



ORDER OF MALTA®

HANDBOOK COMPANION  
FOR  
*LIVING YOUR FAITH*

*Handbook Companion for Living Your Faith*

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*and Produced by*

The Defense of the Faith Committee

Order of Malta-Federal Association, USA

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*LIVING YOUR FAITH*

*“The mission of the Order of Malta is to seek to glorify God  
through work with the poor and sick and  
to witness to the Catholic faith.”*



## Deepening the Faith by Knowing It and Living It

Three clear and poignant articles on Defense of the Faith are contained in the Order's 2003 *Journal of Spirituality* entitled "'Tuitio Fidei' and 'Obsequium Pauperum' Today." The late Chaplain of the Order, Cardinal Pio Laghi, stresses the duty to educate oneself in the faith. In his article, the late chaplain of the British Association Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville, urges members of the Order to defend the faith by knowing it and living it. The Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festig recently reiterated these points in meetings with the leadership of the three American Associations where he saw "'Tuitio Fidei'" as upholding the faith, by growing, nurturing and nourishing it.

Each member of the Order of Malta said "yes" to the Lord when, after a period of formation, they accepted investiture as a Knight or Dame. Each member said: "Yes, I am ready to give my time, energy and resources for the poor, sick and needy. I am ready to live as a witness to my Catholic faith. I am ready to do these things and use my gifts and talents for the glory of God in the Order of Malta." A natural consequence of these affirmations is that each member assumed the duty to advance in knowledge of the Lord and His mission. That means, among other things, Knights and Dames must invest time in study and prayer and witness to Christ in the totality of all that they do. It's a way of life.

In order to help members of the Order of Malta deepen their faith and nurture their vocations as Knights and Dames, the American Association in collaboration with faculty from the Catholic University of America produced a video series, *Living Your Faith*. The first "Volume" consists of a set of four 30-minute DVDs that highlight four activities of the Order where Knights and Dames bear witness to the faith in activities serving the poor and the sick. This is followed by a discussion with theologians from Catholic University of America who address topics suggested by the activity in question and relevant teachings as found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the more recently published *Compendium to the Catechism*.

Each DVD, called an "episode," contains rich content for reflection and growth. The scenes and interviews from various Malta activities are striking. This handbook proposes ways to use these valuable DVDs in gatherings of members of the Order, whether as a part of regular monthly parish or area meetings, in Malta faith sharing or prayer groups, with area defense of the faith events, or in connection with the formation of new members.

This handbook suggests a process to follow in connection with the viewing of each DVD. Because of the way the DVDs present their material, one or more sessions may be suggested by a particular DVD. It is recommended that group leaders and participants read ahead from the sections from the *Catechism* and *Compendium* covered by each session. **Preliminary thoughts** are also offered for consideration before viewing the DVD in a group. The suggested group format follows:

1. Prepare to View DVD  
Open session with prayer of gratitude and to ask God's grace that the session bear fruit.
2. Read a related passage from Sacred Scripture and, in silence, reflect on the passage(s).
3. View DVD
4. Discussion following the DVD  
Questions, Resolutions and Reflections
5. Reflection on the session itself
6. Prayer of Thanksgiving

## DVD 1: Prayer in Christian Life • Lourdes Pilgrimage

The first DVD of the series opens with a brief introduction to the *Compendium*. Next we see moving scenes from the Order's annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes and a conversation about this activity as prayer. It concludes with panelists discussing the topic of prayer from the perspective of the Church's teachings, traditions and practices as found in the *Catechism* and the *Compendium*.

### Lourdes Pilgrimage and Prayer

#### Preliminary Thoughts

- “Tell the people to come here in pilgrimage,” said Our Lady to St. Bernadette at the spring at Lourdes. And so people have, including groups from the Order of Malta forming true community. “They have been willing to leave their comfort zone, exposing themselves to surprises, unfamiliar surroundings, perhaps even disappointments. They do it to answer the call of Our Lady; they do it to accompany their fellow pilgrims – some of whom are ‘Our Lords, the Poor and the Sick’ – and to make the pilgrimage possible for them. And they come in a spirit of prayer.” [Order of Malta, Federal Association, *Many Ways to Pray: a Resource Book for the Order of Malta*, Paulist Press, 2010, page 123]
- After the Order's removal from the Island of Malta, the “Knights of St. John continued to fight the good fight by taking up the spiritual arms of personal testimony, nourished by reflection on the Word of God and on prayer, both private and liturgical.” [Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, *Journal of Spirituality*, No. 10, “Introduction to Prayer,” Rome, 2009, page 12]
- “For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing but trial and joy.” St Thérèse of Lisieux [Cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §2558]

## 1. Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for this opportunity to join with fellow Knights and Dames in this time of study and reflection. We thank you for your gift of our Annual Lourdes Pilgrimage and for inviting us to serve the poor and the sick as members of the Order of Malta. Help us to deepen our faith and to know you better. Guide and strengthen us so that we can live and give witness to our faith and promote your glory. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, begging the intercession of Our Lady, St. John the Baptist, Blessed Fra' Gerard and all the saints of our Order. Amen.

## 2. Scripture:

Matthew 6: 9–13 [Lord's Prayer]

Luke 11: 1–5 [Lord's Prayer]

## 3. View DVD

This DVD can be divided into two parts (*Compendium* and Lourdes — tracks 1–6 and Prayer — track 7). If time is a consideration, viewing the DVD might be broken into two sessions.

## 4. Discussion

- What struck you about the video of the Lourdes Pilgrimage? If you have made the pilgrimage, were there particular scenes that seemed most memorable? That struck a chord? Do you agree that joining the Pilgrimage is one of the greatest ways to enter into the prayer life of our Order?
- What is prayer for you? What ways of prayer do you find most fruitful, nourishing? Can you see prayer as a relationship, an encounter with God? Who have been models for your prayer?
- Does the DVD material in this session support you as a member of the Order and in carrying out its charisms [defense of the faith and service to the poor and sick]?

5. Reflection at the conclusion of the session. After a moment of silence, each participant says how the session went for him or her; and, what resolutions, if any, he or she came to as a result.

6. Give thanks and say a closing prayer, perhaps the Our Father.

## **Resources:**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Four - Christian Prayer, §§2558–2865.

*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Four - Christian Prayer, §§534–598 and Appendix A Common Prayers.

Order of Malta – Federal Association, *Many Ways to Pray: A Resource Book for the Order of Malta*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 2010.

Order of Malta – Federal Association, a *Prayer Companion*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 1997.

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, “Introduction to Prayer,” *Journal of Spirituality*, No. 10, Rome, 2009.

## **DVD No. 2: The Human Community • Rose Hill Center**

This DVD begins at Rose Hill Center, a residential health facility for adults with mental disabilities. The panelists address the Christian's call to work with the vulnerable, helping people reach their potential. Then follows a discussion of the "common good," a particularly important facet of Catholic teaching based upon relationship among all people as God's creations, and some of the necessary actions that follow including giving voice to the vulnerable, participating in society's mediating structures, the public responsibility of a Christian and the importance of concern for the good of the community. After a break, the panel discussion resumes with a shift to the global community, our call to solidarity and, finally, some reflections from the Compendium on our membership in the Body of Christ and the nourishment we receive by our participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

### **Care for the vulnerable and the human community**

#### **Preliminary Thoughts**

- "Many in the Order have come to the view that one of our chief ministries is to persons with disabilities. Jesus spoke specifically about persons with disabilities when He told us [in Luke 14:13, 'Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind . . .'] He spent much of His public ministry healing and consoling the disabled."

"We must remember what it was like for such persons at that time. There were no rehabilitation centers, no home health visitation programs; things we take for granted, like antibiotics and artificial limbs, were unknown. And there was no 'Palestinians with Disabilities Act.' Those who had disabilities were truly and literally outcasts. In the case of lepers, they could not even enter the cities."

"It was to these that Jesus reached out. They were on the fringes of society . . . because then the normal people want to have to look at them. They were a harsh reminder of human vulnerability. Yet Jesus said: Look at them, and see Me." [W. Shepherdson Abell, *Malta Meditations*, Paulist Press, Mahway/New York, 2005, page 71]

- “*Obsequium Pauperum – Service to the Poor*. Our Charism: *Our Lords the sick and poor*. To Hospitallers the poor and the sick were the Lords and the Hospitallers were their servants. Since its establishment the Order has displayed a particular concern for the pilgrims, the poor and the sick. As the Founder, the Blessed Gerard put it, he wanted the serving brothers to be the servants of our masters, the sick, they were, and we are, rendering service to Christ himself.” [Msgr. John Dimech, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers of the S.M.O.M.*, Maltese Association, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Malta, 2006, page 27]
- “Having received from the Lord the charge to heal the sick, the Church strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick and accompanying them with her prayer of intercession . . .” [Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church §§315]
- “In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in turn can be defined only in reference to the human person . . . The common good is to be understood as ‘the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as a groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more and easily.’” [Catechism of the Catholic Church §§1905–6]

### 1. Prayer

Lord, Our God, you have given us the common purpose of serving you in our brothers and sisters who are most in need. Grant that what we do to sustain and relieve them will be grounded in your Holy Gospel and manifest your glory to all the world. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

### 2. Scripture

Luke 10: 25–37 [the Good Samaritan]

Luke 16: 19–31 [Lazarus and the Rich Man]

### 3. View DVD

This DVD can be divided into two parts (Rose Hill, vulnerable people, common good, active citizenship — tracks 1–5; and global community, body of Christ, sacraments — track 7).

#### 4. Discussion

- What struck you about the video of work and people at Rose Hill? What lessons have you taken from your own work in the Order with the sick and vulnerable? Are you able to see Jesus in the sick and the poor?
- What role do you see your faith calling you to in your community? In your Church community? In the Order?
- Do you look to the sacraments for help in carrying out your vocation as a Knight or Dame?
- Does the DVD material in this session support you as a member of the Order and in carrying out its charisms [defense of the faith and service to the poor and sick]?

5. Reflection at the conclusion of the session. After a moment of silence, each participant says how the session went for him or her and what resolutions, if any, he or she came to as a result.

6. Give thanks and say a closing prayer, perhaps the Daily Prayer of the Order.

### Resources:

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1506–1508 [heal the sick]; §§1905–1912 [common good]; §§1913–1919 [active participation]; §§1929–1942 [solidarity]; §§1324–1327, 1268–1372 [the Mass].

*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §315 [heal the sick]; §407–411 [common good]; §410 [active participation]; §414 [solidarity]; §§274–281 [the Mass].

W. Shepherdson Abell, *Malta Meditations*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 2005, pages 63–78. Order of Malta – Federal Association.

Order of Malta – Federal Association, a *Prayer Companion*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 1997 [Prayers for the Sick, Dying and Grieving, pages 51–67].

Order of Malta – Federal Association, *Many Ways to Pray: A Resource Book for the Order of Malta*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 2010 [The Mass as Prayer, 13–17].

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, “‘Tuitio Fidei’ and ‘Obsequium Pauperum’ Today,” *Journal of Spirituality*, No 3, Rome, 2003 [Part II, “Obsequium Pauperum” pages 43–78].

## DVD No 3: Dignity of the Human Person · Hopital Sacre Coeur, Milot, Haiti

The third DVD in the series features the work of the Order at Hopital Sacre Coeur in Haiti. The filming took place before the devastating earthquake, hurricane and cholera outbreak and before the remarkable outpouring of contributions and ongoing volunteer efforts by members of the Order responding to these calamities. The work at Sacre Coeur set the stage for a discussion of the dignity of the human person, a central tenet of Catholic social teaching. The panel next takes up the moral life and moral decision making, and an examination of virtues. After the break the discussion returns to the question of our freedom to act virtuously or to sin, the vices, and concludes with an examination of the virtue of hope.

### Preliminary Thoughts

- “We are duty-bound as Christians to show respect and love towards the poor and the sick. But, as members of the Order, we are specifically encouraged to help all who are suffering, the sick, poor, disabled, spurned, elderly, drug addicts, alcoholics or persons suffering from depression. In a word, we are to help all persons who are bearing physical, mental, emotional sufferings.” [Msgr. John Dimech, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers of the S.M.O.M.*, Maltese Association, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Malta, 2006, page 66]
- “Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and with free will, the human person is from his very conception ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude and loving what is true and good. In man, true freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image.” [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1711, 1712]
- “A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.” [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1803]

- The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person. [*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §365]
- “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire and await from God eternal life as our happiness, placing trust in Christ’s promises and relying on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit to merit it and to persevere to the end of our earthly life.” [*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §386]

## 1. Prayer

May Almighty God bless us and strengthen us in His service that we may honor Him, show courtesy to all, protect the weak and serve Christ in the sick and the poor. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

## 2. Scripture

Genesis 1:27–31 [God creates man and woman]

Matthew 7: 1–5, 7–12 [Jesus’ teachings: Judging Others, Answer to Prayers, Golden Rule]

Hebrews 10:19–25 [Hope in Christ and encouragement of fellow Christians]

## 3. View DVD

This DVD can be divided into two parts (Haiti, Dignity of the Human Person, Conscience formation — tracks 1–5; Freedom and Responsibility, Vices, Virtue of Hope — track 7).

## 4. Discussion

- When faced with such terrible conditions as there are in Haiti today, what is one to do as a member of the Order of Malta? Can we avoid care for the sick, disabled, poor and spurned?
- Everyone, including those suffering from earthquake, poverty, hunger and disease, are made in the image of God. Do we see Christ in the least of His brothers and sisters?
- We are free to choose to engage or resist. What particular virtues help us to give the best of ourselves? How have the virtues nurtured our lives?

- Did you find the discussion of the virtue of hope helpful? Does “God is the anchor” ring true in your experience?
  - Does the DVD material in this session support you as a member of the Order and in carrying out its charisms [defense of the faith and service to the poor and sick]?
5. Reflection at the conclusion of the session. After a moment of silence, each participant says how the session went for him or her and what resolutions, if any, he or she came to as a result.
  6. Give thanks and say a closing prayer, perhaps the Act of Hope:

*O my God, relying on Your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.*

## **Resources:**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1700–1715 [dignity of the human person]; §§1730–1738, 1743–1747 [man’s freedom]; §§1783–1789 [conscience formation]; §§1730–1748 [freedom and responsibility]; §§1865–1867 [vices]; §§1817–1821, 1843 [hope].

*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §358 [human dignity]; §§363–365 [man’s freedom]; §§363–366, 425 [freedom and responsibility]; §398 [vices]; §307 [hope].

Msgr. John Dimech, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers of the S.M.O.M.*, Maltese Association, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Malta, 2006, pages 67–69 [human dignity]; 64–66 [Christ and suffering].

W. Shepherdson Abell, *Malta Meditations*, Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, 2005, pages 63–83. Order of Malta – Federal Association.

## DVD No. 4: Love Thy Neighbor · Malta National Prison Ministries

The final DVD in the series, No. 4, highlights the work of the Order in prison ministry with Bible distribution, visitation, maternity help and post-incarceration job assistance. The panel discusses a range of topics triggered by the work in prison ministry including: love of neighbor, the seventh commandment's injunction against theft, the positive duty to help people find work, the duty to use the gifts we are given, ecological concerns and stewardship of the earth. Finally, the panel considers the eighth commandment and living "the truth" in the context of challenges and opportunities occasioned by the wide array of contemporary methods of communication.

### Preliminary Thoughts:

- "Whatever we do for those who are suffering, we will be doing for Christ." [Msgr. John Dimech, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers of the S.M.O.M.*, Maltese Association, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Malta, 2006, page 66]
- The Order of Malta has an important and irreplaceable mission, to bear witness to the love of Christ for those receiving aid, and to lead to God those who give it. We must all take responsibility to ensure that the words of Blessed Gerard will come true: "Our brotherhood will be immortal, because the misery of the world is the ground, in which to plant is rooted – and because, God willing, there will always be people, who want to work, to decrease these sufferings and to make this misery more bearable!" [Albrecht von Boeselager in Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, "Human Virtues – Christian Virtues, Events, The Young" *Journal of Spirituality*, No 8, Rome, 2008, page 107]
- "The seventh commandment requires respect for the universal destination and distribution of goods and the private ownership of them, as well as respect for persons, their property, and the integrity of creation. The Church also finds in this commandment the basis for her social doctrine which involves the correct way of acting in economic, social and political life, the right and the duty of human labor, justice and solidarity among nations, and love for the poor." [*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §503]

- “Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarding against duplicity, dissimulation and hypocrisy.” [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §2505]

1. Prayer

Spirit of God, open our hearts and minds to the reality of your presence in every person. Jesus our Savior, awaken us to the hidden needs of others. Creator God, give us the generosity and perseverance to do all things well. Amen.

2. Scripture

Matthew 25: 31–46 [Final Judgment “in prison and you visited me”]

Mark 12:29–31 [Love God and neighbor]

Romans 13:8–10 [He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law]

3. View DVD

4. Discussion

- Visiting people in prison can be frightening. Can the fear and other impediments be overcome?
- Helping people find work, ecological and stewardship concerns, and love of the poor all fall under the heading of the seventh commandment’s prohibition against stealing, according to the panel. Does that make sense?
- What of the many examples of troublesome speech like lying, gossip, backbiting, contentious and misleading media resonated as you viewed the DVD? Do you see the virtue of silence?
- Does the DVD material in this session support you as a member of the Order and in carrying out its charisms [defense of the faith and service to the poor and sick]?

5. Reflection on the session itself

6. Give thanks and say a closing prayer, perhaps the *Glory Be*.

## Resources:

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, “Human Virtues – Christian Virtues, Events, The Young” *Journal of Spirituality*, No 8, Rome, 2008 [Part I, “Human Virtues – Christian Virtues,” pages 17–107].

Msgr. John Dimech, *Spirituality and Formation of Members, Future Members and Volunteers of the S.M.O.M.*, Maltese Association, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Malta, 2006, pages 64–74.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§2401–2413 [Seventh Commandment]; §§2464–2513 [Eighth Commandment].

*Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§503–510 [Seventh Commandment]; §§520–526 [Eighth Commandment].

***A copy of this Handbook is available on the Defense of the Faith page of the Federal Association website, [www.orderofmalta-federal.org](http://www.orderofmalta-federal.org), for downloading and printing for use by individuals.***





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