

“Stretch out your hand to the poor”

Order of Malta activities to mark the fourth World Day of the Poor

The World Day of the Poor was established by Pope Francis in 2017 with the theme "Let us love, not with words but with deeds". In announcing the theme for this year, "Stretch forth your hand to the poor" (Sir 7:32), Pope Francis concluded by reminding us that *"In this journey of daily encounter with the poor, the Mother of God is ever at our side. More than any other, she is the Mother of the Poor."*

Across the world members and volunteers of the Order of Malta across participated in both organised activities or personal acts to mark this special day.

"The Order of Malta has embraced the concept of the World Day of the Poor since it was instituted in Pope Francis in 2016" explained the Order's National Hospitaller, John Murphy. *"A major tenet of our order's charism is to serve 'our lords' the sick and the poor. Our lives are dedicated to serving others and this occurs on a daily basis. But as there is Mother's day once a year although we love our mothers daily, so too we have one special day each year that we dedicate and focus on those in our society that may be seen as poor."*

With the easing of some of the Covid restrictions in Melbourne, members and volunteers distributed Covid care packs directly to the homeless and through the Missionary Sisters of Charity. They also shared breakfast and warm coffee served with homeless in the city of Melbourne who were delighted to be greeted early Sunday with a smile.

In Brisbane, members, candidates and volunteers shared high quality, personal care packs and solidarity with many friends from the Emmanuel City Mission. During friendly conversations, attendees expressed appreciation for the thoughtful care packs and "early Christmas" sweets.

In Sydney, Magistral Chaplain, Father James McCarthy, offered [Mass at his Parish, St Aloysius in Cronulla](#). After Mass, the Order of Malta Volunteers hosted a free BBQ next to our Order of Malta marque, where parishioners were invited to join our members and volunteers to learn about our activities to assist those in greatest need.

In the Northern Territory members and volunteers packed 100 hygiene bags for the homeless in preparation for World Day of the Poor and connected with St Vincent de Paul to distribute the packs to the homeless who visit Ozanam House.

About the Order of Malta

The Order of Malta remains true to its inspiring principle set out nearly a thousand years ago: **"Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum"** – Defence of the Faith and Care of the Poor and the Suffering. This becomes reality through the voluntary work carried out by Dames and Knights in humanitarian assistance, medical and social activities in over 120 countries, as well as their charism of nurturing, witnessing and protecting the Catholic faith. Members of the Order recognize the image of God in every single individual and are obliged to work wherever the God-given dignity of human life is endangered.

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