

# The Gozo Cathedral Public Library

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The Gozo Cathedral Public Library has been functional for the last 23 years. It was founded in the '70s, when the then Archdeacon of the Gozo Cathedral, Mgr. Paul Cauchi (1896-1980) donated all his books (more than 3000) to the Gozo Cathedral which marked the beginning of the this library. This fact is confirmed by the inscriptions found on several of the said books.

On the insistence of Rev. Fr. Tony Mercieca, a priest doing pastoral work in Miami, USA, the then Archpriest of the Gozo Cathedral parish Mgr. Carmelo Scicluna collected hundreds of other books from several parishioners and added them to the books donated by Mgr. Cauchi. Thus the library started to build up gradually with the acquisition of about two thousand books per year. Needless to say, the Most Reverend Chapter of the Gozo Cathedral approved this initiative and gave its wholehearted blessing to this worthy cause. Another factor that affected this decision was the resolution taken by the Gozo Pastoral Congress held in 1975 that stated: *"In every parish a library be established, furnished with interesting books and other publications with which all parishioners, especially youths can enhance their culture"*.

From 1979 to this day, the Cathedral Library went through several phases leading to its present situation. The library was growing day by day, and on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1987, Bishop Nicholas Cauchi inaugurated a larger hall, some 50 metres from Independence Square (it-Tokk), Victoria, from where the library continued operating up to 1999. During the previous year, the Gozo Cathedral Parish forked out the sum of about Lm70,000 to buy new and larger premises for the library. On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1999, the library had completed its transfer to the new premises at Qasam San Gorg, also in Victoria.

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\*Mr. Anton Farrugia is a former student at the University Gozo Centre and is currently librarian at the Gozo Cathedral Library.



*Internal view of the library*

The Honourable Speaker of the Maltese parliament, Mr. Anton Tabone inaugurated the new premises which were blessed by the Vicar General, Mgr. John Bosco Gauci who is also the archdeacon of the Gozo Cathedral Chapter.

The main benefactor of the library is Rev. Fr. Anthony Mercieca of Florida, USA. During the past 23 years he sent many thousands of books on all subjects under the sun. A fair estimate would be that Fr. Tony has donated about 70% of all the 103,000 books that the library possesses at the moment of writing this article. When the University Gozo Centre opened its doors in our island, an urgent message was mailed to Father Tony to concentrate on sending tertiary academic books. Fr Tony complied beyond our expectation.

During these 23 years, the main librarian working full time in the library was Mr Anton Farrugia assisted by a staff of ten helpers. All personnel working in the library do so voluntarily without any pecuniary remuneration whatsoever. In 1996, as an appreciation for the sterling work done by the librarian and this staff, the medal "Ġieħ il-Parroċċa" was presented to the librarian to honour all the staff.

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*Photo 3: Hanging valley in the North West of Gozo where erosion was not powerful enough to cut the valley down to sea level because of the small catchment area*

### Conclusions

The geology and geomorphology of the Maltese Islands are quite young in age, common phenomena in most islands. They are also lithologically uncomplicated, have a simple climate, heavily dependent on external controls and are areas of reduced landform scale. These physical assets have conditioned the set-up of agricultural activity, the distribution of settlement patterns and the economy as a whole of the Maltese Archipelago.

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A word of thanks goes to the Honorable Minister for Gozo, Mrs. Giovanna Debono, who for the past few years contributed an annual donation of Lm300-500 to meet some of the inherent expenses incurred in the running of the library. Another word of thanks also goes to the Honourable Speaker of Parliament, who weekly, almost without fail, sends to the library all, or almost all, copies of the Malta Government publications.



*Students making use of the library resources*

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Many educational courses have been organised by the library during these 23 years. The number of student enrolments, especially, university students, has been growing at a steady rate. This, as already mentioned, is due to the fact that the library now specialises in books related to tertiary education such as philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology, archaeology, art and architecture, computer science and technology, and the physical sciences.

The Gozo Cathedral Public Library is open from Monday to Friday, from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. The library is kept closed on Sundays, public holidays, and for the five days preceding the feast of *Santa Marija* in August. The librarian appreciates donations of books and financial help for the continual upgrading of the library. Those who would like to volunteer may contact the librarian on one of these telephone numbers: 21554101; Fax: 21564572; E-mail: [gozocathedral@maltanet.net](mailto:gozocathedral@maltanet.net).