

St Publius enters Valletta

St Paul and St Publius in historic encounter



Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi.

Thousands of Roman Catholics flocked to Valletta last night to witness the historic moment when Floriana's statue of St Publius entered the capital city for the first time.

The majestic statue was carried into City Gate and through Republic Street to loud applause and enthusiasm, while Valletta's equally majestic statue of St Paul was carried on a tour of the city.

The two then 'met' outside St John's Co-Cathedral, as young and old gathered in droves to witness the event, organised to mark the end of the Pauline Year.

Supporters of each saint filled the streets and sang their individual anthems while passionately praising their own saint as "the greatest". The coming together of the two statues was symbolic of the arrival of St Paul who was welcomed to Malta by St Publius after his shipwreck in 60 AD.

As the story goes, St Publius was then converted and became the first archbishop of the island as the two saints converted the rest of the island to Christianity.

The unifying activity between the two rival towns was organised by the Archbishop's Curia. A similar event has only happened once before, in 1960, when the two statues were brought together at the Floriana Granaries.

An open-air Pontifical Mass was said by the Pope's special envoy, Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, in the presence of the country's highest authorities, to mark the end of the Pauline Year that celebrated the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of St Paul.

Similar celebrations have been held in the seven countries St Paul visited during his lifetime.

Archbishop Paul Cremona said the Maltese would celebrate the 1950th anniversary of St Paul's arrival next year and would do so with the same enthusiasm as they did the Pauline Year.

Comments

F.Williams (8 hours, 6 minutes ago)

For you that do not understand this pique;

The pique between the people of Valletta and its suburb is "Nothing.....Its Everything!" and not just football.

And one might wonder why they were looking upwards.....cause they believed that we would have been waiting for them with an arsenal of tomatoes, eggs or some even tought molotovs!!....as if we are a blood thirsty mob. Usual day dreamers...Come on grow up!

As regards to the statue...I believe it is a very good work of Dimech, it is symbolic and one must admire it as a great work of art.....One must also apprecites it has a unique posture ideal for entering Valletta :P

ANTOINE J. HILI (15 hours, 52 minutes ago)

Ejjew inkunu kburin li hafna Maltin jifirhu b'dak li ghandhom biex. Mhux kulhadd ghandu l-abbilta' jifhem l-imhabba li ahna ghandna lejn San Publju u San Pawl, ghax mhux kulhadd ihossu kburi li hu Malti u jirikonoxxi dak li sawwar lil Malta. Ejjew nindmu u nitkellmu b'mod posittiv lejn is-sena Pawlina, kief giet fi tmiema lokalment, ix-xbihat ta' valur gholi, dik ta' San Pawl mahduma minn Melchiorre Cafa' u dik ta' San Publju mahduma minn Vincenzo Dimech ghandna nifirhu bihom ghax huma jfakkruna lejn il-qaddisin sbieh li hemm fis-sema u permezz ta' xi haga li naraw ahna ghandna nersqu aktar qrib lejn Alla li nqeda b'dawk iz-zewg personaggi biex iwassal il-fidi f'pajjizna. Bir-ragun nghidu VIVA San Publju u San Pawl, ghax inriduhom jghixu ghal dejjem!!

ANTOINE J. HILI (15 hours, 53 minutes ago)

Ma nixtieqx naghti wisq importanza lil dawn li bil-kitba taghhom riedu jkunu negattivi, izda nrid insemmi il-kument specjali u tad-dahk ta' C. Micallef li juri li m'ghandux l-icken idea dwar kif l-artist jista' jesprimmi ruhu. Ic-celebri skultur Vincenzo Dimech lanqas imissu jkun fuq xufftejn C. Micallef, li qieghed imaqdru ghall-mod li bih skolpa fl-injam grajja vera izda fl-istess hin b'simboli tant intelligenti bhall-kulur ta' l-iljun...kultant nghid kemm hawn min hu pruzuntuz u ma jiddejjaq xejn jaqa ghar-redikolu billi jitkellem fuq xi haga li ma jafx, pero C. Micallef mhux wahdu, bhalu hemm Peter Zammit li ma ddejjaq xejn ipacpac b'dak li sema; u jissepara lill-San Publju f'bicciet, tassew hassra, il-Malti jghid 'l-akbar injorant hu dak li ma jridx jisma', u dan jimmerita wkoll lil min ipacpac bla jaf sew, kif ghamlu bost f'dawn il-kummenti.

Chris Vella (17 hours, 49 minutes ago)

Veru li ghax taghna l'Maltin immaqdu. Dak ghax San Publju ta' Malta kien Malti u provi hemm cari minn studjuzi bikrin tal-knisja. Meta San Gorg Preca sar qaddis, inghaqadna flimkien u marru hafna Ruma. Allura hazin. Huwa kaz li mmaqdu taghna, u meta naraw tal-barranin noghxew. Huwa San Publju ta' Malta li ahna nghozzu fil-Furjana. Huwa l-ewwel Malti fis-Sema...

Issa min huwa xettiku, insaqsih.... Mietu insara fl-areni qalb l'iljuni? Mela il-Furjana tfakkar lil dawn kollha li hadd ma jsemmihom. Ghalhekk hienja ahna dwar dan ghax nemmnu bla ma rajna.....kif qalilna Gesu' Kristu.

Is-sena d'diehla San Publju jaghlaq 400 sena Patrun ta' Malta, u ta' xejn ma ghamluhx. Huwa ahna tal lum jekk nonqsu mir rispettt li ghandna naghtu Lilu.... Imbaghad San Pawl, appostlu kbir, ghax mhux Malti, nsejhulu Missierna, Iva jkun Missierna, imma Malti li laqghu u ikkonverta, mhux aktar Missierna?..... Insomma l'aqwa li meta dahlet l-istatwa, imissna tghallimna mill-mument, ghax bhax xemx xaghal il-Belt. u Hekk huwa dejjem jixghel fina...

Grazzi lil kulhadd li kien involut ghax Malta tat rispettt lil min taghna il-fidi, u min accettha u haddanha.... u kebbisha biex ahna ghadna ngawdu sal lum..

Mela accettaw Maltin l-istorja kif inhi bhal ma accettana lil Kristu.

Joseph Apap (18 hours, 32 minutes ago)

Mela mhux tal-Belt Victoria biss ghadhom lura ghaliex ingustament jigu akkuzati li huma fanatici fil-parrokkjalizmu? Il-parrokkjalizmu huwa haga sana sakemm jigi kkontrollat u mhux imbuttat ghall-estremm minn membri ekklesjastici.

d.Torpiano (1 day, 2 hours ago)

Well said Christian Psaila! I also think that Claude Portelli struck the point by highlighting the total omission of the Times regarding the coverage of the Pontifical Mass held in front of St. John's. For everybody's knowledge, there were many Florianites and Citizens who fully participated during the Pontifical liturgy. Sometimes I feel that analysis and account of events is given on purpose in a distorted manner. The worst thing is that many seem gullible enough and believe in a childish manner what the media try to convey. The vast majority exhibited no pagan attitude. Only some hot headed few acted inspired by stupid motivations. Such negative behaviour cannot erase the predominantly positive character of the event, though some wished this to happen.

Joseph Debono (1 day, 2 hours ago)

Many of these negative comments are the result of the article in today's Times. There was so much to write about, but your reporter chose to focus on petty rivalry. The article is not a true reflection of what happened last night.

Josef W. Muscat (1 day, 5 hours ago)

Please stop it. I was there yesterday and I enjoyed it all the time admiring two fantastic works of art that Valletta and Floriana should be proud of. What few people from both sides (that can easily be counted) has no value at all. Most of the Valleta and Floriana people have only goos intentions. Yesterday Malta celebrated a big feast - Valletta and Floriana should both be proud for the share they gave !

Christian Psaila (1 day, 6 hours ago)

@Henry Pace

The mob you are referring to walked with St. Publius from the church in Floriana to St. John's Cathedral, stayed for the whole pontifical celebration and returned to Floriana with the image of its Patron Saint. Can you enlighten me and tell me what is wrong with that?

Have we become so big headed and snobbish in this country that we want to dictate to others what to do, what to believe in and how to practice their faith? No one was hurt, no one was offended, football rivalry was left out of the event completely, so yes, it was a positive experience for all present. It was a historic feast for both parishes. All present set an example to other villages so please stop moaning from behind your computers.

M. Attard (1 day, 8 hours ago)

sorry to intervene... but I think celebrating this event this way doesn't make sense, a procession\pilgrimage from st paul's bay chapel to san pawl tat targa at Naxxar would have made more sense... after all neither Valletta nor Floriana did exist in those days this only created this useless havoc

Henry S Pace (1 day, 9 hours ago)

Opening The Times this morning I was greatly amused by the front page picture. This is the statue of St Publius being transported into a warehouse or some workshop to be until the some time in April/May next year.

However, this was not the case because for The Times it was more imprtant that the statue or St Publius rather than giving a faithful report on the closing ceremony of the Pauline Year conducted by the Papal Legat

The Times reporters appear that they came to this manifestation more to report some form of trouble and rioting rather than reporting the Pontifical Mass and the climax of the Puline Year.

What took place yesterday was a shame and very unfortunate situation for the Archbishop's Curia and the organisers of this special event.

The statue of St Publius was out of place with that mob around the statue.

While the Church Authorities are doing their best to eredicate all that are ruining our religious feasts at the same time they walked into an ocean of mud dirtying themselves

which will take quite a long time to clean themselves.
The organisers of this even left much to be desired.

Dolores Sare' (1 day, 10 hours ago)

Well done Floriana . We have endured enough insults from Valletta. After all we were celebrating the entrance of our Patron Saint to our capital city. Of course St. Publius and St. Paul are not the issue. They are both great Saints. Thank God for them and the Catholic Church

stephen mifsud (1 day, 10 hours ago)

its all about family religion and it keeps the maltese people somewhat grounded ...in other countries people are kinda lost without faithi think its all good and its colorful and its Malta afterall ...tourists love it ...donr ever change or lose this culturethe maltese dont know what they have until they lose it

claude portelli (1 day, 10 hours ago)

I am amazed at how the Editor of The Times decided to ignore completely the whole event that took place yesterday from 7pm onwards in front of St John's co-Cathedral and decided to put an added emphasis to pique and fanaticism instead ! It would have been more beneficial to the readers had The Times reported extracts from the Cardinal's encouraging homily and maybe a few pictures of the crowd participating in the mass. I do hope that this was not purposely omitted and that at least the editor could insert a mention in tomorrow's issue !!

C. Busuttil (1 day, 10 hours ago)

AS USUAL

Attacking feasts without having knowledge on the subject, If those writing thing that rivalry between Floriana and Valletta has anything to do with FEASTS you ARE WRONG, its all about FOOTBALL.

In yesterday's event some Valletta supporters who aren't EVEN supporters of St. Paul took occasion of showing their hatred towards Floriana and its symbol, that is ST. Publius. These people are NO FESTA enthusiasts, as Festa enthusiasts of St. Paul would have stood by their statue.

In Valletta festa rivalry is very low, FOOTBALL rivalry is high. Football rivalry towards Floriana unites all Valletta fans either if they belong to ST. Dominc or St. Paul parties or belonging to none.

FOR those who have NO knowledge on the SUBJECT refrain yourself from passing comments without having a clue. This Was NO festa rivalry but an occasion taken by some to vent their football hatred UNFORTUNATELY.

All those writing about paganism in feasts makes me wonder how is it that they are NEVER present during the internal religious celebrations in connection with the parish? Or its maybe Just an occasion to vent their anger at the church with the excuse of feasts.

Steven Camilleri (1 day, 11 hours ago)

Mr Galea , their are people who have Joseph Muscat in their hearts or that idiot duminku , you can even have his photo on the wall , and their are people who have their

village feast which is more important to them, get a life , we are only continuing our traditions, why don't all you moaners go to sliema and stop those muslim's praying ? they are the people who aren't maltese

v.pulis (1 day, 11 hours ago)

Whoever still thinks that Paul of Tarsus succeeded in converting the inhabitants of Malta to Christianity in just three months is living in a dream world. Imagine a Jehovah witness coming to your home and in just five minutes convinces you to change your belief and here I'm talking practically believing in the same person namely Jesus. These people had been worshipping their gods for hundreds of years if not thousands and here comes this prisoner telling them to love their enemies besides other strange theories. I guarantee you that after Paul left for Rome the inhabitants continued with their temple visits as before.

v.pulis (1 day, 11 hours ago)

@ C Barbara

.....all the devout can mentally figure out St. Paul because they see the statue.

I hate to disillusion you but the statue doesn't look a single bit like the real Paul of Tarsus who is traditionally described as being short, fat and bald.

'There is no such thing as a cult for statues'

try saying that to the thousands of 'fidili' who believe that certain statues can work miracles.

and before you say that the miracles are performed by God let me direct you to one particular statue. The Redeemer of Senglea on whose holy pictures is printed ' The miraculous statue' ix xbiha mirakoluza. Would the thousands of worshippers who descend on Senglea every June to walk behind the statue accept if the archpriest substituted the parish image with that of say St. Philip's church in the same locality? I very much doubt it.

Statues of whatever saint are an offshoot of a pagan practice going as far back as Babylon and pharaonic Egypt where effigies of their gods were paraded in the streets during their feast days. And guess what? they too used to work miracles!

George Pace (1 day, 11 hours ago)

Idolatory pure and simple.

Matthew Psaila (1 day, 11 hours ago)

@J Farrugia

Ejja ma nigggeneralizzawx! Huwa vera li kien hemm minn ikkritika minhabba piki personali li ghandu pero l-maggoranza tan-nies li dahlu bi hgarhom raw oltre minn semplicement vara ta l-injam. Il-maggoranza tan nies huma kattolici. Issa jekk seh avviniment li gab membri tal parrocca Furjaniza vicin dawk tal parrocca Beltija ghalfejn ghandna nikkritikawa? Ghad unur l-gheluq tas sena Pawlina giet mfakkra wkoll dik is-silta fl-iskrittura tant ghaziza ghalina l-Maltin meta San Pawl u San Publiju ntaqaw ghal ewwel darba. U ma naqbilx mieghek li din hija haga vojta. Tiqafx biss fil-'fanatizmu' tan-nies izda ara s-sens kollhu wara dan l-avveniment. Mhux ovvja li n-nies se jifirhu bil vara taghhom? B'daqshekk m'humiex kattolici? Jekk haga, tkun xi tkun, tressqek lejn Alla u t-

tghallim Tieghu, naqbel maghha.

Bil-Grazzja t'Alla kollox mar sew u l-Furjanizi u l-Beltin urew kemm il-piki tagghom jibdew u jiefqu f'Ta Qali!

John Zammit (1 day, 12 hours ago)

I think yesterdays occasion supplied more fun than the carnival which enters valletta . The clowns who danced and clapped yesterday everytime the Saints were mentioned were vulgar and hamalli. And the thousands mentioned should be recounted considering that most of them consisted of unwed middle aged ladies all taking part in legion of Mary and yesterday was an entertaining day out for them. It would have been a major flop if it had to be held in Floriana. There was no need to have a band march on sunday. This was not a village feast , and like many was not amused to see the hamallagnijiet .

Annalise Farrugia Bennett (1 day, 12 hours ago)

@ Grace Cassar

Thank you Grace at least there are some people like you that appreciate this. My mother is from Floriana and Floriana has a special place in my heart. when i go to Floriana or see St Publius i remember my grandfather if only he could of seen yesterdays cermony. All the stupid comments won't put us down because we're proud of what we have always have always will. Viva il-Manjus.

Joe V Scerri (1 day, 12 hours ago)

So for The Times, the entrance of St Publius in Valletta, gets more attention than the whole ceremony! I've noticed such subliminal tactics by this newspaper that put more emphasis on the cultural and plebeian aspect rather than the true meaning behind it. If the Editorial team is not comfortable with religion anymore either because they don't embrace it (being Christianity, Muslim or any other) or because they feel it is not relevant anymore to their consumers(in the wide sense of it) then they should say so, loud and clear and the people can start interpreting better the agenda of the newspaper. I would rather report diligently and then leave it up to the people to debate and discuss. And btw fanatics can be found sides of the pendulum, believers and non.

Galea. L (1 day, 13 hours ago)

This shows how some are so hot-headed fanatics that they do not reason at all. I also deplore the fact that there were some who were heard whistling during the procession. This shows total ignorance and lack of civic and religious education. Similarly, the Church should stop those fanatics who shout, hail and praise their saint or whatever in front of the statue even in church and stop the feats if they continue with such pagan excesses.

g. scerri (1 day, 14 hours ago)

Why is the Times saying that "Thousands of Roman Catholics" flocked to Valletta? It has always been thousands of "Maltese". Is the Times too falling a victim to the cult of multiculturalism?

grace cassar (1 day, 14 hours ago)

What a beautiful sight this morning. Let me explain. I have lived in Belgium for the past 30 years. My whole family are from Floriana. My Dad Guseppi In-Nifs was much loved person in Floriana during his time. It is beautiful and very emotional to see the statue of St. Publius. It brought so much memories. Just beautiful!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

C Barbara (1 day, 14 hours ago)

@ B Agius

The use of statues in Roman Catholic cult is to impress on the devout in a very tangible manner the glory of the Saints of God. So for example, if you talk to a person about the writings of St. Paul, all the devout can mentally figure out St. Paul because they see the statue. It is like putting a face to a name. There is no such thing as a cult for statues.

@ C Micallef

If you want to know how a lion attacks, you go and watch National Geographic. You don't go to the Floriana Church.

Others comments not worth replying to - but go to show the level of intelligence of people in Malta.

Annalise Farrugia Bennett (1 day, 14 hours ago)

This was a big thing because everyone knows that Valletta and Floriana don't get along. Part of my family are from Floriana and I'm so proud of that every year the feast of St Publius is great we all have our favourite feasts after all. Although both places are so close to each other no one would ever dreamt that St Publius statue would be taken to Valletta and be next to St Paul. It's only a statue after all but it had a different meaning to everyone. So please guys stop saying stupid things it maybe a statue to someone and something else to someone else respect one another.

Dwane Debono (1 day, 14 hours ago)

To Mr C Micallef, or rather, the Lion's expert.

I don't think that the artist was trying to show a live screenshot of the event of the martyr of St. Publius. If we wanted to know how a lion's attack we would all go watch the discovery channel rather than read your comment. Get a life!

Carmelo Palmier Cecy (1 day, 14 hours ago)

A statue is but a statue, and it represents only the saint whom we intend it to, because it is not a photograph. We do not respect the statue but the saintly person it represents, even though some people do behave in such a stupid way as to make us believe that they are mistaking the statue for the saint himself; but we do respect the memory of the saint it represents.

We do not adore the saints but we adore God alone; even though some disgruntled individuals would like to brand Christians as idolaters in order to accommodate their own psychological needs.

Nigel Lawrence (1 day, 14 hours ago)

Venerating and glorifying a piece of painted stone. Whatever happened to religion? Moses would be disgusted with the Maltese version of the golden calf.

M Axisa (1 day, 14 hours ago)

Is this report serious? You are writing about two wooden statues as if they were real. It's really no wonder that people are turned off by Catholicism.

Norbert Bugeja (1 day, 15 hours ago)

Maybe the lion is a cross breed with a doberman.....:)

Peter Zammit (1 day, 15 hours ago)

Although historically Publius of Malta did meet St. Paul during his stay here, it is also a fact that the St. Publius as revered by the people of Floriana is actually not the St. Publius they intend he is. None other than a mix up with the other Publius that lived in Crete. This is one big mix up that only accommodates the adoration of Publius of Malta that was only referred to as a Prince. Research and pertinent literature were in the past brought to the attention of the late Msgr. Gonzi who was invited to iron out the situation for good, but instead opted to keep the problem of individualising who the proper Publius the people of Floriana should be celebrating unsolved not to raise dust over a delicate matter of deep interest to local folk. A recent programme on Campus FM by Charles Xuereb shed light through documentation that there are gross misfacts about the Publius controversy and his legitimate standing in history. I invite one and all to look up for this programme to draw his own conclusions. It's high time that Msgr. Cremona takes action to stop this nonsense situation.

J Farrugia (1 day, 15 hours ago)

dawn il-partitarji jmisshom jisthu jghidu li huma kattolici. Il-fanatizmu li ghandhom huwa tal-ghageb. Dawn jemmnu f'Alla? Jemmnu fi kliem Kristu li huma ghandhom jaduraw lilhu biss bl-ispirtu u bil-verita'? Din il-hdura li ghandhom ghal xulxin, ghax San Publiju dahhluh il-Belt u kien hemm min qabel u min ma qabilx juri kemm dawn il-'fidili' beltin u furjanizi ghandhom fidi VOJTA u BLA SUSTANZA ta' XEJN. Veru huwa ta' skandlu. U dawn ser ikunu r-rovina tal-festi Maltin. U min qed jipprova jattakka lill-Knisja lit-tmexxija taghha huwa kannol bla krema ghax il-knisja illum qed tesigi li d-devozzjoni trid tkun pura, spiritwali u fuq kollox bl-ispirtu ta' Alla fihom. Dan huwa ghajb ghall-partitarji ta' dawn iz-zewg festi. Nittama li ma jkollix inqid ohrajn magghom. Hemm... hafna wkoll.

apgrech (1 day, 16 hours ago)

Mario, they may be looking at the pigeons. Once I was "blessed" by a pigeon at that spot.

C Micallef (1 day, 16 hours ago)

HOW LIONS ATTACK!

There is no such thing as a black lion! Secondly, lions pounce and go for the victim's neck. With the amount of clothes St. Publius is shown to be wearing, not even a crawling crocodile would dare attack this poor saint's feet, with all due respect for the artist who did this statue. Further more, in the wild, it is usually the lionesses (female lions that have no mane) who go for the hunt.

Franco Farrugia (1 day, 16 hours ago)

What enthusiasm is the Archbishop on about? Does he honestly think that the Roman Catholics in Malta are going to be impressed by statues of saints entering and leaving Valletta? Or fireworks being lit after 11 pm on Sunday night with the blessing of the Church? Come on, let's stop being so immature in our faith.

B Agius (1 day, 16 hours ago)

The "statue cult", it seems, is still over the top in Malta. What does playing with statues exactly signifies? I suppose other cultures do other things - Maltese play with statues. Funny but quite a good distraction from other things so , as such, no harm done..

mario mifsud (1 day, 17 hours ago)

Everyone is looking at something even St Publius and the angel. I wonder what !
