

The Order of Malta Pilgrimage of the Sick to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in México.

Thursday, October 17, 2013

Roma, Italia



Fra' Matthew Festing will participate in the pilgrimage and visit many works of charity of the Order of Malta in Mexico.

The Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' Matthew Festing, on 19 October 2013 will lead the 29th Annual Pilgrimage of the sick organized by the Mexican Association of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe – the Patroness of the Americas, a title Pope John Paul II gave to her on his visit there in 1999, is Mexico revered shrine. The Grand Master will visit the site of the apparition, where he will see the mantle 'tilma' of Juan Diego and share in the devotion to Our Lady so evident at this hallowed spot. Fra' Matthew Festing will lead the 2013 Order of Malta Pilgrimage to Guadalupe, accompanied by the President of the Mexican Association, Don Jorge Alonso Coratella, the Association's senior officers, many members and volunteers of the Order and the disabled in their care, who have all travelled to honour the Virgin and to pray for their special intentions during this moving occasion. Members of the Sovereign Order of Malta coming from all over the American continent will also attend.

In the mid 1970s, the Order of Malta in Mexico start organizing a Sick Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe together with the Archdiocese, Caritas, the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care and the Red Cross. In 2013 more than 10,000 pilgrims are expected.

During his stay in Mexico, the Grand Master will also visit a number of the Order of Malta's works for the poor and the sick in Mexico, a land of extremes of poverty in a country of over 116 million people where the median age is just 27.7. Fra' Matthew Festing will visit a number of these Initiatives, including the 'Help me grow' programme, which combats malnutrition in the young in three main communities – in the states of México, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí, where already over 14,000 youngsters have benefited. He will inspect a programme of aid for mothers and babies to prevent transmission of the HIV virus, called 'Salva a un Niño del SIDA'; he will see over a school and boarding house for children – the Internado San Juan Bosco; visit a home for 58 elderly people in Mexico City – the Casa Hogar San Juan; and on the outskirts of Mexico city at Ciudad Netzahualcoyotl, he will go to an Order of Malta outpatients clinic, Santa María de Guadalupe, which cares for the destitute.

The extension of the Order's work the North America and South America continents now covers activities in 26 countries.