



ST. PHILIP  
PARISH  
HAŽ-ŻEBBUĠ



"For unto you is born  
this day in the  
city of David  
a Saviour,  
which is  
Christ the Lord"

Luke 2;10

peace.

it does not mean to be in a place  
where there is no noise, trouble  
or hard work. it means to be in  
the midst of those things and still  
be calm in your heart.

(unknown)

A Peaceful  
Christmas  
to all our Readers



# Connection

ISSUE 17

DECEMBER 2009

## PEACE... has to start within Myself!

Peace is one of the most profound human wishes and aspirations: peace with oneself... and peace with others and with the rest of the world around us. The desire for peace is what every man of goodwill yearns for. We pray repeatedly for peace amongst all people. And on every New Year's Day, which is rightly so dedicated to peace, we witness our world's leaders pronouncing their yearn for peace, auguring it to all. In his speech on the first day of each year, the Pope exhorts us to endeavour and pray wholeheartedly for it.

The process for the acquisition of peace in our whole world cannot but begin from my own and from your own heart! Without my own peace of heart, there can definitely be no peace in my family, nor with my neighbours or with my colleagues at work, or with whoever I meet, and so on...

Actually, the point of departure is this: Let me thoroughly examine myself to determine whether peace is really present within my own self. Do I normally enjoy a certain sense of serenity and tranquillity?... Do I really feel happy in my soul?... Am I perhaps always feeling restless about something?... And can I be sincere with myself and pinpoint the reason for this disquietude of mine?... I need to perform this awareness exercise (a self-questionnaire) that helps me clear myself from whatever might be saddening my heart or ruining its peace. For example: am I still burdened with some particular sin which perhaps I never had the courage to free myself from, during the Sacrament of Confession?... Have I been unjust with someone?... or unjust with my brethren in inheritance matters?... Am I not happy with myself?... or with my possessions?... Do I



lack forgiveness?... Is it jealousy that troubling my heart?... or anger?... or a particular sorrow that is burdening me?...

And when I succeed in identifying the cause that is robbing me from my peace, I will then need the strength and determination to arrive at a very important decision that will affect my life and that of those around me. Do I really want to enjoy a peaceful life?... If in the affirmative, then I definitely need to do something to reach my goal!

I augur that one day each one of us will understand and feel that our world can only proceed towards its real acquisition of peace only if and only when we are at peace with ourselves.

Peace to each one of you,  
*Fr. Daniel Cardona*  
Archpriest

### Christmas Activities!

#### Procession of Baby Jesus:

Thursday 24 December 2009: 5:30pm.

Departure from MUSEUM, and finishes in Parish Church. All are invited. If children wish, they can dress as angels or shepherds.

#### Christmas Eve Carol Singing at

**11.00pm, followed by**

#### Midnight Mass

**celebrated at the Parish**

**Church. A traditional**

**maltese drink**

**"kokotina" (hot chocolate)**

**will be served after Mass**



Parish web site: [www.parroccezabbug.com](http://www.parroccezabbug.com)

## 'Crib'

A model of the Nativity of Christ

Origin: from Germanic krebe, meaning 'basket'.

Perhaps the earliest Christmas crib was the one used by Pope Sixtus III around AD 400. He introduced the idea of Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in Rome and in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore he built a copy of Jesus' crib.

The practice of 'visualizing' the Nativity scene became popular in 1223 when Francis of Assisi found a cave near the village of Greccio and placed there an ass, an ox and a carved figure of a baby, lying in a manger. The Franciscan monk wanted to communicate the reality of the birth of Christ, in all its poverty and discomfort, to ordinary people. People from all over the region heard about the site and visited it.

Another saint, Bonaventure, writing in the thirteenth century, describes how St. Francis came up with the idea:

*That this might not seem an innovation, he sought and obtained licence from the supreme pontiff, and they made ready a manger, and bade hay, together with an ox and an ass, he brought unto the place. The man of God (St. Francis) filled with tender love, stood before the manger, bathed in tears, and overflowing with joy. Solemn masses were celebrated over the manger, Francis chanted the Holy Gospel.*

In the eighteenth century the creation of Christmas cribs was taken seriously and in Naples the finest sculptures and painters were employed to cut the figures and decorate them. The Bavarian National Museum at Munich has a fine collection of cribs from various periods and lands which show the elaborate care that was taken in preparing the models. Cribs can now be seen in most churches, and public places.

## The Christmas Crib in Malta : *Il-Presepju*

by Dr. Philip Ellul LL.D

Historical  
Corner



The idea of crib building in Malta is said to have started in the first half of the seventeenth century. The first crib known to have been built in Malta dates back to 1617 and was exhibited in the Dominican Friars Church in Rabat. In St. Peter's Monastery in Mdina one can still find a crib dating back to 1670.

The Sicilian style of cribs was introduced in Malta by a Franciscan friar from Sicily who is known to have lived in Malta for some time during the second half of the nineteenth century. This style was more acceptable to the Maltese, perhaps due to the likeness between the Maltese and Sicilian countryside depicted in the cribs. The building

and first part of the twentieth centuries. The media most commonly used were rustic stone, very abundant in Maltese countryside, and coal residue, commonly known as 'gagazza'.

Towards the middle of the twentieth century, particularly after the end of World War II, new customs and traditions were brought into Malta from abroad. Local traditions and folklore were pushed aside. Both in Malta and abroad, the crib became just another Christmas decoration and, due to the work required in its making, it lost its popularity. Nonetheless keen enthusiasts spend several months building impressive mechanical 'presepji'. The crib remains the work of art that depicts the scene best that holy night.



## Forgiveness

Forgiveness isn't easy. Indeed forgiveness is so difficult that some fail to forgive for a whole lifetime. In contrast genuine forgiveness is truly humbling and one of the noblest acts a human being can perform. The forgiveness offered by God is

most genuine forgiveness of all. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who died thirty-three years later as a substitute for each one of us, taking the punishment for each wrong committed by the whole of mankind.

This anonymous poem sums up why God sent Jesus:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator.  
If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.  
If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.  
If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer.  
But our greatest need was forgiveness, So God sent us a **Saviour**.