

Maltese eNewsletter

The Journal of the Maltese Diaspora



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COVID-19



Prof Charmaine Gauci
The Superintendent
of public health
in Malta



CORONAVIRUS
Children in Malta
draw appreciation
cards at the
height of pandemic

**WE HOPE
AND PRAY
THAT THESE
DIFFICULT
AND
UNCERTAIN
TIMES
WILL SOON
BE OVER
AND
WE WILL
APPRECIATE
MORE
OUR
HEALTH
OUR FAMILY
OUR
RELATIVES
OUR
COMMUNITY
AND OUR
FREEDOM**

Photographer Mark Zammit Cordina shot this picture of Valletta on Wednesday afternoon.



President's address: 'Remind those in isolation they are not forgotten'



Kevin Schembri Orland

President George Vella has addressed the nation and thanked health sector workers

for all they have done, while urging everyone to follow the directives that have been issued in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak.

President Vella said that he has been following the Coronavirus situation from the beginning. He said that the situation at national and international level is changing with every moment that passes.

Addressing patients who have contracted the virus and those dearest to them, the President said: "you are in good hands, and the care you are receiving is one of the best. Be courageous and know that you are in the thoughts and prayers of many."

Speaking on their behalf, he thanked the health sector workers, as well as all other departments and volunteers who are tending to the patients and taking care of the country's interests in terms of public health.

He said that a special thanks has to be given to the authorities who are keeping the public informed regularly regarding the developing situation and the measures being taken. I, like you, as a citizen and a father, feel that the provision of such information does a lot of good and puts peoples' minds at ease" He said that information is fundamental.

He pressed upon the sense of responsibility that must guide our each and every step, adding that the directives being issued by the health and political authorities are for the good of all the people, and must be observed without exception.

"If we fail in doing this, we would be exposing not only ourselves and those close to us, but also the whole community."

With this sense of responsibility, he said, he ties in solidarity. He said that many expressions of solidarity and expressions of thanks to doctors and nurses were seen over the past hours. "However there is more solidarity with others close to us that we should express."

He spoke about the elderly and the most vulnerable in society, who, "possibly during this time feel lost and confused. Help them. It is enough to call them every day the see how they are, and offering words of courage, while asking if you can help them with anything, or in doing an errand for them. There are many ways we could remind those in isolation that they are not forgotten."

The President also addressed the many people of different nationalities living in Malta. "I appeal to all foreigners among us Maltese, in these difficult moments. We all share the same worries and concerns. We are all in the same boat. As part of our extended family, your health is also a priority for us. My appeal to you is similar to the one I am delivering to the Maltese citizens. I urge you to observe the directives issued by the health authorities, and take all the necessary measures to keep yourself and others safe. We are all in this together, and your actions can go a long way in ensuring that we get over this chapter the soonest possible."

Vella described the current 'phenomenon' as one that is not just about public health. He said that the repercussions are wider than that, and has both economic and social impacts.

He said that the level of international cooperation is strong, "and I believe that all the necessary measures will be taken so that the impact is not carried by the weak. No country or people will be left alone."

In terms of the social aspect, the President said that "we are having to cut back from our daily

habits and customs - from work, school and social activities."

"I know that this leads to much solitude, and even isolation, but it is something that is needed and we cannot give in. Technology permits much of the work to take place, lessons are being given, and contact is still being held."

Lastly, he appealed for wisdom and hope, and said that the Maltese people are known for their capability of overcoming worse situations. Through unity we overcame many difficulties and obstacles in the past. Through determination, discipline, solidarity and above all else God's help, I am sure that we will find our feet and continue from where we left off."



Coronavirus: Eurovision 2020 in Rotterdam cancelled

This year's edition of the Eurovision Song Contest has officially been cancelled due to the rapid increase of Coronavirus cases across Europe, a post on the official Eurovision Song contest Twitter page revealed.

The post said that "over the past few weeks we have explored many alternative options to allow the Eurovision Song context to go ahead."

However, none seemed to suffice due to the number of restrictions put in place by the governments of the participating broadcasters. This includes the Dutch authorities as the song contest was supposed to take place in Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

They explained that they are saddened that this event will not be taking place but assured that "the EBU, NPO, NOS, AVROTROS and the City of Rotterdam will continue a conversation regarding th hosting of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2021."

They appealed for fans across the world to bear with the news and understand the difficult decision that the company had to take especially considering the number of hands that contribute to the production of the show.

Further news about this situation will be revealed in the coming days and weeks.

Destiny was to be Malta's representative at the contest.

*We received many letters of support from
Maltese Communities living abroad. so far,
although we live in different parts of the world,
the Maltese Diaspora is strongly
united during these unprecedented times,
we care for each other and we pray
that this terrible pandemic will be over sooner than later
and stay united as a resilient and courageous nation.
Malta has been victorious in several other sieges
and maladies through the
intercession of Our Lady Queen Of Victories*





"Jekk il-poplu Malti jobdi u joqghod kemm jista jkun ġewwa, hemm xaqqa ta' dawli li l-'peak' ta' dal-virus ma nilhquhx. Dan il-virus ha jinfirex kemm irriduh ahna. Minna se jiddependi."

Prof. Charmaine Gauci
Superintendent għas-Saħħa Pubblika

English Translation : "If the people follow our advice and stay indoors as much as possible, there is hope that the peak of this pandemic is not reached. COVID-19 will spread as much as we allow it to. It all depends on us." - Prof. Charmaine Gauci, Superintendent for Public Health

Prof. Charmaine Gauci M.D.(Melit.),M.Sc.,Ph.D.,F.R.S.P.H.,F.F.P.H

Professor Gauci is an associate professor at the University of Malta and teaches in the field of public health with special interest in Public Health, Epidemiology, Communicable Diseases, Health Promotion and Policy development. Professor Gauci has a strong commitment to public health. Her aim is to protect, support and improve people's health and wellbeing.



Brazil's Christ the Redeemer statue lit up with flags of countries affected by COVID-19! It did so to send a message of hope and solidarity! There's Malta in there, somewhere.

So it took a common enemy to bring the world together as one.

Let us remember this beyond this storm.



COVID-19

Prime Minister Robert Abela announces €1.8 billion rescue package

The Prime Minister has announced several measures to help improve liquidity for companies and sustain worker wages to help companies retain people in employment. A rescue package worth

€1.8 billion has been unveiled to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

The package was announced by Prime Minister Robert Abela, Finance Minister Edward Scicluna and Economy Minister Silvio Schembri during a press conference at Castille on Wednesday night.

Abela said that though these were generous measures, anyone who is able to attend work should do so until the Superintendence of Public Health said otherwise.

"This isn't the time for a holiday. Anyone who could report to work should do so. This is a time for discipline," he said.

During the conference, Schembri also announced that Malta will no longer accept applications for work from unskilled third-country nationals "with immediate effect."

The key measures are:

- €1.6 billion in liquidity for companies: €700 million in tax deferrals and €900 million in guarantees
- The €900 million in government guarantees to companies are expected to open up the availability of credit and loans to the tune of €4.5 billion that would give companies additional liquidity
- Health authorities allocated additional budget of €35 million to combat Covid-19.
- Quarantine leave: Government to pay companies €350 per employee on quarantine leave.
- Government will cover additional two months leave for parent who has to stay at home to take care of the children as a result of school closures with an €800 per month benefit.
- A company registering 25% less sales will benefit from 1 day per week per employee. This amounts to around €37 per week, equivalent to around €147 per month per employee. Measure is capped at €800 per month.
- A business that was asked to close as part of the Covid-19 measures will get 2 days of assistance per week per employee. This is equivalent to €300 per month per employee.
- A self-employed person will get the same amount.
- A self-employed person who also employs others will get 3 days per week of assistance for himself and 2 days per week for every employee.
- A Maltese or EU citizen who becomes redundant will get €800 per month as unemployment benefit.
- A third country national who becomes unemployed will get no financial assistance but JobsPlus will help to find alternative work.
- People in rental property and who lose their job and did not qualify for rent subsidy, will now benefit from the scheme.
- Foreign workers: A company that makes anybody redundant cannot apply for a work permit for a third country national. Malta will stop accepting new third country national work permit applications.





As more Catholics around the world find themselves unable to receive the Eucharist due to the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis provided an example of a spiritual communion prayer that can be said from home.

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to

receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart ... I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You," Pope Francis prayed March 21 in his televised daily Mass from his residence in Vatican City.

Pope Francis invited those viewing the livestreamed Mass to find the Lord in prayer. He recited the spiritual communion prayer and then exposed the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic Adoration at the end of the Mass.

A spiritual communion is a uniting of oneself to the Sacrifice of the Mass through prayer.

"Let us pray to the Lord, let us return to Him," the pope said in his homily.

He said that the Gospel parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee provides a lesson in how to pray. While the Pharisee was proud, the tax collector said: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner". "The Lord teaches us how to pray ... how we must approach the Lord: with humility," Francis said.

"When we begin praying with our own justifications with our securities, that's not prayer. That is like speaking to a mirror. Instead when we begin praying with our true reality – I'm a sinner – this is a good step forward in allowing the Lord to look at us. May Jesus teach us this," he said.

Pope Francis prayed at the beginning of Mass for families who cannot leave their homes due to quarantine.

"Perhaps the farthest they can go is their balcony," he said. "May they know how to find a way of communicating well, of building loving relationships within the family. And that they might know how to conquer the anguish of this moment together as a family."

"We pray for peace in families today during this crisis, and for creativity," Pope Francis said.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



Dear brothers and sister, We are passing through very difficult times. It had to be a virus to remind us that we are all one human family, different but equal, vulnerable but resilient. No country can overcome this challenge on its own.

We need to fight this war together. At least instead of killing each other we want to kill this virus that is destroying our health and livelihood.

Please let us help prevent the spread of this virus by following the medical advice we have been given by staying safe within our homes and washing our hands as often as possible.

I wish you well. Take care, Evarist Bartolo

Grand Master of the Order of Malta: “The Sick and their families in my prayers



Dear confreres and consœurs, dear professionals, volunteers and supporters of the Order of Malta around the world,

In this unprecedented moment that is uniting over 150 nations worldwide in facing the same grave challenges, my most profound gratitude goes to the Order of Malta's Associations, volunteers and relief corps who have been contributing in supporting the national health systems in several of the countries affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our medical staff and volunteers are providing assistance to the elderly who are forced to quarantine at home, by regularly delivering food and medicines, and health teams are deployed to administer tests to the population and to manage some mobile medical units which are equipped to handle the virus, strictly following the sanitary guidelines. Their indefatigable dedication is witness to the Christian message and faith which underlies all the charitable activities of the Order of Malta.

I also wish to express my deepest appreciation to all those medical professionals who – since the onset of the virus – have been working round the clock to assist people affected by this disease.

Every day we read in the news distressing reports on the condition of the people who've been hospitalized, many in intensive care,

some incubated. We must pray for the Malades who, by experiencing isolation, suffer this loneliness the most. Our thoughts also go out to their families: being denied from attending or even saying goodbye to your loved ones is a pain nobody should endure, and I wish to express my sympathy to all those people living this dreadful condition. To them and to all the doctors, nurses, health workers go my prayers and my full and wholehearted gratitude.

With deep regret, it was decided to cancel the 62nd Order of Malta's International Pilgrimage to Lourdes, one of the most significant moments in the life of the members and volunteers of the Order of Malta. This decision was a very painful one.

Given the rapidly worsening of the situation in France, for the first time in over 160 years the Marian sanctuary of our Lady of Lourdes has been closed to the public. It is my hope that many members and volunteers will be able to reunite for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land programmed next November, on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the death of Blessed Gerard, our founder, trusting that the world will have by then turned this dramatic page in history.

With its over 900 years of Hospitaller tradition in assisting the poor and the sick, the Order of Malta remains close to those in need and those who are suffering in this terrible moment and will continue reaching out to whoever is in need. I would like to recall Pope Francis' words just a few days ago:

“United to Christ, we are never alone”, and I renew the appeal of the Pontiff to ask everyone “to pray for the elderly who are suffering, in a particular way from interior solitude”.

I wish you all a blessed lent,

Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto

Grand Master of the Knights of Malta



National Call to Prayer in Gozo, Malta and UK

The Diocesan Ecumenical Commission of Malta and Gozo, in collaboration with Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta), is joining the ecumenical initiative of Churches Together in England, in a call to prayer in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

When so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, many are seeking peace of heart and spiritual courage during this difficult times.

On Sunday, the 22nd of March, which is Mother's Day in the UK, at 8.00pm, Malta time (7.00pm GMT), Christians of different Churches in Malta and Gozo joined Christians in England for this National Day of Prayer and Action. Christians were invited to light a candle of hope in the windows of their homes as a visible symbol of the "light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer."

Please also stop and join for a few minutes of prayer for the sick, the vulnerable, the doctors and paramedics, in fact everyone that is on duty at this difficult time.



Good Friday manifestations, Easter celebrations cancelled

Our Lady of Sorrows and Good Friday manifestations, as well as Easter celebrations, have been cancelled in view of COVID-19. The feasts are being cancelled in line with a decree by the Congregation for the Divine Cult and the Discipline of Sacraments. The congregation is also preparing directive on the celebrations which is to be communicated in the coming days. The traditional processions, involving the participation of well over 1,000 people and costing thousands of euros to organise, are held in over 20 localities and are the culmination of the Holy Week activities.



Communications Office

23rd March 2020
30/2020

THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY BY POPE FRANCIS TO MALTA IS BEING POSTPONED

In view of the current situation around the world, and in agreement with the Authorities and the Catholic Church of our country, the Apostolic Journey by Pope Francis to Malta and Gozo has been postponed. The date of the journey will be determined at a later stage.

The Bishops of Malta and Gozo would like to take this opportunity to invite Catholics to keep Pope Francis in prayer.



**D'Amato Records
98 Triq San Gwann,
Valletta, Malta**

**Dear Friends, we've been open
for the last 135 years.
We have survived 2 World Wars,
the Spanish Flu, recessions,
amongst other challenging
and hard times. During WWII
when Valletta was the most bombed
place on Earth, we and other shops
still remained open. I was told it
kept people's spirits high.
In the coming days we will keep on going
until we are legally allowed.
We will all be bruised but
we will come out of this horrid time
especially if we a
ll do it with the right attitude!!
The Maltese are a nation of survivors
and no Flu, War or whatever comes
our way will get the better of us...
keep well, be safe and be strong!!**

Facebook : D'Amato Records

New Adelaide Archbishop appointed by Pope

Emily Cosenza



Bishop Patrick O'Regan has been appointed the twelfth Archbishop of Adelaide by Pope Francis.

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Patrick O'Regan as the twelfth Archbishop of Adelaide.

Bishop O'Regan is currently in charge of the Diocese of Sale in Victoria, and succeeds Archbishop Philip Wilson who resigned from the position in July 2018.

Bishop O'Regan said his appointment comes at a critical moment for Catholics across the country.

"I look forward to playing my part alongside the people of the Archdiocese in welcoming to Adelaide the Church from

right across Australia," Bishop O'Regan said.

He thanked Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, who served as Apostolic Administrator of Adelaide in addition to his role as Bishop of Port Pirie.

Bishop O'Kelly SJ will continue overseeing the entire Church of South Australia until Bishop O'Regan's installation. The date for his installation is yet to be set.

Bishop O'Regan was born in Bathurst in 1958 and undertook seminary training at St Columba's College Springwood and St Patrick's College Manly, and was ordained a priest in 1983 for the Diocese of Bathurst.



**Bacchus Marsh Good Friday
Association Inc.**

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE CONSULATE
GENERAL OF MALTA IN SYDNEY,
NSW, AUSTRALIA.**

Lawrence Buhagiar

**Maltese Residents currently in the
state of NSW Australia requiring the
assistance of our Consulate are
encouraged to reach out to us through
the following contact details:**

Telephone: (02) 92629500

Email:

maltaconsulate.sydney@gov.mt

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY

+61 430402177

Good Friday 20

13/03/20

To all People Concerned regarding This year Good Friday
which falls on the 10th April 2020

On the 9th of March The committee and some members
attended a working session at

Ta Pinu Shrine (at the back shed) and Discussed The problems
on the Corona Virus

Unfortunately, we Decided to Cancel This year festivities to
coincide with Government Rules

And to protect the health of all involved

Please share This to all your friends to minimise the
inconvenience

John Sant

President Good Friday Association



AUSTRALIA: Easter services hit as COVID-19 prompts religious leaders to halt church, temple and ashram gatherings

The coronavirus is testing all religious practices as they
find ways to connect with parishioners.

Those turning to their faith for guidance on how to cope with COVID-19 are finding their places of
worship in lockdown as religious institutions do their bit to contain the spread of the virus.

Traditional churches have cancelled services, including those for Easter, along with weddings and
other occasions in line with the Federal Government's ban on indoor gatherings of 100 people or
more. The Catholic Bishop of Lismore, Gregory Homeming, said all public Easter liturgies had
been cancelled and there would be no funeral liturgies in church. But prayers could be said at a place
of burial.

**ONE LESSON WE LEARN
FROM THESE
DIFFICULT TIMES**

*Let's get
Together*





REFLECTIONS

"Worrying can be destructive. We need to remain focused. Extend our field of consideration.

"Droughts, bushfires, and viruses challenge a society that has become highly individualistic. Hopefully, this will make us think of our community, a relationship with each other, and a relationship with God.

"You can still enjoy life during these times. We can't change reality but we can change our perception towards it.

"Go out and sit in the sun. You can still do that at a safe distance

from others."

Ashram measures

It is not just traditional religions that are being impacted by the coronavirus.

The Hare Krishna movement is also implementing tougher measures at ashrams across Australia.



Sunday feasts are cancelled, and their famous street celebrations are now limited.

The director of the Hare Krishna Farm at Eungella in northern New South Wales, Ajita Cozzi, said visitors were no longer allowed to visit the farm or village.

"It's up to the individual if they want to chant in the street, but they must stay in isolation somewhere else so as not to infect the other Krishna residents," he said.

"If you want to chant Krishna in the streets you can, but you can't return here."

© ABC Western Australia

He said the coronavirus was also impacting on their Easter festivities with the Sacred Sound event being cancelled. It normally attracted 1,000 people from overseas and interstate.

Mr Cozzi said there are also financial repercussions with services including yoga classes and food catering being shut down. "We have already lost up to \$80,000, and now with Bluesfest being shut down it means more financial losses," he said.

But Mr Cozzi said they are continuing to work on the farm, grow food, and respect nature.

"Nature has ownership over the earth you can't be a thief. If you steal from nature you are a thief and there will be no peace," she said.

Worshippers practise social distancing

There is a large Sikh community in northern New South Wales and strict hygiene regulations are being implemented at temples across the region.

Ranbir Singh Bhorla, secretary of the Murwillumbah Sikh Temple, said hand sanitisers were now in all temples, and material towels were being replaced with paper ones.

"They need to sit 1.5 metres away from each other," Mr Bhorla said.

"We are no longer serving food at our ceremonies and are asking people over 70 years, and young children below 10 years, not to come to the temple to reduce the risk."



Mr Bhorla's wife Amrit is a nurse and encouraged women to wear dupatta sarees when attending temples.

"We would really appreciate it if they can cover their mouths with dupattas as a safety precaution," she said.

In the Sikh tradition, weddings are a big occasion with large crowds in attendance.

But for now, those too are on hold.

"We have just had to cancel a wedding that was due to take place at the end of March. Around 800 people from overseas and interstate were expected to attend. But it can not go ahead in these dangerous times," Ms Bhorla said.

Anglicans embark on outreach

Archdeacon Matthew Jones of the Diocese of Grafton said podcasts, Facebook, and messaging online were being looked at as ways of communicating with their flock.

But he said they have a lot of older parishioners who were not computer savvy.

"We're looking at phoning or house-visiting, if necessary, as a way of keeping in touch with our elderly worshippers and making sure they're alright," Archdeacon Jones said.



Associate priest Reverend Cathy Ridd of the Anglican Parish of Ballina said she was worried that the homeless will be the biggest victims of COVID-19.

"It is a huge concern for all the churches as the homeless aren't always aware of what safety measures they need to take to protect themselves," Reverend Ridd said.

"We are working to ensure they're safe and have food available to them."

© ABC Western Australia

Archdeacon Jones said it was important to have reflective time to quieten the mind from all the chaos. He recommended setting aside the time to do things that give you pleasure — such as a walk, or watching an uplifting, favourite movie. Reverend Ridd, who is also a historian, said these were hard times but we would get through it.

"History shows when the Spanish influenza hit many thought it was the end of the world, but we survived. And we can survive the coronavirus too," she said. "We must work together to overcome this crisis."



***Almighty God,
healer of the sick and
strength of the weak,
look with mercy on all those
who suffer at this time.
Bring healing to those who
are sick, bring peace to those
who are anxious,
bring strength to those who
care for them, and bring
wisdom to our leaders
that our whole society may
journey together through this
difficult time
with determination and
generosity,
through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen***



Maltese brought with them from Malta the Catholic Traditions to Australia

By J. Grantham

The Maltese people are proud Catholics, bearing the noble heritage of their island's Catholic history – where St Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked and the Knights of Malta saved Christendom from the entire Ottoman Turkish fleet.

The Maltese are passionate about the faith because they have been catechised well.

The Australian church authorities are very proud of the Maltese Community especially in the Parramatta Diocese. The Maltese community is one of the oldest ethnic communities in Australia.

Maltese began immigrating to Australia in the 1870s with an increase after the Second World War. From 1948 onwards, one fifth of the population of Malta departed for countries like Canada, America, England and a great number came to Australia, particularly Sydney and Melbourne.

Almost 100,000 Australians claim Maltese heritage, compared to Malta's population of 450,000. Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish,

Greystanes is traditionally one of the Maltese hotspots in Australia.

Maltese Catholicism is based on a serious catechesis that had been available for the Maltese faithful on a daily basis for the last 110 years. I refer to the excellent work of the Society of Christian Doctrine founded by St George Preca.

The contribution of this group to Australian Catholicism is enormous, because the Maltese brought this heritage with them. 35% of the catechists that graduated last year for the CCD programme were Maltese.

The prayerfulness of the Maltese is exemplary. Wherever you go in Sydney,

Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane and Tasmania you find Maltese people involved in the parish life and give their contribution to their parish.

The Sydney Chaplaincy is based on at the La Valette Social Centre at 175 Walters Road, Blacktown. Fr Paul Baron OFM Cap helped found the centre in the 1970s. He got around him a group of Maltese people in a Committee and started to work with him 50 years ago. The impressive centre comprises a Chapel, presbytery, meeting rooms, hall and popular restaurant and has even been visited by the Maltese Presidents, Prime Ministers, and other dignitaries.

The centre features Sunday and Weekday liturgies in Maltese and English.

Two groups meet regularly in the chaplaincy – the Emanuel Charismatic Maltese Prayer Group and the Neo-Catechumenal Way of Blacktown (Maltese Chaplaincy).

Ongoing activities at the La Valette Social Centre include activities for the elderly and the Maltese Australian Youth Group.

The Chaplaincy celebrates important Feast Days in Maltese culture, including:

Malta National Day (8 September), the feast of St Paul's arrival in Malta, St. George Preca in May, St. Peter and St Paul, the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven, and memorial Mass for the Maltese buried at Pinegrove Cemetery on the first Sunday in November

Pillars of the community include Antoinette Caruana, the President of our La Valette Social Centre and her husband Mark and her vibrant committee and volunteers. Frank Zammit is also known for his literary skills.

Mark is very interested in gathering the personal stories of people, so people can contact him to continue the Maltese oral history. The La Valette Social Centre helps to preserve the living traditions of Maltese Catholicism and knowledge of their incredible history.

Maltese Catholicism

The confluence of unique historical factors led to the importance of Maltese Catholicism in Australia.

During WWII, Malta was the nearest British dominion to Axis Italy and was bombed within hours of Mussolini's declaration of war on 10 June 1940.

Malta's membership in the former British Empire led to its heavy bombardment during WWII and the subsequent opportunity of migration to Australia.

Malta's strategic importance was the reason for being a British Naval base. This strategic importance was a crucial element for the survival of the Christian West during the 1565 Great Siege, when five hundred Knights of Malta and the Maltese held off the entire Ottoman fleet.

The Maltese Catholic community continues its venerable custom of defending and advancing the faith, now in Australia through evangelisation, catechesis and service.

In any new movement in the church you will find Maltese and they are leaders. Of this we are intensely proud.

Re: Heritage Malta Lecture

I wish everybody during this uncertain times health and safety. Please enjoy this lecture through the kind assistance of Heritage Malta. Unfortunately the series of talks have been postponed indefinitely because of this health crisis. So we are lucky to have received this link. The Lecture by Dr. Maxine Anastasi, from the Department of Classics and Archaeology at University of Malta, presented 'Car Park Archaeology' a talk about the 1983-84 archaeological excavations of the Museum Esplanade in Rabat and was held on Friday 6th

March 2020 at St Paul's Catacombs in Rabat.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVcLAgYoTb4>
 Saħħa u tislijiet Edwidge Borg

CONVENTION OF MALTESE LIVING ABROAD 2020

Just to let you know that in these dire circumstances preparations for the Maltese Living Abroad Convention 2020 are at a halt. We are all busy working at our Situation Centre day and night and would appreciate your understanding for not focusing on other issues, as priorities at this stage are the Maltese who are stranded abroad. With best wishes John Buttigieg

praying for those in need

We are doing a chain of 1 million Hail Marys for those who are suffering from the Coronavirus and the whole world at risk.

Say one Hail Mary and pass it on to 10 people. Let me know if you can't so we don't break the chain. Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you.

Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God. Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death. Amen

LET'S ALL PRAY TO ALMIGHTY GOD TO RID THIS WORLD OF THIS COVID-19

VIRUS.....wishing you all GOOD HEALTH & BEST WISHES. Charles N. Mifsud NSW Australia

Tithassar il-Via Sagra bil-Malti fi Greystanes NSW

Fiċ-ċirkustanzi li sibna ruħna fihom rigward l-epidemja tal-Coronavirus u r-rakkomandazzjonijiet tal-awtoritajiet tas-saħħa, il-komitat tal-Għaqda Kulturali Maltija ta' NSW iddeċida li jikkancelła l-Via Sagra bil-Malti u li kienet se tkun akkumpanjata mill-kor tal-MCA u li kella ssir nhar il-Ġimgħa 27 ta' Marzu fil-knisja tal-Our Lady Queen of Peace ta' Greystanes. Din issa thassret.

**NOW WE ARE REALISING
 THAT WE USED TO TAKE
 THINGS FOR GRANTED**

HISTORY

Malta and the Spanish flu outbreak 100 years ago

The pandemic wiped out five per cent of the world's population

Just over 100 years ago, Malta was hit with the Spanish Flu which claimed the lives of 551 locals. A document the the National Archives of Malta shows the record of people affected between July and mid-September of 1918.

People were warned to avoid spitting on the floor and allowing sunlight into their houses that were today's equivalent of getting vaccinated and washing one's hands.

Just like any other country, Malta was not safe from the Spanish flu but a widespread awareness campaign and rigorous quarantine ensured the island suffered the smallest number of casualties.

The island registered the lowest death rate across all of Europe. Only eight per cent of the Maltese population were struck by the deadly and infectious bout of H1N1 strain flu between 1918 and 1919, compared to 23 per cent of the UK's population.

In just four months – between August and December – there were 11,600 flu cases in Malta, with 551 eventually succumbing to the viral infection.

By the end of the influenza pandemic, Malta lost 0.3 per cent of its population to the flu, compared to Samoa's 20 per cent, Italy's 1.3 per cent and Great Britain's 0.6 per cent.

About 100 million people perished worldwide, making the Spanish flu the biggest pandemic. Asked about today's relevance to a 100-year-old pandemic, Dr Orr noted that today's H1N1 virus was the same doing the rounds then.



However, a repeat with the severity of the Spanish flu was expected only every 100 years or so and, thus, learning how the world coped medically back then could help us today during this coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

The chief government medical officer, Dr. Attilio Critien, had sent a leaflet in every household, warning people about complications and ways to ensure the pandemic did not spread.

Those going through an “attack” should use a handkerchief when coughing and sneezing, he advised, calling on people not to spit on the floor or in the street.

Sunlight was also a good shield against the flu because it dried and destroyed the virus. The leaflet asked people to stay away from work and crowded places and to allow as much air and light as possible into their living rooms.

Dr Critien had also deployed officers to places such as theatres to make sure they were not overcrowded, trams were disinfected daily, people were quarantined on Manoel Island and clothes of the deceased were burnt and barred from being pawned at shops.

The Spanish flu pandemic lasted from 1916 to 1919 and thankfully only eight per cent of the population were struck with it. Worldwide, about 100 million people perished due to the infectious disease, making the Spanish flu one of the biggest pandemics.



Why the Spanish Flu was able to Kill Healthy WWI Troops

Military.com | By Blake Stilwell

The Wuhan Coronavirus appears to be the first major health crisis of 2020. China's Health Minister reports that the virus is increasing in virulence and people could be infected without knowing. Fear is spreading across the globe faster than the virus itself.

Little more than a century ago, the world faced a similar situation. As World War I raged in Europe, the Spanish flu rampaged with it -- and across the rest of the planet. By the time the flu disappeared, some 500 million people had been infected and at least 50 million had died..

The 1918-1919 pandemic was the deadliest and most widespread in recorded history.

What was truly remarkable about that virus was that it was able to more easily kill otherwise healthy adults, especially the fighting men in the trenches of the Great War -- more than children or the elderly. Usually, influenza works the other way around.

Much of the virus' spread could be attributed to crowded military encampments and war-related transportation, meaning the war directly affected more than half a billion people around the world.

It's said that, for every American service member killed in the trenches, another 12 fell to disease, much of that caused by the Spanish flu. Influenza and pneumonia killed more Americans during the war than the German military. Why were able-bodied troops so susceptible to the virus? According to a 2009 study by Emily Breidbart, then a fourth-year medical student at NYU School of Medicine, the answer is counterintuitive. She says the troops' strong immune systems were to blame.

Influenza is usually killed off long before it enters the lungs, but not so with the Spanish Flu. Instead, the virus made its way into the respiratory system, where it dug in and faced the inevitable onslaught of T-cells sent to kill it by the body's immune system.

The study says people's immune systems went over the top in response to the virus.

"The capillaries surrounding the alveoli dilated and poured out fluid composed of white blood cells, antibodies, and cytokines. Cytokines and enzymes effaced the capillaries. More fluid poured into the



lung. The cells lining the alveoli were damaged, and hyaline membranes formed. Surfactant production ceased. The body produced fibrous connective tissue, entangling the lung in debris, fibrin, and collagen... continued exudation of fluid in areas where blocking of smaller bronchi had occurred would produce eventually airless regions."

Nurses During the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic. (Library of Congress)

Essentially, the body would drown itself trying to kill the virus. So the stronger and more able the immune system, the more liquid the body could produce, killing itself faster than someone with a weaker immune response.

Army pathologists have studied remains of soldiers killed by the Spanish flu, buried in the permafrosts of Alaska, and found the signs of this sequence of events in those bodies. The self-destructive behavior is now known as a "cytokine storm."

Doctors have long since learned that previous exposure to flu viruses decreases the effectiveness of new strains on the body. New Army recruits during the Great War were more likely to suffer the effects of the disease and die from it than veterans who had been previously infected with other strains.

But the most vital lessons learned during that long-ago pandemic were the importance of handwashing and vaccines for flu prevention.



A Short History of the Maltese-American Social Club of San Francisco

By Abraham Vella and Mona Vella-Nicholas

Towards the end of November 1929, thirty-five Maltese residents of San Francisco met to discuss the establishment of a Colonial Club. A committee was given the task of finding suitable premises for a meeting place. In January 1930, they rented the ground floor of a house at 1648 Oakdale Avenue, San Francisco. That same month, a committee selected the first officers of the club: F. Grech, President; C. Fenech, Vice-President; E. Micallef, Secretary; J. Azzopardi, Treasurer; C. Scicluna, Assistant Secretary; and R. Deguara, Assistant Treasurer. Hence,



the “Maltese Club of San Francisco” was given birth.

Very soon after, the “Melita Soccer Football Team” decided to join the Maltese Club, doubling the Club’s membership. In 1932, the “Sons of Malta Soccer Team”, as the Club’s team was now called, won the Redmen Convention trophy in Santa Cruz.

Other Club members who were musically talented organized a jazz band which played at dances and picnics and even gave concerts. This “San Francisco Maltese Band” even played for the welcome of Archbishop Edward Hanna at his dedication of the St. Paul of the Shipwreck Church auditorium. A dramatic company was also formed under Club auspices. This group put on plays in Maltese for the entertainment of the Club’s members and their families. The Club’s activities encouraged many other Maltese to enroll, so bigger premises became an indispensable necessity. In June 1931, the committee rented the large building at 1789 Oakdale Avenue, a former church. The Club eventually bought the property, which remained its headquarters until 1995, when the Oakdale building was sold and the Club’s present premises at 924 El Camino Real in South San Francisco became the Club’s new home.

Although the soccer team and dramatic group no longer exist, the Club continues to be a source of entertainment and community to new generations of Maltese-Americans. Dinner-dances, casino trips, children’s Christmas parties, and other events draw members and guests from all over the Bay Area to the Club. With the addition of women as full-fledged members in the 1990’s, mystery trips, bingo nights, pot-luck dinners, and knitting groups have been added to the list of the Club activities. In addition, a Melitensia library has been added, providing books, music, and films on a variety of aspects of Maltese history and culture.

The Club celebrated its 50th anniversary at its Oakdale premises in San Francisco in May 1979. Joseph Grech, Jr. was president at the time. San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein was the guest of honor. Twenty-five years later, led by President Joseph Tanti, the Club celebrated the biggest event it has ever had.



Preserving Maltese heritage in the Portola San Francisco

By GREER MCVAY Broadcasted on MAY 16, 2017



If you walk down San Bruno Avenue in the Portola neighborhood, you'll notice an orange building sitting in the shadow of the Avenue Theater. Right now it's a Round Table Pizza. However, more than 60 years ago, this building was the Melita Furniture Store.

Barbara Fenech, the daughter of one of the co-owners of the store explains, "Melita was the Phoenician name for Malta. It drew about 100 or 80 percent of the Maltese community [and] was going really well." Barbara and her sister Margie worked at the store for more than 30 years. Their dad, a first generation Maltese, owned it along with his business partner Joseph Tonna.



They started small and grew the store over time. Barbara remembers that they made money by "selling radios, toaster, irons-just small appliances." They'd make enough money selling smaller goods, and then they'd take the proceeds and buy larger items like stoves and refrigerators. "Business, I think was pretty good," Barbara recalls, because so many people were immigrating to the area.

The Fenech sisters' parents immigrated to The Portola from Malta in the early 1900s with hundreds of other families who came to San Francisco around the time of World War 1. Many of them settled in the Portola and opened businesses, like Fenech's furniture store and the Sp-Teri Ice skate boot factory. To this day the sisters maintain strong friendships with many of the people they grew up with.

Barbara and Margie Fenech and their friends like to gather to reminisce about this time - 'the good old days' growing up and working on San Bruno Ave, what they used to call 'The Boulevard.' Through most of their

youth and young adulthoods, Barbara and Margie worked five days a week.

"I would answer the phone, do the billing, dust the furniture, wash the bathrooms, sweep the floors. You name it, I did it," Margie says.

The tightknit community of Maltese immigrants built a thriving neighborhood that endured two world wars. But things weren't always great. Like any other ethnic group migrating to America, the Maltese experienced feeling like outsiders in their new country.

"I think at the time that my parents came there wasn't this problem of immigrants coming in. But when they got here to San Francisco they were taunted to a point," Barbara says. She recalls her dad telling her a story about how some people would mock him because he was Maltese.

"They would pass him [on the street] and they'd go meow, meow, meow, like a Maltese Cat."

People immigrated from Malta for many of the same reasons they'd migrate from anywhere. They were looking for opportunity, connecting with family, and wanted to share in the American dream. The transition was eased somewhat for Maltese people in the Portola community in large part because the Maltese-American Social Club was there to help. These days, president Brian Ciappara works tirelessly to support all the members of the club and new immigrants.

"Especially after the second world war, even in the early 1900s, there weren't too many jobs in Malta, so they were migrating out of Malta. So a lot of people came to the US," Ciappara says. "In those days coming to America wasn't that difficult and fitting in was quite easy for the Maltese because they had a community eager to embrace them. We are a people who help each other as much as we can," he adds.

There was, and still is support from the Maltese Honorary Consulate, one of only 15 in the country. Louis Vella, the current Maltese Consul General, describes how the consulate was established in 1967 after the Maltese Prime minister visited the Portola and met with the community.

"The Prime Minister... he kind of noticed that there was a very nice Maltese community here. They needed a lot of help, at the time even more so than today because many of them remained Maltese citizens...They needed passports...and papers."

When the Prime Minister went back to Malta, he suggested they form a consulate in the Portola. The consulate has been helping people find living arrangements and jobs, and helping with their passports and immigration ever since.

A highway runs through it

In the late 1950s, the Bayshore Freeway was built linking San Francisco to Highway 101. That changed everything. It made getting to the San Francisco Airport easier and linked the city with the South Bay, but the highway cut right through the middle of the Portola.

"The freeway sort of divided San Bruno Avenue," Barbara Fenech remembers. It cut off business in the small town that relied on the traffic which had previously made stops in town for gas, lunch and other commercial needs. Additionally it separated San Bruno Avenue from Bayshore Avenue, creating two distinct communities.

"People would just zoom by and forget all about San Bruno Avenue. It was kind of a trauma for us. Businesses closed. The neighborhood got boarded up," Margie Fenech says.

A changing community

As a result, many of the locals from the Maltese community moved south for new opportunities. Families like the Fenech's stayed and reinvented themselves. Now, all these years later, Barbara Fenech continues to focus her attention on improving the neighborhood for everybody. She's been active in the Portola Neighborhood Association for 15 years.

"We were able to get underground lighting...we have a new public library," Barbara says. The Association has been instrumental in a long string of improvement and beautification projects in the neighborhood. They've put new lights on San Bruno Avenue and are currently renovating the old Avenue Theatre. With neighborhood preservation moving forward, Barbara can now add Maltese preservation back onto her agenda.

"Little by little we are gradually getting back in," she says. "Our consul general has started a Maltese heritage organization. Our job the last two or three years is to contact the immigrants that came to the Bay Area after the second World War and find out what village they came from? Why did they come to the Portola District? Why did they come to San Francisco?"

The group is compiling the data into books and storing these archives of Maltese history for future generations. They're also helping seniors in the neighborhood.

"There's a lot of older Maltese people whose husbands have passed away or they don't know how to drive, so we're forming an organization where somebody can pick them up, take them shopping, take them to the Maltese Club for whatever function we have or to church," Barbara says.

This is the type of support that Maltese have always been known for. Barbara noted that there's another imperative that drives their work: they do work to preserve the culture because they are worried it won't be a part of the Portola for much longer.

I ask her if she feels confident that 20 years from now the Maltese club or association will still be around.

"I don't really think so, no," she says. She chalks that prediction up to the lack of involvement by the youngest generation of Maltese, the children and grandchildren of Barbara and her lifelong friends. "We're moving so fast...I just think there are so many activities and ventures that these young people can come into." However, keeping the younger generation engaged is what drives so much of their work. They won't give up.

Dear Frank, Hope that you're well, I haven't received my newsletter for a few weeks.

In Spain we are in total lockdown, the situation is getting worse with more deaths and infections increasing every day. We are told to expect worse before the situation will stabilize and starting to decline. Take care and stay safe. Kind regards

Godfrey Vella from Spain



Malta High Commission in Canberra



URGENT NOTICE

Maltese nationals resident in Malta in Australia & NZ who do not manage to return to Malta before the Malta International Airport closure, are to register their travels with Situation

Centre at [Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Malta](#) by not later than 21 March 2020.

For further information contact: sitcen.mfea@gov.mt or +356 2204 2200

Or contact the Malta High Commission in Canberra on +61 433 799 746 or

highcommission.canberra@gov.mt



**THIS NOTICE ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE
IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT RULES
THAT THE CENTRE IN CRINGILA NSW
WILL BE CLOSED INDEFINITELY**

George Cross Falcons Community Centre

COVID-19 Almost perfect silence at the airport – no further incoming flights

Report: Glen Falzon

Incoming flights have now stopped. Since this restriction began 12 hours ago a TVM crew visited the Malta International Airport which is virtually deserted.

Air Malta announced that as from Monday it will only operate outgoing flights for those in Malta wishing to return to their own countries and other special incoming flights for the carriage of essential goods, such as medicines. Outside the airport, apart from the sounds of gusts of wind, silence is almost perfect.

Bus stops are virtually deserted and the many empty parking places tell their own story in the parking lot that was always packed and in which there is now only a few vehicles belonging to employees.

The only part of the parking lot that is packed with vehicles is an area occupied by cars for hire, a good indication of the coronavirus effect on the tourism industry that was dealing with a constant influx of many thousands of tourists but now, nobody.

The final incoming flight last night was from London's Heathrow Airport. Many aircraft are parked on the runway, including Air Malta and Ryanair aircraft and to complete the surreal scenario, they are deserted with nobody around, including no tourists.

Air Malta's CEO, Capt Clifford Chetcuti, said the airline will be operating flights to bring medicinal products. He said that company employees, particularly those that have to meet with people, have been trained in precautionary measures for their own safety as well as how to deal with suspected cases of Covid-19.

Capt Chetcuti remarked that aircraft are being cleaned more than the usual and are being disinfected after every repatriation flight. He explained that the air filtering system on Air Malta's aircraft is similar to that used in hospitals, filtering microbes from the air.

A Spokesperson for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs confirmed that over the last week 800 Maltese citizen have returned to Malta after being caught in various localities by the virus spread. Of these, more than 100 made use of repatriation flights organised by Air Malta and coordinated with Government.

CURRENT AFFAIRS - MALTA

20,000 student cancellations for the country's English Language schools

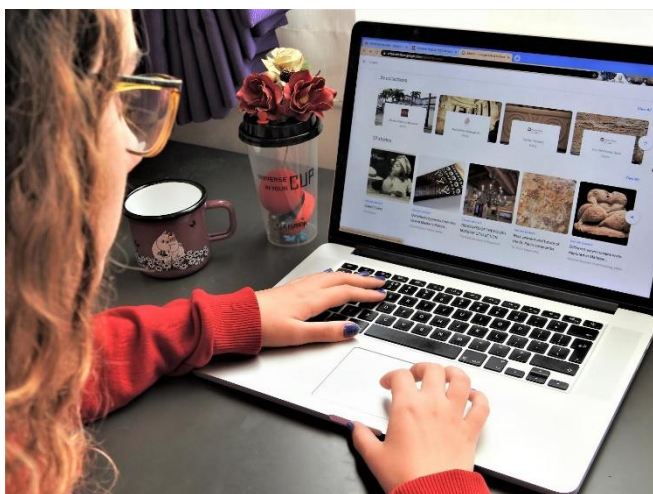


The Federation of English Language Schools for Foreign Students, Feltom, said that up to 16th March language schools have already suffered 20,000 student cancellations.

It described the current situation and the cancellation of flights as a major storm for the industry and some have already closed and dismissed employees.

It added that financial damages to be suffered in the sector will be just under €9 million. The Federation said that the financial package announced by the Government

will not be enough to safeguard employment in the sector. <https://www.tvmm.com.mt>



COVID-19

You can visit Heritage Malta sites from the comfort of your home

The COVID-19 situation is causing untold complications, but the cycle of seasons is not affected. However, Heritage Malta had to organise a virtual transmission instead of taking visitors to Imnajdra Temples, to allow them to see and experience the Spring Equinox from the

comfort of their homes.

"Now that we have shut down museums and national sites, we are attempting to remain in contact with you through the Heritage Malta Facebook page, where our curators are doing their best to post

information and photographs and also to reply to your questions on this page. You can also pay virtual visits through Google Arts and Culture," Heritage Malta curator Katya Stroud explained.

The virtual Equinox is one of the initiatives for cultural sites in Malta and Gozo to be enjoyed through virtual technology. The virtual visits can take one into the depths of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, around the halls of the Museums of Archaeology in Malta and Gozo, and provide surprises with the beautiful coloured mosaic in the Domvs Romana, and will accompany you through the difficult days of World War II via exhibits at the Fort St Elmo War Museum.

These virtual tours are helping the public to discover the beauty of these cultural sites, in the hope that once the present situation is normalised, one can visit the sites. The video of the Spring Equinox which has been posted on the Heritage Malta Facebook page has already been viewed by 27,000 persons within just a few hours.

The voice of Maltese living abroad

Malta - where I belong



As the Coronavirus closes borders to all countries and all activities are cancelled, as if life has been cancelled. My only hope is I will return to my Malta when I can.

Here is my story -

I went to New York USA, to run my 100th Marathon in 2009, after visiting Hawaii and England, it was time to return to Australia.

But instead of returning to Australia, I left for Malta. Nothing has been the same since touching down at Malta airport, I felt I had been there before. Something gripped my heart.

I had arrived in my parent's country. At the airport there were relatives, I had never met before, greeting me. I walked through Valletta and many towns, with my Maltese family.

Malta was more than beautiful towns and pastizzi. The Maltese people treated me as if I was one of them, strangers became friends, sharing their meals with me. I had many adventures and many laughs.

At the airport I said my goodbyes, I was sad and did not want to leave, I felt that part of my heart was staying in Malta.

I have returned many times. Wherever I go in Malta there are people I know, I miss my family and friends, I miss running free along the beautiful streets, I miss the taste of the delicious food. I miss the breathtaking views along the coast. I miss the Maltese way of life.

When the borders are open I will be back to where I belong.

Stephen Mifsud



COVID-19

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Dear Family members and Friends,

I have just received a message from our sonAssistant Director of Nursing @Queen Elizabeth Hospital has said "The Virus seems to be spreading quickly via PETROL PUMPS. So they advise to wear protective gloves when filling up or use paper towel and bin straightaway.

Please pass this around as it could make a huge difference." Maria Catania



COVID-19 - ANZAC DAY IN AUSTRALIA

Anzac Day is an important commemoration where we demonstrate our respect and admiration for Anzacs past and present. But the way we commemorate Anzac Day this year will need to change.

The National Cabinet has agreed that Anzac Day ceremonies and events should be cancelled due to the high proportion of older Australians who attend such events and the increased risk posed to such individuals. A small streamed/filmed ceremony involving officials at a state level may be acceptable. There should be no marches.

All Australian-led international Anzac Day Services will be cancelled for 2020 given international travel restrictions and restrictions on public gatherings.

The Australian War Memorial will aim to conduct a national televised Dawn Service with no general public attendance.

State and Territory Governments and the RSLs will work together on local community arrangements to commemorate Anzac Day.

Due to Curia closure, our head office is closed for the time being, but we are still here to help you...



7921 3480 / 7921 3479 / 7921 3482 / 9912 2515



help@caritasmalta.org



Please call, send an sms on the numbers above, or send us an email



Caritas
MALTA

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

As public conversations around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear.

WE BIND TOGETHER DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD AND WE TRY TO STAY STRONG, HEALTHY AND HAPPY. WE THANK GOD WE STILL CAN BE DIGITALLY CONNECTED SEND US YOUR EXPERIENCE WHILE YOU ARE STAYING A HOME AND SHARE IS WITH YOUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS GLOBALLY