



28th August 2013

QUESTIONS FROM THE TIMES WITH REGARDS TO THE STATUE OF ST GREGORY OF SLIEMA

Questions

The statue of St Gregory the Great (Sliema) had been commissioned by Alfred Vella to Italian renowned sculptor Angelo Righetti. It is carved out of one solid piece of olive tree and arrived in Malta in 1952. The great-grandson of Mr Vella has told us that, in 2010, the statue was meant to be restored. The work was carried out by Fr Charles Vella. But instead of a simple restoration, the original wooden statue has been transformed into another statue – it was entirely covered in karta pesta which means that it is larger than the previous one and very different.

- Did the Curia authorize restoration? Did it include covering the old statue in karta pesta?
- Who carried out the works and when?
- How much did the restoration cost?
- Is it reversible? Can the wooden sculpture of Righetti be restored to its original state?

Answer

- Projects of a new piece of art or restoration of existing works in parishes are presented to the Archbishop's Curia for approval. The respective Commissions are consulted before permission is granted or refused. In the case of the statue of St Gregory, permission had been granted by the Archbishop's Curia, however the restorers exceeded the scope of their brief.