

## **HONOURS AND AWARDS 2020**

### **NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT**

#### **COMPANION**

#### **HIS EMINENCE MARIO CARDINAL GRECH KOM**

Mario Grech was born in 1957 in Qala. After completing his secondary studies in the Victoria High School in Gozo, in 1977, he started studying philosophy and later theology at the Gozo Major Seminary. After his ordination in 1984, he was sent to Rome where he obtained the License in *utroque iuris*, both Canon and Civil Law at the Pontifical Lateran University. In the following years, he also obtained the Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical University S. Tommaso d'Aquino (the *Angelicum*).

When he returned to Malta, he exercised the ministry at the Cathedral of Gozo; in the National Shrine of Tá-Pinu; and later, he was appointed parish priest in the parish of Kercem. He also held the offices of Judicial Vicar of the Gozo diocese and member of the Metropolitan Court of Malta.

Grech was Elected bishop of Gozo, in November 2005 and subsequently consecrated in January 2006. While he was heading the Gozitan Diocese, various initiatives and commissions were set up. Among the reforms Bishop Grech carried out, he spearheaded the reform of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal in Gozo.

Mario published 20 pastoral letters as Bishop of Gozo, 34 pastoral letters with the bishops of Malta and delivered hundreds of homilies. He attended three Synods of the Bishops. On October 2, 2019, he was named Pro-Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops. He remained as apostolic administrator of the Gozo diocese until the Pope named a new bishop. In July 2020, he was named member of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

Mario Grech was created cardinal deacon during the consistory of November 28, 2020.

## **OFFICER**

### **DR CHRISTOPHER BARBARA UOM**

Dr Christopher Barbara was born in 1962 and is currently the Clinical Chairperson for the Pathology Department at Mater Dei Hospital.

He first qualified as a medical doctor in Malta and subsequently specialized at the University of London in Microbiology and Virology. He has a special interest in Vaccinology and has been an active member of the *Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices* (ACIP) for many years. He is also a Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta and has published a stream of papers in Microbiology and Virology, both at national and international level. Barbara is the *National Microbiology Focal Point* (NMFP) for Malta at the *European Centre for Disease Control* in Sweden. He is a founder member of the Malta College of Pathologists.

Dr Barbara has successfully promoted the Virology laboratory to a World Health Organisation (WHO) recognized National Influenza Centre (NIC) to raise the standards and international visibility of the Mater Dei Laboratories. In his capacity as Chairman of the Department of Pathology at Mater Dei, Dr Barbara leads a very large team composed of 425 members and in 2019 alone, the Department of Pathology has carried out as many as 11.7 million tests.

Throughout the years Barbara served as a founder member in national preparedness teams responding to Swine flu, Zika virus, Ebola virus as well as the Anthrax scares. He currently represents Malta on various European network meetings including those involving food and water diseases, as well as on sexually transmitted infections. Recently, he has also joined the inter-ministerial Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) response team. Together with his team, Dr Barbara is currently dedicating extensive time and effort to meet and control the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **BRIGADIER JEFFREY CURMI UOM**

Born in 1975, Brigadier Jeffrey Curmi joined the Armed forces of Malta (AFM) in 1994. He attended the Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and was awarded the 'Cane of Honour' for being the best overseas student. He then specialised in conventional munition disposal at the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) at the Army School of Ammunition, both in the United Kingdom.

He completed the Diving Officer Course at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Centre (U.S. Navy), Florida, United States of America and qualified as top student in the course amongst US and international candidates. In 2006 he completed a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) Defence Diploma in Italy, the United Nations Staff Officers Course in Hamburg, Germany and eventually furthered his studies and qualified as an Advanced Operational CBRN Instructor in Italy. He furthered his EOD, IEDD, Advanced Explosives Disposal Techniques and Post-Blast Investigation specializations in the United States of America, Spain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland and Denmark. He frequently represented Malta at European Union level, including the Explosives Security Task Force, the Standing Committee of Explosives Precursors, and the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network.

He attended the Combined Strategic Intelligence Training Programme with the Defence Intelligence Agency in Washington D.C. and was deployed for a six-month anti-piracy mission as Chief Intelligence Analyst at EUNAVFOR Operational Headquarters in the United Kingdom.

Throughout his career, Curmi led the majority of EOD, IEDD, diving and fireworks related operations together with EOD sweep operations in major security events. He is the Court Technical Expert in explosives and diving incidents and was appointed as Court Technical Expert by the International Criminal Courts during the Libyan Crisis. In 2013, Curmi was appointed commander of the AFM in the rank of Brigadier. During the plane hijack of 2016, he was placed at the head of negotiations as chief negotiator, results of which led to peaceful surrender with no casualties.

## **PROF CHARMAINE GAUCI UOM**

Professor Charmaine Gauci was born in 1966. She has graduated as a medical doctor in 1991 and pursued her studies with a Masters in Public Health, consequently following the European Programme in Epidemiological Training in France. In 2006, she also attained her PhD Degree in epidemiology. Over the years Prof Gauci has developed skills in the diverse areas of public health. In 2007, she occupied the position of Director of the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate where she served for 9 years.

Prof Gauci is also an associate Professor at the University of Malta delivering lectures in the field of public health with special interest in Epidemiology, Communicable Diseases, Health Promotion and Policy development. She has also served as president of the Malta Association of Public Health Medicine for four years and also acts as a focal point for several bodies within the European Commission and the World Health Organisation.

Professor Charmaine Gauci is currently renowned for her position as the Superintendent of Public Health within the Ministry for Health in Malta, which she occupied for the last four years. This position covers the wide responsibility of public health to safeguard and enhance the health status of the people. She is responsible to lead and coordinate the public health preparedness and response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and provides scientific advice to government. She is also responsible to deliver public information on the pandemic situation based on data analytics, monitoring and insights.

## **DR CHARLES MALLIA AZZOPARDI UOM**

Dr Charles Mallia Azzopardi was born in 1963. He graduated in Medicine from the University of Malta and trained in Infectious Diseases in the UK. He was the first doctor to specialise in Malta in Infectious Disease and was instrumental in establishing an infectious disease service based at Sir Temi Zammit Ward, St Luke's Hospital. Such service includes the care of persons living with HIV. As a Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta Charles has involved himself enthusiastically in undergraduate and postgraduate education as well as the Malta Foundation School.

He currently heads the division of Infectious Diseases at Mater Dei Hospital and is renowned by many for his role in the COVID-19 pandemic in Malta. In fact, he and his colleagues were the first to recognize the threat of the disease and the importance of preparing for the pandemic.

He is the person who took the early initiative in meeting all the health care workers coming from the different departments to understand their particular needs and prepare them for the challenges and re-organisation that they had to go through because of the COVID-19 pandemic. His hands-on attitude has helped health care workers to feel safe and accept change.

## MEMBER

### MAESTRO PAUL ABELA MOM

Paul Abela was born in 1954 and started studying music at a young age. At the age of 13 he joined the group from Mellieħa, the New Cuorey with compositions of Maltese songs that are still popular to this day such as: *L-Aħħar Bidwi f'Wied il-Għasel*, *Il-Bajja tal-Mellieħa* and *Bħal daż-żmien konna flimkien*.

In 1978, Abela moved to Boston, USA where he studied music at the Berklee College of Music. After graduating he returned to Malta where he started composing music again. One of his greatest successes was the composition of the Rock Opera *Ġensna*. Amongst his original musicals one can find *Taħt Tliet Saltriet*, *Bastilja*, *Ali Baba* and *1565*.

Several of his compositions have represented Malta in numerous occasions at international festivals and even four times in the Eurovision Song Contest. He was the musical director of many renowned musicals that were staged in Malta, including: *The Sound of Music*, *Evita*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Les Miserables in Concert* and many more, as well as taking part several times in the Malta Jazz Festival with his Big Band.

Maestro Paul Abela is currently the musical director of The Malta Concert Orchestra.

## **PROF CHARLES BRIFFA MOM**

Born in 1951 Charles Briffa is a retired professor of Maltese and Translation.

He studied at the RUM graduating BA(Hons) in English in 1973 and MA in 1980, and at Oklahoma State University (USA). In 1996, he graduated Ph.D from the UM with his work on Maltese literature. Briffa taught all levels from primary to tertiary, including English, Maltese, Arabic, and Systems of Knowledge. In 1978, he joined the Education Department becoming assistant head of school in 1990. He then joined the Matsec Support Unit of the University of Malta in 1992. Briffa lectured on Maltese Literature and Literary Criticism, and at postgraduate level on Translation and on Maltese authors with the University of the Third Age.

In 1986, Briffa became an academic member of the Akkademja tal-Malti and after being a council member since 1992 and serving on the editorial board and on the commission on the Maltese Language he became President of the Akkademja tal-Malti (2000-2004) and, from 2005-2008, a member of the National Council for Maltese Language. From 2011 to the present he has been a member of the sub-committee on terminology for the NCML. He attended numerous international conferences and presented papers. He is a member of the Poetics and Linguistics Association (UK).

Charles Briffa is a literary critic and wrote extensively on the stylistic qualities of Maltese literature and on different aspects of translation. His publications include a wide range of studies on cultural linguistics, translation and literature, and dictionaries. He has also gained several literary awards.

## **MR ANTHONY CASSAR DARIEN MOM**

Born in 1946, Anthony Cassar Darien is an artistic director, writer and arts' commentator. He started out at the Deporres Theatre in the 1950s when he was only 11 years of age.

In 1981, he was appointed principal of the Manoel Theatre Academy of Dramatic Arts, now known as the Drama Centre and in 1993, he resigned to become the first-ever artistic director of the National Theatre of Malta. His tenure was marked by improvements in both the physical and aesthetic aspects of the theatre which was transformed into a modern commercial and artistic complex staging alternative cultural events like *PoeżijaPlus*, *Windows-on-music*, *LoggaPalk* and the *Theatre-Talk* programmes. Tony Cassar Darien has also written extensively for the radio, stage, and television, including some fifty radio plays, some of them receiving several awards.

## **PROF STEPHEN MONTEFORT MOM**

Professor Stephen Montefort was born in 1960. He graduated M.D. from the University of Malta in 1984 with distinction. In 1987 he was awarded a Chevening scholarship to further his studies at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital in London. In 1990, he was awarded a Commonwealth scholarship which helped him read for a PhD on the pathophysiology of asthma at the University of Southampton qualifying in 1993. On his return to Malta he continued his studies into the epidemiology of asthma and was the Eastern Mediterranean regional coordinator of the worldwide International Study of Asthma and Allergic conditions in Childhood [ISAAC]. He has published his research extensively and is currently among the most cited authors at the University of Malta.

In 1997, Prof Montefort became consultant respiratory physician with the Malta Health Department. He has been the Lead consultant in this specialty since 2012 and has significantly expanded the department's services. He was elected Professor of Medicine in 2007 and since 2012 has been the Academic head of the department of Medicine and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at the University of Malta.

In 2015, Stephen Montefort started running an international regional centre for the postgraduate clinical exam [PACES] of the MRCP [UK] in Malta and has been Malta Federation lead for the Royal Colleges of the United Kingdom since then.

## **MR JAMES HENRY PEARSALL MOM**

James Henry Pearsall started his career at the Malta Drydocks and later served as a Head of Trade Schools since 1980 and after that as Director at one of the institutes of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) where he worked extensively in vocational training.

Pearsall holds a Master's degree in HR Training & Performance Management as well as a Diploma in Social Studies. He is part of the Institute for Public Services' educational board, and, for many years, he has been contributing to the work of the Industrial Tribunal. He also served for years as President of the Section for Public Services of the GWU and also as President of the General Workers' Union and became a member of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) of which he took over the role of Chairman at the end of July 2020.

## **MONS DR JOSEPH VELLA GAUCI MOM**

Born in 1964, Joe Vella Gauci started his studies in Philosophy and Theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Victoria, at Fareham Tertiary College and the Open University in the UK. He was then ordained a priest in 1988.

After his ordination, he furthered his studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London where he was awarded a BA (Hons) in Politics and Religious Studies in 1990 and then a Masters in Oriental and African Religious Studies. He then obtained a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the Birmingham University in 1996. In 1995, he was chosen as Parochial Vicar of the Cathedral in Victoria, Gozo and in 1996 he was appointed as Archpriest of the Cathedral until 2007.

In 2010, Joe Vella Gauci, was appointed Senior Adviser in International Relations and Religious Freedom at the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) Secretariat, in Brussels. In 2013, he was appointed Malta's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO as well as the Maltese Government's official representative at the International Centre for the study of the Preservation and Restoration at Cultural Property (ICCROM) in Rome.

Joe Vella Gauci is also one of the founders and chairs the Board of Directors of *Fondazzjoni Kenn u Tama* which inaugurated *Dar Emmaus* in Victoria Gozo in 2014, serving as the first residential emergency shelter on the island.

Mgr Vella Gauci chairs the Emergency Response and Rescue Corps (ERRC) which is a voluntary, charitable and non-profit organization based in Gozo that helps people in crisis, assists in emergency situations, offers water rescue service, ambulance services and first aid posts during public events.

## **MIDALJA GHALL-QADI TAR-REPUBBLIKA**

### **PROF CARMELO AGIUS MQR**

Carmelo Agius was born in 1951. He is recognised for having started the fish farming industry in Malta and as an international expert in this field.

In 1974, he graduated B.Sc in Biology and Chemistry and two years later M.Sc in Biology with specialization in Marine Biology and Aquaculture later on obtaining his Ph.D. degree from the Institute of Aquaculture at Stirling University (Scotland) as a Commonwealth scholar.

After working as a Research Lecturer at Stirling University and subsequently as a Senior-Lecturer and Reader at the University of Kingston-Upon-Thames in London, he returned to Malta in 1989 where he was appointed Professor of Biology at the University of Malta and also consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It was then that he established Fort St Lucian at Marsaxlokk as the National Aquaculture Centre which gave rise to a flourishing fish industry with great potentialities.

Since 1980, Agius has been giving consultancy services to numerous entities including the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the European Council, Council of Europe, British Council, CIHEAM (the Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation for development of Agriculture and Fisheries) and various foreign Governments and Universities in Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia. He also occupied numerous positions including that of vice-president of the executive committee of the Mediterranean Fisheries Council and member of the Committee of Mediterranean Aquaculture.

Agius has written a considerable number of scientific papers in international journals, book chapters and technical handbooks. Some of his works were translated into other languages.

## **MGR PROF EMMANUEL AGIUS MQR**

Born in 1954, Professor Emmanuel Agius distinguished himself both in Malta and internationally as a scholar in bioethics and professional ethics. He graduated in Sacred Theology (S.Th.B.) from the University of Malta in 1979 and furthered his degree with the S.Th.L. in 1981. After his priestly ordination in 1981, he followed his postgraduate studies at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, where he obtained a MA in Philosophy and a doctorate in theology in 1986. He then pursued his post-doctoral research in bioethics at the University of Tübingen, Germany, at Georgetown University in Washington DC, and at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

Agius introduced undergraduate and postgraduate courses and programmes of studies in the field of bioethics and professional ethics at University of Malta to promote a culture of bioethics and good professional conduct. He is also an ethical advisor in European institutions and since September 2005, he was appointed by the Presidents of the European Commission as member of the prestigious *European Group of Ethics in Science and New Technologies* (EGE). He is also a member of the *Pontifical Academy for Life*. In 2007 he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta. Emmanuel Agius is also the author and co-editor of several books and his articles on bioethical, social and environmental issues and marriage have appeared in a number of international peer-reviewed academic journals.

## **MRS REBECCA CREMONA MQR**

Born in 1983, Rebecca Cremona is a Maltese filmmaker. She obtained a BFA (Hons) in 'Film Theory and Comparative Literature' from the *University of Warwick* (UK) and an MFA (Hons) in *Broadcast Cinema* from the *Art Centre College of Design* (US). She also studied at the *American Film Institute* in Los Angeles.

Her thesis film *Magdalene* won a student Emmy and a Director's Guild of America award. In 2014, she directed and co-wrote *Simshar* which was Malta's first ever submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the 87<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards. As well as being a local box office hit, *Simshar* enjoyed worldwide distribution garnering critical acclaim. Furthermore, the film won a plethora of awards from over 40 international film festivals it was selected for.

Cremona has worked on several films that were shot in Malta, including Spielberg's *Munich* and Amenabar's *Agora*. Her portfolio of work includes Public Service Announcements for the United Nations and other entities. Rebecca also volunteered her time to make promotional videos for the national bids for the *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (IFACCA) and V18.

Recently she adapted for the screen a novel by Juliana Maio, for the renowned producer Sara Risher. With several projects in the pipeline, Rebecca is committed to bringing Maltese stories to international prominence and working towards the preservation of Malta's heritage and environment.

## **PROF ALAN DEIDUN MQR**

Alan Deidun was born in 1979 and he is a marine biologist and Malta's first-ever Ocean Ambassador. Deidun directs the Malta Training Centre of the International Ocean Institute (IOI) and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology (London). He is also an Associate Professor within the Faculty of Science of the University of Malta.

Prof Alan Deidun holds a PhD in Biology from the University of Malta and a post-graduate diploma in Maritime Spatial Planning from the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed papers and contributions in high-profile academic journals as well as in conference proceedings.

He is currently a contributor to the UN's Second World Ocean Assessment and has masterminded the organisation of the first-ever Global Forum of Ocean Ambassadors in August 2018 in Malta at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is a core lecturer within the Masters of Science in Applied Oceanography and has been very active in the field of ocean literacy for the past twenty years, coordinating the opening of the first-ever marine environmental education centre at Dwejra (Gozo) in 2013 and having co-produced a total of five underwater documentaries on local Marine Protected Areas. As of June 2010, he also coordinates three citizen science campaigns on a national basis – the Spot the Jellyfish, the Spot the Alien and the Spot the Alien Fish ones.

Since 2002, Prof Deidun has penned in over 600 local English language environmental and popular science newspapers and magazines. He has acted as Principal Investigator at the University of Malta on numerous EU-funded projects through which, he has managed to attract an estimated 2.5 million euro of European funds to Maltese shores for work related to the coastal and marine environment.

## **MR RAYMOND FARRUGIA MQR**

Ray Farrugia was born in 1955 in Floriana. He started out his career in his hometown team of Floriana, where he played between 1974 and 1978, winning 11 trophies. He also played for the Malta National Team at youth and national level.

In 1978, Farrugia was transferred to play for Melita Eagles Football Club in Sydney, Australia, winning 9 trophies as well as that of Best Player of *New South Wales* (NSW) and twice Best Player of his club. He also represented the state of NSW. Subsequently, he was awarded Best Maltese Achiever in Australia by then Australian Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke.

He returned to Malta in 1990 where he played and coached the Naxxar Lions Team until 1998, winning club Player of The Year twice. From 1998 to 2002 he coached the Under 21 National Team, bringing some positive results. In 2001, Farrugia was voted Best Sports Maltese Official by the Maltese Sports Writers Association. Between 2002 and 2010 he coached several Premier League Clubs. In 2011, he then returned to coach Under 21 National Team, again achieving good results.

He was promoted to Assistant Coach of Malta senior side in 2014 and in 2018 Farrugia was appointed Head Coach of the Malta senior National Team where he served for 2 years.

## MR ELIO LOMBARDI MQR

Elio Lombardi was born in 1933 and since he was a child, he has had a love for both singing and acting. He attended the Salesian Oratory, where he continued to learn in this art.

In 1982, Elio made an attempt at his first short film, *A Friend in Need*, so that he would be able to become a member of the MACC. This film won First Place and its lead actor, Emanuel Grima, won Best Actor. From then onwards Lombardi continued to produce more films. One of them, *Pepita Gomez*, came to the attention of British director Michael Klinger who offered to make a film with a story by Elio, but unfortunately, he had died before this could happen.

The stories of his films are all written by him, except for that of *Il-Madonna taç-Ċoqqa*, which was written by Ġuze' Diacono. In October 1988, Elio made his first full-length film called *Frida*, and today he is working on his 106<sup>th</sup> film.

Apart from being the author of several novels such as: *L-Eku tad-Daqqa ta' Harta*, *Il-Misteri tat-Tabib Gustav Harding*, *Sonya*, *Wara n-Niket*, *Meta Nħaraq in-Notre Dame*, Elio Lombardi is also a painter, singer of Italian and Neapolitan songs, tailor and also a printer. He is also a make-up Artist where he spent twenty-seven years doing make up for the Good Friday Procession of Qormi.

In 1965 Lombardi also won a competition with his painting representing Arturo Toscanini.

## THE TRAMPS MQR

The Tramps was a Gozitan pop group composed of the late Dominic Grech, Spiro Sillato, Joe Cassar and Carmel Portelli. They achieved their prominence in the 70s with their hit songs *Xemx* and *Inti Djamant*. *Xemx* has remained popular and *Inti Djamant* is also used as the signature tune for TV programme *Għawdex Illum*. Both songs became probably the most locally covered songs, featuring in most live concerts. Other hits include *Sinjur Ġib Il-Paci*, the winning song of the 1st International Malta Song Festival, in 1981, and *Kif Qatt Nista'* which are today still considered classics. In 1976 & 1978 The Tramps performed for the Maltese communities in Toronto, New York, Melbourne and Adelaide.