



“Non Nobis Domine”

The Knights Templar Newsletter
for the Province of West Yorkshire



Edition 37

Lent and Easter 2024



Right Eminent Knight
Hearl Lenton MBE
Provincial Prior

The season of Lent is a wonderful period of preparation and anticipation of the warm weather to come as the gardens burst forth with flowers and birdsong.

I personally always enjoy our Provincial Prelate’s meditation on Lent in our ‘Non Nobis’ publication. This is followed by a thoughtful oration that he gives us at our Family Church Service of thanksgiving on Low Sunday each year.

This year is no exception and we shall be meeting again at Batley for our annual celebration of the message of Easter on Sunday April 7th. I hope that as many of you as possible will bring your family with you for the event; and hopefully join us Sunday lunch afterwards.

As a Province, we have long had a tradition of supporting the Great Priory Meeting at Great Queen Street in Covent Garden. If you have never been then you really must try it. A great day out, travelling by train both ways with many of your colleagues and friends from West Yorkshire. You will be treated to a fantastic ceremony with superb pomp and ceremony and watching the Grand Master’s Bodyguard at work is very impressive.

This year the meeting takes place on Wednesday 15th May, with attendees needing to take their seats by 11.30am.



Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Psalm 51:7

Words from the Psalm for
Ash Wednesday

As the warmer weather and lighter nights approach, I look forward to seeing you in your own Preceptories and as you visit other Preceptories around the Province. Do please take some of the newer Knights with you so that they too can enjoy the fun of visiting.

I hope you will have a lovely peaceful and Blessed Easter

Yours very sincerely in the Bonds of the Order,

Hearl Lenton MBE
Provincial Prior for
the Province of West Yorkshire



Contents;

Around the Province; Welcome to new Knights; Reports of Preceptories
The Knights Templar & the Extra Terrestrial Battle Tactics; A Lenten message from our Provincial Prelate:
The Knights Templar in Gaza; Guillaume de Chatres - 14th Grand Master;
The Primitive Rule; Guidance on Religious Feast Days to be observed
Bohemond’s Book – The Knight Templar by Jan Guillou

Around the Province

When you take this oath, never break it!



De Ros Preceptory
Kt Bramley & Kt Kozacek



If you are free on Monday 11th of March come along and support Integrity Preceptory as they welcome their new Knight Paul Dunnigan



Kt Dave Bramley



*Kt Vigne Kozacek
Pronounced 'Vine'!*



To all the Knights new to our Province



The Knights of Craven and their visitors welcome Kts Les and Robert Turnock into the Order of Malta



E.Kt John Howe, EP, welcoming new Knight Anthony Ashton into St Laurence Preceptory



Medieval Knights making their devotions

Be Loyal, Brave and True



Around the Province

More progress from King George V Preceptory;

At their meeting on 13th February – Shrove Tuesday - the Preceptory welcomed three new joining members to swell their numbers.

Welcome to E.Kts. John Nicholls, Keith Howland and Bernard Armstrong. The Knights were then entertained by E.Kt. Paul Eustace who delivered a lecture based upon the article in this edition entitled 'The Knights Templar in Gaza'.



The KGV EP welcoming 2 of the 3 new joining knights

Airedale's January Meeting;

Meetings on a cold January evening seem somehow to be less inviting! If you weren't part of the 15 Knights who met at Airedale on January 28th then you missed a treat. 3 visitors braved the cold and dire threats of snow to enjoy a lecture delivered by four Knights of the Preceptory in entertaining fashion.

The warmth in the bar afterwards followed by a splendid Festive Board made the journey all the more worthwhile!



The first knights to reach the bar – concentrating on the drink rather than the conversation!

Provincial Prior's Council



The Prior's Council Knights in formal attire!

Much of the rest of the business for the day was concerned with arrangements for long-service certificates and presentations

The Spring Prior's Council meeting took place on 1st February at a secret location in Morley. Coffee and biscuits were provided by E.Kt. Binks to the delight of all present.

Much of the meeting was taken up with discussing and reviewing the Development Strategy for the Province and especially the Brethren & Companions' Information Evenings that have so far taken place.

Those present were delighted with the report on our Pipeline and the positive uplift that the Information Evenings have had. To give you a flavour we now have 85 names & contacts on the pipeline, 35 of them coming from the Information Evenings.

We have, so far, installed 36 Knights with another 49 still to be installed. Our Pipeline is flexible in the sense that it notes those who have expressed a wish to join us but maybe have some previous commitments that mean they might not be ready just yet. This is recognised within our Pipeline planning, and we regularly (but not necessarily frequently), keep in touch with those who have expressed an interest in joining us. As a first step we propose to make contact with all names on the Pipeline just to check that they do still want to join us

Great Priory Ranks for Knights of West Yorkshire

Promotions

to Gt.Her. (Acting) - E.Kt. J. Stephen **Priestley** (710)
 to P.Gt.Her. - E.Kt. D. Robin **Gregson** (216)
 to P.Gt.Her. - E.Kt. Trevor G. **Pugh** (230, 324)
 to Gt.St.B.(B.) (Acting) - E.Kt. Stephen T. **Schofield** (298)

Appointments

to P.Gt.A.-de-C. - E.Kt. C. Rupert G. **Jorissen** (3)

Come and
join us.....



You'll be VERY
Welcome!

**Preceptory meetings
to be held
during
Lent and Easter 2024**



Preceptory	Date	Place
<i>Plains of Mamre Preceptory 89 (Installation)</i>	Saturday 2 nd March	Mill Hey, Haworth, BD22 8NA
<i>Fearnley Preceptory 39 (Installation)</i>	Thursday 7 th March (Transferred)	Savile House, Lees House Rd, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury WF12 9BP
<i>De Furnival Preceptory 66</i>	Thursday 7 th March	63 Station Street, Swinton, Mexborough S64 8PZ
<i>Integrity Preceptory 205 (Provincial Visit)</i>	Monday 11 th March	Thornfield House, Bruntcliffe Rd, Morley, LS27 0QG
<i>Wharfedale Preceptory 215 (Installation)</i>	Tuesday 12 th March	Westbourne House, Westbourne Close, Bradford Rd, Otley LS22 3LG
<i>Salamanca Preceptory 21 (Installation)</i>	Thursday 14 th March	Southwood, Birdcage Lane, Halifax, HX3 0JQ
<i>Hope Preceptory 4</i>	Friday 15 th March	Greenhead Rd, Huddersfield, HD1 4EN
<i>Airedale Preceptory 230</i>	Friday 22 nd March	Charles St, Bingley BD16 4LG
<i>Plains of Rama Preceptory 3 (Installation)</i>	Tuesday 26 th March	12 Cooke St, Keighley BD11 3NN
<i>Temple Preceptory 235 (Installation)</i>	Tuesday 2 nd April	Cockerham Lane, Barnsley, S75 1AT
<i>Family Church Service of Thanksgiving</i>	Sunday 7 th April	Batley
<i>Greyfriars Preceptory 265 (Installation)</i>	Monday 8 th April	Priory Place, Doncaster, DN3 1BZ
<i>De Ros Preceptory 213 (Malta)</i>	Wednesday 10 th April	Station Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 5NE
<i>Amphibious Preceptory 158</i>	Thursday 11 th April	Market St, Heckmondwike, WF16 0JU
<i>Chantry Preceptory 214</i>	Monday 15 th April	Zetland St, Wakefield WF1 1QT
<i>Fidelity Preceptory 114</i>	Friday 19 th April	Castle Grove, Headingley, LS6 4BP

If you'd like to attend one of these meetings, consult the Rubine Red Year-Book, call the Registrar, book yourself in and look forward to a great evening.

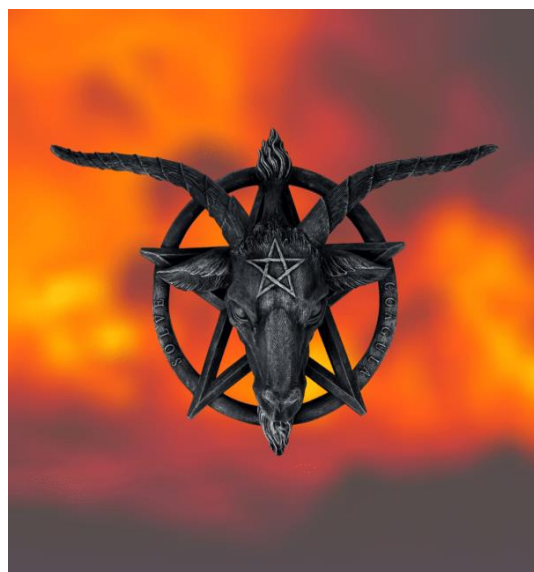
The Knights Templar and the Extra Terrestrial; Baphomet

Based upon an article by historian Terry McMahon

If you're captivated by Conspiracy theories then the story of the Knights Templar and the Head of Baphomet will really get you going!

Such Conspiracy theories began to emerge in the 1970s which became something of a golden age for weird conspiracy theories on almost every aspect of human life that couldn't be easily explained.

Many of the theories are centred on beings from outer space., The French sci-fi author Claude Avicé – alias Pierre Barbet - published two novels between 1972 and 1974 about the Knights Templar in which they helped an extra-terrestrial called Baphomet and then joined forces with him and flew with their new alien friend to other galaxies to conquer alien civilisations with the express intent of converting them to Christianity.



The Head of Baphomet as depicted in the 18th Century

Those of you that have read about the trials of the Templars in 1307 onwards will know that Baphomet was the head of a devilish creature that the Knights Templar were accused of worshipping and was used as one of the pretexts for bringing them down. In confessions obtained under torture, the Knights often referred to a head that was placed on an altar and venerated. Descriptions of this head vary but if you try to imagine the classic Satanic goat's head then you are getting close to the supposed head of Baphomet. According to the Templar accusers, Baphomet's head allegedly spoke to them and directed their actions and military operations.

So, here we have Avicé in the 1970s speculating that Baphomet was not actually a devil in the medieval sense but a being from another Galaxy. Two novels told the story: ***The Empire of Baphomet*** in 1972 and ***Stellar Crusade*** in 1974. Perhaps being somewhat embarrassed by the content of the books, Avicé wrote them under a pseudonym, Pierre Barbet.

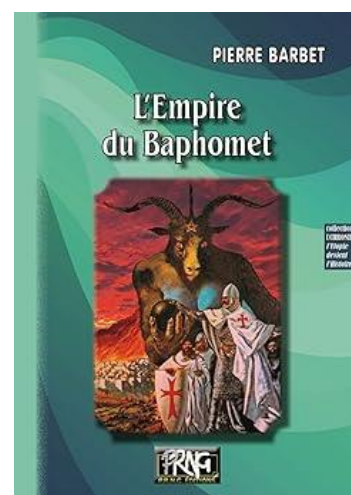
The 1972 book title has also been translated as *Baphomet's Meteor* with a subheading: ***In the Sign of the Atom - Conquer!*** This can only be a direct copy from the ancient war cry of the Templars (and the Roman Emperor Constantine), "in hoc signo vinces" or, in the vulgar tongue, "by this sign you shall conquer".

A little while later the two books were also released under the title ***The Cosmic Crusaders***.

The books' narrative suggests that an extraterrestrial, called Baphomet, crash lands his spacecraft in France around the year 1118. The same year that the Knights Templar are believed to have been founded. Coincidentally, he meets a penniless knight called Hugh de Payens and poor old Hugh thinks he is a demon.

Baphomet carefully explains, presumably in medieval Pidgeon Norman French that he is from outer space and needs help to repair his ship. It would appear that Hugh was a little nervous of communing with the Devil but his reservations quickly disappeared when Baphomet handed him a bar of gold, and guaranteed him a steady supply of food, and even promised to make Hugh both famous and invincible. Those of you who thought that Hugh was a pious Christian Knight had obviously got it wrong!

Baphomet, however, is as good as his word. Hugh forms the Knights Templar, becoming their first Grand Master, and they embark upon a triumphant progress through Europe and the Middle East overwhelming the Saracens and Mongols and becoming fabulously rich in the process.



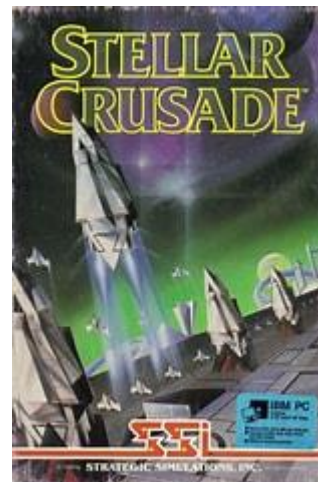
Baphomet surrounded by his Templar 'followers' on the Book's cover

As all extra-terrestrials do, the action moves hastily forward 150 years to 1170. Hugh, despite help from his alien mentor, has quitted this mortal coil and been replaced by a series of grand Masters of whom William de Beaujeu is the new incumbent. William has met with a Tibetan holy man who has told him that the Templar Order is the creation of an extra-terrestrial, Baphomet, and since De Payen's time they had been under its total control. The wily William apparently knew that Baphomet was from another world but is, not surprisingly, unaware that his own mind was being manipulated by the alien.

And at that point I'll issue a Spoiler Alert and stop telling you the story – so that you can buy the books and read them yourself – but, as if to enliven the Oak Island theory, it does end happily for those Templars who escape planet Earth in time to avoid being burned at the stake by the Catholic church!

What on earth gave rise to this fictional madness?

Were the Templars really accused of worshipping such a head and where did the accusation come from? Whatever the nature of this diabolical figure – the Knights Templar were accused of worshipping it!



Various described as the head of John the Baptist; the head of a devil that talked; a many-faced demon; a cat; a prophet and possibly Jesus Christ. You name it – Baphomet has been linked. But most of us struggle to understand what exactly this demon is. All we know for sure is that during the trials of the Knights Templar between 1307 and 1314 – there were repeated allegations that the knights worshipped a curious head.

It seems there was more than one head. And some were carved while others were painted on the wall. If you read the accounts of the trials, the rituals with these heads were most unusual if not to say fanciful.

The head apparently spoke to the knights, commanding the Templars to do its bidding.

Some of these accusations were even said to involve homoerotic and pornographic scenes that the knights later confessed they were disgusted by – or coerced into. Yet we are no closer to knowing the true nature of Baphomet.

Where could the Knights have got such a head from?

In the Fourth Crusade, a huge crusader force sacked the Christian city of Constantinople. This action was condemned by the Pope and flew in the face of the stated objective of the Crusades – to recover the Christian holy places from Muslim rule. Instead, another, rather rich, Christian city was despoiled.

Once the crusaders got in to the city, they burnt and plundered with an unseemly ferocity and made a point of desecrating the ancient cathedral of the Hagia Sophia (holy wisdom). This included crowning a whore on the bishop's throne. This must have been true as there is a contemporary description of this event:

What is more, a certain harlot, a sharer in their guilt, a minister of the furies, a servant of the demons, a worker of incantations and poisonings, insulting Christ, sat in the patriarch's seat, singing an obscene song and dancing frequently.

So, perhaps, there was some fire that caused the later smoke with which they were accused?

Constantinople was dripping with holy relics. If you wanted a crumb from the Last Supper or a fish from the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, someone in Constantinople would sell it to you. Given that the Crusaders; the Templars included, had sacked the city, burning and looting as they went, then could it be that during the orgy of destruction, that the Knights Templar acquired the head of Baphomet, which they subsequently worshipped in an heretical manner?

The truth is we don't know. But under torture many Knights Templar were adamant they had worshipped such a head and hung on its every demonic word.

It seems incredible that the Knights of a Christian Order could act in such a repulsive way and there is some relief for those of us who would rather it wasn't true. Whatever Head the Templars were accused of worshipping, there are apologists for the Baphomet image.

One such reads like this

"the familiar and very misunderstood Baphomet image (that was adopted by Alastaire Crowley in the early 20th century as well as by the Satanic Church in the 1960's) was actually a very positive (yet confusing) spiritual icon developed by Eliphas Levi in the mid-1800's.

Levi infused many positive esoteric and occult meanings into his strange image. However, also in the mid-1800's, Frenchman, Leo Taxil, who hated the Catholic Church, played an elaborate prank to try to prove the gullibility of the Catholic clergy. This included printing pamphlets with Levi's Baphomet in a very intentionally negative association with Freemasonry, as if Masons worshipped Satan. The Catholic clergy lapped it up, of course. Leo Taxil finally and publicly admitted to his hoax, proving the gullibility of the clergy and others, but the damage was done and his pamphlets and the fancifully false information contained in them lives on to this very day.

So maybe it wasn't just the Templars that were guilty of Devil Worship!

Shame on those Freemasons!

BUT.....spare a thought for the rediscovered Templecombe Head of Templecombe Devon

The Templecombe Head painting was discovered in an out-house building that was once the priest house of the *Combe Templariorum* (1185-1307) – a Templar Preceptory. Originally vividly coloured in green and vermilion pigments with gold stars around the bearded head, it was faded out to its present sepia appearance by an attempt at amateur restoration. Carbon dated to between 1280 and 1310, it is considered to represent the head of Christ. The lack of any redeeming features or halo means it could represent Jesus before his baptism, or John the Baptist. Proof positive that the Templars did reverence a head, either Christ's or that of John the Baptist. Easily subverted into something more sinister to support accusations against them!



The Templecombe Head.

*Absolute proof that a Head played a part in
Templar rituals.*

Footnote;

Just in case you'd like to read Avice's books for yourself, they are available on Amazon Books and via various other search sites

Pierre Barbet (16 May 1925 – 20 July 1995) was the main pseudonym used by French science fiction writer **Claude Avice**. Avice also used the pseudonyms of **Olivier Sprigel** and **David Maine**. Several of his novels were translated into English and published by DAW Books.

The Knights Templar in Gaza

Compiled from the research of a number of historians

Gaza is in the news at the moment as Israel and Hamas clash in this relatively small piece of territory that is nevertheless densely populated. A little known fact about Gaza is that it was a stronghold of the Knights Templar during the Crusades.

The area currently know as the Gaza Strip has changed hands many times over the Millenia having been part of the Egyptian Empire, ruled over by the Canaanites, Philistines, Phoenicians and the Kingdom of Judah (sometime called Israel). The Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar came next until, followed by Cyrus of Persia, the land was given back to the Jews to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem – as detailed in the Exaltation Ceremony of the Masonic Holy Royal Arch.

Scroll forward through the period of the Maccabees to the Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire in AD70 and the dispersal of Jews around the then known world and the eventual arrival of the Christian Emperor Constantine in the 4th century, largely led by St Helena, his mother, and the subsequent conquest of the area by Muslim forces in the 7th century and you have the picture that greeted the Christian Crusaders in 1099.

Gaza city fell to the crusaders in 1100, just a year after Jerusalem had been taken. It was of huge strategic importance being so close to the enemy Fatimid empire, a Shia Muslim realm centred on Egypt.

The Fatimid Caliphate based in Egypt began to harass the Christian areas around the Muslim enclave of Ascalon. There were Christian Castles at Ibelin in the north, Blanchegard in the northeast, Beth Gibelin in the southeast and Gaza in the south. Of these, Gaza was the most important as it stood on a direct route from Ascalon to Egypt where the Fatimid reinforcements came from.

Beth Gibelin was held by the Knights Hospitaller and around 1149, the Knights Templar were tasked with holding the city and fortress of Gaza. Holding Gaza allowed the Kingdom of Jerusalem to encircle nearby Ascalon, which was still under Fatimid control. With Gaza transformed into a Templar stronghold, the supply routes from Egypt to Ascalon were effectively disrupted.

The Ascalon garrison quickly realised the danger of encirclement and launched a major offensive against the Templar stronghold at Gaza, hoping to reopen their communication lines to Egypt. They were repulsed by the Templars with such heavy losses that the garrison of Ascalon was further weakened.

In 1153, Ascalon fell to the crusaders after a victorious siege in which the Templars played a major role but not without gruesome consequences. Led by their Grand Master de Tremelay, about 40 Templars rushed through a breach in the wall only to be overwhelmed by the defenders. Before the Templars could be reinforced the defenders had repaired the breach. The following morning the bodies of the dead Templars including that of their Grand Master de Tremelay were hung headless and naked from the walls of Ascalon.

A year later, in 1154, the Muslim chronicler Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Idrisi conceded that under Templar control, Gaza was thriving and its once severely reduced population had recovered, benefiting from being located on a key trading route. Indeed as Gaza grew, people were encouraged to build homes outside the city wall under Templar protection.



A view of modern Ascalon pre October 7th 2023



The ruined Temple and mosque in Gaza City

Promoting Christianity was at the centre of the Templar mission. In 1149, a large church was built in the city on top of the ruins of what had been a 6th century Byzantine Christian church then transformed into a mosque after Muslim armies invaded in the 7th century, but subsequently badly damaged by an earthquake in 1033 that sent the minaret crashing down on to the building.

Going back further in history, like so many churches, the site had originally been a pagan temple. But not just any old pagan temple. This was the Philistine temple to the god Dagon famously toppled by Samson in the bible. The building reverted to being a mosque after the Templars gave up Gaza but traces of the crusader church were still very visible for centuries. However, much of the mosque and its medieval Christian remains were destroyed in an Israeli air strike in December 2023.

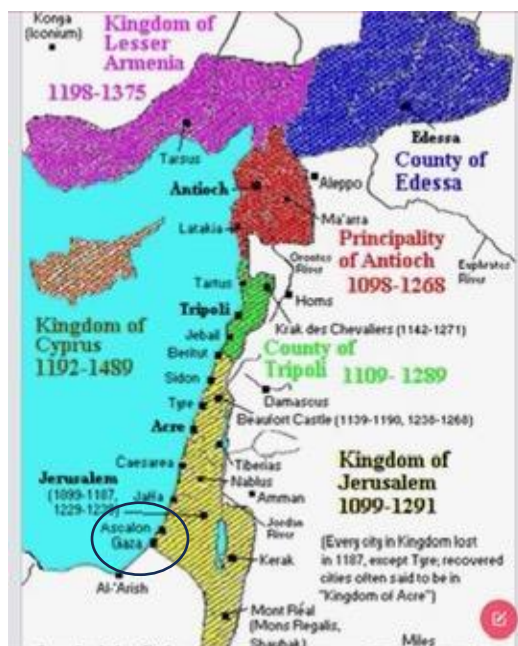
In 1170, the Templars completed the construction of a fortress around Gaza. But in that same year, the Saracen leader Saladin - who had unified Egypt and Syria and now posed a huge threat to the crusaders - attacked Gaza. Many of the Templars were not present having been ordered to help King Almaric of Jerusalem defend another nearby town. Gaza was left under the control of a cousin of the king, Miles de Plancy. The medieval chronicler William of Tyre described De Plancy as a 'degenerate drunk unfit to hold such an important position'.

Faced by this surprise assault from Saladin, and with few Templars around to defend the city, De Plancy raised the drawbridge, preventing defenceless inhabitants entering the fortress, which led to their slaughter by Saladin's soldiers. It seems that De Plancy's view was that these untrained people should do their best to fight the invaders while he watched from the battlements. What he witnessed was an horrific bloodbath. However, Saladin failed to take Gaza that day.

Emboldened, Saladin amassed a huge army and began ravaging the countryside around Gaza and Ascalon in 1177. The Saracens numbered 6976 Ghulams within a total force of 26,000. It is reported in a document of 1181 that Saladin *"did not remotely believe such a tiny force of Christians should be considered a threat and marched at his leisure on Jerusalem, allowing his army to spread out across the countryside to pillage the Kingdom of Jerusalem's farmlands"*.

Saladin's troops fanned out over the area becoming a little lax in terms of discipline. Reportedly, there were tens of thousands of Saracens looting and taking supplies all within crusader territory. King Baldwin IV of Jerusalem, the teenage monarch who famously suffered from leprosy, decided to strike back. The Christian forces numbered 375 knights plus 80 Knights Templar, 500 heavily armoured cavalry and approximately 2500 infantrymen.

Together with his 80 Templars King Baldwin IV inflicted a stunning defeat on Saladin at the Battle of Montgisard on 25th November 1177, sending the Muslim leader fleeing back to Egypt - defeated despite his overwhelming superiority of troop numbers. The Montgisard battle took place to the north of modern day Gaza between the towns of Ramla (or Rama) and ancient Yibna.



The juxtaposition of Ascalon and Gaza



An artists depiction of Baldwin's victory



A medieval depiction of the battle with manuscript text

This was the high point for the Templars in the Holy Land where they evidenced the effectiveness of their battle tactics and incredible discipline, moulded by their spiritual ethos. But, of course, pride comes before a fall. And Saladin learned his lessons well. By 1187, the Templar Grand Master was the mercurial Gerard de Ridefort who spent a great deal of time immersed in the turbulent court politics of the kingdom of Jerusalem. On July 4 of that year, he led his Templar army to a terrible defeat at the Battle of Hattin, largely because he refused to take advice from crusaders he disliked for political and personal reasons. This advice was overwhelmingly sensible and included chiding De Ridefort for positioning his army in an area where there was no natural water; advising him that if the battle lasted any time then his troops would be exhausted and unable to fight due to this lack of water.

De Ridefort was taken prisoner by Saladin but the Templars negotiated his release in return for surrendering Gaza. Not long after, Saladin made a point of destroying Gaza's fortifications.

The city was retaken in 1191 during a subsequent crusade by Richard the Lionheart and his Templar army but he quickly realised that the only way to ensure safety for Christian pilgrims was to make terms with Saladin which he did later that year and a short period of peace then ensued until Richard was captured by Leopold of Saxony being effectively removed from the military and political manoeuvring in the Holy Land. Gaza quickly returned to Muslim rule before being completely flattened by a Mongol army under Hulagu Khan in the 13th century. Hulagu was the Grandson of Genghis Khan and had formed the largest Mongol army ever seen but despite this he still allied himself to the Kingdom of Jerusalem under Bohemond and his Crusader troops to ensure that they could break the power of the Ayyubids and remove them completely from The Holy Land.

The tactic worked and to prevent the Ayyubids ever using Gaza against him, he gave orders that the city was to be flattened.

And so it remained for several decades.....

The Provincial Malta Meeting

Leap-day 2024

A successful and enjoyable evening for the installation of Kt. James Lee of Craven Preceptory into the Order



The Prior of Malta explains the Banners to Kt James



The Provincial Prior addresses the meeting, whilst the Provincial Marshal takes a moment to himself!



2 happy Knights!



The Provincial Sub Prior checks the certificates



The Installation group; is Keith Howland really that tall?



The two Provincial Deputy Marshals

One of the great Penitential Seasons

Lent



By E.Kt. Paul Christodoulou
Provincial Prelate

Brother Knights all, the word “Lent” comes from an old English word that means “springtime,” so it reminds us of spring cleaning and the new life in nature during spring. This season of Lent is a time of special grace for us in which we want to do some spring cleaning in our lives and enjoy new life as a result. So, we should come to acknowledge that we are sinners. We want to clean up our lives during Lent. We want to leave sin behind and grow closer to the Lord. We want a change of heart this Lent.

The words of the Lord through the prophet Joel have Haulage significance as we begin this season of Lent; Haulage they are words that we can easily see the Lord speak to us personally:

“Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.

For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment”.

(Joel 2:12-13)

The words of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians are also very relevant for us as we begin this season of Lent:

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor 5:20-21)

In the Scriptures when people left sin behind and turned over a new leaf, they used ashes to symbolize their repentance. Job said, ***“I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6)***

Daniel ***“turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.” (Dan 9:3)***

Jesus said, ***“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matt 11:21; Luke 10:13)***. Therefore, in a spirit of repentance we take ashes on our foreheads at the commencement of Lent on Ash Wednesday.

Sometimes people ask, ***“What are you giving up for Lent?”*** There is one thing to give up during Lent—sin. This season of Lent is a preparation for renewing our baptismal promises during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. Paul says, when writing to the ***Romans (6:3-6), that when we were baptized, we died to our old way of life to live a new way of life*** i.e., if we were baptized as adults, we died to our old sinful ways, we left sin behind. Therefore, Paul says that when we were baptized, we went into the tomb with Jesus and rose out of the tomb again with Jesus to a new life. The season of Lent is to give us time once again to die to our old sinful ways and rise out of the tomb with Jesus to a new way of life so that by the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night when we renew our baptismal vows, we will also have renewed our lives. That is why the First Preface of Lent says,

For by your gracious gift each year, your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure.

Paul urged the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor 6:1). During Lent this year we too do not want the grace of God to go in vain.

To show that we are serious about overcoming sin, we do penance. Our penance during Lent, as well as being a small attempt at reparation for our sins, is a symbol of the change of heart we want to achieve. Jesus spoke about prayer, fasting, and giving alms. Since the early centuries, these are three practices the Church has encouraged us to undertake during Lent as a form of penance: praying more, fasting, and giving alms to the poor.



Our medieval Templar namesakes receive the word of God from their Bishop



Hearing the WORD from our Great Heavenly Captain

Lent; a period of praying more, fasting, and giving alms to the poor.

- Some fast on Good Friday and abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent. In a spirit of repentance. It is a way of showing that we love the Lord more than food and that we love the Lord more than sin.
- There are many ways of giving alms. In helping other people we also love the Lord. I for one, make a donation to charity and this year will walk 11,000 steps a day in March for Prostate Cancer UK.
- I hope Lent may also be for you a time of growing closer to the Lord by spending more time in prayer. Reading the Bible and reading spiritual books are also a great help. There are some great Lenten companion books that you can follow each day throughout Lent.

I wish you a holy season of Lent, a joyful season of Lent, a time in which you grow closer to the Lord and leave sin behind. The Lord comes to us with a different grace in each season. May the grace that God gives us during this season of Lent not be in vain. I conclude with the opening prayer of Mass at the start of Lent:

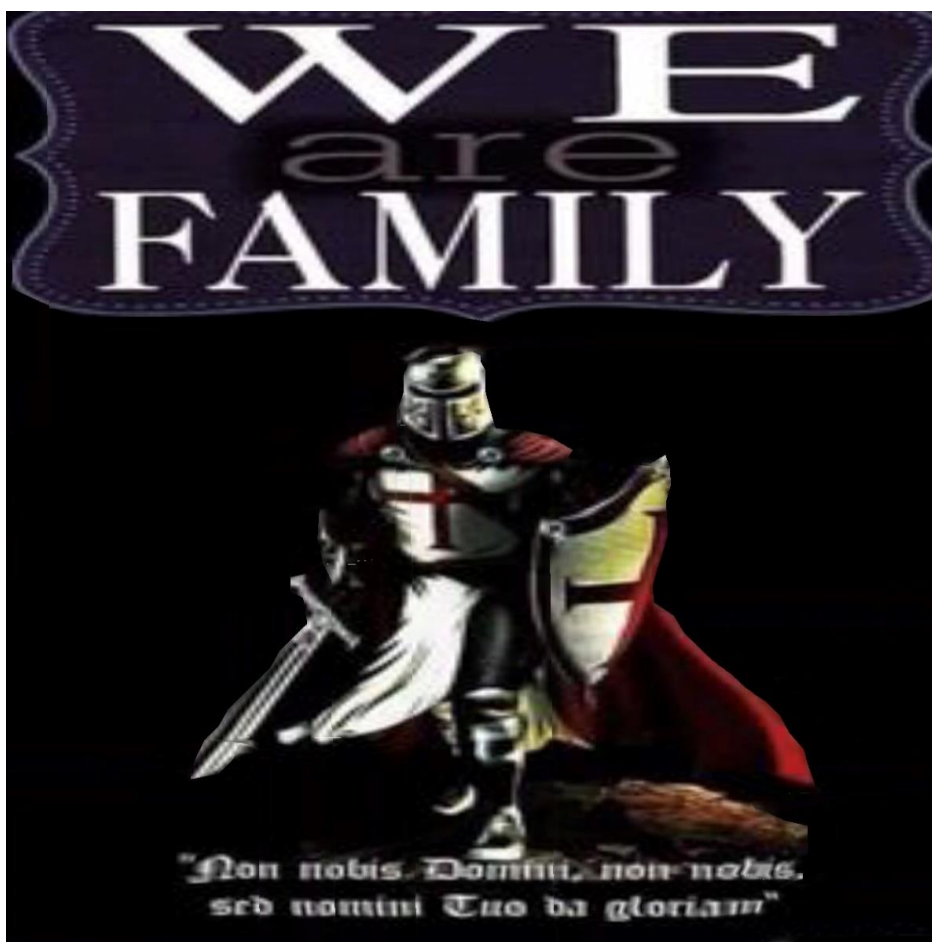
Grant, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting, this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint. (Opening Prayer of Mass on Ash Wednesday)

I look forward also to our family church service that takes place on Low Sunday. (April 7th), and as always, I am here if you need me, anytime.

With love in Him,

Paul

E.Kt. Paul Christodoulou
Provincial Prelate
KT Province of West Yorkshire



The Provincial Family Church Service
is on Low Sunday
7th April 2024
at Batley

The Fourteenth Grand Master

Guillaume De Chartres

1210-1218



The Arms of Guillaume De Chartres

Guillaume de Chartres (Guilielmus de Carnoto, Willemus de Carnoto) was the 14th Grand Master of the Knights Templar from 1210 to 26th August 1218.

He was the son of Nilon III, the Count of Bar-sur-Seine and was born in 1178.

In 1210, he assisted at the coronation of Jean de Brienne as King of Jerusalem. In 1211, he acted as a go-between for the Templars in their disputes with Leo I of Armenia regarding the castle of Bagras.

During his rule, the order flourished in Spain, achieving significant victories against the Moors.

He began the Templar contact with the Mongols which eventually resulted in alliances between the Crusader kingdoms and the Mongols. Guillaume's first contact was with Genghis Khan but his moves were controversial and he was accused of treason as a result.

He commanded the Templar forces which took part in the naval siege of the Egyptian port of Damietta as part of the 5th Crusade. The city, under the control of the [Ayyubid](#) sultan [al-Kamil](#), was besieged in 1218 and eventually taken by the Crusaders in 1219

At the beginning of the Fifth Crusade, it was agreed that a force would attempt to take Damietta, located at the mouth of the river Nile. The Crusading forces planned to use this city as a launching point for the southern part of a pincer attack upon Jerusalem from Acre and Suez. Control over the area would also provide the wealth to finance the continuation of the crusade, and reduce the threat from the Muslim fleet

In March 1218, the Crusader ships of the Fifth Crusade set sail to the port of Acre. In late May, the forces assigned to besiege Damietta set sail. The first ships arrived on May 27, although the main leaders were delayed by storms and further preparations. The crusading forces included groups of Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller. Naval fleets from Frisia and Italy, and troops amassed under numerous other military leaders.^[2]

Upon the arrival of the first Crusader ships to Damietta, Simon III, Count of Saarbrucken was chosen as a temporary leader until the arrival of the remaining ships. Under his command, the force established a landing site on May 29 "without any loss of blood." Later that day, the remaining ships arrived.

The first objective of the Crusaders was to take the defensive river tower that protected the fortress of Damietta and anchored one end of a chain across the harbour. However, the approaches to the tower were limited by the large iron chain to the east, and the shallow depth of the river to the west.^[3] Assaults upon the tower began on June 24, but they repeatedly failed. As a result, the Crusaders created a new type of naval siege weaponry, sometimes attributed to the chronicler Oliver of Paderborn; two ships were bound together, and four masts and sailyards were built, with a siege tower and ladder constructed on top. The structure was then covered with a layer of animal skins to protect from enemy attacks. On August 24, the engine was brought to the tower; the next day, the men in the tower surrendered.^[2] The use of this remarkable siege engine aided the Crusaders in taking the tower, and opening the way for the fleet to attack the fortress.

Unfortunately for Guillaume, pestilence had ravaged the Crusader forces and he succumbed to what is thought to have been endemic typhus on 25th August 1218, the day after the Tower of Damietta was taken by the Crusaders and so he probably never saw the use of the new and effective naval siege engine that the Templars had helped to build.



A later artist's impression of Guillaume De Chartres

In Praise of the new Knighthood

As our series on the Rule of St Benedict draws to a close, we find the guidance given to our medieval namesakes about the Christian Festivals that they should observe. These are the Feast Days and Fasts that all the Brothers should Celebrate and Observe



HERE CONTINUETH THE RULE OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE POOR KNIGHTS OF THE HOLY CITY

74. Let it be known to all present and future brothers of the Temple that they should fast at the vigils of the twelve apostles. That is to say: St Peter and St Paul; St Andrew; St James and St Philip; St Thomas; St Bartholomew; SS Simon and Jude; St James; St Matthew; the vigil of St John the Baptist; the vigil of the Ascension and the two days before; the rogation days; the vigil of Pentecost; the ember days; the vigil of St Laurence; the vigil of Our Lady in mid-August; the vigil of All Saints; the vigil of Epiphany.

And they should fast on all the above-mentioned days according to the commandments of Pope Innocent at the council which took place in the city of Pisa. **And if any of the above-mentioned feast days fall on a Monday, they should fast on the preceding Saturday.** If the nativity of Our Lord (25th December) falls on a Friday, the brothers should eat meat in honour of the festival. But they should fast on the feast day of St Mark (25th April) because of the Litany: for it is established by Rome for the mortality of men. However, if it falls during the octave of Easter (8 days including Easter Day), they should not fast.

These are the Feast Days which should be Observed in the House of the Temple

75. The nativity of Our Lord (25th December); the feast of St Stephen (26th December); St John the Evangelist (27th December); **the Holy Innocents*** (28th December); the eighth day of Christmas, which is New Year's Day; Epiphany; St Mary Candlemas; St Mathias the Apostle; the Annunciation of Our Lady in March (25th March); Easter and the three days following; St George; Ss Philip and James, two apostles; the finding of the Holy Cross; the Ascension of Our Lord; Pentecost and the two days following; St John the Baptist (24th June); St Peter and St Paul, two apostles; St Mary Magdalene; St James the Apostle; St Laurence; the Assumption of Our Lady; the nativity of Our Lady; the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; St Matthew the Apostle; St Michael; SS Simon and Jude; the feast of All Saints; St Martin in winter; St Catherine in winter; St Andrew; St Nicholas in winter; St Thomas the Apostle.

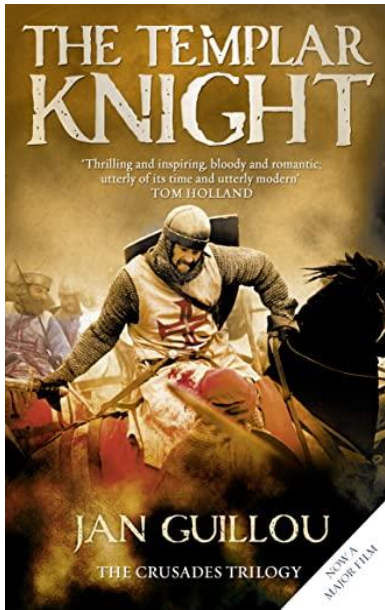
76. None of the lesser feasts should be kept by the House of the Temple.

And we wish and advise that this be strictly kept and adhered to: **that all the brothers of the Temple should fast from the Sunday before St Martin's to the nativity of Our Lord, unless illness prevents them.** And if it happens that the feast of St Martin falls on a Sunday, the brothers should go without meat on the preceding Sunday.

* The date when King Herod's soldiers killed all the young boys in Bethlehem



Bohemond's Book



A rollicking good adventure from the author of The Crusades Trilogy
The series was so captivating that it was made into a TV series which is available on YouTube

The second volume of the crusades trilogy from best selling Swedish author Jan Guillou. THE KNIGHT TEMPLAR follows Arn's adventures in the Holy Land, where he discovers that the infidel Saracens aren't as brutish and uncivilised as he had been led to believe, and that in fact there is another, darker side to the teaching of the Cistercians.

Book reviewers commented that;

'He has a remarkable grasp of the mindset of the period and always puts the emphasis where it would be for the people involved at that time, rather than ours. Some readers may find that disorienting, but a capacity for disturbing readers' assumptions is even more a hallmark of good historical fiction than the inclusion of the Knights Templar'

'Thrilling and inspiring, bloody and romantic; utterly of its time and utterly modern'



“Non Nobis Domine”

**The Knights Templar Newsletter
for the Province of West Yorkshire**



The Editorial Team is always on the lookout for material to be included in our Newsletter – so if you have any news about your Preceptory or articles that we may use then please let the Editor know. The Newsletter is produced by the Prior's Council Membership Working Group.

And, once more, Brother Knights, our toast is:

“To all Knights Templar wheresoever dispersed over the face of earth or water”

E Kt Paul Eustace
Editor