



**PASTORAL LETTER
FOR THE PASTORAL YEAR 2025-2026**

**“WHILE HE WAS AT THE TABLE
WITH THEM”
(LK 24:30A)**

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Beloved in Christ,

It has become increasingly difficult to meet as a family for dinner due to conflicting work and school timetables or the children's extra-curricular activities. When the family manages to be together for any time either at home or at a restaurant, most probably it would signal a special occasion.

When this happens, lived or ongoing experiences are shared. We start talking about what pleases and what irks us, what is positive and what is not, what is encouraging and what is discouraging. We try to face emerging health issues, appreciate progress in work or study, value any profit-making, and feel sad at missed opportunities, and so on...

When Jesus used to visit for a meal, the conversation centred around every-day issues. With great love he helped the families discern their situation not only from a human perspective but from the perspective of the loving God.

That is what he did after calling Levi to follow him. He sat at table with several sinners. He told them that God is comfortable to share with them the table as "...it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick" (Mk 2:17). When he was invited for dinner by Simon the Leper and a fallen woman enters and kisses his feet anointing them with precious nard, Jesus tells Simon that love is not calculating, and that "who is much forgiven much loves" (Mk 14:3-9).

We are close to the end of the Jubilee Year of Hope. Throughout the Pastoral Year, together with the official delegates, I conducted the Pastoral Visit in all our parishes – "He went in to stay with them" (Lk 24:29b). The next step is meeting round the table – "While he was at the table with them" (Lk 24:30a) – to continue talking about our families and our parish community which includes all our families.

During the Pastoral Visit, I could witness the strong commitment and fruitful work of the many in our parishes. I could meet the parish priests who together with their presbiterium give their all to their respective communities. I came to know better the lay persons who help in any way they can. I shared Holy Mass and prayer services during which the community meets the Lord and Jesus himself meets the community. I spoke with those who organise the parish feast. Although time was limited, the week which I spent in every parish helped me to appreciate the good and beauty as well as the limits and what can be improved upon.

After the meetings with the parish priests, the Presbiterial and Pastoral Councils, I felt that what I together with the delegates could observe in the parishes, should be communicated to you all in your respective parishes. In this way, all of us would be able to have a clear picture of the state of our Diocese and our parishes. We would thus let Jesus help us to evaluate the charisms and talents of our Church which we need to fructify, and the weaknesses and limits which need rectifying. In this manner we can continue to look forward in the hope which this Jubilee Year wants to instill in us.

That is precisely what Jesus and the 72 disciples did when they regrouped after he had sent them in twos to the villages and towns of Galilee. The 72 disciples recounted to Jesus their mission and how they fared. Jesus through his word illuminated their experiences (cfr Lk 10:1-20). The Apostles did the same thing when they paused to reflect upon the experiences of the nascent communities; how many pagans were converting to the true faith even though they did

not have Jewish traditions. Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James together with others convened to map the way forward (cfr Acts 15:1-32).

Thus, throughout the forthcoming Pastoral Year commencing this October, I will be visiting once again all the parishes, together with my collaborators, to meet round a table to speak with all the respective parish communities about the outcome of the Pastoral Visit just conducted. In this way, together we can reflect upon and discuss not only the present situation in our parishes, but also identify the most urgent and pressing issues and which need to be addressed in our dear Diocese.

To this end, meetings with various parish entities are being planned. The first meetings will be held with the parish priest and parish presbyteria, followed by meetings with lay collaborators and subsequently with all those who wish to be informed about their respective parish's situation as evidenced by the Pastoral Visit of last year. A concluding meeting with the parish presbiterium and Parish Council to discern the steps to be taken will be held.

In this way, glory is rendered to God for the charisms and the good which he bestows upon every parish in our Diocese as we pray so that he may help us acknowledge with humility and in truth the difficulties and problems which challenge us. In this way, guided by the Holy Spirit and in a spirit of fraternal love, we could discern the pastoral activity of our Diocese and our parishes for the future.

I impart to you my blessings.

Issued from the Bishop's Curia, Victoria, today 14th September 2025, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

Mgr Edward Zammit
Chancellor

✠ Anton Teuma
Bishop of Gozo