

RECEPTION CENTRE SJA FOUNDATION

SJA FOUNDATION
Reception Centre
51, Tarxien Road
Tarxien PLA04
Reception Desk Tel. 2767 2367
Email: sjafoundation@onvol.net

Monthly Newsletter – Issue No. 7 January 2008

Spiritually Literate New Year's Resolutions

by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

1. I will live in the present moment. I will not obsess about the past or worry about the future.
2. I will cultivate the art of making connections. I will pay attention to how my life is intimately related to all life on the planet.
3. I will be thankful for all the blessings in my life. I will spell out my days with a grammar of gratitude.
4. I will practice hospitality in a world where too often strangers are feared, enemies are hated, and the “other” is shunned. I will welcome guests and alien ideas with graciousness.
5. I will seek liberty and justice for all. I will work for a free and a fair world.
6. I will add to the planet's fund of good will by practicing little acts of kindness, brief words of encouragement, and manifold expressions of courtesy.
7. I will cultivate the skill of deep listening. I will remember that all things want to be heard, as do the many voices inside me.
8. I will practice reverence for life by seeing the sacred in, with, and under all things of the world.
9. I will give up trying to hide, deny, or escape from my imperfections. I will listen to what my shadow side has to say to me.
10. I will be willing to learn from the spiritual teachers all around me, however unlikely or unlike me they may be.

Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Dear sisters, members, volunteers and Friends of the St. Jeanne Antide Foundation,



In my capacity as Superior Provincial of the Sisters of Charity in Malta and as a Chairman of the Board of Governors, I would like to give a hearty and warm welcome to Mrs Nora Macelli. We are glad and thankful to God that she has accepted our invitation to be the first Chief Executive Officer of the restructured Voluntary Organization of the Province, previously known as St. Jeanne Antide Welfare Campaign. Sr. Rose Rizzo soc has been the first full time worker with the organisation. She worked hard with a real spirit of a sister of charity and being the first professional worker, many times she had to deal with all situations and all bits and pieces which she was faced with. A special thank you, from me and from all of us is not enough. We assure Sr. Rose our prayers and support. She will continue to be the full time social worker of the organisation working hand in hand with Nora.

We have started a new chapter in the history of the Mission of the Sisters of Charity in Malta through the engagement of Mrs Nora Macelli so that she will develop and coordinate the new services which have been already launched and those which will be launched in the future. Nora has all the competence but above all she has the Christian spirit which makes us serve our brothers and sisters knowing that we are serving God himself present in all of us. Now we have an organisation which has about 40 years of life but which has been completely renewed during the intensive work carried out during the last 2 years.

I also thank Sr. Laura Tanti who has been the inspiration and the founder of the organisation, as well as all the lay people and the sisters of Charity, who have given their contribution in the organisation, along the years. Because of them this Voluntary Organisation, run by the Sisters of Charity, could “walk with”, give support in many different forms to so many people in need. The Organisation has met the needs of people in Malta and in many other countries, especially our brothers and sisters in the third world. For all this we give thanks to the LORD who gave us, sisters and lay, the grace to share in that special grace, which we call a charisma, given to St. Jeanne Antide.



Nora welcome!!! All of us look forward to work together so that God’s kingdom on earth will grow and flourish in love, peace, hope and faith which are seen in action. For each and every one of us I pray so that we will be always open to the action of the Spirit who is within us. God bless you all.

Sr. M. Salvina Bezzina

Mistoqsija lil-qarrejja.....

Nixtiequ nkunu nafu jekk tippreferux li l-artikli li jidhru f’din in-newsletter ikunu bil-Malti biss, bl-Ingiliz biss jew b’taħlita taz-żewġ lingwi.

F’ċertu każjiet l-artiklu irid ikun miktub bl-Ingiliz għal fatt li jkun miktub minn xi hadd barrani.

Napprezzaw ħafna l-koperazzjoni tagħkom.

Grazzi



AVVIŻ IMPORTANTI.....

Il-Grupp HBIEB TA’ SANTA GOVANNA ANTIDA
ser jibda joffri għajjnuna lir-residenti ta’ Dar Nazaret, Żejtun

GĦANDNA BŻONN TA’ AKTAR VOLUNTIERA !!

Dawk li huma nteressati u jixtiequ jgħinu, għandhom iċemplu lil Geraldine Gatt fuq 21632327 jew 79632327 sabiex tispjegalhom x’tip ta’ għajjnuna hemm bżonn.

**“Dak li tagħmlu ma’ wieħed mill-iżgħar fost ħuti,
tkunu qed tagħmluh miegħi”**



GRAZZI

STRENGTH COMES FROM GOD

Some initial considerations:

- The people of God had just returned from exile. Jerusalem and the temple had been restored, and the cult of God was resumed And the people were returning to the city:
"...But now that they had returned to their God, they have come back from the Dispersion wherein they were scattered, and had repossessed Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and have settled again in the mountain region which was unoccupied.." Jdt 5, 19
- The work in the small city of Bethulia, on the mountain of Judea, developed. The city is surrounded by Nabucodonosor's army, commanded by General Oloferne. They occupy the river that supplies the city with water, hoping to win over the people because of their thirst:
"Stay in your camp, and spare all your soldiers. Have some of your servants keep control of the source of water that flows out at the base of the mountain, for that is where the inhabitants of Bethulia get their water. Then thirst will begin to carry them off, and they will surrender their city. Meanwhile, we and our men will go up to the summits of the nearby mountains, and encamp there to guard against anyone's leaving the city. They and their wives and children will languish with hunger, and even before the sword strikes them they will be laid down in the streets of their city. Thus you will render them dire punishment for their rebellion and their refusal to meet you peacefully." 7, 12-15
- For the Jewish people, to surrender means lack of trust in God. If God had set the people free from slavery, giving them a land, they could not accept that the "promised land" would be usurped. It was a real threat to their own identity.

Let us see some suggestions::

- The Leaders of the people and the Elders do not have any answers to give and suggest a delay: to wait five more days to see if God will intervene. If he will not, they will surrender; *"Uzziah said to them, "Courage, my, brothers! Let us wait five days more for the Lord our God, to show his mercy towards us. He will not utterly forsake us. But if those days pass without help coming to us, I will do as you say." Jdth 7, 30-31*
- The unspoken and daring reply, will be given by a woman. A reply that defends life, identity and not the submission to fall again into slavery:**
"When Judith, therefore, heard of the harsh words which the people, discouraged by their lack of water had spoken against their ruler, and of all that Uzziah had said to them in reply, swearing that he would hand over the city to the Assyrians at the end of five days, she sent the maid who was in charge of all her things to ask Uzziah, Chabris, and Charmis, the elders of the city, to visit her. When they came, she said to them: "Listen to me, you rulers of the people of Bethulia. What you said to the people today is not proper. When you promised to hand over the city to our enemies at the end of five days unless within that time the Lord comes to our aid, you interposed between God and yourselves this oath which you took. Who are you, then, that you should have put God to the test this day, setting yourselves in the place of God in human affairs?" Jdt 8, 9-12

Judith, a young widow.

Is respected by everyone for her charity and her faith in God.

Judith presents another suggestion to the Leaders of the people, which is not a stopgap measure, but a firm decision to attack evil at its roots:

"But since we acknowledge no other god but the Lord; we hope that he will not disdain us or any of our people. If we are taken, all Judea will fall our sanctuary will be, plundered, and God will make us pay for its profanation with our life's blood."
(Jdt 8,20-21)

Judith possesses a kind of perception:

She foresees the consequences of what could happen...she goes beyond her own interests. She knows that the extermination of her city will allow the enemy to take possession of the whole country of Judea. To give in only a little means giving way to the enemy.

Judith, firm in her ideals of liberty, sure that God is on her side,

elaborates the strategies and prepares the methodology which will finally free them from slavery. Judith risks...but she is full of hope in the lord

"You must not inquire into what I am doing, for, I will not tell until my plan has been accomplished." Jdt 8, 34

Judith does reveal her plan to the Leaders. She simply asks to let her act freely.

Let us read the prayer Judith makes before carrying out her plan.

Jdt 9, 1-14

She wears her "feast day dress" and goes to the valley in search of the enemy. The soldiers stop her and she tells them that she wants to surrender. So she was taken to Oloferne, who remains astonished at her beauty... Judith knows that her triumph is not in her hands, but in God's hands who wants to save his people.



"Lord, God of Israel, give me strength at this moment"
 Jdt 13, 7

With the commander's death, the enemy feels lost and retreats.

God shows his presence among his people and act with the help of a trustful and courageous woman, who does not resign herself to the situation, she does not conform herself to submit to become a slave. She wishes for herself and for her oppressed people a full and free life. God listens to the cry of the oppressed people and remains at their side. God does not want his people to be under domination, but wants them to be free and worthy, he wants them to face the situation and not to yield: "...your strength is not in numbers, nor does your power depend upon stalwart men; but you are the God of the lowly, the helper of the oppressed, the support of the weak, the protector of the forsaken, the saviour of those without hope". Jdt 9,11

Judith represents the people, and all those who seem insignificant, humiliated. But God acts through the little ones to confound the great and the powerful. "When my lowly ones shouted, they were terrified; when my weaklings cried out, they trembled, at the sound of their war cry, these took to flight ... "A new hymn I will sing to my God. O Lord, great are you and glorious, wonderful in power and unsurpassable. Let your every creature serve you; for you spoke, and they were made, you sent forth your spirit and they were created; no one can resist your word." Jdt 16, 11. 13-14



Sr. Mirta soc.



* **Is there anyone who would consider, later on this year, being released for one year from his Public Service work to work with the Foundation under a government scheme that approves such releases for work with an NGO? Please contact Nora for further discussion and exploration. Full information about this scheme can be accessed via the Department of Information Website, Government Gazette 31 July 2007, pages 6939 to 6941. Those released retain their substantive salary for the period of release to work with an NGO.**

* **We need highly experienced and dedicated Tutors to work with groups of vulnerable youths and families to help in skills building. Write to Nora if you are an experienced Trainer, Tutor, Teacher.**

SJA Foundation Reception Centre

Reception Centre Administrator: Paul Barbara paul.j@maltanet.net
 Reception Desk tel: 2767 2367 email sjafoundation@onvol.net

- **Adult Education and Community Work Team**
 Current contact: Nora Macelli macen.sjaf@gmail.com
- **Friendship Services Team**
 Co-ordinator: Caroline Cortis carol.cortis@global.net.mt
- **Social Work Team**
 Co-ordinator; Sr. Rose Rizzo sisterrosetk@yahoo.com
- **Homework Services Team**
 Co-ordinator: Jessie Spiteri marjespi@gmail.com
- **Reception and Secretarial Team**
 Co-ordinators: Paul Barbara paul.j@maltanet.net
 Melanie Ferò amfero@maltanet.net
 Information Officer: Joanne Ebejer joannee@maltanet.net
- **Refreshments Group**
 Contact: Sr. Rose Rizzo sisterrosetk@yahoo.com

Other SJA Foundation Teams and Steering Committee

- **Fundraising Team**
- **S.O.C. Steering committee for SJA Foundation**

**W
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**NEW MEMBERS
SJA FOUNDATION**

Reception Group
Emily Zerafa

Social Worker
Jenny Lynn Gafa

Homework Group
Graziella Tully
Rodianne Conti
Carmen Attard

A Message from Nora

Dear Colleagues,

Today is my 11th working day at the St Jeanne Antide Foundation and I feel truly honoured to be working side by side with the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide of Thouret and with you all dear and committed volunteers. I feel at home at our base in Tarxien and some of the sisters sometimes refer to me as the 'Postulanta'; I do admit that I have a long way to go and to grow – spiritually that is – and that they are right. So, 'Postulanta' in spirit it is!

This evening, Sr. Salvina Bezzina, Sr. Antonietta and I had the opportunity to meet with our Archbishop, Mons. Pawlu Cremona, at an informal gathering of representatives of Diocesan Commissions and Secretariats. We discussed with him our evolving work and described how we plan to set about reaching out to families whose life circumstances are too daunting and challenging.

The past 11 days have been truly hectic, as my colleague Sr. Rose Rizzo can tell you. Sr. Rose has been holding the fort for over a year now and, I hope (!), feels relieved that she is no longer alone working full time at the Foundation. Thank you Sr. Rose for all your hard work and efforts to make everyone feel truly welcome and at home.

With your help, we are slowly transforming the ground-floor into a space for people to seek information, support, and linkages to other service providers, learning guidance, courses, and opportunities for volunteering. During these past 11 days, we have managed to achieve the following:

1. We have invited all the families in Tarxien and Santa Lucia to an introductory meeting at Dar Nazareth – an accessible centre run by the Tarxien Parish – to discuss their life issues and concerns so as to build a course around their expressed needs. This introductory meeting is scheduled for the 29th of January at 6.00pm. The process shall be facilitated by Mrs Doreen Falzon, a mother of an autistic youth who has co-worked with me in the past to facilitate similar processes in Isla and Ħaż-Żebbuġ. Wish us well please!
2. We have started co-working with a very energetic and dynamic full-time volunteer from tarxien to support youths who are and feel emarginated and excluded. We plan to provide these identified young persons with mentoring and training support. Next Tuesday, we shall be going to MCAST with some of them for a *Basic Skills Assessment* so that we can proceed to find them Tutors who would enable them to continue learning ICT, Maltese, English, Numeracy and anything else which will enable them to pursue personal development and proceed on their lifelong learning journey. Do tell us if you know of dedicated and committed Tutors who are available in the mornings.
3. We are working hand-in-hand with the Agostinian Order in Tarxien to set up an **N&N Club (Nanniet u Neputijiet)** which will provide an opportunity for grand parents who regularly care for their grandchildren to learn and practice stimulating educational strategies. During the first meeting held on Tuesday 22nd January, it was decided that an educational club would be started on February 18th at 9.30am
4. We have also signed an agreement with the National Commission for the Family of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity to run, with government funding, three community work projects in three localities – one of which is in Gozo. At the moment teams are being created to start outreach work, home-visits, meetings, and group meetings. Wish us well. I shall introduce the teams to you in our next issue of the newsletter.
5. We have met the Tarxien Parish Priest, Fr Reuben Deguara, his Viċi Fr Andrew Borg, the Agostinian Pirjol Patri Franco Grech, the Tarxien Kummissjoni Djakonija, Tarxien Youth Centre Director Mr Joseph S. Farrell, the Tarxien Mayor Mr Farrugia, and the Mayor and staff of a locality with whom we are starting one of two new community work projects.
6. On Tuesday 29th, we shall be starting a Basic Skills Programme for young persons aged 16 to 22 who lack basic skills and wish to continue advancing in their learning. We are designing with them a programme that combines IT training with English conversation, basic Maltese, innumeracy and budgeting and personal development. Wish us well!

In the coming weeks, I hope get to know you all well and to work closely with you. I plan to meet your respective groups and to consult you on your thoughts about moving forward in our common vision. So feel free to make suggestions. My email is macen.sjaf@gmail.com.

With peace and appreciation for all your collective hard work behind the scenes.

NEWS UPDATE

Teams of the Reception Centre Projects

Homework Services Team

So the festive season is over, the new year's promises have been made, the celebrating is over, and hopefully the Birth of the Christ will be with us every day of this year, bringing with it the joy and peace that only Christ can give.

The Homework club team is all set and more than ready to start a new term. We have been moved, that is the cupboards that house our resources have been shifted to the room, which if I am correct, is to be used as the Adult Training Room. We like our corner of the room and are happy to discover that there is also a table that can serve for our meetings, so you see things are really on the move at the centre.

We have welcomed our new volunteer Rodianne Conti. Rodianne is a sixth form student and by the looks of it, it is going to be a great asset for our group. She had already come for an introductory meeting, and an observation session, and even helped at our little party for our service users. She will be helping a fifth former. After their first session together (Friday 11th.), they both seemed to have established a contact. Funnily enough, for all our enthusiasm for the work, our first session started with asking most to the tutors, not to attend as seven of our service users were away. But hold on, this does not dampen our spirits, next Friday we will have a full house, and celebrating the event over a pizza after the session. Sharing a meal with co-workers and friends is always a pleasure.

May I take the opportunity, now that our newsletter is circulating quiet well, to put in an appeal. The Homework Club is in need of books. We would like so much to set up a little lending library, if we encourage reading, we will be setting our service users on the right path to learning. We require story books, simple story books for beginners, picture dictionaries, word games, in fact anything that is educational. We require books both in English and in Maltese. We do not mind old books, as long as they are decent, if we want to instill in these children a love for the book, we cannot give them a tatty copy. Hope some one out there can help us.

Thank-you

Jessie Spiteri



Friendship Team

During our Team Meeting held just before Christmas, we had the opportunity to welcome a new member, Salvina, and continue with our discussions as to how we can reach out to the ones in need of real friendship. Sr. Rose was present for our meeting, and as has been agreed, she forwarded a list of names of some of the elderly living either in Tarxien or close by, and who are interested in receiving this service. We distributed the names between us, each taking 2/3 persons in our care. Since all of us Team Members have our hands full, either to family or work commitments, or due to other voluntary assistance being carried out, we agreed that as things stand, we could call them on a weekly basis and possibly pay them a weekly visit. Sr. Salvina was also present for a good part of the meeting, and her feedback and words of encouragement were very up building. We all agreed however that almost all of these elderly spend long spans of time on their own, longing for someone, anyone really, to listen to them and show them they are still important to society at large.

Unfortunately, due to life's fast pace, we tend to forget that there are so many who are desperately crying out for help. And many times all they require is an assurance that they are not forgotten. We ended our meeting with a small party we held between us, to close the year together in style, and inaugurate a new year ahead of us, hoping and praying that it be filled with loads of opportunities and new members joining our Team.

On January 22nd 2008, we paid our 4th visit to the female inmates within Corradino Correctional Facility. This time we visited the main Detention centre, and were welcomed by a good few inmates, who this time, were very hard at work. Usually, the inmates have no other option other than to waste their days away, either sprawled on sofas smoking endlessly, or on the phone, or picking on each other. On this day however, the inmates were all busy working. One of the leading toy factories in Malta, is providing the inmates with the opportunity to work and earn that little extra pocket money. So they have organised themselves to carry out this work at a fast pace. The faster they work, the more they earn. It was very satisfying to see them actually enjoying it. They themselves expressed such point of view, stating that at least they can feel useful and the days pass by quicker. The prison wardens also told us that they have seen a big difference in them since all this started. They continued that the Centre is much more tranquil now, and outbursts of anger and frustration are becoming few and far between. During the hour we spent there, we rolled our sleeves too, and gave them a helping hand. This visit was in itself very pleasant and tranquil too. After all, the most important thing is that we were able to spend some good quality time with them, actually becoming one with them.

Caroline Cortis
Co-ordinator

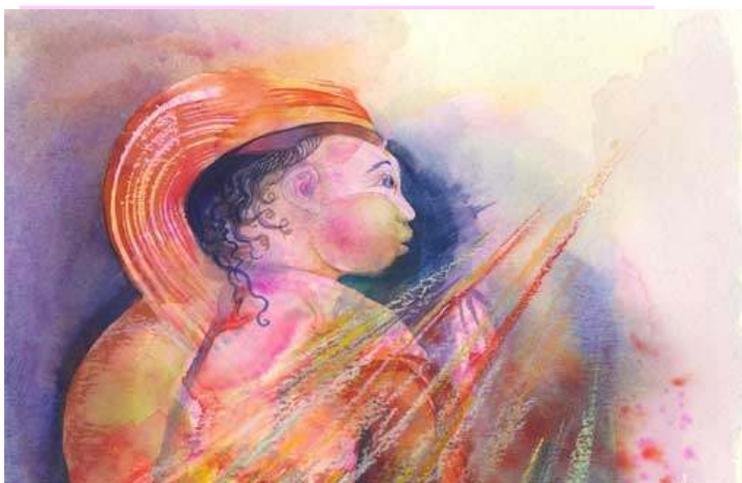
Reception Group

'Following the two meetings Nora Macelli, Paul Barbara, and Sr Rose Rizzo held with Reception volunteers' a number of interesting ideas and plans emerged.

- ❖ As projects and initiatives evolve and visitors to the centre increases, the nature of the work of Reception Volunteers will grow and expand. Roles will include phoning persons who feel lonely and isolated to extend fellowship and determine whether an urgent need for a visit exists, supporting the organisation of events, minding children of persons participating in a course or meeting, assisting in administrative work, working on the excel version of the directory of support services, etc.
- ❖ Jessie and Mary will be submitting a plan for a Children's Play corner outlining specific child-friendly resources and safety safeguards such a staircase removable guard rail, small blunt-edged tables, etc.
- ❖ Helping in the start up of a library which will house both spiritual books as well as those related to the fields of activity of the Foundations and books for service users including children.
- ❖ A diary has been placed on the reception desk by Nora. Reception Group suggested that they would use it to leave notes, reminders and instructions for each other, especially to ease the activities of each shift of volunteers.
- ❖ The interests and strengths of each volunteer were discussed to get ideas about the potential involvement of reception Volunteers in specific fields of activities of the foundation.
- ❖ Security issues were raised and discussed. These will be addressed by Nora in close collaboration with Provincial Sr. Salvina.
- ❖ On-going training elements identified include: (a) how to use the phone in a sensitive and responsive but non-intrusive manner, such as when callers with a problem phone or volunteers call service users indicated by Sr. Rose and Nora. (b) Another element is safe childminding on the premises, and how to respond to situations where a visitor requires an urgent solution but no one is on the premises to provide an immediate response.
- ❖ Vivien and Doris shall be assisting Nora and Trainer Doreen Falzon during the meeting at Dar Nazareth for families with a member with special needs and/or disability.
- ❖ Daniel has been assisting Nora in carrying out essential tasks that involve transport such as going to the bank, applying for telephone lines, delivering notices to parishes within the Unita'.
- ❖ Joanne will be assisting Sir Rose in data-input specific to Sr. Rose's work.
- ❖ Vivien and Grace will be assisting Nora in administrative tasks. Vivien has kindly increased her volunteering hours as well and has also hand-delivered invitation letters for meetings to Tarxien residents.
- ❖ Sr. Letizia, a trained Midwife with extensive field experience in Egypt has offered to support young mothers with a first born child. Nora will be discussing this offer with Parish Priest Fr Reuben and his assistant Fr Andrew.
- ❖ Other volunteers are interested in assisting in the N&N Club (Klabb Nanniet u Neputijiet).
- ❖ The group suggested that articles about SJAF be submitted to the Diocesan newsletter FLIMKIEN, Familja Kana and the Parish Directory. A poster shall also be designed for house-to-house drops.
- ❖ The group will also be assisting in ideas for fundraising and contacting specific companies for donations of resources (e.g. Playmobil for the children's play corner).
- ❖ Reception group appreciated the folder on the Reception Desk started by Nora with information updates about evolving activities and events. This will be sustained so that everyone on the premises becomes aware of what's happening in real time.

A huge thanks to everyone for your enthusiasm, dedication, and support.

Nora



Embracing the Mystery
(Detail of a watercolour by Tony Macelli)

Reception Centre Opening Hours

Opening timetable – January / February / March 2008

Monday:	9:00am to 11:00am 5:00pm to 7:00pm	Tuesday:	9:00am to 11:00am
Wednesday:	9:00am to 11:00am 5:00pm to 7:00pm	Thursday:	5:00pm to 7:00pm
Friday:	9:00am to 11:00am 5:00pm to 7:00pm		

NOTICEBOARD

Monday 4th February – Fundraising Group Meeting

St Jeanne Antide Foundation on-going activities

- Every Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.00am to 3.00pm, there will be a group of young persons meeting on premises to follow a new Basic Skills Programme that includes Spoken English, Maltese Literacy, Basic Computer Skills, and Innumeracy & Budgeting.
- Every Tuesday between 6.00pm and 8.00pm a group of persons with a family member with a disability and/or specific learning difficulty will be following a course on disability issues. This programme is aimed at families from the Parishes of Tarxien and Santa Lucia.
- Starting February 18th, between 9.30 and 11.30am, an educational club for grandparents who look after their grandchildren will be meeting at the premises of the Augustinian Fathers at Tarxien



Correspondence Address

Ponderosa
Triq l-Ikhal
M'Scala MXK3623
Malta
Tel no. 27636819

Qarib

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sar il-ħin għall-mewt,
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kif għaref imqajjem kien wiegħed,
“min imut qabel ma jmut
ma jmutx meta jmut”*

Tony Macelli
Jan 2008

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(* jghid patri Agostinjan tas-seklu 17,
Abraham ta' Santa Clara