

## International Day of Prayer for Malta - August 8<sup>th</sup> 2005



When the Apostle Paul shipwrecked in Malta, he found that the "islanders showed us unusual kindness." Today the 400,000 Maltese still welcome nearly a million visitors a year to enjoy the warm weather and the sparkling blue waters of the Mediterranean. The small nation became a member of the European Union in 2004 and also maintains close ties with its North African neighbors. The people speak English and Maltese, an Arabic-based language. Over 80% of the Maltese regularly attend Mass, and the islands are filled with beautiful church buildings, chapels, and statues of Mary and Jesus. Although many Maltese know who Jesus is, very few have made him their personal Savior.

The following descriptions are not based on any one person but rather a compilation of many Maltese. As with any nation, the uniqueness and variety of people could never be fully represented. These sketches are intended to give you a snapshot of life in Malta.

Grandmother, or "**Nanna**" **Maria** spends most of her time keeping the family home spotless, cooking for her husband, and anticipating every Sunday evening when her children and their families come to eat. She rarely leaves her village as everything she needs is found within walking distance of her home. She attends Mass several times a week and says the Rosary every night. Nanna Maria is trusting that her good works will outweigh her bad deeds when she dies and hopes to go to heaven.

**Pray for everyone in Malta to realize that "it is by grace we have been saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves." (Eph. 2:8)**

Grandpa, or "**Nannu**" **George** is retired from Marsa Shipbuilding, where he worked as a welder. Most mornings he can be found visiting with his friends in the village square. In the afternoons, particularly during the heat of summer, he takes a siesta time in the coolness of his limestone house. Then he often joins other men for a drink at the bar or a relaxing game of bocci (similar to lawn bowling) while arguing over local politics. He attends Mass once a week to please Nanna Maria, but doesn't think too much about religion as he feels his wife does enough praying for them both.

**Pray for the Maltese to develop a thirst for Jesus who says, "I will give them to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life." (Rev. 21:6)**

**Josephine** has three children- **Roberta**, 13, **Matthew**, 11, and **Carmen**, 6. Josephine tries to be a good wife and mother and keeps her home tidy and good food on the table. She enjoys her daily trips to the local grocery and bakery to buy her family's bread, milk, and food. There she catches up on the local gossip, visits with neighbors, and brags on her children. Much of her energy is also devoted to helping her children do their homework and study. Due to the structure of the education system, the competition among students is enormous. At age 11 **Matthew** is facing exams that will determine his future schooling. Like most students, he attends private lessons twice a week and many times has so much homework he that he can't complete it before dinner. **Carmen** is going to weekly catechism classes so that she can participate in her first Holy Communion this year. **Roberta** wants to go to Paceville (the clubbing district) every weekend and spends a large part of the day text messaging her friends on her mobile phone. Josephine sometimes feels depressed being at home so much of the time in the same routine, and feels guilty for her shortcomings. She goes to Mass with her family on Saturday evenings, but somehow feels as if there must be more.

**Petition that Maltese would meet Jesus who came to give us "abundant life." (John 10:10) Pray that parents would look to God's Word for raising their children and making life decisions.**

Josephine's husband **Manuel** (or **Leli** as he is called by his friends) works as a maintenance man for a large hotel and part-time as an electrician too. He often leaves home before sunrise and returns after sunset, especially during the busy tourist season. He attends the obligatory weekly Mass, but tries to stay busy and not think about the emptiness he feels inside. He believes that if he works hard to gain material possessions for his family, that he will find happiness one day. Leli's one day with his family is Sunday, when they often go for "BBQ's" or daylong picnics by the sea, complete with chairs, tables, and a generator for lights.

**Ask that whole families will come to Christ (Acts 16:31) and that new churches will then be formed.**

**Mark** is a recent University of Malta graduate and has not yet been able to find a job in his area of expertise. He is considering moving to England to search for a job now that Malta is a part of the European Union. He quit attending Mass a long time ago and prefers to be "open" and broad-minded in his views. He believes Malta's laws against divorce and abortion are backward and that his country needs to become more modern. He enjoys chatting on the Internet with people from around the world and going to clubs and discos on the weekends.

**Lift up Maltese who have listened to Satan's lie of universalism- that everyone will make it to heaven- and surrender their lives to Jesus who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)**

**Rose and Carlos** are a young married couple who are both working full time jobs to try and keep up with the payments for their extravagant wedding and the new house they have purchased and furnished. They want to have the very best house, car, and clothes, and work very hard to get these material possessions. They attend Mass to "see and be seen" but it has no real impact on their daily lives.

**Petition that the Maltese would not try to satisfy their emptiness with materialism but instead be "filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18)**

**Joe and Sharon** are members of an Evangelical church and their daily lives give evidence of a personal walk with Jesus. Neighbors witness the difference in how they treat each other and their children, and they secretly desire to know more. Fear of what others might think or say keeps them from asking.

**Pray for believers in Malta to "let their light so shine before men" (Matt. 5:16) and bring glory to their Father. Ask that those who are being drawn by the Holy Spirit would put aside their fears and say yes to His call.**

**Josette** is one of few Maltese children being raised in an evangelical Christian home. She gets teased for not participating in the daily Religion class or the weekly Mass at her public school, and is labeled as a "bad" girl and a cult member. Even though her parents explain to her that the Bible is their sole source of authority and not the traditions of men, it is hard for Josette to understand.

**Ask that these children will see the faith of their parents and other church members in action, and decide to begin their own personal walk with Jesus. Pray that they would "be strong in the Lord, and in His mighty power." (Eph. 6:10)**

You can contact Team Malta at [pray@praymalta.org](mailto:pray@praymalta.org) or [www.praymalta.org](http://www.praymalta.org).