



# ORDER OF MALTA

## BOSTON AREA

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta

### Area Chair Report Damien DeVasto,



Dear Confrere,

Our calling in the Order of Malta is multi-faceted. We dedicate ourselves to helping the sick and the poor, seek to nurture our own spiritual well-being and resolve to defend the faith. The stories in this newsletter illustrate how we respond to that calling. They include the journeys of:

- Members working to bring the Cancer Support Ministry started at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Centerville to other parishes across our Area. To date, four more parishes have developed programs, and we expect that number to increase. Additionally, the ministry has broadened to include anyone coping with an illness of body or spirit.

- Malades and caregivers who have experienced the healing waters and miracle of Lourdes and who have found strength in one another.

- Our new Knights and Dames, who will be Invested in New York this November. Drawn to the Order of Malta by our unique mission, they have found a special place, where they can further their work of serving those in need while strengthening their own faith and our collective calling.

These are just a few of the stories of our Order. Through their talents, compassion and generosity of time and spirit, our members demonstrate every day their commitment to living our mission.

Warmest Regards,

*Damien DeVasto*  
Damien DeVasto

### Malta Group Works to Roll Out Catholic Cancer Support Ministry

#### Support Group Created by Malta Members and Our Lady of Victory Parish

When a service ministry works well in one area, we have a success. When we can replicate that success, we have a program with the potential to serve many communities. That is the case with the Catholic Cancer Support Group, a Malta Ministry started in 2009 at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Centerville. The group began by providing spiritual as well as practical support to cancer patients, their families and friends. But the focus has now broadened to include support for anyone coping with an illness of body, mind or spirit. The ministry has been so effective that several Boston Area Malta members are working to introduce it to other parishes.

The idea for the Catholic Cancer Support Group grew out of a series of conversations among then pastor of Our Lady of Victory and

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**Msgr. Dennis Sheehan and the Cancer Support Group at Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Newton.**



## Lourdes Inspires, Heals and Embraces Pilgrims

Our annual trip to Lourdes is always an inspiration, and this year was no exception. Thirty-one pilgrims from the Boston Area, including Boston College nursing students, joined 361 pilgrims from the American Association to experience the healing waters. The quiet dedication of our Malta volunteers, Chaplains and medical professionals was matched only by the courage of our Malades and their caregivers. Here are just a few of the inspirational stories from this year's pilgrimage.

### **Surrounded by Goodness**

"It's just incredible to be surrounded by nothing but goodness and happiness," said Susan Kiely. It has been a difficult couple of years for Susan. She underwent 16 months of chemotherapy and radiation for her breast cancer; learned her sister, Cindy, was also diagnosed with the same disease; and helped care for her ill mother and mother-in-law, who both passed away recently.



Her sister-in-law, Dame Camille Kelleher, who is Area Chair for New York City, recommended Susan travel to Lourdes as a Malade and that Susan's husband, Barry, accompany her as her caregiver. At first, she had her doubts about the trip. "I'm a physical therapist, and I've always taken care

of people," she said. "My biggest anxiety about going to Lourdes was how I would feel about people taking care of me." She soon discovered there was much more to the pilgrimage than physical care. "It's a mind-body experience, spiritual, emotional and intellectual as well as physical."

### **Powerful, Moving and Humbling**

You would think Joe Milano had enough on his plate. He is the owner of the Union Oyster House, America's oldest restaurant; serves as Honorary Consul General to Thailand; and enjoys spending time with his four



## *The community came together, creating a sacred space in order to prepare Jim for his final steps home to God.*

daughters and their families. But at age 70, accompanied by his wife, Jill, who is a nurse, he made the pilgrimage to Lourdes. “It’s a very powerful, moving and humbling experience,” he said “Very spiritually enriching.” The Milanos cared for a gentleman who has pancreatic cancer. The gentleman’s caretaker was his wife, but, as she has some physical limitations herself, Joe and Jill took care of both of them.

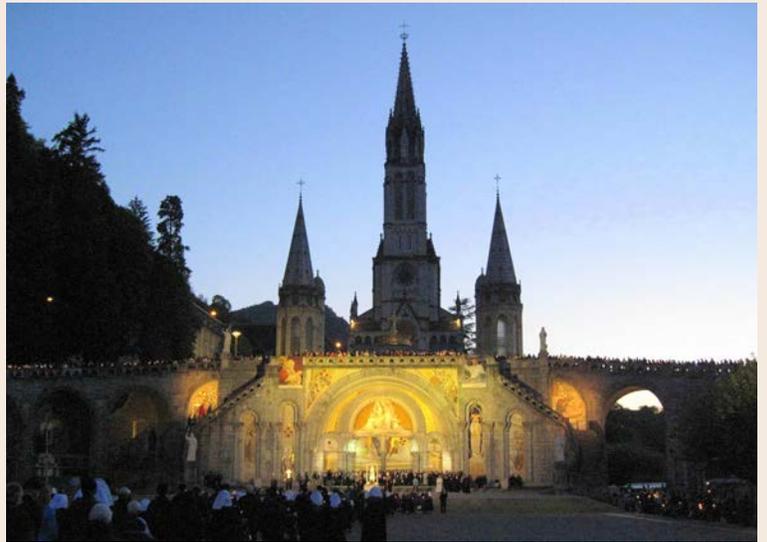
While Joe traveled as a Knight, he has his own health challenges. Before the trip he had undergone seven months of chemotherapy to treat his non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. “I could really relate to what the Malades were going through.” Back home, Joe said he felt better than he had in a long time. “Three weeks after the trip I was on maintenance and found my energy was up. I feel good.”

### **Creating a Sacred Space**

Although Jim Long was quite ill, he insisted on following through with plans for him and his wife, Donna, to make the pilgrimage to Lourdes. Jim succeeded in his goals: to have his Confession heard in Lourdes, to receive the Eucharist, to receive the Anointing of the Sick, and experience the baths. However, the journey was not an easy one for him or Donna. During the pilgrimage he weakened, but he did not go through his illness alone. The community came together, creating a sacred space in order to prepare Jim for his final steps home to God. Jim passed away during the pilgrimage with Donna at his side. Members of the Malta community were present, saying the prayers of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, something Jim and Donna had made a part of their daily routine for two years.

On the same evening of Jim’s passing, Donna, along with Jim’s doctor, John Murphy, led the sacred Candlelight Procession pulling an empty vature, the vehicle that those too ill to walk travel in. They were followed by Malta pilgrims from around the world.

These are just a few of the inspirational stories from our 2014 pilgrimage. Each, in its own way, demonstrates the strength and caring of the Malta community.



**Top: The Candlelight Procession was led by Donna Long and Dr. John Murphy.**

**Middle: Susan and Barry Kiely.**

**Bottom: Joe Milano (l.) with Frank Holobowitz.**





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## Catholic Cancer Support *(continued from page 1)*

Malta Chaplain Fr. Mark Hession, Malta members Joe Gill and Ed Marshall, and Msgr. John Moore. Msgr. Moore had started a similar group at St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in North Falmouth. Former Boston Area Chair Sue Downing also serves on the committee. “There are a lot of cancer-support groups,” said Joe, who chaired the endeavor until recently. “What makes ours different is that it is centered on the Eucharist.”

Joe has retired as chairperson of the group at Our Lady of Victory in order to work with Ed and Sue to bring the concept to other parishes. The team was able to meet with Deacon Jim Greer, Director of the Archdiocese of Boston’s Health Care Ministry. Deacon Greer encouraged parishes across the Archdiocese to learn more and to attend information sessions about how to form a cancer-support ministry. Today, an additional four parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston have started programs. They include:

- Blessed Sacrament, Saugus
- Our Lady Help of Christians, Newton
- Sacred Heart, Newton.
- St. Augustine, Andover

Joe said that parishes must create services geared to their communities. “One of the keys to making this work is to talk to the members to find out what they want,” he said. “At Our Lady of Victory we changed what we were doing as we went along. We started out with medical speakers but soon learned people were more interested in uplifting, motivational speakers who talk about their journeys. Now, as we look at the value of the program, we see opportunities to help people facing many different types of pain.”

While each parish will design a process that meets its particular needs, Our Lady of Victory provides an effective model. There, participants—people of all faiths are welcome—meet once a month. The gathering begins with a Healing Mass, which includes Anointing of the Sick, and is followed by either a guest speaker or social event. Topics might focus on the practical, such as nutrition and exercise, or they could be inspirational in tone, such as an individual’s triumph over a difficult situation. This past summer, the novelist Patry Francis was a guest speaker.

AnneMarie Johnson, who was diagnosed in 2009 with an inoperable brain tumor, has been a participant in the group at Our Lady of Victory almost since the beginning. “It’s just a comfort to be with people who know what you’re going through,” she said. “And the Healing Mass is one of the things I look forward



to.” AnneMarie is monitored every three months but said she is doing great now. “I will survive is my motto,” she said.

Fr. Mark said the ministry is a continuation of what begins at Mass. “The Cancer Support Ministry has reminded people that a parish’s vibrancy and relevancy have everything to do with what flows—during the week—from Sunday Mass,” he said. “We enter to worship and leave to serve.”

Boston Area Chair Damien DeVasto described the expansion of the Catholic Cancer Support Ministry as a wonderful example of Malta members fulfilling our mission. “They saw a need, responded with an innovative program, and are now working to bring that service to many more calling out for care,” he said.

Joe has continued to emphasize the importance of the religious setting, “Having access to a faith-based group where others understand you provides tremendous emotional support and gives people hope,” he said. “The Catholic Cancer Support Group is a simple ministry that doesn’t cost much, is easy to run, and improves the quality of life for a lot of people.”

If you would like to volunteer in assisting with the roll-out, or if you believe your parish might be interested in forming a group, please let us know. We can provide materials describing how to get started. Additionally, information sessions will be held in the coming year. For more information, contact Joseph B. Gill, [josephgill@comcast.net](mailto:josephgill@comcast.net), 508-733-1010, or Edward Marshall, [marshall.e@comcast.net](mailto:marshall.e@comcast.net), 508-726-1206.

**Left to Right: Fr. Mark Hession;  
Ed Marshall; Geri Medeiros  
(new Co-Chair at Our Lady of Victory);  
and Joe Gill.**



*“The Catholic Cancer Support Group is a simple ministry that doesn’t cost much, is easy to run, and improves the quality of life for a lot of people.”*

– Joe Gill

## Boston Area Members Prepare for Investiture

One of the highlights of our year is the Annual Investiture. At St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York November 14 we will be welcoming into the Order from the Boston Area 10 new Knights and Dames as well as one Conventual Chaplain. This is the largest number of people to be Invested from the Boston Area in the past decade. Our Candidates have a wide variety of backgrounds. Harvey Rowe, a lawyer, is a former attorney general and a former navy intelligence officer who worked

with the forerunner of NCIS (Naval Criminal Investigative Service). Vicki Regan is a retired registered dietician. Joseph and Raeanna Williams are raising a family of nine children, ages 16 months to 18 years. He’s a financial advisor, she a full-time homemaker.

No matter what their life situations, they all have something in common: a belief in the Malta mission. “My main interest has always been in serving the sick and the poor, and that corresponds to the Order of Malta’s

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*"I'm so inspired by these men and women of Malta who quietly give their time."* – Raeanna Williams

## Investiture *(continued from page 5)*

mission," said Harvey. In addition to working with My Brother's Table in Lynn, Harvey spends a week each year helping poor communities, both here and in third-world countries. His first trip was to Juarez, Mexico. "When I saw the plight of people in third-world countries, actually looked them in the eye, I knew I had to help."



David Solimine (l.) and Harvey Rowe (r.) with Cardinal Seán at our 2013 Annual Dinner.

Vicki, who volunteers for the After-School Program at St. Mary School in Waltham and Cor Unum, also likes the Order's two-pronged approach. "Not only does the organization provide ways to serve others, but it also presents the opportunity for spiritual growth and prayer,"

she said. "I like the emphasis on displaying joy and influencing other people through actions." No stranger to serving those in need, Vicki has twice traveled to Haiti as part of a medical team sent by her then parish, St. Malachy in Brownsburg, Indiana. She provided critical information about nutrition and sanitation. On a trip to India, she worked with missionaries to serve the elderly, those who are hard of hearing and children.

That Joseph and Raeanna, busy raising a large family, devote time to serving others is a testament to their strong faith. And yet, they both manage to volunteer at Visitation House in Worcester, a home for women facing crisis pregnancies. The Williams first learned of the work of the Order through Joseph's sister, Dame Charlotte Williams. When their daughter, Lillian, 9, came down with Lyme disease, Charlotte suggested Lillian travel with her father on the Boston Area Malta Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Joseph and Raeanna were impressed with the work being done. "I'm so inspired by these men and women of Malta who quietly give their time to serve the poor," she said.

"I've read about the lives of saints and wondered how I could incorporate their example in my life." Joseph appreciates the opportunity Malta provides to spread the Word of Christ. "I like the idea of defending the faith, whether through education, spiritual calling or just the way you live your life," he said. The Williams have now added Cor Unum to their volunteer commitments.

*"My main interest has always been in serving the sick and the poor, and that corresponds to the Order of Malta's mission."* – Harvey Rowe

## Our 2014 Knights and Dames

To be Invested into the Order in November:

**Mr. Robert Conway**, Belmont, MA  
**Mr. Gerald H.T. de Folan**, Boston, MA  
**Mr. John Granese**, Marblehead, MA  
**Mr. Christopher LaRossa**, Newton, MA  
**Mrs. Gretchen Lee LaRossa**, Newton, MA  
**Dr. John LaRossa**, Newton, MA

**Most Rev. Peter A. Libasci**, Bishop of Manchester, NH  
(Conventual Chaplain)  
**Mrs. Vicki Regan**, Weston, MA  
**Mr. Harvey Rowe**, Lynn, MA  
**Mr. Joseph Williams**, Windham, NH  
**Mrs. Raeanna Williams**, Windham, NH

Profiles of all our 2014 Candidates for the Order of Malta will be sent to Members by email.

*"I like the idea of defending the faith, whether through education, spiritual calling or just the way you live your life."* – Joseph Williams

Each of these candidates was inspired to join the Order by someone already in Malta. For the Williams, that inspiration came from Joseph's sister as well as the people they encountered during the Lourdes trip and other Malta events. Harvey had met Knights Dave Solomine and Shawn Czado through My Brother's Table. It was during a conversation with Chair Damien DeVasto about Vicki's work in India that she became inspired to learn more about the Order of Malta. Through example and gentle encouragement, we all have the opportunity to increase the number of people serving God and the poor.

*"I like the emphasis on displaying joy and influencing other people through actions."*

– Vicki Regan



**Raeanna and Joseph Williams.**



**Vicki Regan (c.) volunteers at Cor Unum.**

## Prayer Line and Bereavement Support

As members of the Order of Malta, we are part of a special community. We support one another in life, through challenges and illness. We are also present to honor members who have passed, by providing funeral honors.

### Prayer Line Requests

Members of the Boston Area Order of Malta and their families are invited to submit the names of loved ones and friends to our Prayer Line. Your prayer requests will be e-mailed to Knights, Dames, Chaplains and Auxiliary in the Boston Area who have offered to pray for your intentions.

### Joining the Prayer Line

Members of the Boston Area Order of Malta are invited to join the Prayer Line to offer prayers for the intentions of our members and their families.

*To submit a prayer request or join the Prayer Line, contact the Prayer Line Coordinator, Suzanne Downing, DM, at 508-224-9597 or [suewdowning@verizon.net](mailto:suewdowning@verizon.net).*

## Bereavement Support

Families of deceased Knights and Dames may request funeral honors through our Bereavement Committee. The Bereavement Committee will arrange for Knights and Dames to be present at the funeral, providing an honor guard, assisting in the use of robes and the pall of the Order, and attending to other appropriate details. If possible, at least 48 hours notice should be provided.

### Serving the Bereaved

The Bereavement Committee also needs volunteers who may be asked on short notice to participate in Funeral Masses.

*To request services or volunteer to serve the bereaved, contact the Bereavement Committee Coordinator, Edward Delaney, KM, at 617-759-2584 or [ejdelaney@comcast.net](mailto:ejdelaney@comcast.net).*

WEBSITE VERSION OF THE FALL ISSUE OF THE MALTA BOSTON NEWSLETTER

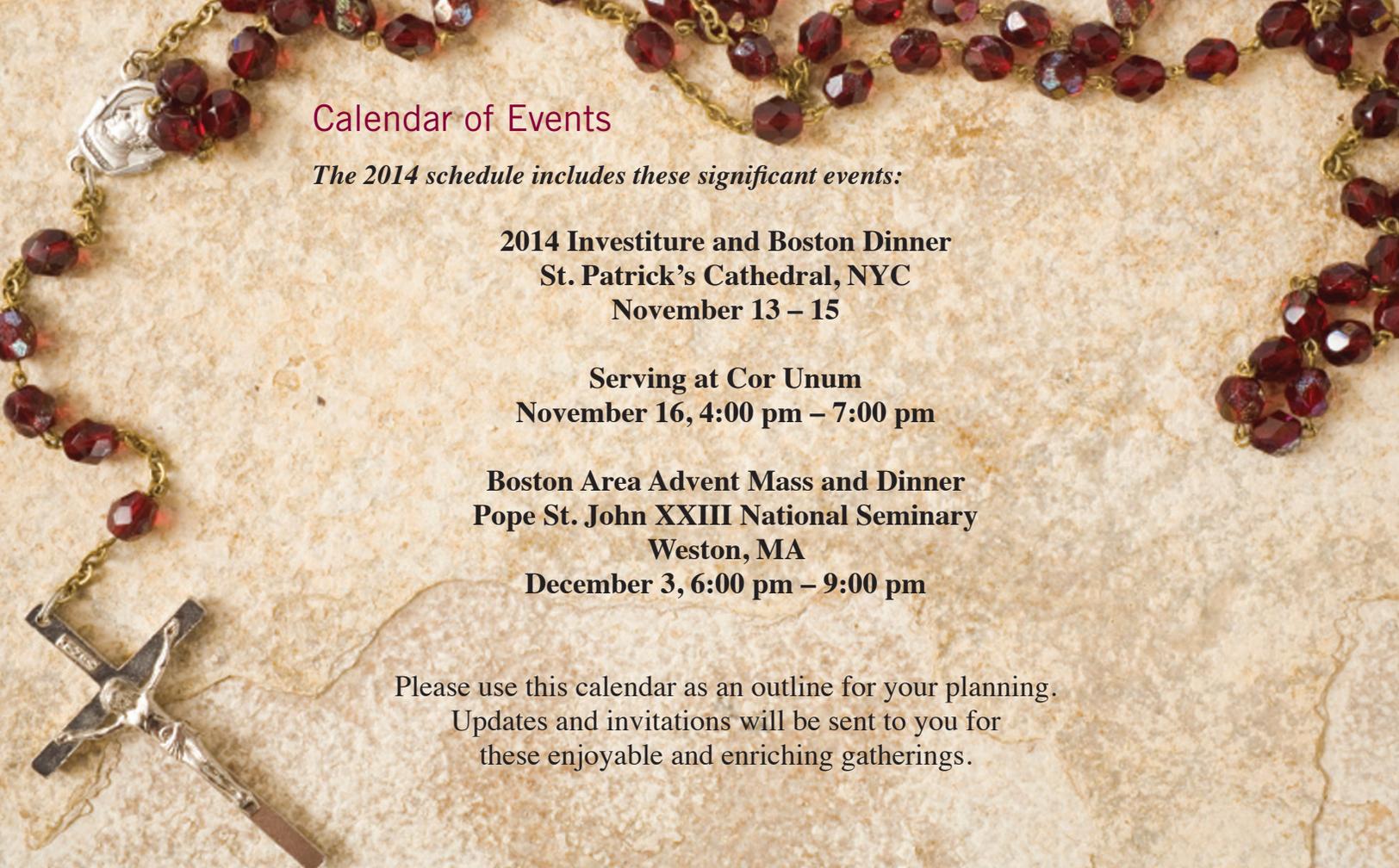
You can read our newsletter online at [Maltaboston.org](http://Maltaboston.org).

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## Calendar of Events

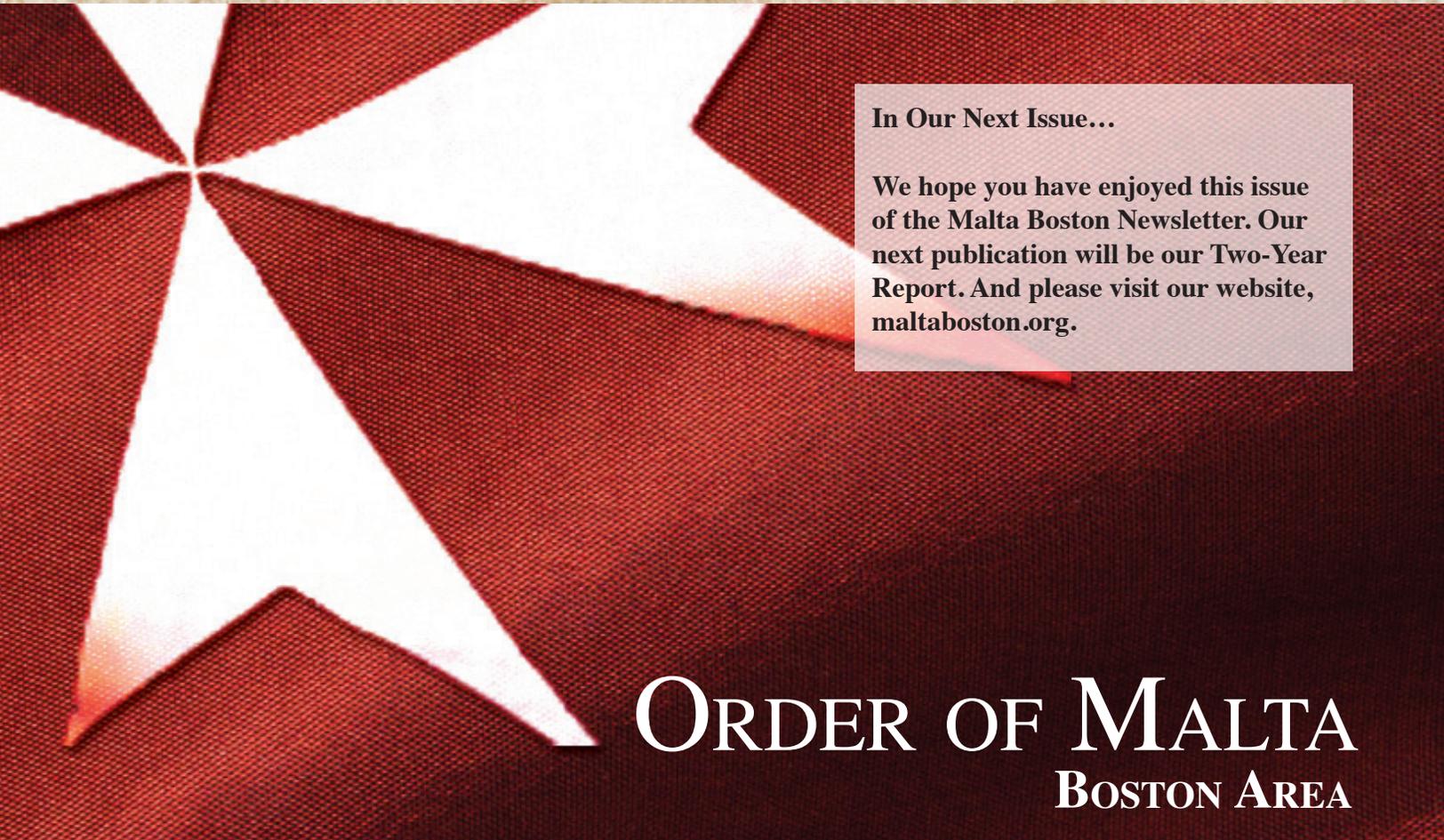
*The 2014 schedule includes these significant events:*

**2014 Investiture and Boston Dinner**  
**St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC**  
**November 13 – 15**

**Serving at Cor Unum**  
**November 16, 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm**

**Boston Area Advent Mass and Dinner**  
**Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary**  
**Weston, MA**  
**December 3, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm**

Please use this calendar as an outline for your planning.  
Updates and invitations will be sent to you for  
these enjoyable and enriching gatherings.



### In Our Next Issue...

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Malta Boston Newsletter. Our next publication will be our Two-Year Report. And please visit our website, [maltaboston.org](http://maltaboston.org).

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**BOSTON AREA**