



See the face of Christ in those most in need!



- Training of the spirit
- No admission denied to shelters due to place shortage
- Assistance across borders



No admission be denied to shelters

As in the chilly January days all the homeless care centres were full in Budapest, people were accommodated in the temporary crisis shelter of the National Centre of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The charity organisation operates more than sixty homeless care institutions where the basic rule is there should not be one single person rejected due to lack of space. A mattress should always be available to anybody. The dispatcher centre of the Charity Service received more than sixty emergency calls per day in the coldest weeks of January 2017, crisis cars were practically in constant use.

The centre of the Charity Service in Budapest several times distributed hot food to homeless people and needy families several times during winter and operated a mobile medical unit for them. Secondary school children and athletes joined them to help during the crisis. Initiated by the Charity Service, warm clothing was collected in twelve schools in February.



A partner in trouble

A heavy storm and hail damaged two thirds of the houses in Megyaszó on the 21st of June. More than five hundred buildings were severely damaged, four houses became completely uninhabitable. The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta launched a charity drive to help. Twenty six families received material to repair damaged roofs and the Service renewed the home of a large family that was forced into temporary shelter.

Volunteer psychologists of the Hungarian Charity Service's emergency group provided mental support on site in Venice to relatives of the victims and to survivors and their families. On the 20th of January 2017 a bus carrying Hungarian students crashed into the side of a highway near Verona and caught fire killing sixteen people.



Assistance across borders

Having signed a co-operation agreement with the Serbian government in 2016, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta organised family and child support programmes, community events, and medical screenings for the people staying in the refugee camp in Szabadka. Based on the good neighbourly relations and mutual assistance, the Charity Service offered programmes primarily near the Hungarian border in settlements of Vojvodina. More than six hundred volunteers of the Charity Service worked in the transit zones and in the Serbian region for one year.

On the World Refugee Day, 20th of June, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta held a discussion forum for ecclesiastical and charitable organisations active in the refugee and migrant crisis. During the meetings, representatives of the institutions discussed events of the past three years, exchanged information on their own activities, and outlined future plans for possible co-operations.

The new centre inaugurated on the 25th of April in Beregszász bears the name of Freifrau Csilla von Boeselager, Co-founder and Permanent Honorary President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The centre was built with the financial assistance of the Hungarian government. The institution operated in the building provides care for disabled children and adults who live in Transcarpathia. At the same time, the Charity Service maintains its traditional charitable activities in Beregszász, supporting 700 needy families in the region.



For the sake of Roma people

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Father László Somos, parish priest of Kaposfő, the spiritual leader of the Charity Service's group in Kaposvár for his devoted activities for Roma families. This goodwill award of the Mária Terézia Twickel-Zichy Foundation was presented for the first time in June 2017 in acknowledgement of committed and dedicated social work.

The RARE programme of the EU with the participation of eight countries and twenty-one national organisations focuses on Roma people as an important part of the workforce. The leading partner of RARE is the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The best practices and professional recommendations were collected and implemented during this two and a half year long programme launched in February 2017.



Training of the spirit

Some five hundred and fifty people, among them two hundred and thirty with disabilities, were present in Győr at the Sports Day of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. Altogether, 22 teams from 15 cities participated in the event organised for the twentieth time in October 2017. In mixed teams, Olympic and top athletes also competed to call attention to the acceptance of the disabled. "This is perhaps the most important training, training one's spirit. At the competitions it is not the physical strength but the spirit that directs us" –said Father Imre Kozma, President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in his speech.

An international table-tennis tournament was organised in Budapest for people with hearing impairment. Players from abroad were transported to the Hungarian capital by vehicles of the Charity Service. The organisation of the Order of Malta itself is often the organiser of events for people with physical disabilities to develop acceptance. In October 2017 nearly 550 participants attended "The Chance Sports Day" in Győr, where mixed teams of top athletes and disabled people were competing.

Representing Hungary at the World Championship of Children's Homes the Sports Club of the Charity Service placed fifth in Warsaw. Twenty four countries nominated teams for the Hope for Mondial held on the 15th-16th of July.



The message spread over the whole country



A replica of the statue of Homeless Jesus, which became the symbol of solidarity, arrived in Budapest last April. Other copies of the work by the Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalcz are displayed in a number of big cities around the world, proclaiming the message that we should recognise Jesus in the most downtrodden people. The sculpture was brought to Budapest by the Charity Service of the Order of Malta. On the Holy Week, it was blessed by Cardinal Péter Erdő then taken for a tour around Hungary. At the festive occasions organised by the cities that wished to exhibit the sculpture, bishops, church leaders and mayors spoke about their feelings concerning acceptance.





This camp is a demonstration

Two hundred and fifty young people visited the Holiday Camp of the Order of Malta for Disabled Youngsters in Balatonfenyves in 2017. A unique feature of these camps is that wheelchair-bound or people with multiple disabilities can arrive here without their relatives or permanent helpers. During the time spent together in the camp, they are assisted by young volunteers. The house and the lake-side were made wheelchair accessible so that those who were in wheelchairs could reach the water using a ramp. Physically disabled guests had the chance to play various sports, get into a sailboat, and even had a dance organized. "The camp is a demonstration. This camp's message to the world is that we love these young people and we belong together" - said Father Imre Kozma, President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta at the camp opening Holy Mass.



Development and innovation

Financed by EU funds, institutions of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta will be renewed. As a result of this development, the area reached by the Service will be enlarged and maintenance costs of certain buildings will be reduced. The Charity Service received 648.95 million HUF in non-refundable EU support from the Széchenyi Programme 2000, according to Under-Secretary Miklós Soltész at a press conference. Lajos Győri-Dani, Managing Vice-President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta added: "The sum will cover renewal costs of buildings in Sátoraljaújhely, Pécs, Győr, Dorog and Tata. In Tiszaörs the big community house and the campsite will be renovated. This development is necessary because the majority of these buildings received by the charitable organisation after the change of the political system were built for other purposes.

The Charity Service of the Order of Malta took over six residential elderly homes from the state on the 1st of July 2017. Nearly five hundred elderly people living in the institutions in Zalakomár, Sármellék, Görcsöny, Keresztpuszta, Esztergom and Pilismarót will be cared for by the Charity Service in the future. In accordance with the Christian approach of assistance, spiritual needs will be given attention alongside physical ones. This change is not obligatory for residents or the staff, but opens a way to join religious events.



A fifteen million forint donation was collected in online purchases from customers who chose to round up their payment sums to the nearest hundred or thousand. The difference in payment was given to support programmes of the Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The "Round It Up" programme won second prize in its category in last year's Civil Award competition acknowledging positive innovative initiatives of non-profit organisations.

To assist saving lives, a mobile application called "City Heart" has been developed by the National Emergency Service. The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta is a co-operating partner in the programme. Following an emergency call received by the national service, registered medical professionals within a 500 meter radius also receive a message on their phone to assist in resuscitation prior to arrival of medics.

The Charity Service in the shop window

One hundred thousand people participated in the 33rd SPAR Budapest Marathon held on the 14th-15th of October. At the Festival, runners and spectators had the chance to learn about the “We bring the playground here” programme of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and could try the equipment offered in mobile playgrounds. Initiated by the Charity Service, about one thousand children’s story-books were collected over the weekend for children of the most needy families.

The “It is good to be good” charity campaign of the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) was organised in 2017 to support the activities of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. The charity drive advertised by the public media started on the 10th of November and ended with an all-day live broadcast on the 17th of December. Institutions of the Charity Service served as venues during the programme. To assist high priority programmes of the Charity Service, altogether 290 million HUF in support was collected including donations in kind.



