

Lifestyle & Culture

A Revival of Giuseppe Cali's mastery

Bank of Valletta supports another significant restoration

The preservation of artistic and cultural works is a gesture that revives the appreciation of compositions buried for decades, possibly centuries. Valletta-born artist Giuseppe Cali is known for his many paint-



ings found in churches around Malta and Gozo. The old parish church in the heart of Ghajnsielem is considered an artistic landmark, as it holds nine of Cali's canvases.

Financed by Bank of Valletta and commissioned by Archpriest Rev. Canon Frankie Bajada, the restoration of these nine treasures is now complete, securing the longevity of these prolific artifacts.

"The rich heritage of our country is a value that we must preserve and exhibit for the upcoming generations," stated Charles Azopardi, executive PR & Marketing at Bank of Valletta. "Over the years, the bank has had its name associated with several prestigious projects, such as the Ta' Giezu Crucifix and the 18th century titular painting depicting The Sacred Family upon its return from Egypt, found at the chapel in Comino."

Entrusted with the restoration project, Fr Charles Vella explained that infilling and reintegration were necessary to recover the paintings' original aesthetic conditions. "Dating back to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, these paintings were damaged by tears and fungus infestations," stated Fr Vella. Preventive conservation was also undertaken to minimise future decay and unnecessary treatments.

Research conducted before the restoration project reveals that Giuseppe Cali ap-



plied his techniques through handmade colours consisting of natural minerals. Among other discoveries, was the word *Inglese* (English) inscribed on the snake in the titular painting of the Immaculate Conception, a clear sign of Cali's lack of fondness towards the British, which is also subtly documented in other works of his.



The other paintings restored were those of the Annunciation, the Assumption, St Andrea, St Anthony, St Paul, The Nativity, Our Lady of the Rosary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The restored paintings are displayed inside the old Ghajnsielem church and visitors can now admire these artistic gems and connect to the Maltese cultural heritage.