona, who together with those present, contemplated the Stations of the Cross by means of reflections written by Dr. Marina Abela. The ceremony came to an end with a concelebrated Mass led by Archbishop Mroseca in the main square of residence. In his homily, Mgr Mroseca spoke about the need for young people to give more attention to the older generations.

On Easter Sunday, April 23, 2000, there came the news that the statue of the Redeemer would undertake a historic pilgrimage to Gozo. The statue was to be transported to the church of Our Lady of Porto Salvo, which, at the time, served as a temporary parish church until the main church was rebuilt. When, in October 1967, the sanctuary of the Holy Cross was once again in use, the statue was transported to its rightful place there.

In 1988, the statue of Jesus the Redeemer started being carried in procession along the streets of Senglea every year on the fourth Friday of Lent. Since 1990, this practice had become a tradition of a domineering pilgrimage, normally led by the Archbishop.

More recently and on eight occasions to date, the statue of Jesus the Redeemer has been taken out of Senglea on various pilgrimages. This devotion radiates to all parts of Malta outside the city and from Gozo. This event of prayer was led by Archbishop Paul Cremona, who together with those present, contemplated the Stations of the Cross by means of reflections written by Dr. Marina Abela. The ceremony came to an end with a concelebrated Mass led by Archbishop Mroseca in the main square of residence. In his homily, Mgr Mroseca spoke about the need for young people to give more attention to the older generations.

On Easter Sunday, April 23, 2000, there came the news that the statue of the Redeemer would undertake a historic pilgrimage to Gozo. The statue was to be transported to the church of Our Lady of Porto Salvo, which, at the time, served as a temporary parish church until the main church was rebuilt. When, in October 1967, the sanctuary of the Holy Cross was once again in use, the statue was transported to its rightful place there.

In 1988, the statue of Jesus the Redeemer started being carried in procession along the streets of Senglea every year on the fourth Friday of Lent. Since 1990, this practice had become a tradition of a domineering pilgrimage, normally led by the Archbishop.

More recently and on eight occasions to date, the statue of Jesus the Redeemer has been taken out of Senglea on various pilgrimages. This devotion radiates to all parts of Malta outside the city and from Gozo. This event of prayer was led by Archbishop Paul Cremona, who together with those present, contemplated the Stations of the Cross by means of reflections written by Dr. Marina Abela. The ceremony came to an end with a concelebrated Mass led by Archbishop Mroseca in the main square of residence. In his homily, Mgr Mroseca spoke about the need for young people to give more attention to the older generations.