



BAZILIKA SAN ĠORG

GOZO
CELEBRATES THE FEAST
IN HONOUR OF
ITS GREAT PROTECTOR

THE MEGALOMARTYR SAINT GEORGE

PATRON OF THE DIOCESE AND OF THE CITY OF VICTORIA
AND TITULAR OF ST GEORGE'S BASILICA

6 ~ 21 July 2019

The Nine Devotional Thursdays of Saint George

The Nine Devotional Thursdays of St George, starting on 16 May 2019, are a spiritual preparation for the feast of St George. On each one, the Reverend Archpriest celebrates Holy Mass at 8.00pm, during which special prayers are recited in turn for all residents of all the neighbourhoods of Victoria.

The Victoria International Arts Festival – the 22nd Edition

This international festival, held in the context of the feast of St George, was launched in 1998 as a high-culture contribution to the festivities. It adds a new and original dimension to the traditional Maltese *fešta*. The general public is invited to the daily concerts, which are free of charge, thus maintaining the popular nature of this festival. A detailed Programme of the current 22nd edition is available at www.viaf.org.mt.

FRIDAY 5 JULY

8.30pm: The 'Festa Banquet' at Qbajjar, Marsalforn, organized by the *Għaqda Żgħażaġh La Stella* (La Stella Youth Group).

The Novena of Saint George
“Minn Kwadri Ġorgjani”
(Reflections on the depictions of Saint George in art)

The Novena consists of church services over nine days promoting further spiritual preparation for the week-long festivities. This year’s theme is: *Minn Kwadri Ġorgjani* (Reflections on the depictions of Saint George in art). During the Novena, holy Mass is held at 7.00pm, celebrated by Archpriest Mgr Joseph Curmi. A charity campaign in support of the Major Seminary of the Diocese is also held over the nine days. After Mass mementos are given to the children present, followed by an activity for children in St George’s Square.

SATURDAY 6 JULY

First day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George embraced, lived, witnessed to and loved the Faith.* Everybody is invited, especially families of children baptised in the last twelve months.

SUNDAY 7 JULY

Second day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George gave up all to obtain a treasure.* Everybody is invited, especially engaged couples.

MONDAY 8 JULY

Third day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George protects us from all evil.* Everybody is invited, especially parents and grandparents.

TUESDAY 9 JULY

Fourth day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George was not afraid to bear witness to Christ.* Everybody is invited, especially children who received Holy Confirmation during the last twelve months, and their parents.

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY

Fifth day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George shows us how to pray in our moment of trial.* Everybody is invited, especially those who received First Holy Communion in the last twelve months, and their families.

THURSDAY 11 JULY

Sixth day of the Novena

Ninth and final Devotional Thursday of Saint George

10.00am: Mass for senior citizens, the sick and those with special needs from all over Gozo. Holy Mass is celebrated by Canon Michael J. Galea, with the participation of volunteers from the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Malta. During Mass the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is administered. Afterwards the congregation attends a ‘Festa Banquet’ organized by the *Ladies Society* of the Parish in the Parish Hall.

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George was willing to die*. Everybody is invited, especially those who have lost dear ones in the last twelve months

FRIDAY 12 JULY

Seventh day of the Novena

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George is a model of love*. Everybody is invited, especially those who in the last twelve months celebrated the 25th, 50th or 60th wedding anniversary.

SATURDAY 13 JULY

Eighth day of the Novena

11.00am: **Talk in English on the topic of:** *Saint George the Martyr: A story for our times* delivered by the writer and researcher Michael Collins at the Il-Ħaġar museum.

7.00pm: Novena Mass with the theme: *Saint George, the victor of Christ*. Everybody is invited, especially those who plan to join the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

7.45pm: Triumphant band march with the statue of the Victorious Saint George (1894), a masterpiece of the sculptor Vincenzo M. Cremona, with the participation of the La Stella Band. The march starts from the Teatru Astra and ends in St George's Square.

8.15pm: Musico-literary evening in St George's Square to mark the 125th anniversary of the statue of the Victorious Saint George, with the participation of the La Stella Band under the direction of Maestro Dr John Galea, and the La Stella children's choir *Piccole Stelle* under the direction of Sylvana Cini. The first grand hymn* performed in Gozo, *Su Garzoni* (1894), words and music by Mgr Giuseppe Farrugia (1852-1925), will be performed.

**(A 'grand hymn' is sung before the start of the evening procession on the day of the feast)*

SUNDAY 14 JULY

Ninth and final day of the Novena

7.00pm: Concluding Mass of the Novena with the theme: *Saint George: Patron, Protector and Defender of the Faith*.

8.15pm: Party and entertainment for children in St George's Square.

MONDAY 15 JULY

Masses at 5.00pm, 6.00pm and 7.00pm are held in the Parish Centre.

8.00pm: Grand concluding concert of the Victoria International Arts Festival with the participation of the National Philharmonic Orchestra and clarinettist Godfrey Mifsud under the direction of Philip Walsh.

TUESDAY 16 JULY

The main statue of St George is carried triumphantly from its niche and placed on its pedestal in church

The last Mass of the day will be at 6.00pm in the Parish Centre.

7.00pm: March by the La Stella Band from in front of the Good Shepherd church in the Taċ-Ċawla neighbourhood of Victoria to St George's Square.

8.00pm: **The main statue is placed on its pedestal. Sculpted in wood by Pietru Pawl Azzopardi in 1839, it is the first titular statue in Gozo. A special collection for the feast is held.**

9.00pm: *A celebration of Christian values by youth devotees of St George in the Basilica*, organized by Grupp 23four, characterized by prayer, reflection and song led by Fr Marcello Ghirlando OFM.

9.30pm: March by the Santa Marija Band of Żebbuġ from Republic Street to St George's Square.

10.00pm: **Triumphal march by the Santa Marija Band with the statue of St George sculpted by Austin Camilleri in 1991. The march starts in St George's Square and ends in St Francis Square.**

12.00am: Street fireworks in Triq Enrico Mizzi organized by the La Stella Youth Group.

WEDNESDAY 17 JULY

First day of the Triduum

6.00pm: Last Mass of the day.

6.30pm: **Solemn Vespers sung by the Collegiate Chapter and the liturgical assembly presided by Canon Joseph A. Borg. Sermon delivered by Fr Anthony Bajada, Parish Vicar of San Lawrenz. Followed by the hymn, antiphon and holy benediction by Canon Tonio Galea.**

During the Triduum the a capella singing is performed by the Laudate Pueri choir and the Schola Cantorum Gregoriana. These, and the orchestral music, are directed by Canon George Frendo, Maestro di Capella.

9.30pm: March by the La Stella Band from Triq Ġħajn Qatet to St Francis Square, and another by the Santa Margerita Band of Sannat from Triq l-Arcisqof Pietru Pace to St Francis Square.

10.00pm: **Triumphal march from St Francis Square to St George's Square with the statue of St George on horseback sculpted by Alfred Camilleri Cauchi in 1987, with the participation of the La Stella Band and the Santa Margerita Band.**

THURSDAY 18 JULY

Second day of the Triduum

9.00am: Conventual concelebration presided by Mgr Ġużeppi Gauci, with the participation of the Chapter and clergy of the Basilica, in suffrage for the souls of the spiritual pastors and priests who served the parish community of St George.

6.00pm: Last Mass of the day.

6.30pm: **Solemn Vespers sung by the Chapter and Collegiate and the liturgical assembly presided by Mgr Felix Tabone. Sermon delivered by Fr Anthony Bajada. Followed by the hymn, antiphon and holy Benediction by Mgr Giovanni Bosco Cremona.**

9.00pm: March by the San Ġorġ Band of Qormi in St Francis Square.

9.00pm: March by the Santa Katerina Band of Żurrieq from St George's Square to St Francis Square. The participation of this band is an initiative of the *Ġħaqda tal-Armar Festa San Ġorġ*.

9.30pm: **Triumphal march with the statue of St George Patron of Gozo, sculpted by Michael Camilleri Cauchi in 2008. With the participation of Banda San Ġorġ and Banda Santa Katerina. From St Francis Square to Savina Square, where an audio-visual spectacle is held, also featuring synchronized fireworks. Produced by the La Stella Youth Group.**

FRIDAY 10 JULY

Third day of the Triduum

9.00am: Conventual concelebration presided by Archpriest Mgr Joseph Curmi, with the participation of the Chapter and clergy of the Basilica, in suffrage for the souls of the parishioners who passed away in the last twelve months.

6.00pm: Last Mass of the day.

6.30pm: Solemn Vespers sung by the Chapter and Collegiate and the liturgical assembly presided by Canon Joseph Zammit. Sermon delivered by Fr Anthony Bajada. Followed by the hymn, antiphon and holy Benediction by Canon Emanuel Buttigieg.

9.00pm: Performance in St George's Square of the grand hymn *Su Garzoni* (1894) by the La Stella Band directed by Maestro Dr John Galea, and the choir *Piccole Stelle* directed by Sylvana Cini.

9.00pm: March by the La Valette Band of Valletta from Republic Street to Independence Square.

9.15pm: March by the Banda L-Unjoni of Hal Luqa from St Francis Square to Independence Square.

9.15pm: Grand triumphal march with the statue of the Victorious Saint George through the streets of Victoria, with the participation of the La Stella and Banda L-Unjoni, joined later in Republic Street by the La Valette Band. Concluded with a spectacle organized by the La Stella Youth Group.

SATURDAY 20 JULY

END OF HOLY TRIDUUM

9.00am: Conventual concelebration presided by Mgr Pawlu Cardona, Episcopal Vicar for the Clergy, with the participation of the Chapter and Collegiate of the Basilica. Concluded by the solemn singing of the *Te Deum*.

EVE OF SOLEMNITY

5.00pm: Mass on the vigil of the Solemnity.

6.00pm: March by the La Stella Band from Republic Street to Independence Square, where it accompanies the Translation until it reaches St George's Square.

6.30pm: Solemn Translation of the relic of St George from St James's Church to the Basilica of St George. Pontifical Celebration of the first vesper of the Solemnity presided by His Excellency Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo and Deacon of the Collegiate Lateranensi, assisted by the Cathedral and Urban Chapters. The Knights of the Sacred, Military and Constantinian Order of Saint George will participate.

7.45pm: Eucharistic Blessing by Mgr Ġużeppi Farrugia.

8.00pm: Concert in St George's Square by the King's Own Band of Valletta, directed by Maestro John Galea.

9.30pm: The La Stella Band under the direction of Maestro John Galea performs *A San Giorgio Martire* (1931), the celebrated hymn with words by Luigi Billion (1860-1939) and music by Giuseppe Giardini Vella (1895-1974).

10.00pm: A special march with the participation of the La Stella Band and the King's Own Band, who join up to form a massed band in Republic Street.

12.00am: Grand synchronized fireworks spectacle in Republic Street.

SUNDAY 21 JULY
SOLEMNITY OF SAINT GEORGE

Morning Masses at 5.00, 6.00, 7.00 (in the Basilica); at 8.00 (in the Parish Centre), at 8.30 (in the Basilica), at 10.00 (in the Parish Centre), at 11.00am and 12.00pm (in the Basilica). Evening Masses at 4.00pm and 5.00pm (in the Basilica).

8.00am: Solemn Singing of the Terce by the Collegiate Chapter, presided by the Diocesan Bishop in the Major Sacristy.

8.30am: Pontifical Concelebration presided by H.E. Mgr Mario Grech, Bishop of Gozo and Deacon of the Collegiate Lateranensi, assisted by representatives of the Cathedral Chapter, the Chapter and Clergy of the Urban Basilica, and members of the secular and religious clergy. The panygeric in honour of Saint George, Patron of Gozo, will be delivered by Canon Dr Jonathan Farrugia.

Holy Mass will feature the Mass in D in honour of St George "Princeps Martyrum" composed in 1976 by Joseph Vella (1942-2018).

11.00am: Festive March in the city centre by the Banda San Ġorġ of Qormi and Banda Sant'Elena of Birkirkara. This will conclude with a synchronized fireworks display produced by the La Stella Youth Group.

6.00pm: Solemn Celebration of the second vesper of the Solemnity by the Urban Collegiate Chapter, presided by Archpriest Mgr Joseph Curmi.

The Psalms of the Second Vesper of St George, composed by Joseph Vella, will be sung by the Laudate Pueri, the resident choir of the Basilica.

7.00pm: Solemn commencement of the procession with the titular statue of Saint George, greeted by a rendition by the La Stella Band of *Georgius natus est* (1984), words by Canon Joe Mejlak (1944-2008) and music by Joseph Vella.

7.15pm: The La Stella Band and choir play the hymn *A San Giorgio Martire*.

7.30pm: Solemn Procession with the titular statue of Saint George presided by Archpriest Mgr Joseph Curmi, with the participation of the Chapter and Clergy of the Basilica, the Religious Orders of Victoria, Seminarians and Parish Fraternities. The La Stella Band plays religious hymns during the procession.

8.15pm: March by the Banda Mnarja of Nadur from Republic Street to St George's Square, where it performs a concert under the direction of Maestro Joseph Grech.

10.30pm: Triumphant entry of the statue of Saint George in the Basilica at the end of the procession, accompanied by the massed crowds of Gozitans and Maltese singing the popular hymn *Lill-Kbir Martri San Ġorġ* (1952), words by Fr Akkursju Xerri OFM (1915-1968) and music by Vincenzo Ciappara (1890-1979).

10.45pm: Antiphon followed by Eucharistic Blessing by Archpriest Mgr Joseph Curmi, which bring to an end the main annual festivities in honour of Saint George Megalomartyr, ancient Protector of the Gozitans.

*Thanks to Mr George Camilleri for the English translation.
The Maltese version is available in PDF on this website.*