

MY PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, MY HUMAN RIGHT: MY GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSIBILITY - A CALL TO ACTION

On Friday 4th December, the St Jeanne Antide Foundation organised a national conference entitled ***My Protection from Violence, My Right: My Government’s Responsibility – A Call To Action.***

The team behind the conference are a group of women who experienced domestic violence for many years and are today rebuilding their lives while supporting victims and other survivors. The group got together three years ago after approaching the St Jeanne Antide Foundation for support and mentoring to fulfil their wish to be of service to women and children in similar circumstances. Since 2013, the SOAR group has evolved into a service that provides advocacy and support and youth-focused preventive activities that aim to break the cycle of drifting towards abusive relationships. SOAR stands for ‘survival of abuse with resilience.’ The Conference falls between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Hu-



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The main speakers of the Conference are all SOAR Committee members. Their presentations capture the results of 22 semi-structured depth interviews with victims and survivors of domestic violence who poured out their experience of being plunged into systems that could, with collective commitment and goodwill of policy makers and service providers, be improved to achieve justice for many women and their children. The women presented the collective voice of many women who feel unable and afraid to speak in public.

As the bio-notes attest, the speakers-survivors have moved away from the 'victim' straightjacket in which their perpetrators harnessed them. They are now thriving and building a better future for their children and themselves.

Domestic violence is directly touching at least 40,000 to 50,000 women in Malta and Gozo, and a number of men. It does not discriminate between class, race or sexual orientation, young or old. It leaves a devastating impact on the victims and their children, on the victim's immediate and extended family, and friends. Coercion and control in domestic violence leads to a drop in female workforce participation and therefore has direct implications for the financial well-being of the victims and the larger economy. It also leads to a rise in mental health incidence and other health-related issues, including loss of life.

Domestic violence contributes directly to the rising figures of separation, single parenthood, childhood trauma, loss of property ownership and the slide into poverty that ensues with the subsequent mounting demands that stretch social welfare and housing resources even further. For many victims, domestic violence is the beginning of a slippery slide into a black abyss in which many remain stuck for many years after leaving to seek safety.

SOAR service research shows that survivors face violence from the same perpetrator repeatedly for many subsequent years after separation. This situation is of concern to fellow citizens who are seeing this crime going on in the community with impunity. It also concerns every tax payer who funds the cost of the support services, the law enforcement services, the court services, the health care services, and the welfare system. Domestic violence is a scourge

of our society and indeed a serious concern for all citizens and our elected parliamentarians.

The Istanbul Convention, which Malta was one of the first countries to ratify, binds signatories to embark on a number of key measures. These include the following:

- "take the necessary legislative and other measures to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere." (Chapter I, Article 4, Para 1)

- "take the necessary legislative and other measures to adopt and implement State-wide effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies encompassing all relevant measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention and offer a holistic response to violence against women." (Chapter II, Article 7, Para 1)

- "ensure that policies place the rights of the victim at the centre of all measures and are implemented by way of effective co-operation among all relevant agencies, institutions and organisations." (Chapter II, Article 7, Para 2)

- "Measures shall involve, where appropriate, all relevant actors, such as government agencies, the national, regional and local parliaments and authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations." (Chapter II, Article 7, Para 3)

- "Parties shall recognise, encourage and support, at all levels, the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and of civil society active in combating violence against women and establish effective co-operation with these organisations." (Chapter II, Article 9)

For all the above reasons, the Conference aimed to involve many stakeholders in building on the recommendations of victims and survivors. Many persons attended and participated in the 8 workshops that went on during the conference. SOAR will be synthesising the points raised during the workshops to create a final document of recommendations.

After the Conference, SOAR plans to publish a book outlining the research outcomes, conference presentations and workshop recommendations, posters

designed by SOAR members on *Why I Stayed* (with the abusive partner) and on *Why I left*, illustrations and other content.

The Foundation thanks The Voices Foundation and the President's Award for Creativity for supporting the creative and human rights driven processes that have led to the Conference.



The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is a Council of Europe convention against violence against women and domestic violence. It was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul, Turkey. The convention aims at prevention of violence, victim protection and "to end the impunity of perpetrators". As of November 2015, it has been signed by 40 countries. On 12 March 2012, Turkey became the first country to ratify the Convention, followed by eighteen other countries from 2013 to 2015 (Albania, Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden). The Convention came into force on 1 August 2014.

voices
FOUNDATION



IL-PREMJU TAL-PRESIDENT
GHALL-KREATTIVITA

Caterpillar in a Jar goes to Budapest!



Dear diary,

I am Jenna, the 15 year old character in the book *Caterpillar in a Jar*, and I'm going to tell you all about my trip to Hungary!

During November, my story became one of three finalists as a tool for education during the local National Learning Tool Fair organised by the European Union Programme Agency and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh. Elaine, my creator, explained how my story is used to create awareness and discussion among young people on the topics of healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships and how to get out of abusive relationships. Becoming a finalist meant that Elaine and I would participate in the International tool fair taking place in Budapest, Hungary. So off we went!

Day 1

After a long day of travelling, we arrived at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. The building has 5 floors, with rooms for lodging, a large dining room, a large garden at the back and many multi-purpose rooms for activities. The view from the top floor was breath-taking! People began arriving from all over Europe and beyond. A large chart indicated where everyone was from.

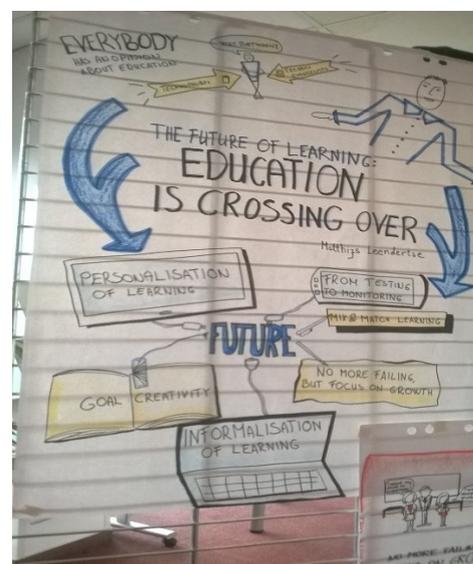


The Creative Facilitating Team were a group of volunteers who, for the coming three days, would inject creativity in the way they capture and record the event. Some with photos, some with drawings and cartoons, others with interview write-ups. Today they offered us many different musical instruments and we joined in with an instrument during an improvised music session. It was a lot of fun! In another room, the Hungarian National Agency

prepared many typical local treats for participants to try out.

Day 2

During the opening of the Tool Fair X, there were some presentations given by key persons in the sector of youth work. The one that I think was most interesting was about how education and learning is evolving and what it might look like in the near future, thanks to new technology. The main focus was on how standardized tests and exams can't be a one-size-fits-all and how at present, they label young people as failures. Education in the future will have a more individualistic style of learning and focus on continued growth, not passing or failing. With my Matsec exams coming up, I tend to agree! After the presentations, everyone was asked to think of a challenge they may want to overcome during these 3 days and how they would 'Cross The Line'. Hmm... upon reflection, I really wanted to challenge myself to be an empowered character that girls can identify with when they read my story and I wondered if the participants at the Tool Fair X would like my story



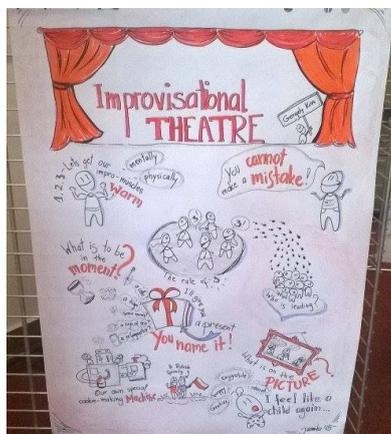
In the evening, the group participated in different activities. Participants watched two Hungarian dancers dance to traditional Hungarian music. Then we decorated gingerbread with white icing. The room smelt delicious!



Afterwards, we met a local crafts lady who showed everyone how to make a Christmas angel out of dry corn leaves. Starting with a dried fruit seed, we wrapped the shaped pre-soaked corn leaves around and tied them with raffia around the head and wings. The leaves became rigid as they dried. I think our angel is so cool!

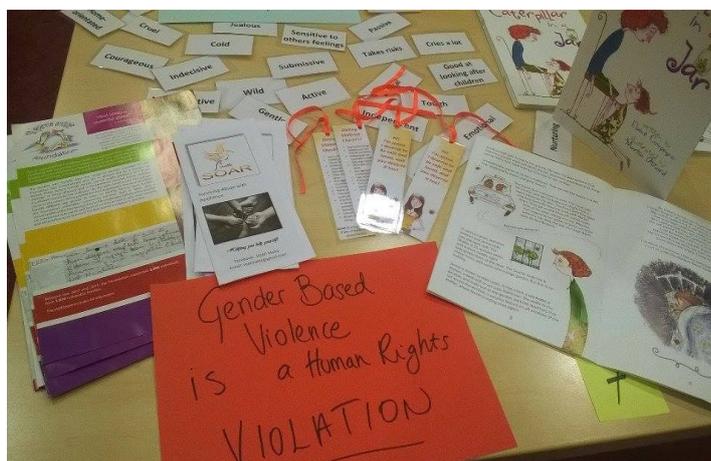
Day 3

Today we participated in other tool presentations. Many of the tools involved games that helped us get to know each other better and break the ice. Many of the games would have us in fits of laughter, such as the game where we gave each other a gift by miming it, while the receiver had to guess what the gift was. This is a cartoonist's drawing of one such moment. The game is very good to get those creative ideas going.



Another very interesting game during this session was the one where the facilitator would call out a theme and participants would volunteer to make a pose related to the theme. One by one, they would go to the centre of the circle and join the poses of those before them until they look like one big statue. This game could be used for any theme and it's a creative way to encourage young people to express themselves about sensitive topics. Another game that really got me laughing was the human machine. The facilitator told us that we were back at the industrial revolution and each one of us needed to become part of one whole machine, included the sound effects and repeated motions. It was amazing to watch everyone working in tandem. This is a useful game for team-building.

The Market is open! Today I get to show off, as I am displayed to the 135 participants of the Tool Fair X. Copies of my story are neatly stacked and displayed as I become the protagonist for the Maltese Market Stall. The table is full with SOAR brochures, SJAF brochures, bookmarks and games related to my story. Being Human Rights Day, we thought we should especially highlight how gender-based violence is a human rights violation. Many participants stopped at our table. The feedback was very good and many thought that our learning tool was a very good idea. Some purchased the book while others took photos and wanted to know more about how they could adapt similar learning tools in their communities on different themes.



Day 4



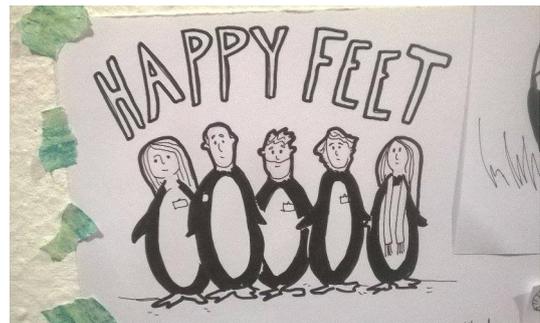
Today's game was bags of fun! The facilitator started the session with a few ice-breaker games. Then we proceeded to the main activity – Fairytale Cards. He split the participants into four groups and gave each group colour coded blank cards. Each group needed to draw and fill in the cards according to the assigned themes: Places, Persons, Objects, Conflict. It was a team building activity as each group got creative with their cards. When the card-making time was up, the cards were used

to create a story around one central theme, giving a chance to many people to contribute to the story. In this case, the theme was interculturalism, but the theme could be anything (disability, bullying, teamwork, jealousy, racism, unemployment etc). It was probably the activity I enjoyed the most.

Later that day, we all went out for dinner on board a river boat that took us up and down the Danube. Budapest is truly beautiful at night! The Parliament, glowing in golden light, majestically steals the show. It is the largest parliament building in Europe.



There were many tools that were showcased including ones about coaching, about building communities and managing money, but time passes quickly when you're having fun...



...and before I knew it, I was on a plane back to Malta. I'm really excited and bursting with new ideas on new tools to help me pop out of the pages of my story and into the creative minds of young participants in the aim of being a better tool of learning.

With love,

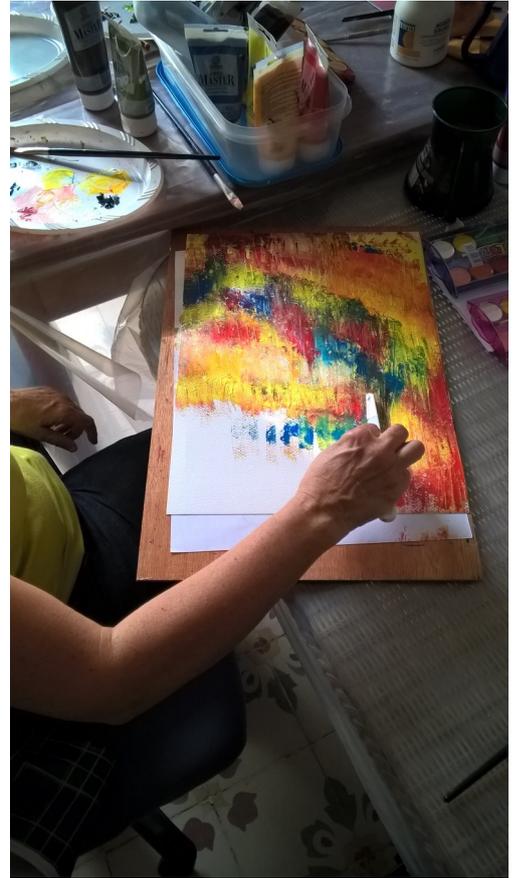
Jenna x

SOAR Conference

12 students from the MCAST National Diploma in Care (Year 2) attended the SOAR Conference with Assistant Lecturer Antonella Agius (Institute Community Services). Ms Agius wrote: "On behalf of the National Diploma in Care year 2 students, I wanted to congratulate to you for the very informative and well organised conference. It was a great learning opportunity for students to better understand what domestic violence is like in reality, to meet with other professionals, and to participate actively in the workshops. Well done once again and thank you."



Art Group at Dar Hosea for service users - women involved in street prostitution - and staff



*May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace...
The gladness of Christmas give you hope...
The warmth of Christmas grant you Love...*

Merry Christmas

The article extract proposes a new take on the meaning of the mystery of suffering.

The website is interesting, too: "The Contemplative Society" "committed to recovering the mystical heart of the Christian wisdom t
<http://www.contemplative.org/incarnation/>

INCARNATION

December 25, 2012/in [Cynthia Bourgeault](#)

As we celebrate this season of mystery, and at the end of a year which seems to have dissolved into tragic chaos, it is good to re-affirm the spiritual reality in which we journey. Here are words from Cynthia Bourgeault's [Sounds True Audio Learning Course "Encountering the Wisdom Jesus," 2005](#) in which she calls us back to the heart of the spiritual life.

What do we make of our human task here? Some traditions say that we're here to be good, to engage in spiritual warfare to mind our 'p's' and 'q's' so later we have the right to go home to where we've come from. Some traditions will say that we're here to work off past karma and that when we have finally worked off our past karma and emerged whole and fused in our being, we can leave this endless cycle of birth and death and heaviness and density.

But the gist is always the same. Wherever you go in spiritual tradition it seems that here is not home, that our task is somehow to realize our way out of the illusory bonds and get back to where we belong. That message is filtered to us even through our Christian tradition where heaven has come to represent so much that place that we go to after we die if we're good.

But is there another way of looking at this?

I believe there is. And I believe this is actually what is at the heart of that beautiful intimation "For God so loved the world."

Yes this is a very heavy frustrating difficult density. It seems as if by the very binary finite nature of the mind that we're always bumping into sharp edges. It seems that our walk in time is diminishment. We are always having to choose. To do one thing means we can't do something else. To love one person means we can't love another. And our sharp edges, our boundaries as human beings bump against each other and we age. And we diminish. And we finally have our hearts broken. It's a hard place. It's a frustrating place. It's a difficult place.

We come into constriction. But is that as punishment? I believe not. I believe it's as sacrament.

***"I was a hidden treasure and I longed to be known.
And so I created the realms."***

In this realm, by its very dense nature, by its very dualistic, binary, jagged-edged nature, it becomes specifically the dimension to express certain aspects of the being of the Divine that can only be expressed in these boundaried conditions. It shows us what love is like in a certain terribly particular and intense way. It accentuates those dimensions of divine love in which love becomes costly and therefore becomes precious.

So the very sharp edges that we experience as constriction are in fact the opportunity to show forth some of the exquisite dimensions of the nature of love that can only be manifest in finitude.

Since love requires your heart being broken, we begin to see qualities such as steadfastness, tenderness, commitment, forbearance, fidelity. These beautiful subtle savours of what love is like have no real context where there's no edges and boundaries, when all just flows. But when you run up against the hard edge and have to stand in love anyway, what comes forth is a most precious nectar of the quality of divine being.

I've sometimes said, and I don't mean this entirely in jest, that the most profound product of this world is tears. Tears express that vulnerability when we can stand having our heart broken, and still love. In the tears flows out a sweetness, a warm-heartedness to the Divine which has been known in our tradition as the divine mercy, the divine compassion.

This is the realm, I believe, in which this mercy, this compassion is most deeply, harrowingly, excruciatingly, and beautifully released.

That's our business down here. That's what we're up to.

And I think this has some very important implications.

It's not about punishment. It's not about coming down here as a sort of high school or proving ground for further rewards. But right here and now, we are in the process of co-creating with God the manifestations, the revelation of God's most secret and intimate name, the heart of God. That's a difficult assignment. In some way we chose it. We elected or consented to be part of it.

And so, in a sense our deepest opportunity is not to look at how we can get out, how we can get home, just as for Jesus, crucifixion wasn't the hard thing, Incarnation is, so for us. And to realize in some conscious or deeply trans-conscious way, we are bearing our part in the suffering of God, in the suffering, the costliness that's involved in the full manifestation of the Divine Name, of the Divine Love. And we're doing it right here and now, and that these conditions as fragile and as frustrating as they are, are precisely and perfectly the only conditions in which that love can be fully manifest.



ROKNA POEŻIJA

Nemnem il-Mużbieh

nemnimli l-mużbieh, u qal:

- ja forma maħbuba tieghi,
qis li tara,
u ara li tkun
imwaħħad għall-aħħar
u b'qalbek miftuħa,
għalkemm moħħok jipprova
u ma jasalx

issirx farka jew frak,
issirx wiehed minn tnejn
izda wiehed minn wiehed,
ħa' jkollok ix-xorti
li tgħix barka li tfeġġ
meta ħajtek tintilef
għalija

hekk tfeġġlek din ħajti
u tnixxi mill-fond
ta' qiegħ dak il-vojt li
hu inti tassew -
li hu jien

għismek għal ftit żmien
moħħok għal ftit żmien
u l-ispirtu tiegħek
għamilhom ċari, ħalli
minnhom jgħaddi d-dawl,
li huwa jien

I-imħabba-dawl jiddi bid-dija
li taħslek u gġibek
bħal tifla jew tifel
imnaddaf mill-biża', ħzunija
w bżulija fil-vojt

I-imħabba-dawl iġibek
ta' wara quddiem,
ta' taħt fuq u rasek l-isfel:
mużbiehek mhux tiegħek,
izda tiegħi,
u l-imħabba-dawl
li jdawwal il-madwar tal-
mużbieh
huwa jien

għax minn dejjem hekk kien,
hekk jien
anki t-toqol ta' gebla jitbiddel
aktar
milli nitbiddel jien

allura, jekk b'xoċftok
nitbissem irrid,
u b'qalbek inħobb
- ħallini
jekk b'qalbek u b'fommok
irrid ngħallem u nrodd
- ħallini
u jekk b'dirgħajk irrid

naħdem għall-ġid
sakemm saħħtek tkun tiflaħ,
u anki lilhinn
- ħallini

izda qis li ma torqodx
u ara li tisgħar
b'qalb miftuħa beraħ -
għax inkella kif tisma'
l-ħoss ħiemed
li hu jien?

kif ġieli qalulkom
miż-żmien il-qadim
"Fir-renju tas-sema,
jkun xogħoli bl-unur,
u mhux xogħolok;
u kull ħaġa hemm fik
ħlief dak li nkun
sawwartu jien,
ma tiswa għal xejn."

tony macelli



Kurrent Qawwi ta' Ħniena

Hu kurrent qawwi ta' ħniena
li artab, delikat, mimli għarfien
jersaq issa qribi
ħa ninħall fi mħabbtu.

Hu kurrent qawwi ta' ħniena
li taħt l-ilsien ilissen isimni
li kelli qabel iż-żmien
jgħannaq u jwennes u
jgħixni,
u jibqa' jgħammar hawn.

Hu kurrent qawwi ta' ħniena
li jzommni fil-pali ta' jdejh
fejn jien bqajt imnaqqax
sa minn qabel ma trawwimt
f'guf iż-żmien.

tony macelli

Salm 121:1-2

*Nerfa' għajnejja lejn l-għoljiet;
mnejn se tiġini l-għajnuna?
L-għajnuna tiegħi minghand il-Mulej,
li għamel is-sema u l-art.*

Salm 95:4

*F'idejh huma qaghan l-art,
tiegħu huma qacacet l-għoljiet.*

*Isaiah 49:1 ... Isimgħuni, gzejjer,
aqhtuni widen, popli mbiegħda!
Il-Mulej mill-guf sejjajli,
mill-ġewwieni ta' ommi ftakar f'ismi.*

Isaiah 49:16

Ara! Naqqaxtek fuq il-keffa ta' idejja...



FACING ONE'S SHADOW - from the Balzan Centring Prayer Group

We have been looking further into the question of facing one's shadow. The shadow is a concept that the pioneering psychologist Karl Jung developed; it means those parts of ourselves that we deny, or are ashamed of, or are afraid of, or just cannot handle. It is essential for the spiritual path that we become aware of the contents of the shadow. If we don't, then we remain incomplete beings, isolated from ourselves, and so remain isolated from the greater Oneness that is the Kingdom among us and beyond us. Thus Jesus said "Be you complete as your Father in Heaven is complete." (The Greek word translated as "Perfect" here really means "complete"). We are incomplete - there is no need to deny that. Facing the shadowy bits, humbly, non-judgmentally, non-aggressively, non-shamefully and bringing them to light will mean that the shadowy bits become our passport to completeness, wholeness, holiness. Hence the phrase "golden shadow", coined by Miller, author of "Your Golden Shadow". Richard Rohr's recent meditations reflect this.



In today's Balzan Centering Prayer-Meditation group session we were blessed with understandings and insights about this. It was clear that we were being guided!

The scripture reading for Lectio Divina was chosen after one of us wondered what a particular car registration number MTH 416 would mean when converted into a scripture reference, i.e. Mt 4:16

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ **the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.**"¹⁷

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

An inspiring reading that "happened" to be pre-chosen (by a different person in our group) for the start of the session was an extract from Thomas Merton's Thoughts in Solitude:

" to keep ourselves spiritually alive we must constantly renew our faith. we are like pilots of fog-bound steamers, **peering into the gloom in front of us, listening for the sounds of other ships, and we can only reach our harbour if we keep alert. the spiritual life is, then, first of all a matter of keeping awake.** We must not lose our sensitivity to spiritual inspirations. We must always be able to respond to the slightest warnings that speak, as though by a hidden instinct, in the depth of the soul that is spiritually alive. **Meditation is one of the ways in which the spiritual man keeps himself awake.** It is not really a paradox that it is precisely in meditation that most aspirants for religious perfection grow dull and fall asleep. Meditative prayer is a stern discipline, and one that cannot be learnt by violence. It requires unending courage and perseverance, and those who are not willing to work at it patiently will finally end in compromise. Here, as elsewhere, compromise is only another name for failure."

Our contemplative discussion after the contemplation was also rich with connections, on the notion that facing your shadow is the route to completeness, wholeness, holiness.



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<https://www.facebook.com/SjafAntideCentre?fref=ts>



DONATIONS

Your donation is truly appreciated. It enables us to sustain our services to vulnerable and poor individuals and families.

Donation to the St Jeanne Antide Foundation can be made as follows:

Cheque issued to The St Jeanne Antide Foundation and posted to the Foundation: 51 Tarxien Road, Tarxien TXN 1092

For **local bank transfers**: **APS** 2000 0681 886 **HSBC** 013175021001
BOV 4002003379-0 **BANIF** 00210404101

If you are a Go/Vodafone/Redtouch subscriber you can donate by sending a **blank SMS** (SMS tariffs applicable):

€2.33 – 50617371 €4.66 – 50618095
€6.99 – 50618909 €11.65 – 50619217

You will receive a text message of thanks and acknowledgement

For **bank transfers from overseas**: APS Bank, 146/147, Antoine De Paul Square, Paola PLA1260

Bank Code (Swift) APSBMTMT IBAN No: MT03 APSB 7708 0005 5047 2000 0681 886 (last 11 digits are the account number).

HOW YOU CAN HELP US - OTHER OPTIONS

- If you are getting married: make a donation instead of buying wedding souvenirs.
- If you are having a birthday party: ask friends to make a donation instead of buying a gift.
- If you are having a wedding anniversary celebration: convince your guests to make a donation instead of buying a gift.
- For funerals: you may wish to make a donation instead of buying flowers.
- Get Together: organise a spontaneous collection.
- You may wish to send us a monthly or annual donation, whatever the amount.
- You can encourage others to consider donating to the Foundation.
- Ask your employer for a matching scheme which will make your contribution go even further!

Become a HELP-SJAF Champion and ask friends and family to make a donation.

CONTACT US: sjafngo@gmail.com

Foundation SERVICES

1. Family Resource Centres:

- **Centru Antida** in the heart of Tarxien. Open from 7.30am to 5 pm daily in winter time (sometimes later as well).; up to 1pm in summer Serves localities of Tarxien, Paola, Fgura and Santa Lucia. Social Work, community outreach, advocacy, referral, information, emotional support, support groups.

Volunteering opportunities, included inclusive volunteering for service users.

Volunteer Handymen in support of vulnerable and poor families.

Learning Support for vulnerable persons supported by Foundation Social Workers. Includes: *For Children*: weekly learning support for primary level students; *For adults*: non-formal learning opportunities such as self-esteem groups & literacy.

Volunteer Befriending for lonely, home-bound elderly persons

Counselling;

Bazaar in Tarxien (recycling and fundraising)

- **Centru Enrichetta in Birzebbuga**. Open Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8am to 2pm. Social Work service; Family Literacy Support Programme; MCCF service on Tuesdays from 8am to 11am (Project financed for 12 months by the EEA NGO Malta Fund managed by SOS Malta).

2. LWIEN Service – support for family carer-givers of persons with mental health problems. Includes family consultations, counselling, support groups, home-visits, social work.

3. IRENE Service in support of very vulnerable women involved in street prostitution. (Project financed for 18 months by the EEA NGO Malta Fund managed by SOS Malta).

4. SOAR Service: advocacy and support for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Includes workshops on dating violence for young persons (soarmalta@gmail.com)

5. Emotional Freedom Service for persons wanting to be free from their anger, fear or other emotional distress;

6. Overseas Development Projects: SJAF works with partners in developing countries to formulate anti-poverty projects. It has also arranged for public funding of such projects in Pakistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Malawi.

7. Centring Prayer Group for contemplative prayer practice.

PUBLICATIONS: ask us for list.

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