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Contact details

**Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of
St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta**
Grand Priory of Austria
Johannesgasse 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria
T: +43 1 512 72 44, smom@malteser.at
www.malteserorden.at

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Conventual Chaplain Rev. Mag. Albin Scheuch, DI Richard Steeb (Chancellor),
Jochen Ressel (Communications Officer)
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SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER OF
ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA
GRAND PRIORY OF AUSTRIA



MALTESER CHURCH
Saint John the Baptist

ENGLISH



WELCOME *to the Malteser Church of Saint John the Baptist*

As early as 1217, the Knights of St. John, now known as the members of the Order of Malta, operated a chapel on this site (destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1258) and a hospital, named Commandery St. John of Vienna. The church dates back to the 14th century and the fully preserved roof truss is one of the oldest in Vienna. Originally Gothic (the 5/8 choir is still clearly recognisable today), the interior of the church was baroqueised, redesigned in the Empire style in 1806 and given its current façade.

After the church was renovated in 1997 and 1998, the 17th century Sonnholz organ was completely refurbished in 2016/2017. Located directly on one of Vienna's busiest shopping streets, the Church of the Order of Malta is a place of tranquillity that is used by hundreds of people every day to pause for a moment and pray.

Thank you for your visit!



The Sovereign Order of Malta

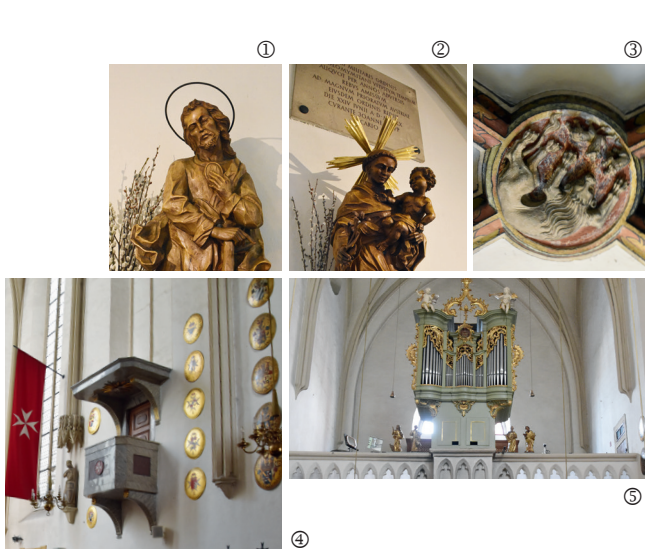
- Around 1048: Foundation of a brotherhood for the care and hospitality of pilgrims and the sick in Jerusalem
- 1113: The brotherhood becomes an order - St. John the Baptist is its patron saint - hence the name „Knights of St. John“ (in German language “Johanniter”)
- 1309: Rhodes becomes the headquarters of the Order (until 1522)
- 1530: Malta becomes the new headquarters; the name „Order of Malta“ becomes common and “Malteser” for its members
- 1565: Victorious defence of Malta from the Ottomans
- 1571: Battle of Lepanto ends the ottoman dominance
- 1798: Napoleon takes over Malta - withdrawal of the Order
- 1834: The Order's headquarters are moved to Rome.

The Order of Malta today

- Approx. 13,500 members worldwide, approx. 80,000 volunteers and approx. 50,000 full-time staff
- Over 15 million supported people in over 120 countries; Diplomatic relations with more than 110 countries and international organisations (UN, EU, etc.).

Care and relief activities in Austria

- **MALTESER Hospitaldienst Austria:** voluntary relief corps, social services for the sick and physically disadvantaged, medical services, disaster relief operations
- **MALTESER Ordenshaus:** modern and best-equipped care home in Vienna for 72 people in the need of 24/7 care
- **MALTESER Care:** mobile care services (home help, home nursing, 24-hour care, family relief service)
- **MALTESER Children's Aid:** operates the palliative care home Hilde Umdasch House in Amstetten for children and young people suffering from life-shortening illnesses
- **MALTESER Community of St. John:** spiritual initiatives to accompany people on their journey of faith
- **MALTESER International:** support for projects run by the Order of Malta's international refugee and disaster relief organisation



Tour of the Malteser Church

Entrance area

Left: ① Statue of St. Jude Thaddeus (intercessor in emergencies); Right: ② St. Anthony of Padua (invoked in case of loss of objects)
③ Keystone in the cross vault: motif of the lion breathing life into its young = symbol of Christ, who gives people supernatural life

Church nave

Apsis: Gothic church interior still recognisable; ④ over 40 coats of arms of Grand Priors and Commanders;
⑤ Baroque organ: built in 1767 by the famous organ builder Gottfried Sonnholz; statues of the four evangelists on the parapet

⑥ Church interior

Left: ⑦ Monument to Grand Master Jean Parisot de La Valette (+1568, defended Malta against the Ottomans in 1565 and built the new capital Valetta)



In front, above the High altar:

Left: State flag of the Order of Malta

Right: Flag of the Order's relief organisations: The eight-pointed cross refers to the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5) and to the Eightfold Misery that the Order of Malta fights against (illness and abandonment, hunger and homelessness, lack of love and guilt, indifference and disbelief)

Right: Bust of Commander Fra' Franz von Colloredo (designed the church in its present form in 1806)

⑧ High altar

High altarpiece: by Johann Georg Schmidt in 1730, shows the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by St. John the Baptist (= patron saint of the Order of Malta). In the background: the island of Malta.

Tabernacle: in the form of an ancient temple, is the place where the Blessed Sacrament is kept.

Above it: ⑨ Icon „Our Lady of Philermos“, a highly revered image in the Order of Malta of Holy Mary.

⑩ Statues: Left: St. Paul (was beheaded with the sword in Rome); Right: St. Peter (with the keys of the kingdom of heaven - Mat 16,19)

We cordially invite you to pray to St. John the Baptist for your intentions and to light a candle!

St. John, the Lord himself calls you the greatest prophet. You are great because of the miracles that accompanied your conception and birth, great as a humble forerunner and pioneer of the Messiah, great as a fearless preacher of repentance, great in your martyrdom.

We ask you to also implore us to be sincerely humble and willing to sacrifice ourselves in the service of the Lord. Help us to recognise that today, too, the axe has been laid to the trunk and that every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down. Call us to repentance so that we may turn to the Lord with all our hearts. Amen.

Prayer of the Order of Malta

Lord Jesus,

thou hast seen fit to enlist me for thy service in the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. I humbly entreat Thee, through the intercession of the most holy Virgin of Philermo, of St. John the Baptist, Blessed Gerard, and all the saints, to keep me faithful to the traditions of our Order.

Be it mine to practice and defend the Catholic, the Apostolic, the Roman faith against sacrilege. Be it mine to practice charity towards my neighbors, especially the poor and sick.

Give me the strength I need, to carry out this my resolve, forgetful of myself, learning ever from Thy Holy Gospel a spirit of deep and generous Christian devotion, striving ever to promote God's Glory, the world's peace, and all that may benefit the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Amen.