

ANNUAL REPORT

August 2018 - July 2019



The
St John's
Co-Cathedral
Foundation



The St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation
COUNCIL MEMBERS 2018 - 2019

(starting from the left)

Mgr Joseph Bugeja

Mr Wilfrid Buttigieg

Dr Philip Farrugia Randon

Mgr Louis Camilleri, President

Dr Raymond Bondin

Mgr Victor Zammit McKeon



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A PROMISING FUTURE

The President's Note



It is with great pleasure that I present the annual report of the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation. This Foundation was established in 2001 and since then it has successfully implemented management and restoration projects to bring St John's Co-Cathedral to its former glory. This unique temple was built by the Knights of St John the Baptist as their conventual church. The magnificent works of art the Knights gave as gifts, over several years, to the church to honour God has given St John's Co-Cathedral a unique spirit.

The position of President alternates yearly between a government-appointed member and a church-appointed member of the Foundation's Council. For the year under review, that is from August 2018 to July 2019, it was my privilege to occupy the position of President of the Foundation. Each year the Foundation publishes a report on the work carried out during that year. This edition gives a review of the extent of management and restoration activity carried out during the year under review. It was with satisfaction that as a Foundation we saw the continuation of several challenging projects to further preserve and enhance this unique place of worship.

The restoration of this unique monument is managed by the Foundation's expert management team which also engages conservators to execute extensive conservation projects according to a strategy plan and using the latest conservation technology available. This year security and safety have been given a priority to ensure the best possible safe conditions for our employees and visitors. The Foundation's human resources have been revamped to ensure that 'people come first'. Improvement of our visitors' experience was based on the current attitude that visitors want to look, listen and learn, by means of the quick changes in the development of communications' technology and digitisation. For this reason, the Foundation has procured a new hands-free video guide. The latter is an essential requisite which achieves an appropriate balance between preservation, conservation and accessibility to this national monument to the widest possible audience.



Conservation works were carried out on the marble funerary monuments, inlaid marble floor, the Grand Masters' Crypt, and several other operational projects. During this period we continued with the restoration of the tapestry set, consisting of twenty-nine pieces, a formidable task that will soon be concluded. This year, we are also very satisfied to communicate that the very challenging project to conserve and preserve the Grand Masters' Crypt will be concluded. This is certainly a state-of-the-art project which has not only restored the Crypt but has installed environmental equipment that will control the interior climate conditions so that deterioration will not occur again and threaten the loss of the precious frescoed surface and the delicate carvings of the Grand Masters' sarcophagi. Also, this year, work on the development of the new museum extension continued with extensive ground investigations. This main purpose of this extension is the construction of a tapestry chamber of some seven hundred square metres to ensure the preservation and exhibition of the unique set of tapestries that belong to St John's Co-Cathedral.

The results that can be seen when visiting St John's Co-Cathedral are the fruit of the combination of skill and dedication, not only of its original sculptors, painters, and architects, but also of all those who have contributed their expertise to its restoration and upkeep. Restoring this monument to its former condition and conserving it in the best possible manner as a church and as a place that can be enjoyed by present and future visitors is the Foundation's mission. Though the golden aura and dramatic art captures one's attention, one is to keep in mind that this is above all a holy place of worship and its splendour is simply a visual to honour the expression of Faith.



MGR LOUIS CAMILLERI
President 2018 - 2019



The St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation
ADMINISTRATION TEAM

(starting from the left)

Kevin Attard

Human Resources Manager

Marie Bartolo

Head Custodian

Stephen Deguara

PR, Sales & Marketing Manager

Adriana Alescio

In-House Conservator / Restorer

Valentina Saliba

Administrative Executive

Ian Camilleri

Operations Manager

Cynthia de Giorgio

CEO/Curator

Anthony Casha

General Administration Officer

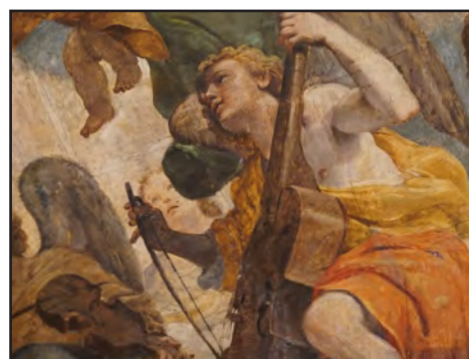
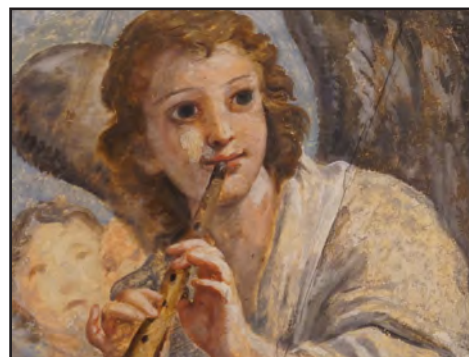
ST JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL

An Introduction

The Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta built this church as their conventual church and dedicated it to St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Order. The building was completed by 1577 and it stood as a formidable and rather proud reflection of the Knights' victory in the Great Siege in 1565 just a few years previously. The following years were a glorious time for the Order and gradually St John's Church was transformed into an outstanding treasure house, since the Grand Masters and the Knights donated gifts of high artistic value and made enormous contributions to enrich the church with only the best works of art by leading artists of the time. The numerous artefacts, by artists including the renowned Caravaggio and Mattia Preti, which embellish the Co-Cathedral, are the artistic and religious heritage of hundreds of years of glorious history that is simultaneously Maltese and European. It is a unique monument of international importance and is a gem of baroque art. St John's Co-Cathedral is still an active sanctuary and holy place of veneration and hosts the most important church celebrations and state events.

St John's Co-Cathedral was built in the prevailing mannerist form with plain stone façades flanked by two bell towers. The interior, which consists of a wide nave roofed with a barrel vault and two aisles divided into side chapels, was originally just as simple as the exterior. But the dawn of the seventeenth century saw the formation of a new style, referred to as Baroque, that was both exuberant and demonstrative in character and provided ample decorative material. Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner ordered the complete redecoration of the interior. The contrast between the simple architecture of the external façade and the colourful rich interior is a major characteristic that makes St John's such a unique monument.

The first major change was carried out by Mattia Preti, an Italian artist, who had offered to embellish the vault by painting episodes from the life of St John the Baptist on its surface. Preti was one of the leading artists of the seventeenth century and with his pristine draughtsmanship and skilful use of colour he transformed the interior into a celebration of baroque art. Preti produced a masterpiece of dramatic scenes and illusionistic architectural effects. During the seventeenth century, the plain walls of the nave and the chapels were carved and gilded with a variety of motifs from foliage and flowers to angels and many other symbols.





St John's Co-Cathedral houses one of the most exceptional marble inlaid floors in the world. The floor contains tombstones that commemorate high-ranking members, with carved inscriptions that describe the acts of chivalry and religious ardour of individual knights. The extensive use of symbols and heraldic devices is a unique feature of the floor tombstones.

The St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation was established in 2001 by the Government and the Catholic Church in Malta. The Foundation is administered by a Council consisting of six members: three are appointed by the Government of Malta and three by the Archbishop of Malta. The main aims of the Foundation are the conservation and restoration of the priceless works of art and artefacts preserved within the Co-Cathedral and its museum. The Foundation is responsible for the administration of St John's Co-Cathedral as a religious and cultural monument. The income generated throughout the year funds the maintenance and restoration projects, with the aim of preserving this Maltese jewel in the best possible condition to enhance the knowledge and admiration of present as well as future generations.

Over the last fifteen years, under the administration of the Foundation, St John's Co-Cathedral has undergone an extensive programme which has restored the interior to its former condition, transforming it into the glowing jewel it was during the reign of the Grand Masters of the Order of the Knights of St John. The planning and design of the extension and refurbishment of the museum was the major project undertaken during the year. St John's Co-Cathedral is one of Europe's unique churches and for this reason was listed, together with the entire city in which it stands, as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1980.

The report that follows illustrates the activities of the Foundation and gives an extensive review of the works and projects carried out during the presidency of Mgr Louis Camilleri and directed by Cynthia de Giorgio, the Chief Executive Officer.



CYNTHIA DE GIORGIO
CEO/Curator



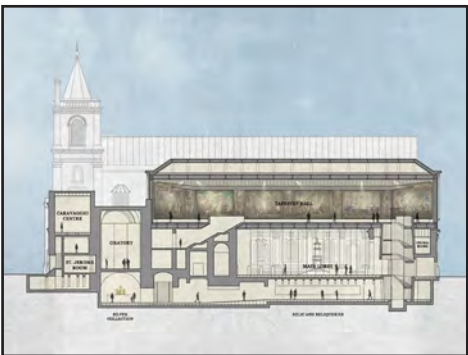
The Extension and Refurbishment of the St John's Co-Cathedral Museum

The objective of this project is to extend and refurbish the museum to create room to be able to conserve and exhibit artefacts. The available spaces will be modernised to be able to conserve and display works of art in a fully accessible manner according to the importance, relevance and value of each artefact. The extension will create adequate space and distance for visitors to view and appreciate the *objets d'art* according to the scale and materials of the artefacts. The appropriate conservation conditions will be installed, and artefacts exhibited in the correct sequence using modern didactic means.

Part of the extension and refurbishment of the museum consists of an area called the 'Caravaggio Wing' that focuses on expanding the awareness of the renowned artist. The Caravaggio Wing is planned to be equipped with the latest technologies to support the best didactic approach to the artist. Throughout this year, the refurbishment of the Caravaggio Wing has progressed well with the ground floor being refurbished to exhibit the painting depicting St Jerome Writing. Display panels were procured and installed this year. The space for the display of the painting of St Jerome Writing is called The St Jerome Room. This space was designed to captivate the audience with its immediacy of vision. Appropriate lighting and climate control were installed during this year.

The Caravaggio Wing will give visitors the opportunity to look and learn, assisted by user-friendly visual aids. It will also allow visitors to spend additional time discovering more about the artist and his masterpiece. During the peak season, it will allow for flexible museum opening hours. The space will offer a planned visitor experience where those interested will be able to find all the art history and religious information they may require. The information will be enhanced with interactive features and other modern media provided by the latest technology available. For this reason, an expert in audio-visual technology has been engaged by the Foundation to assist in procuring the latest technology systems.

The Caravaggio Wing is being part financed by EU Funds under Priority Axis PA 5 Protecting our environment, with the aim of investing in natural and cultural assets for the Caravaggio Wing and Basement Museum Spaces within the extension and refurbishment project of the St John's Co-Cathedral Museum. The Caravaggio Wing is forecast to be completed by the end of 2020.





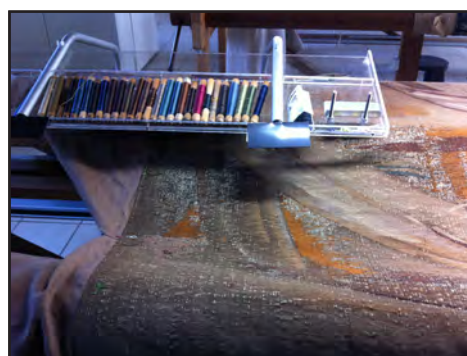
I. CONSERVATION PROJECTS

I.1 Restoration of The Triumph of the Eucharist Tapestries

As part of the project to restore the set of tapestries belonging to St John's Co-Cathedral, four tapestries depicting St Andrew, St Bartholomew, St Philip and St James were sent to the Royal Manufacturers DeWit Laboratories in Belgium for restoration in March 2018 and are due to return in 2020. This project is led by the Curator Cynthia de Giorgio.

The set consists of twenty-nine pieces and is the largest collection of tapestries woven during the Baroque Age. Fourteen large tapestries, each measuring just short of seven metres in width, depict scenes from the life of Christ and allegories portraying the Triumph of the Eucharist. Another fourteen smaller panels represent the Virgin Mary, Christ the Saviour and the Apostles. One tapestry portrays the benefactor, Grand Master Perellos, who donated the set to St John's in 1702. The tapestries were woven in pure silk and wool and, since textiles are susceptible to deterioration from handling and being exposed to UV light, with the passage of time their restoration had become necessary to preserve them. The methodology of the restoration process consisted of the removal of accumulated dust from the surface, followed by the application of a fine mist solution of water and solvents until the fabric was thoroughly cleansed. The tapestry was dried by a special quick-drying process to avoid shrinkage. Earlier restoration interventions were removed, loose parts and threads were consolidated, and open seams repaired. The tapestry was then fitted with a new supportive lining to prevent deterioration.

The tapestries had originally been woven in Brussels by the tapestry merchant and weaver Judocus de Vos in the late seventeenth century. The set was commissioned by Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Roccaful who had just been elected Grand Master and wished to furnish the Knights' Conventual Church of St John in Valletta with a series of tapestries to be hung on specific feasts. The set of tapestries depicts the Triumph of the Eucharist. The larger tapestries of the set were woven on cartoons based on creations by the renowned Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens.



E · GRANDIS · PARVIS · ACERIBUS



1.2 Environmental Control Equipment for the Grand Masters' Crypt

The Grand Masters' Crypt represents a highly important feature of Malta's historical and cultural heritage. It was excavated during the Co-Cathedral's construction in 1577 and is situated beneath the choir and the altar areas. It consists of a rough square in plan with two arched recesses in each of the north and south walls, a polygonal sanctuary with a large window at street level, and a western apsidal area. The Crypt contains monuments dedicated to the first twelve Grand Masters of Malta, either free-standing sarcophagi, or set into the walls, as well as marble tombstones set into the floor. The frescos that decorate approximately 160 square metres of the surface are attributed to the Italian artist Niccolò Nasoni, and date from 1723-1725.

Another primary ongoing project at St John's Co-Cathedral has been the installation of a permanent environmental control system for the Grand Masters' Crypt which was concluded in September 2018. The project commenced after the restoration was completed in 2012. A scientific study was carried out by the Courtauld Institute that focused on the relation between the microclimate condition of the Crypt and the conservation of its delicate frescos and monuments. The study was followed by the analysis of the deterioration phenomena that had caused the decohesion of the stone monuments and salts efflorescence on the painted surfaces. The result showed that only active preventive conservation, together with periodic maintenance, could slow down the deterioration process.

Fluctuations of temperature and relative humidity are the main causes of damage to the Crypt. Considering the delicate nature and the importance of the subterranean chamber, the Foundation proposed to install a sophisticated automated environmental control system as the best and unique solution to keep the inner microclimate in a stable and suitable condition for the constituent materials of the artefacts. During this year the installation of the environmental control system was concluded. The environmental control system has been specifically designed to control the ambient conditions inside the Grand Masters' Crypt in accordance with predetermined design parameters. Essentially the system included an air handling unit (AHU) which was installed in an existing room located at roof level at St John's Co-Cathedral. The AHU consisted of various sections as required. Supply and return air will be transferred through ducting down to the Grand Masters' Crypt located beneath the main altar of the church. The system includes an external inverter-driven heat pump to provide both temperature and humidity control in conjunction with a humidifier.





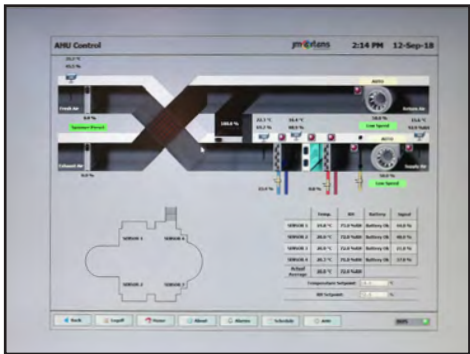
All the parts of the environmental control plant were custom-built to achieve the environmental conditions which correspond with the performance requirements to reach an optimum conservation level within the Crypt. The accessible route was from four oculi located in the Crypt's vaulted roof which once emerged into the floor of the main altar. These oculi had been blocked off when the presbytery area was elevated and enlarged. The proposed ducting route has been studied thoroughly to ensure minimum interventions to the existing masonry fabric. The result of the study showed that the oculi were the only possible pathway for the ducting.



The process consisted of the preparation of a passage for the inflow and outflow of the air ducts from the roof down to the Crypt. Once the required ducts reached floor level a passage was made through the masonry wall for the ducts to emerge beneath the choir stalls. For the ducts to reach the oculi several rows of the existing marble tiles were mapped and numbered and removed with precision. Once the ducting was laid the marble tiles were replaced in their original position. The works concerned were all carried out by experts in the field of restoration and under constant supervision. The delicate masonry and marble works were carried out by the Foundation's masons and restorers. The intervention was kept to a minimum, with as low an impact as possible, especially considering the benefit of the proposed system for the Grand Masters' Crypt. As a result of these works, it was equipped with a state-of-the-art environmental control system which will minimise the deterioration within the Crypt to ensure its preservation for further study by future generations.



This project was led by the Foundation's Curator, Cynthia de Giorgio and managed by Ian Camilleri, Operations Manager and Adriana Alescio, Conservator. The architect in charge was Arch. Gaston Camilleri of TBA periti, whilst the environmental engineering was carried out by Eng. Renzo Curmi, Galea Curmi Engineers. Civil works were carried out by the Foundation's maintenance personnel, Mario Debono and restorer Raymond Aquilina whilst the re-laying of the marble tiles was carried out by restorer Jesmond Bartolo.





1.3 Restoration of the Altar and the Crucifixion Group in the Grand Masters' Crypt

The Crucifixion group depicting the Golgotha scene is found above the altar within the Grand Masters' Crypt. It consists of six polychromed wooden statues representing Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, St John and two angels at the sides. The sculpture representing Jesus is a fine all-round sculpture and was hung in the background with three metal nails with pyramid-shaped tips, whilst the others are carved in high-relief and were attached to the wall with nails, as suggested by the holes found on the marble background. The high reliefs stand on a double wooden platform resting on the limestone altar.

The background of the Golgotha scene is clad in black Portoro marble slabs and is framed by a cornice made in Giallo di Siena marble. All the statues and marble were found to be in a very bad state of conservation: the wooden statues were covered with dust and grime and showed various broken and missing parts; the sculpture representing St John was detached from the wall and laid on the altar. This statue's surface did not show paint layers which had probably been removed during a past intervention that was never completed. The bases of the statues were warped, which had provoked fractures along the wood grains, whilst non-original wood inserts had been disconnected from the upper base.

The black marble was partially covered by a veil of salt efflorescence which was a result of the cement-based infills added during the last intervention, and rising damp in the wall. The aim of the restoration was to clean the statues and the marble of any additional deposits, identify the manufacture technique, and recover the original polychrome finish of the sculptures. The black marble was first cleaned of dust and residues of salts by using soft brushes and vacuum cleaner. The flaking areas were consolidated, and the residues of cement were removed mechanically by scalpel. The surface was then cleaned using ethanol and a neutral detergent at different percentages in order to remove residues of wax and grime. Microcrystalline wax was applied to polish the marble surface and to protect it from scratches and abrasion. The wooden statues were moved to the temporary laboratory set up in the Annex. Graphic documentation and samples were prepared for diagnostic analysis with the aim of identifying the type of wood, the dating and the stratigraphy of the paint layers.



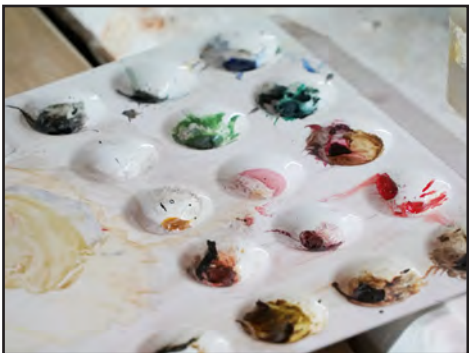


The statues were cleaned of deposits of dust and grime. The stratigraphy showed that the whole set was overpainted between the 18th and 19th centuries by applying thick layers of white oil-based paint and later with a coating made from a mixture of gypsum, lime and oil. The overpaints were removed by an application of solvent gels and the original finishing was uncovered. It consists of a brownish coating probably made with a mixture of organic compounds such as shellac or wax.

During the restoration of the Crucifix, some relevant details were revealed. A black line found over the eyelids suggested that the Crucifix was originally painted on the wood without application of a preparation layer. Most probably it was covered with a preparatory layer of gypsum and animal glue at the time when the other statues were made. The complex stratigraphy and the stylistic difference found between the figure of Jesus and the rest of the set (anatomy, dimension, manufacture technique) suggest that the Crucifix is earlier than the other statues.

Once the set was cleaned, the broken and detached parts were glued together, and the wood consolidated. The losses of paint layers were integrated with varnish-based colours and the surfaces were treated with a coat of protective varnish.

The statue representing St John was found to be without coating or ground layer because of a previous intervention. In order to achieve the same tonality as the other statues, a primer was applied following the original technique. The surface was then integrated by using varnish-based colours to match those of the other statues. All screws were replaced with new ones in stainless steel and the statues were put back in their original place. The restoration works were carried out by the Foundation's restoration team: conservator Adriana Alescio, assisted by Mario Debono and marble restorer Raymond Aquilina.





1.4 Viewing Door for The Grand Masters' Crypt

Following the intensive conservation project and the installation of the environmental control equipment, the Grand Masters' Crypt was provided with a viewing door that was installed at its entrance to allow visitors to view the interior of the Crypt. The viewing door consists of a platform and a stainless-steel structure with a glazed cubicle that was specifically designed to fit the original opening of the Crypt. The viewing platform will allow visitors to observe the interior of the Crypt, whilst preserving the interior from fluctuating environmental conditions.

1.5 Restoration of the balustrade in the Chapel of Provence

The stone balustrade in the Chapel of Provence consists of seven carved columns between two carved square pillars which are held by an upper section called a cymatium. The balustrade has a low pediment built beside the staircase leading to the Grand Masters' Crypt to separate the ground floor of the chapel from the lower level. The balustrade has an L-shaped dado that is interrupted by three steps built to allow access to the choir stalls.

The balustrade and the dado had suffered deterioration mostly due to the detachment and discolouration of several layers of oil-based paint applied over the centuries. The stratigraphic test showed that originally the balustrade and the dado were painted in a light red colour, which was covered, at a later stage, by darker brown layers of paint.

Different cleaning tests were carried out to identify the correct methodology to remove the layers of overpainting. The first general cleaning performed on the entire surface consisted of poultices of ammonium carbonate applied to the surface. This cleaning process was repeated in the areas where the superficial layers of varnish were thicker. The surface was then rinsed with de-ionised water. Residues of varnish in the interstices and undercuts were removed manually by scalpel and sandpaper. Broken and small missing parts were integrated with a lime-based mortar, including limestone powder, to match the colour of the original stone. The surface was then stabilised and consolidated with an application of ammonium oxalate dissolved in water, and finally painted with a light lime-based paint applied by brush and sponge.





D. O. M.

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VIVENS UTRAMQUE EXPRESSIT.
ET ITA UT ARMIS NE MELIUS.
AN STUDUS PRÆSIDENTEM IGNORES.
ILLIS PROLUSIT, CUM ADHUC IUVENIS TRIREMIS PRÆFECT.
TURCICAM, VEL POST LETHALE VULNUS SUSCEPTUM SUBEGIT.
IN HIS PERIATUS, CUM ROMÆ, PARISUS OPTIMATIBUS CHARUS.
ADMIRATIONEM PRÆSENS, ABSENS DESIDERIUM EXCITAVIT.
PLURIMIS UBIQUE COMMISSIS SEDULO REPARATIS.
COMMENDIS SIBI COMMISSIS SEDULO REPARATIS.
PER SEPTIMUM ET ULTRA MAGNUS COMMENDATARIUS.
PRUDENTIA IUSTITIAQUE CULTOR.
MERITIS GRATIS E VIVIS EDITUR.
QUA CÆPISSIME ANGEBAUR ARTHRITIDE.
DIE 9. SEPTEMBRIS 1706. ÆTATIS SUÆ 79.
OPULENTO RELICTO SPOLIO RELIGIONIS ERGO.
MEMORIAM AE FATA ERIPIAN, ATERNARUNT IN LAPIDE
FR. IOHES. BAPTISTA SPINGOLA ORDINIS BAIULIUS EXFOUIT
ET NOB. CAROLUS DE GLANDEVES CUGES EX FRATRE NEP.

2. RESTORATION WORKS

2.1 Restoration of the Inlaid Marble Tombstones

The floor of the Co-Cathedral consists of around four hundred inlaid marble tombstones dating from the early seventeenth century to the nineteenth century. The tombstones are the resting place of some of the most illustrious Knights of the Order. Most of the designs of the marble tombstones were made by renowned artists, often executed by Maltese craftsmen. They are all original in design and, as a result, they are truly unique works of art. Each one is made of a large polychrome marble slab, inlaid with symbols of death and military trophies. The engraved Latin epitaphs illustrate the lives of the deceased and their achievements. Though marble is a durable material, it suffers from damage caused by abrasion. The inlaid designs and motifs made of thin marble on the tombstones are also susceptible to cracking due to the passage of time as well as weight, leading to losses in the inlaid marble layer. The restoration of the inlaid marble tombstones is executed according to a priority conservation management plan. The work involves the skilful consolidation of any loose parts and the replacement of missing pieces. The restoration of the tombstones is an arduous task and is the main occupation of the in-house marble restorer Jesmond Bartolo. The restoration of the floor consists of replacing the missing inlaid parts with matching marble, often very difficult to obtain, using the appropriate techniques. All restoration is recorded and documented.

During this year, restoration was carried out on seventeen tombstones, and special attention was dedicated to the cleaning and the maintenance of the tombstones underneath the protective carpets. Amongst these were the tombstones of Mauricelli Giovanni Filippo in the south corridor, Jerome de Monteliu in the passage to the Oratory, and Pierre de Merle Beauchamps in the Chapel of Provence. The aim was to restore the losses that had occurred over time. Past restoration interventions were removed. All the tombstones in the main nave were examined and each tombstone that had sustained losses was cleaned up and replacement was carried out with new marble parts of the same type and colour.





The losses caused by the abrasion of footfall on the surface were filled using suitable materials to render the incisions visible and enhance the aesthetic quality of the design. The tombstone belonging to Pierre de Merle Beauchamps in the Chapel of Provence was temporarily removed from its place and relocated on a platform for restoration.

Past interventions were removed and replaced with inlaid marbles similar to the originals. A portion of the cornice was found broken into two parts due to the discontinuity of the subsoil. This section was transferred to the laboratory to be cleaned and repaired: two fibreglass rods of 6mm were applied between the two pieces and another two of 8mm were applied from the back side in order to keep both pieces at the same level and to reinforce the marble. The cornice was assembled, and all the missing parts were filled in with suitable materials. The subsoil was inspected and levelled with a mortar composed of hydraulic lime and sand. The tombstone and its cornice, after restoration, were put back in their original place.

The restoration of the marble tombstones was carried out by the Foundation's restoration team; conservator Adriana Alescio and marble restorer, Jesmond Bartolo.





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2.2 Maintenance of the walls leading to the Grand Masters' Crypt

The maintenance within the Grand Masters' Crypt consists of a series of treatments to stabilise the condition of those areas where deterioration reoccurred after the last restoration intervention. This was due to the porous properties of Maltese limestone and the crystallization and deliquescence cycle of salts, because of an unstable inner microclimate. During this year, the stabilization of the environmental condition, due to the installation of the controlled monitoring system had reduced deterioration to smaller localised areas. The maintenance intervention was focused only on minor areas in the lower parts of the pilasters and the side walls below the cornice.

The pilaster closest to the entry was the one mainly damaged: the plaster applied during the last restoration was found detached from the stone support due to the salts forming efflorescence between the stone support and the mortar layer, causing the decohesion of the last one. The plaster was carefully removed prior to an application of Japanese paper on the surrounding original painted surfaces. The stone support was cleaned of residues of previous restoration mortar and salts. It was structurally in good condition and it was consolidated by application of nano-lime dispersion applied in low concentration. A new lime-based mortar was prepared and applied to the pilaster by spatula. The surface was smoothed with a trowel before it dried to facilitate the carbonatation of the lime.

The walls leading to the Crypt were originally covered by plaster both below and above the handrail. Before the restoration intervention, the surface of the stone support bore chisel marks, proving that the surface was tapped to allow better adhesion of the plaster. The restoration works consisted of re-plastering the lower part of the side walls using a lime-base mortar like the original one. The handrail was first removed and the joints between the stones were properly filled. Missing parts were replaced, and fractures were repaired, and the surface was consolidated with saturated solution of ammonium oxalate. The new mortar was applied to the stone support by spatula and the surface was then smoothed with a trowel. The work was carried out by the Foundation's restoration team; conservator, Adriana Alescio, marble restorer Raymond Aquilina, under the supervision of Curator Cynthia de Giorgio.



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2.3 Monitoring of the Artefacts in storage

The environmental monitoring programme has been taking place within the St John's Co-Cathedral through regular and systematic inspections with the objective of recording the microclimate condition of the spaces where artefacts are stored. The programme consists of documenting the atmospheric environmental changes throughout the year and verifying the state of conservation of the artefacts.

Monthly readings are carried out by the Foundation's conservator and the data is periodically collected for analysis. Data such as temperature, relative humidity and dew point value per hour are transformed into a graph and interpreted. The analysis of the information related to the microclimate will assist in understanding the patterns of the effects the changing environment may have on the physical and chemical reactions on the constituent materials of the artefacts, such as metals, papers and textiles. The results of the monitoring procedure will assist in determining the right maintenance and the choice of the best conservation methodology.





3. OPERATIONAL PROJECTS

3.1 Audio Guides Service

This year saw the introduction of the new video guides for visitors. Exalta AV Ltd. were awarded the tender for providing the new audio-visual guides, now equipped with 8 language options. Each stop in the guide has a narration including several photos, and a 360 degree view of several areas of the Co-Cathedral. The headphone system enables best quality of use and hygiene. The audio-guides are still included with the entrance fee.



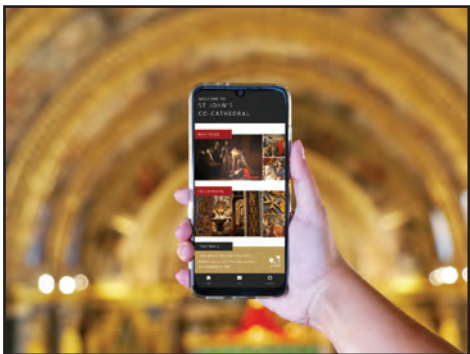
3.2 Web and Mobile App

This year the website was upgraded, and a Mobile App developed, targeting potential and regular visitors to the site of the Co-Cathedral. The upgrade was in design and on giving better facility of navigation, usability and appearance. The Mobile App presents, in bite-size form, the best of the Cathedral: paintings, artefacts and the chapels. The App provides essential information for potential visitors of the Cathedral. The Mobile App was launched in October 2019.



3.3 Manuals

During 2019 two new manuals had been compiled. These manuals provide information relating to standard rules, policies and procedures to help employees to carry out their duties effectively and to better understand their individual employee rights.



3.3.1 Health & Safety Manual

In 2019 the HR & Administration Manager introduced a Health & Safety Manual to create better awareness on Health & Safety.

The manual includes topics such as, common causes of fires, different ways in which fires can spread, how to extinguish fires, the different classes of fires and how to operate a fire extinguisher. The manual also provides guidelines on how to instruct visitors in such an event using a PA announcement. A map indicating the positioning of fire alarm sensors is included just in case these need to be used. The manual also includes a bomb threat policy and the procedure to follow when calling emergency services. Safety control measures were installed for all employees to ensure their safety.



3.3.2 Policies & Procedure Manual

The Employee Manual, which was introduced towards the end of November, is a detailed guide giving instructions on how it is to be used. It outlines procedures on recruitment and work permits, employment (including contracts, all leave entitlement, notice periods, probation periods, working times, data protection and injury at work). There are sections on employee relations and remuneration, policies for equal opportunities, appearance and behaviour, discipline and harassment, whilst other sections cover termination of employment and Foundation hierarchy. All job descriptions and contracts have been included in this manual.

3.4 Recruitment

The recruitment process is integral to St John’s Co-Cathedral Foundation reaching its future objectives. This process abides by the policies and procedures in place to secure the selection of the best employees for the vacant position whilst also attracting the right applicants. This financial year the Foundation has employed a new cleaner and a general hands person.

3.5 Collective Agreement for Custodians

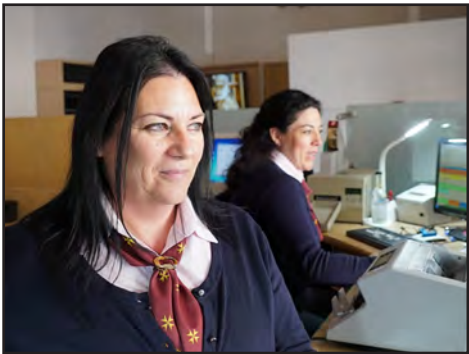
The collective agreement has the introduction of new incentives to help motivate custodians, to encourage them to fulfil the objectives of the Foundation and to promote self-fulfilment. It also encourages employees to continue growing in their knowledge by undertaking sponsored education to further their studies in areas that relate to St John’s Co-Cathedral.

3.6 Training Courses

Training is an important aspect of the objectives of St John’s Co-Cathedral Foundation. This year employees were provided with different types of training which will further enhance the operations at St John’s Co-Cathedral.

3.6.1 Customer Care

Customer care is the foundation of our operation and it is essential that all custodians have frequent customer care courses to ensure that we provide the best customer experience to all our visitors.





3.6.2 Security Course

St John’s Co-Cathedral Foundation takes all measures to prevent any type of security threat. A foreign counter-terrorism expert has given training to all employees on how to be alert to, react to and prevent any threats to St John’s Co-Cathedral.

3.6.3 Fire Fighting Course

The firefighting course was held to provide each employee with the knowledge required in the unlikely event of a fire. The theory course was carried out at our premises and the practical was held at a remote site. All employees attended and each employee had a hands-on opportunity to try tackling different types of fire and to learn which type of fire extinguisher should be used.

3.7 GDPR

European data protection law is currently governed by the General Data Protection Regulation, (EU) 2016/679 (the regulation or the GDPR) which came into force in the European Union on 25 May 2018.

This means that all organisations in Europe must abide by the GDPR rules. St John’s Co-Cathedral Foundation has a private consultant who has conducted an audit and reported areas in which action must be taken to be compliant.

3.8 Maintenance

3.8.1 Wall Surfaces

The Foundation’s maintenance personnel carried out maintenance works on the walls behind the main altar. Layers of paint and cement rendering were removed from the stone surface and consolidation of the original walls was carried out.





3.8.2 Roof Maintenance

During September 2019 maintenance consisted of an intensive inspection of the roofs to identify damage to the water proofing system. Repairs were carried out mainly on the areas to protect from any rainwater infiltration.

An intensive inspection was carried out on the protective steel structure covering the nave roof, panels were changed due to damage. The Foundation took this project a step further, and an agreement was signed between the Foundation and the steel structure company to perform scheduled inspections and carry out all the necessary maintenance on the structure. Note that this structure was built to conserve and protect the main nave ceiling from natural elements. Maintenance is an ongoing process and needs to be performed regularly, so the Foundation has set up a schedule of maintenance in order to prevent deterioration and damage. Following this, our maintenance team engaged in a maintenance programme, where all the cornices and arches in all the side chapels were deeply cleaned using paint brushes and vacuum cleaners. The maintenance team also performed deep cleaning of all window nets on both roofs to improve air circulation into the Co-Cathedral. The street portals on St Lucy Street and the top metal grids were restored.



3.8.3 Oratory Lantern & Wind Vanes

During February 2019 storms caused structural damage to the lantern of the Oratory. After inspection by the Foundation's architects it was clear that the lantern needed to be changed. A replica of the structure has been procured. The main sacristy skylight suffered irreparable damage, and our maintenance team embarked on another project to replace the outer skylight frame and restore the inner frame and glass.

The storms also damaged the wind vanes of both bell towers. The Restoration Directorate within the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government assisted with the evaluation of the damage. Inspections were carried out both internally and externally. Damage was mainly caused to the internal mechanism that allows the wind vane to swing. Coordination of the various teams to carry out this repair project involved the use of a crane able to reach the wind vane signs externally and carry out inspection of the shafts. The Restoration Unit along with our maintenance personnel fixed the damage on both the bell towers, and the wind vanes are now in operation. Appreciation goes to all those concerned in this delicate operation, particularly the Restoration Directorate within the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government, our maintenance personnel, Valletta local council and Transport Malta.



3.8.4 Steeple Bells & Clock

Maintenance was carried out on the bells which was also required due to wear and tear, the springs needed to be reset as these were back hitting the bells due to lack of space between the bell hammer and the bells themselves. Maintenance works were carried out by a professional clock-smith on the steeple clock.



3.9 Security

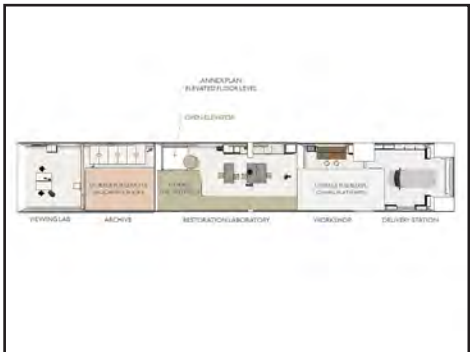
Security was increased and more officers were engaged at the Co-Cathedral. The security officers check all the visitors prior to them entering the Co-Cathedral.

Along with this, the CCTV camera system was upgraded to a more modern system, the number of CCTV cameras around the Co-Cathedral's perimeter was increased and more CCTV cameras were added inside in order to make this world heritage site more secure. High risk areas were also identified, and access was reduced by fitting intelligent security locks.



3.10 Health & Safety

Another area given high attention is the health and safety of the Foundation's employees. A representative from the Foundation's appointed consulting agency visits the Co-Cathedral on a regular basis, audits our health and safety measures and presents guide to improve the health and safety standards for the benefit of employees and visitors.



3.11 Design of a Restoration Laboratory

During this year a proposal was put forward to create a professional restoration laboratory within the Carapecchia Wing, which was built in the 18th century along the north-west side of the Co-Cathedral. It measures 30 metres in length by 4.80 metres in width, with a total surface of 144 square metres. This space is used for restoration works and maintenance works. The wing also serves as storage space for the reserved collections.

The aim of the project is to create a multifunctional place, optimizing the available space as much as possible, whilst creating a professional and well-equipped restoration laboratory to house and restore the artefacts and masterpieces of St John's Co-Cathedral and Museum.

The design consists of setting up four different areas separated by reversible partitions. The different sections would hold the archives, where documents could easily be consulted, a restoration laboratory, a carpentry workshop and a garage for deliveries and storage. An overhead soffit will be used for depositing objects and artefacts coming from the Co-Cathedral. A viewing door connecting the Carapecchia Wing to the rest of the Co-Cathedral will be installed so that visitors can observe restoration works in progress.

4. PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES

4.1 Notte Bianca – 6 October 2018

Notte Bianca was held on Saturday 6 October and St John’s Co-Cathedral opened its doors for the public to visit for free from 19:00 until midnight. Free guided tours of the church and Oratory were provided in Maltese and English. Once again, a leaflet was provided, this year providing information about artefacts that had been recently restored and their location.

The painting representing ‘The Virgin Mary’ which was under restoration was placed in the Sacristy. This painting was the work of an unknown artist who had been inspired by the image of the Madonna di Carafa which is venerated in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in the Co-Cathedral. One of the in-house marble restorers Raymond Aquilina was cleaning the sepulchral monument of Nicolas Cotoner in the Chapel of the Langue of Aragon. A total of 6,973 visitors entered St John’s Co-Cathedral during this event.

4.2 Enhancing the Visitors’ Experience

During the past year, the visitors’ entrance saw the introduction of the new electric curtain, new monitor screens and exit brochures for visitors, with content was produced in-house by the Marketing Department. An automatic notice was also implemented inside the church to remind tourists to keep silent during their visiting hours. The racks and spaces for the provision of audio-guides have been enhanced with monitors and proper racks.

4.3 Content Publicity

This year the Marketing Department embarked on providing varied content, on different platforms. Articles were published in magazines which specifically target tourist visitors in hotels, tourist accommodation at the Malta International Airport.





Other initiatives are direct marketing by way of info-brochures in high-demand tourist locations, such as the cruise port and visitor information offices. Continuous public relations kept the Matese public informed of the recent job recruitments, restoration projects and scholar interviews by way of newspaper articles and high-quality video content on social media platforms. In addition, an investment in video-equipment was made for productions by the marketing team.



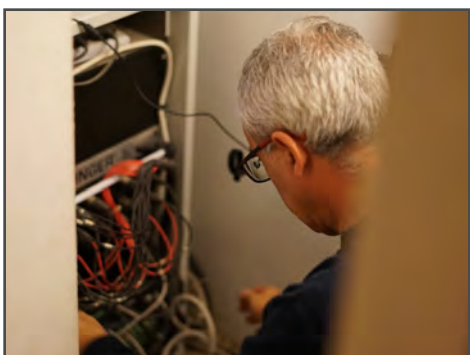
4.4 Set up of Events and Culture Sub-Committees

In November 2018, the Council approved a Cultural and Events sub-committee, to clarify its policy regarding these matters. The purpose of this Sub-Committee is to establish and foster an inclusive and varied programme of cultural involvement and ensure that such requests conform with policy. Events that are selected are from areas such as musical performances, open days for the public and lectures of general appeal.



4.5 Overhaul of Sound System

During the year under review a new sound system was set up in the Co-Cathedral. The new apparatus has a music scheduling system with PA announcements which are triggered automatically during visiting hours. For the choir the Foundation has also invested in a new microphone system comprising new microphones, stands and a manual choir system programmer to integrate with the new sound system. This equipment ensures that the choir is heard in an adequate manner during liturgical services. The system is also equipped with UPS which senses voltage fluctuations and protects the system from power surges and from losing data after power outages.





5. CONCERTS

- On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the St Paul Choral Society, a concert for Choir, Organ and Orchestra was held in aid of Hospice Malta on 19 October 2018, under the direction of Mro Hugo Agius Muscat with the participation of the St Paul Choral Society.
- A concert by St Monica Choir was held on 11 November 2018. The concert was directed by Sr Beniamina Portelli, the founder of the choir, with the participation of Nicholas Mulroy as guest conductor and Jean Paul Attard as Assistant Director. Works of Sacred Music by famous local and foreign composers were performed during the concert.
- As part of the activities entitled: 'Music in Malta from Prehistoric to Vinyl', organized by the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, a concert was held in the Oratory of St John's Co-Cathedral by Cappella Sanctae Catherinae on 14 December 2018. Works of Sacred Music from the 13th to the 17th centuries were performed during this concert.
- On 22 January 2019, on the occasion of the Valletta International Baroque Festival organized by Teatru Manoel, Johann Sebastian Bach's 'St. Matthew Passion' was performed by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment directed by John Butt with the participation of the Choir of the Age of Enlightenment.
- An Easter Concert entitled: 'Miserere Mei - Passiontide Music & Reflections' was held on 5 April 2019, conducted by Mro Christopher Muscat and with the participation of Jubilate Deo Choir, the resident choir at St John's Co-Cathedral and Naxxar Parish Church. This concert was organized by the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation.
- The annual orchestral Charity Concert with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency Dr George Vella, President of Malta was held on 20 June 2019. This concert was organized in aid of the philanthropic activities of the Maltese Association of the Order of Malta. The concert was under the direction of Mro Prof Michael Laus with the participation of soprano Miriam Gauci and the Goldberg Ensemble Malta. During this concert works by Bach, Pergolesi, Mozart, Lasso, Vivaldi, Albinoni and Caccini were performed.





- ‘Stradivarius Best of Classics Concert’ by Bach, Schubert and Mozart was performed on the 18 May 2018 by Edwin Marton, composer, conductor and violinist. This concert was organised by Lisa Maria Foundation.
- The Eighth Annual Orchestral Charity Concert was organised in aid of the philanthropic activities of the Maltese Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, on the 13 June 2018 to commemorate the Feast Day of St John the Baptist, Patron Saint of the Order of Malta, which falls on 24 June. The concert was performed by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra led by Marcelline Agius, the Resident Conductor Prof. Michael Laus, with the participation of Tenor Juan Gambina and the Goldberg Ensemble Choir. The programme took the audience on a pleasant musical trip, giving a brilliant performance of works by Bach, Gibbons, Handel and Haydn.
- A concert of sacred music organised by the St John’s Co-Cathedral Foundation was performed by Italian singer-songwriter and composer Roberto Camisasca, best known as Juri Camisasca, on the 27 July 2018.





6. DISTINGUISHED VISITORS AT ST JOHN'S CO-CATHEDRAL

- HE Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India
18 September 2018
- HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent
7 November 2018
- HE Mr Nasser Ahmed Kamel, Secretary General
of the Union of the Mediterranean
8 November 2018
- HE Mrs Rita Adam, Ambassador of Switzerland to Malta
3 December 2018
- HE Andreas Stadler, Ambassador of Austria to Malta
4 December 2018
- HE Frank Keurhost, Ambassador of the Kingdom
of the Netherlands to Malta
3 January 2019
- Hon. Josep Borrell, Foreign Minister of Spain
17 January 2019
- Hon. Emanuela Claudia De Re, Italian Deputy Foreign Minister
18 January 2019
- HRH Haya bint Hussein, Princess of Jordan
13 February 2019
- Hon. Giovanni Tria, Italian Minister of Economy and Finance
16 February 2019
- HE Philip Reeker, incoming Assistant Secretary of State
for European and Eurasian Affairs
11 March 2019
- General Claudio Graziano, Chairman of the European
Union Military Committee
22 March 2019
- H.G. Rev. Mgr Corrado Lorefice, Archbishop of Palermo, Sicily
1 July 2019
- HE Dr A K Abdul Momen MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
23 July 2019







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MMXX



Monument of
Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena
(1722-36),
The Chapel of the Langue of Castile

The St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation

The St John's Co-Cathedral

St John Street

Valletta VLT1156 - Malta