



The Companions of the Order of Malta

19 December 2022

Companions
And
Volunteers

Dear Companion,

CoM CHRISTMAS 2022

Thanks to you and the incredible efforts of so many Companions and volunteers over the past few weeks we have been able happily to surpass all expectations in delivering ‘comfort and joy’ this Christmas.

From our tea parties for the elderly to our Christmas parties for the poor and homeless some wonderful times have been provided and great moments shared. To mention just some of the highlights, below.

The festivities began with the CoM Brompton Oratory Lunch on 23 November 2022, with 50 guests joyously entertained, including celebrations for one guest’s 100th birthday. Our Christmas cards for the OSJCT Care Homes has yielded an amazing 700 card so far and counting.

At the beginning of December, in support of our work with Nehemiah, Young Companions were out in torrential rain and winds at one of the homes to plant spring bulbs. YC’s also visited last Saturday to carry out some redecorations, delivering also 5 CoM Christmas wreaths and boxes of Quality St. Whilst in Scotland our Coatbridge Christmas party set the standard with Santa Claus providing the presents.

For the Homeless our Christmas parcels this year numbered just over 950 each containing 5 items of Clothing and 11 toiletries. Brilliantly organised, these over 20,000 items were packed in one evening by a small army of volunteers (see below) and have since been dispatched to 21 different destinations around the UK.

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But the centrepiece of our homeless work at Christmas must be our parties for our guests, first in Colchester and then last Thursday at Spanish Place where over 90 full Christmas dinners with all the trimmings were served, accompanied by Eddie Pease and his fellow singers (see the film posted to our website www.orderofmalta.org.uk/companions and our London!Facebook page). These to be followed this week by another Christmas dinner at SP on Monday with more carols, a full-scale festive celebration at East Hill on Tuesday and more festivities at our breakfast clubs at Bayswater and Golden Square on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Even then our seasonal offering will not be done, we will finish at SP on Thursday, but open at Golden Square between 10am and 2pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the 28th, 29th and 30th of December to provide a warm space, lunch and company, when Crisis will have finished and many other projects are also closed for the holidays.

Meanwhile our Winter Warmer campaign has received an unrivalled response this year, with over £4,000 raised so far. On top of this huge individual contributions have also been made, with many generous personal donations made. Not least the Irvin family who once again hosted a Christmas drinks party for their friends in support of our work, raising an incredible £2,500+ in doing so.

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Thank you also for supporting our Carol Service, which was attended by over 250 people and raised more this year than ever before; thanks to Mgr Philip, the Choir and all our organising committee.

None of this would be possible without all your support, efforts and prayers. But as you will know very special thanks belong to our project leaders, Alexandra, Liz, Kate, Helena, Coco, Georgie and Adrian, Anna and JD, Helene and Sybille, Andrea and Wojtek, Jamie, Krzysztof, and Liam and Angus in Scotland, as well as our lead cooks Kate and Clare and Patrick our QM in chief.

Each time we say the Companions' Prayer we ask for the Grace we need 'to practise our Faith and to practise charity', wonderfully, as all of the above shows, our prayers are being answered.

In 2023 we shall keep up our efforts and prayers to continue our mission to aid the poor, homeless and elderly, both through our existing projects as well as new plans, such as our major new initiative for homeless accommodation in Birmingham.

God Bless and Merry Christmas,

Paul Letman
Chair

Charles Nicholson
Deputy Chair

PS. Looking to the New Year, please save the date for Companions Day, 11/2/23