

**FUNERAL OF FRA' ANDREW BERTIE, GRAND MASTER
OF THE ORDER OF MALTA
SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY**

The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St Jean of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta announces that the Funeral of His Most Eminent Highness the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie will be celebrated in Rome on Saturday 16 February at the Basilica of Santa Sabina at 11.30.

The family members of the 78th Grand Master, together with the members of the Sovereign Council and his close colleagues, friends, members of the Order and volunteers are arriving from all parts of the world to pay their last respects to Fra' Andrew. Among the mourners will also be ambassadors accredited to the Order, and civil and religious senior figures. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated by His Eminence the Cardinal Patronus of the Order, Cardinal Pio Laghi, and concelebrated by Their Eminences Cardinal Paul Poupard, Jean-Louis Tauran, Renato Raffaele Martino and John Patrick Foley.

A solemn procession will escort the Grand Master from the church of Santa Maria del Priorato, which is situated in the grounds of the Magistral Villa of the Order on the Aventine Hill, where he has lain in state during this week, to the basilica of Santa Sabina for the funeral service. The Benedictine community from the nearby church of Sant'Anselmo will accompany the procession singing Gregorian chant.

In the Basilica of Santa Sabina, a military guard of honour from the Italian Republic will stand at attention as the Last Post is sounded.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Grand Master will be interred in the Church of Santa Maria del Priorato.

Journalists and television teams who wish to be present at the ceremonies are asked to present their accreditations by fax or email to :

Communications Office of the Order of Malta

Fax +39.06.6784815 – Email: ufficiocomunicazioni@orderofmalta.org

**Saturday 16 February 2008 Basilica Santa Sabina, Via di Santa Sabina, Rome
Please be advised that it is absolutely essential to be at the basilica no later than 11.00.**

The Prince and Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie

Andrew Willoughby Ninian Bertie was the first Englishman to be elected to the post of Grand Master in the Order's 900-year history. Born 15 May 1929, he was educated at Ampleforth College, Christ Church Oxford and the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. After military service in the Scots Guards, he worked as a financial journalist in the City of London, before taking up the senior post in Modern Languages (French and Spanish) at Worth School, Sussex. Admitted to the Order in 1956, he took solemn religious vows in 1981 and served on the Sovereign Council (the government of the Order) for the following seven years before being elected Grand Master on 8th April 1988.

On the death of Fra' Andrew Bertie, the Grand Commander of the Order, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, was sworn in as Lieutenant ad interim. He remains in charge until the election of a new Grand Master.

The Order of Malta

The Sovereign Order of Malta is a sovereign subject of international law. The Order has diplomatic relations with 100 countries, including the Holy See and the Italian Republic. It has 18 official representations and permanent observer relations with the United Nations, the European Union and numerous international organisations.

The Order of Malta has a permanent presence in 54 countries, eleven Grand Priories and Sub Priories and 47 national Associations, numerous hospitals, medical centres, daycare clinics, first aid posts and special aid programmes in 120 countries.

The Order's 12,500 members, 80,000 permanent volunteers and 13,000 medical personnel, are all dedicated to the care of the poor, the sick and all those who suffer.

For more information on the Order of Malta

www.orderofmalta.org

For further information

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