

# Newsletter

## Digital Archives Website

### Archdiocese of Malta

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## Malta Parish Churches

In the *Rollo* (inventory) of the benefices of the churches, or chapels, in Malta and Gozo, held by Bishop Senatore de Mello in 1436, ten distinct chapels are mentioned, which presumably must have been acting as parishes in the various villages, since earlier days. Besides the Cathedral at Mdina and the Church of *San Lorenzo a Mare* at Birgu, the following chapels are mentioned:

- ◆ Naxxar - *the Nativity of the Virgin*
- ◆ Birkirkara - *Saint Helen*
- ◆ Qormi - *St George*
- ◆ Bir Miftuh (now Gudja) - *the Assumption of the Virgin*
- ◆ Zebbug - *Saint Philip of Aggira*
- ◆ Siggiewi - *Saint Nicholas of Bari*
- ◆ Zejtun - *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*
- ◆ Zurrieq - *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*
- ◆ Hal-Tartani (now Dingli) - *Santa Domenica*
- ◆ Mellieha - *the Nativity of the Virgin*

It is important to note that Dingli, originally *Hal-Tartani* was parish before 1436. However it was suppressed in 1539 and re-instated by Bishop Baldassare Cagliares on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1615 to be again suppressed in 1668. Bishop Michele Molina re-instated Dingli as a parish on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1678.

Mellieha was mentioned as a parish in the inventory by Bishop Senatore de Mello in 1436. Because of the lack of inhabitants, the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr Pietro Dusina, in 1575 suppressed the parish and merged the administration to the parish of Naxxar. Hence a rector was appointed.

Mellieha was re-instated as parish by Bishop Francesco Saverio Caruana on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1841. However this re-instatement was contested by the Naxxar Parish. Mellieha was confirmed parish on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1842. The official Decree was published on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1844.

Rabat in Malta was styled as a parish from time immemorial. The de Mello Rollo quotes as parishes La Cappella di San Paolo de Fora (which is St Paul's Grotto which was the parish church of Rabat) and Mdina together. At Mdina there was the Cathedral for the whole of Malta while at Rabat there was the seat of the parish for both Rabat and Mdina together. So much so that till the separation of 1902 the archpriest took two pusses in Mdina as canon archpriest of the Cathedral and in Rabat as parish priest of Rabat and Mdina together. On 18<sup>th</sup> March 1902 when the population had increased considerably, Mdina and Rabat for the first time became two distinct parishes and for practical reasons Bishop Pietro Pace declared Rabat as a new parish but that was contested in Rome and it was declared that Rabat was *parrocchia pre-existent*.

I trust that you keep finding our website useful.

**Fr VicGeorge Vassallo**  
Webmaster

# PARISHES IN MALTA







