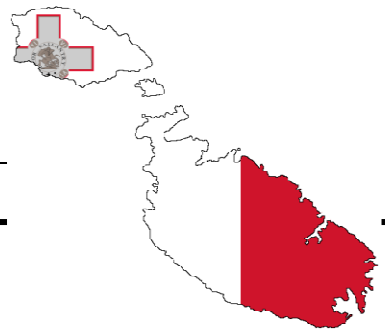


## S4.1 Maltese Personalities



### S4.1.1

We will research three renowned personalities.

Research by Ms Cynthia Gafà and Ms Therese Bonanno Siggiewi

### Dun Mikiel Xerri



One of the Maltese personalities we should really be proud of is Dun Mikiel Xerri. He was born and raised in Zebbug. He became a priest and opened a school for persons who couldn't afford to pay for their children's education. He lived in Zebbug till he became a professor at the University of Malta. Since, at the time, the university was in Valletta, he went to live there.

Dun Mikiel Xerri lived during the time when Malta was ruled by the Knights of St John. The Knights built many large palaces in Vittoriosa and Valletta, where they also built St John's co-cathedral. In 1798 the *French* came to Malta.

The French overcame the Knights, expelled them from the island and started ruling themselves. The Maltese were against French rule from the start because the French weren't kind at all. Amongst other things, they stole some of the most precious treasures from our churches. The Maltese rebelled against the French and chased them out of most of Malta. For this reason, the French barricaded themselves behind the bastions of Valletta.

A group of courageous Maltese, led by Dun Mikiel Xerri, wanted to rid Malta of the French once and for all. They came up with a plan on how to do this but, unfortunately, their plot was discovered. Dun Mikiel, together with about forty other persons, were shot in the square, in front of the Palace in Valletta, in 1799. Dun Mikiel Xerri's last words were *Viva Malta (Long Live Malta)*.

Although Dun Mikiel's plan failed, the Maltese persisted, till with the help of the British, they got rid of the French. In fact, the French rule in Malta lasted two years only, after which, the British took over the island.

Dun Mikiel Xerri and his friends will be remembered for their courage and we call them **patriots** or **heroes** because they died for their country. In Valletta there is a monument that commemorates this event. Following the example of people like Dun Mikiel Xerri, many Maltese, despite the small size of our nation, courageously defended our country when the need arose.