



**On the occasion
of the Pauline Year,**
the Kummissjoni Ambjent (Environment Commission)
of the Archdiocese of Malta, the Archbishop's
Seminary of the same Archdiocese, the Bishop's
Seminary of the Diocese of Gozo

in collaboration with
APS Bank,
the Centre for Environmental Education & Research, Faculty of
Education and
the Faculty of Theology – University of Malta

are pleased to announce

**An intensive educational experience and conference for
regional seminaries on promoting environmental
stewardship.**



*12-17 July 2008,
Malta*



FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

**The Past, Present and Future of the
Mediterranean, and St Paul.**

Historically, the Mediterranean was both a route and a barrier, at times dividing the various cultures which sprung along its shores, and at others providing the means whereby they merged, influenced or conquered each other. This 'melting pot' of religious, political, economic, cultural and demographic pressures, with its natural and physical constraints, has led to an environmental landscape (and seascape) which presents urgent problems needing solutions as well as opportunities for a sustainable future that need to be realized.

Religion has always played a dominant role in the social and cultural developments throughout the Mediterranean. St Paul, or as he is known: the Apostle of Nations, played no small role in this. Through his pioneering voyages along the Mediterranean coastline as well as writings, he managed to inspire whole generations with the basic truth and legacy of a humanity redeemed by Christ. This same truth together with the values it incorporates, are highly relevant to the modern context of a sustainable future for this region.

In spite of the cultural and religious diversity that characterizes this region, its hope for a

sustainable future is dependent on the ability of its peoples to be guided by basic and moral values in their daily choices effecting their interaction with the environment. Furthermore, the main religions of the region foster and indeed uphold moral values that are conducive to sustainable lifestyles. This is why the various religions of the region should play a more evident and leading role in motivating their faithful to respect God's creation and gift of life.

In a recent report (May 2005), the recommendations on Education for Sustainable Development prepared by the Education Working Group of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), stated that education and learning must be at the heart of all our efforts towards a sustainable Europe. "In Central, Eastern and Western Europe alike, this education takes place within a dominant individualistic consumer culture.

When people are faced with evidence of environmental crises, this culture has little to offer: it is part of the problem rather than the solution. People despair and see no effective way in which to contribute to a future worth living."

The educational task is therefore no mere information-giving, but the provision of learning experiences that motivate and inspire, leading to what the consultation of the European Bishops' conferences called 'ecological conversion':



profound changes of heart and mind by which people respond to God's gift of life, in all its variety and interdependence, with repentance, reverence, care and restraint." We believe that these ideas have their roots in Paul's teachings.

The same report continues to note that in many Christian traditions an important element in the formation of those who lead public worship and who engage in the teaching ministry of the

church is that of ensuring that they have a proper understanding of environmental issues and are capable of engaging with them in the natural life and work of local congregations.

We are aware that many Catholic and Christian seminaries and Faculties of Theology (including those in Malta) have already incorporated within their curriculum varying elements of environmental education and

ethics. Nonetheless we feel that there is room for more development and improvement in environmental education experiences in such educational institutions and in the preparation of priests that would focus specifically on the Mediterranean, its environmental identity, its problems and opportunities for sustainability. This desirable improvement may be facilitated through increased regional cooperation in such graduate religious studies and continuing education in ecology, social justice, and religion.

In this year dedicated to the commemoration of St Paul, we feel that we should go beyond the usual celebrations, and explore the real meaning and relevance of his teachings today. The organisation of this regional course and conference is a contribution towards this aim.

Having experienced the direct blessings of St Paul's teaching when he was shipwrecked here on his final voyage to Rome, Malta would be an ideal place to host such environmental educational experiences for seminaries from the Mediterranean coastal states (and other countries). Moreover, Malta may be considered as a representative microcosm of the current Mediterranean environmental issues.

To contribute in practice towards achieving such regional cooperation, a regional course in education for sustainable development, is being organised in Malta from the 12th to the 16th July 2008. The course targets regional Catholic and Christian Seminaries and Faculties of Theology and focuses on God's Creation and Sustainability Issues in the

Mediterranean. It aims to be an effective contribution towards rekindling the spiritual legacy left to this region by St Paul.

The course will familiarize participants with current issues of sustainability facing the Mediterranean Sea and the manner in which their religious obligations, theological and moral values may contribute towards the greater environmental sustainability in the area.

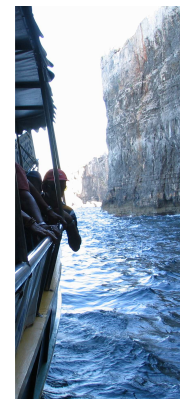
PROGRAMME

The course is to provide over the shortest possible time, a primer and introductory experience to some of the major sustainability issues facing the region. It will do so through:

- **Focus presentations** on themes such as the economics of sustainability; sustainability issues; human pressures arising from development; environmental ethics and morals; the Mediterranean as a region of religious conflicts and route of worship.
- **Field experiences**, including a boat trip around the Maltese Islands showing aspects of coastal development, fish farming and other coastal pressures; a journey through the prehistory and history of worship in the Mediterranean, and others.



- **Workshop and Discussion Sessions:** In the footsteps of St Paul.
- **Conference:** The role of the church and environmental education,



The course and conference will be held in English and any course material will also be produced in **English**.

The venue for the course will be the Archbishop's Seminary at Virtu, Rabat Malta which will provide the necessary reflective atmosphere as well as all necessary services for accommodation, meals, presentations, lab work, discussions and prayer.



A detailed programme of the course and conference will be made available soon.

REGISTRATION: 100 euros

The course will be sponsored by APS Bank (Malta), as well as by the Archdiocese of Malta and the Diocese of Gozo. Such sponsorship has enabled the organisers to reduce the registration fee to just 100 euros.



This fee will cover:

- 5 nights full board at the Retreat Centre of the Archbishop's Seminary at Tal-Virtu (Rabat), Malta
- Field trips held as part of the course
- All course materials

All foreign participants will be required to cover their travel costs (to and from Malta). Furthermore, they will cover the costs of accommodation for any extra nights which they may require before or /and after the duration of the course.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Further information on applications for the course and conference on the programme and on other related matters are available on <http://www.maltadiocese.org> (click on Science and Environment)

If you are interested in registering and participating in this initiative, you are kindly asked to contact the **course director: paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt**

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS: 1st June 2008.



The Grotto, Rabat.
The place where according to legend, St Paul lived during his visit to Malta.



Malta is a small island at the crossroads of the Mediterranean with a rich religious heritage extending back to 1000 years before the Egyptian pyramids. It includes the great Neolithic Temples which are the oldest stone buildings in the world, catacombs of the early Christian era up to the stupendous churches of the Knights of St. John