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THE CHURCH IN MALTA PREPARES FOR THE YEAR OF FAITH

On the 11th October 2012, the Church in Malta will unite with the Universal Church for the commencement of the Year of the Faith. One year ago, in his Apostolic Letter 'Porta Fidei', Pope Benedict XVI announced this special event for the Catholic Church, "summons to an authentic and renewed **conversion** to the Lord, the One Saviour of the world".

The Church in Malta will be organizing a programme of activities with the aim that the Maltese people may once again recapture an enthusiasm for their faith. This invitation is open to everyone; however Archbishop Paul Cremona O.P. wishes to urge in a particular way, practicing Catholics to rediscover their faith, while at the same time sharing their faith-experience with others. This enhances that which the Archbishop has been preaching since the beginning of his episcopate: the necessity for each and every Christian to make a quantum leap from a faith of convenience and tradition to living one's faith with conviction, as a conscious choice, in a culture which is continually changing. For this reason, during the Year of the Faith, the Church in Malta will carry on with the new evangelization which, as the Pope said that it is what enables the Church to present herself to the world today, as she did in the past, supported by the strength of the faith and the enthusiasm of ordinary people."

The annual Diocesan Assembly, which will be held on 5 and 6 October, will offer an opportunity to all representatives of the Church – clergy and laity – to reflect, together with the Archbishop, upon the Year of the Faith. The Assembly which is also held in all parishes during October and November will provide an opportunity for discussions, with the aim of setting up concrete projects to be undertaken in the parishes. Religious orders will be offering their faith-experience to pastoral operators in all Church entities. Other initiatives which are being organized are: moments of a renewal of faith for priests and members of religious orders; parents of children who are to receive the sacrament of Baptism will be offered the opportunity to experience a strong catechetical formation, twelve articles, explaining the Creed, will appear in the magazine 'Flimkien'; TV and radio programmes dealing with topics in connection with the Year of the Faith will be aired in the Church media and on public stations; conferences will be organized for the public on the subject of the faith.

The Year of the Faith will commence with an invitation from the Bishops, through a Pastoral Letter which will be read in all Churches in Malta and Gozo on Sunday, 7th October. The following Sunday, 14th October, all Christians will be invited to rediscover baptism through a liturgical rite which will form part of the mass, renewing the relationship with Christ and his Church. During the celebrations of Christ the King and Pentecost, there will be a message written purposely for the Year of the Faith. A diocesan celebration commemorating one hundred years since the Eucharistic Congress of 1913 will also be centred upon the same theme.

The Year of the Faith will be launched in all the dioceses of the world on 11th October 2012, which happens to be the 50th anniversary of the commencement of the Second Vatican Council, as well as the 20th anniversary since the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This will also be the day upon which the Bishops' Synod on Evangelization will commence. Bishop Mario Grech will be representing the Episcopal Conference of Malta during the Synod. The Year of the Faith will end on 24th November 2013, the feast of Christ the King.