

# Obituary – Mro. Ġużeppi Mallia (1932-2023)

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On Saturday morning of the 25th of March, I received the news that Mro Ġużeppi Mallia of Żebbuġ (Gozo) had passed away. I have known the Maestro since 2008 when the then Bishop Mario Grech appointed me assistant-priest of the Żebbuġ Parish where I served until September 2021. Ġużeppi Mallia was born in Żebbuġ Gozo in 1932, the son of Maestro Antonio Mallia and his wife Carmela née Mallia, one of three siblings. In the year of his birth, his father Antonio (1898-1980) composed the antiphon in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary assumed into Heaven, which is still played today. His two sisters, now deceased, were Filomena and Maria, the latter having died at the tender age of 35. Ġużeppi married Katerina Vella and had five children; Maria, Louis, Anthony, Josephine and Carmel. Louis entered the Missionary Society of St

Paul (MSSP) and served also as Provincial of his congregation; he is superior at St Joseph's Home of St Venera and at present says mass on a daily basis on one of our local TV stations. His daughter Josephine entered the religious life and became a Benedictine nun, choosing the name of Anna, and forms part of the religious community of Vittoriosa. Mallia served as 'maestro di cappella' for his native parish of the Assumption for 51 years and followed in the footsteps of his father by serving the parish church as sacristan on a voluntary basis for many decades. A carpenter by profession, Ġużeppi worked out in wood various items for the parish church including the frames for the fourteen pieces of the Via Crucis, the over-door for the titular altar-piece and the wooden crown that crowns the pavilion of the titular statue of the Assumption. Ġużeppi played the organ during the main liturgical services as well as the piano.

Ġużeppi was an affable person, humble and loved by one and all besides having a sense of humour. He was keen to be of service to his native parish church and he passed on his love for church music to his children; his daughter Maria and her son Franco Cefai took over the running of the choir and the orchestra thus keeping alive the family's musical tradition. After becoming housebound, I had the privilege of distributing Holy Communion to him and his late wife on a weekly basis, thus building a friendship which I will cherish forever. May he now be reunited with his parents, his sister and his wife for more than half a century, Katerina. Lord, grant him eternal peace.

