



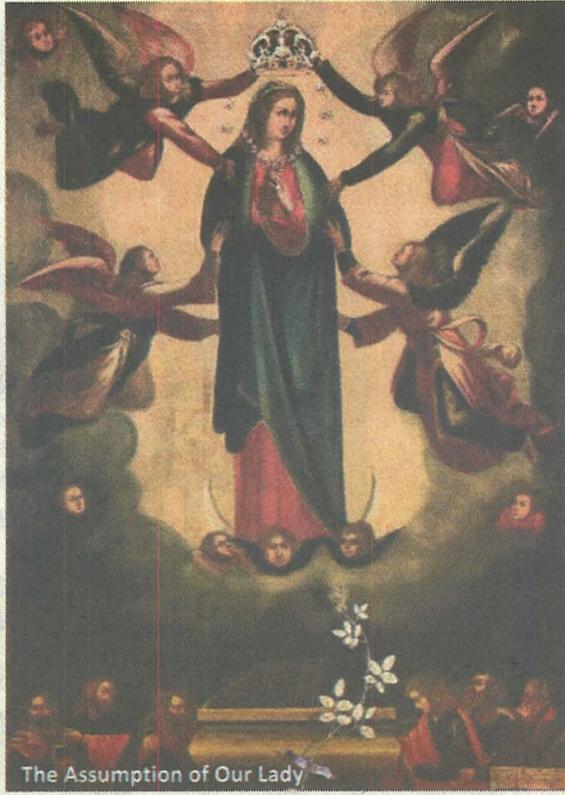
The chapel where in 1883 Karmni Grima and Frangisku Portelli heard the voice of the Blessed Mother



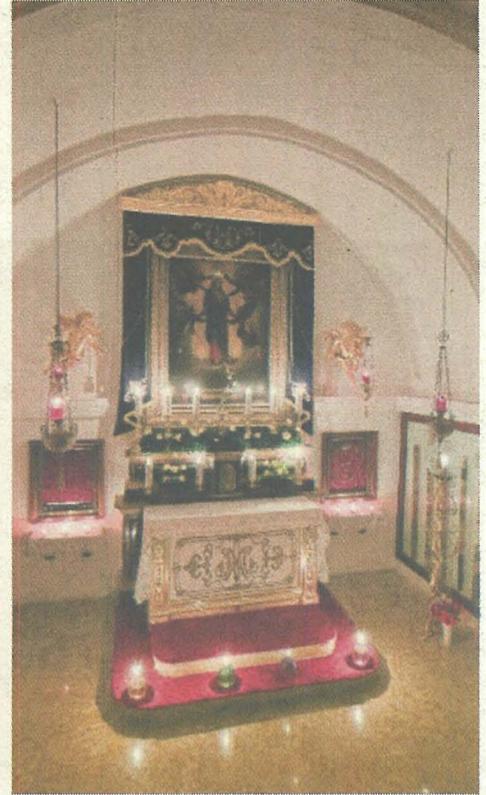
Karmni Grima



Frangisk Portelli



The Assumption of Our Lady



From CHAPEL to BASILICA

Ta' Pinu church was built as the result of the mystical religious experience of a farmer's daughter. Her name was Carmela Grima.

Carmela Grima, known as Karmni, was born 181 years ago on February 2, 1838, in Gharb, Gozo. Her parents, Thomas and Antonia were farmers and worked in the fields nearby; so did Karmni, as she grew up.

Every day, Karmni would hear Mass in a small chapel, which had escaped demolition centuries before. In 1575 Pope Gregory XIII delegated Msgr Pietro Duzina to visit the Maltese

Islands. Finding the church in a bad condition he ordered it to be demolished and its duties to pass to the parish church. But when the task began the workman making the first strike broke his arm. Everyone saw this as a sign the church should not be demolished and it became the only chapel on the island not to succumb to similar decrees from Duzina. Already the chapel and Karmni's destinies were becoming entwined.

Twenty-three years later Pinu Gauci became the procurator of the church and changed its name to Ta' Pinu, meaning of Philip. In 1611 Gauci paid for it to be restored with a stone altar added and provided investments for liturgical services. In 1619 he commissioned the painting for the main altar, *The Assumption of Our Lady*, by, Bartolomeo Amadeo Perugino.

One day in 1883, as Karmni was returning home from the fields, she passed the chapel, as usual, and heard a voice asking her to "Come ... come

today. For a whole year, you will not be able to return." Naturally she was terrified but she did go in. The painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary still hung inside and from it Karmni heard the same voice instructing her to "Recite three Hail Marys in honour of the three days that I stayed within the tomb." Soon after this Karmni became ill and was unable to return to the chapel for a year.

To begin with, Karmni said nothing about her experience. But eventually she told her priest and her friend Francis Portelli, who was also devoted to the Virgin Mary.

He told her that he had also heard the voice, recommending devotion to the wounds caused to her Divine Son by the weight of His cross on the way to Calvary. They both kept these events to themselves. But when Francis's mother's recovery from a disease she suffered was proclaimed a miracle a deep devotion to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu developed.



Karmni Grima portrait

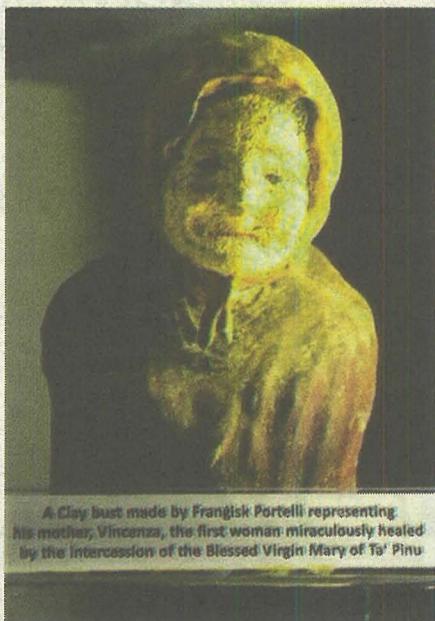
People started organising pilgrimages asking for temporal and spiritual favours. The church authorities built a sanctuary to house the crowds that visited daily.

Karmni died aged 88, on 25 February 1922. She had been bedridden for the last 15 years of her life, but bore her suffering and passed her days at peace with herself and fully contented in the will of God. Her home was passed to the church and is now a museum, full of artifacts from her life and times. In 1993, the village school changed its to Karmni Grima, Gharb Primary School, and attached a plaque to the school's façade.

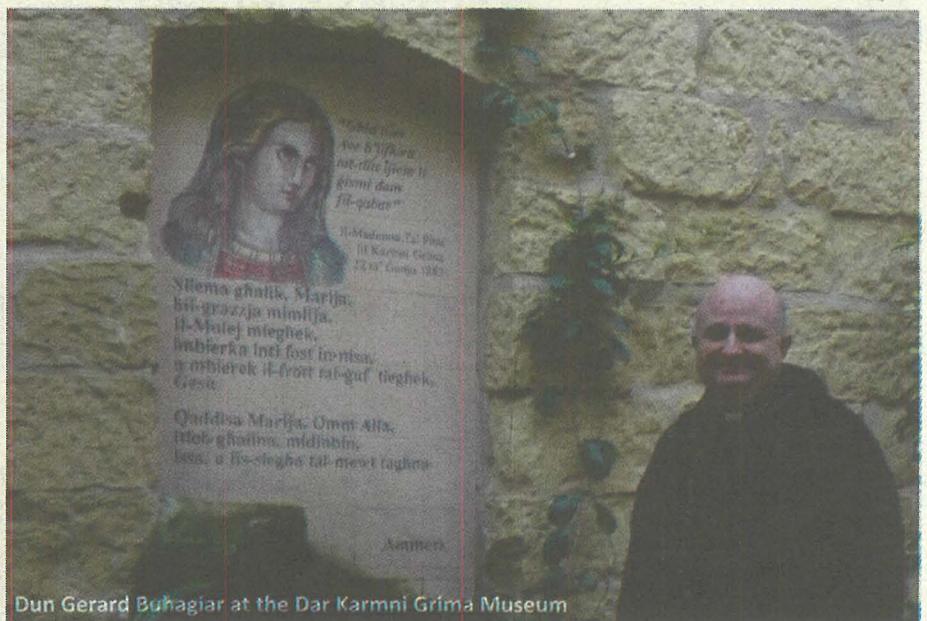
In 1920, the foundation stone of the church standing in place of the chapel Karmni knew was laid. People come from around the world to visit Ta' Pinu. It is a far cry from the scene Karmni would recognise, but its purpose is the same as ever.



Karmni Grima Statue



A Clay bust made by Frangisk Portelli representing his mother, Vincenza, the first woman miraculously healed by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Ta' Pinu



Dun Gerard Buhagiar at the Dar Karmni Grima Museum