

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION  
ADVANCED LEVEL**

**RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MAY 2014**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**AM RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MAY 2014 SESSION  
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**Part 1: Statistical Information****Statistics**

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for the May 2014 session of the examination.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	abs	TOTAL
NUMBER	12	25	41	26	16	10	22	152
% OF TOTAL	7.9	16.4	27.0	17.1	10.5	6.6	14.5	100

**Part 2: Comments regarding candidate's performance****2.1 General Remarks****General Info**

Once again, one has to highlight the poor knowledge in Catholic Social Teaching and a lack of references to the scriptures and the Magisterium. Candidates would perform better if questions are answered according to what they are clearly asked.

**2.2 Paper I: The Scripture and the Creed****Section A – The Christian Bible****Question 1**

Most of the 111 candidates who attempted this question have rightly emphasised God's (single) plan of salvation revealed in both testaments. While the reference to God's gradual revelation, particularly in the Old Testament, is undoubtedly important, many candidates failed to mention that Scripture takes on a new light in the ultimate event of dying and rising of Jesus Christ. In this sense, the New Testament is hidden in the Old and the Old is revealed in the New.

**Question 2**

Question 2 was attempted by 25 candidates. The majority of the candidates seemed reluctant to answer this question. The candidates choosing to answer this question have shown to be knowledgeable both about the meaning of prophecy on the Old Testament and to explain the message of two prophetic books.

**Question 3**

Question 3 was answered by 52 candidates. The candidates responded sufficiently well to the question of the empty tomb. Nonetheless, some points that need to be highlighted are the "truth" about this mystery, the reality of "life everlasting" and that all of this was "the first step" to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

## **Section B - The Creed**

### **Question 4**

43 candidates chose to respond to this question and the meaning of Tradition was clearly understood by most. Candidates rightly mentioned the transmission of the Word of God, the role of the Apostles and their successors as well as its intrinsic link to Scripture. A central idea which was missing in most papers is that of the sacred deposit which is made up of Scripture and Tradition as the "life" of the Church.

### **Question 5**

This question was tackled by 79 candidates. While answers, in general, were to the point, it would have been better to insist on the central points: God's "will" to save, God's "promise" of salvation, the centre of salvation is the "cross" of Jesus and the Holy Spirit who makes us "sharers" in divine life.

### **Question 6**

76 candidates addressed this question, mostly responding well to it. Indeed, the Church has apostolic origins, it continues Christ's mission on earth, it guards his teaching and its guidance has been entrusted to the apostles' successors.

## **2.3 Paper 2**

### **Section A – Liturgy and the Sacraments**

#### **Question 1**

This question was attempted by 52 candidates, some of whom tackled it in a very satisfactory way, namely by underlining the role of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist represented in the ambo and the altar. Fewer candidates explained the preparatory nature of the Word for the celebration of the Eucharist. The presence of Christ in both liturgical tables was duly mentioned, yet some mirrored the custom in their parishes that the intercessions of the Community Prayer are announced, as are the parish's notices, from the ambo. Further liturgical meaning of the altar was expected in several papers, especially the relation to Easter and resurrection of Jesus. Yet the answers, on the whole, were rather satisfactory.

#### **Question 2**

The majority of the 89 candidates who chose this question answered the first part while shortly referring to or ignoring completely the second liturgical part. Few were able to see, or rather deduce, the nature of the sacrament as it flows from the different parts of the rite of marriage. Many were mistaken to think that the most important part of the sacrament were the rings, and not so much the consent of the spouses' giving of themselves of which the rings are only a symbol. This reflects the power of image in the world we live in. Practically all candidates explained that the ministers of the sacrament are the couple themselves. Reflecting today's civil reality, some also insisted that the sacrament, as established already in creation, requires that a man and a woman partake of this sacrament. The characteristics of unity, indissolubility and fidelity – or on the other hand the different kinds of love being *eros*, *philia*, and *agape* – were explained, but not so much in a liturgical way.

#### **Question 3**

The question about the role of the Holy Spirit in five sacraments led many (88 candidates) to undertake this question. The majority chose to explain briefly five sacraments but this was clearly not enough for the question specifically asked about the role of the Holy Spirit in each. Especially noteworthy in the answers was the reference to the descent of the Spirit in the baptism of Jesus and thus in our own baptism, the epiclesis in the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, and the strengthening of agape love in marriage. The Sacrament of the Sick was related by many only to the dying. The Holy Spirit as the giver and lord of life (thus animation), inspiration, strength, bond, enlightenment, etc. were duly explained, even in different terms.

## **Section B – Christian Morality**

### **Question 4**

The 46 candidates who chose to answer this question were keen to give examples and show the changing values of today's society regarding, for example, abortion, euthanasia, homicide, IVF, divorce and civil union. Some related their answer to the difference between Natural Law, the Old Law and the New one, and also, satisfactorily, referred not only to the Decalogue but also to the Beatitudes. Candidates placed their arguments on the possibility of absolute moral truth, between good and evil, and their approach to the question was that of "a matter of fact" – this is today's society. Some gave a good explanation of the role and nature of human conscience, and its formation.

### **Question 5**

For many of the 40 candidates addressing this question, conversion meant a change from one's previous bad life to that of new good one, which in a way is true. But more meaningful was the explanation of *metanoia* in terms of a lifelong process, a journey of love of God and neighbour, and the healing and strengthening of our relationships with God, ourselves, others, and nature. And some did precisely this.

### **Question 6**

Very few of the 67 candidates who tackled this question did so correctly. No relation to the magisterium of the Church was given, if not the repetition of the Holy Father's words in the question provided. The social doctrine of the Church seems to be poorly known, particularly the milieu of politics. The vision and values of politics expressed were rather taken from the media in general, but no reference to the Gospel and the Church's teaching. Many enforced the right of the Church to speak in these matters, and left it at that. The Christian's involvement was highly related to his duty to vote (only) and politics seemed to be exclusively the mechanism to help the under-privileged, although a most worthy cause. The common good was well explained by many.

## **Chairperson**

## **Examiners' Panel 2014**