



PROVINCIAL PRIORY – 19 OCTOBER 2024

ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT EMINENT PROVINCIAL PRIOR

Once again it is good to see you all, particularly our guests from other Provinces. Everyone is most welcome and I hope you have an enjoyable day.

It is now five years since I was Installed as Provincial Prior, and I want to take the opportunity today to reflect on that period and to look at my vision for the future. This is particularly relevant having today Installed a new Sub-Prior for the Province.

I have already spoken about the retiring Sub-Priors contribution to the Province over the past thirteen years, and the last five would not have been as successful without his support and guidance.

It is fair to say that the period since my Installation has seen challenges, mainly not of our own making. However we survived the pandemic and I believe came out stronger because of the initiatives we took at the time and since. Yes our membership took a tumble from some 480 members in 2019 down to a low of 445, but Brother Knights. We are now recovering and have just admitted our eightieth Knight into the Order since we resumed normal activities some three years ago, bringing us back to our 2019 levels. This is due in no small part to those initiatives taken by the Province, the hard work of Officers in their implementation and your support.

So what have we done:

- Developed a Strategy for Growth and formed a Development Team to take that initiative forward
- Established our much acclaimed newsletter 'Non Nobis Domine', the Introductory Card and the Ritual Rovers
- Strengthened our ties with the Holy Royal Arch
- Introduced a Facebook Group which now has over 150 members
- Made changes to the Emmaus Society membership to make it open to all

So what about the future:

The one thing we are not going to do is sit back and rest on our laurels.

I have already had a review of the ritual used in the Province and I am most grateful to the Provincial Chancellor for leading this review and my advisors for helping me make what I consider to be fair and equitable decisions which have been communicated to Preceptories. This exercise was not done for any self-aggrandisement on my part, it was to ensure that the Supreme Grand Master's concerns about ritual were addressed within the Province. I do make one plea – please read my decisions in respect of ritual, do not place your own interpretation or listen to rumours.

So what else is in store:

- We will continue with those initiatives which I consider have proved successful in recent years in raising the profile of this wonderful Order
- Our awareness' evenings will continue, with a strengthened emphasis
- I want to encourage our new members to become involved in the work of Preceptories and in delivering ritual
- A look in more detail at what we are doing, why we are doing it, are we doing it in the right place at the right time, are we doing it for the best interests of the Order and the Province but more especially are we doing it in the best interest of our members. Why do we have three Preceptories meeting on the same evening, two within less than two miles of each other. Also let's have a critical look at areas in the Province where we have no representation and explore our potential to develop.

How nice it would be to have a crystal ball that would let us look into the future – it would definitely make some of our decisions easier. But the best thing is accepting the future with positivity and an open mind. I cannot take the Province and the Order forward on my own, I have a new Sub-Prior who is eager to take on the challenge of the office and he will be leading on a number of these initiatives. But we can only do so with the help and support of you all. I usually end my address with a quotation but I think the following words from Mahatma Gandhi are more than appropriate at this stage in my address –

“THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU DO TODAY.”

The Provincial Prelate has already referred to those Knights who have departed on that pilgrimage that ends in the Holy City. Their contribution to the work of the Order of the Temple, however small, is much appreciated and they will be sorely missed. We mourn the loss of all the Brother Knights and extend our sympathy to their loved ones, but rest in the consolation that they are now at peace.

I have today appointed, re-appointed and promoted certain Knights in Provincial Priory. I collectively offer my congratulations and best wishes to them all. To the Acting Officers who are retiring I extend my thanks for their fealty and support. Our First Constable comes to the end of his term and we thank him for taking on this role, and prior to that Second Constable, in addition to his onerous duties as Provincial Director of Ceremonies in the Royal Arch. Our Bodyguard Commander stands down today after distinguished service in the Bodyguard, with a break of three years when he was Deputy Provincial Marshal and I thank him for his valued contribution to the work of the Province. I look forward to the Acting Officers supporting me and the Preceptories' in the coming year.

We continue to make use of the Facebook page to pass information about Provincial activities to members. I thank the administrator and his team for looking after the Group. Also I am pleased that we have eventually resolved the matter of the Provincial Website and this is now up and running. We are most grateful to for the assistance of a Knight from outside the Province for his work in building the new Website and I am pleased he is with us today. We also have a new Webmaster, and are working to get the balance right between our two social media sites.

I must express my thanks to the members of the Provincial Priors Council for their continued support and encouragement. To the Provincial Marshal for the work he does, not only throughout the year, but also to ensure today's meeting has been conducted with the usual

ceremonial. We extend our congratulations to him on his significant appointment in the Royal Arch. I know he will continue to take every opportunity to promote this Order. To the Provincial Chancellor for his continued wise counsel and acerbic wit; the Provincial Treasurer for his management of the financial affairs of the Province; and the Provincial Registrar for overseeing the arrangements for our meetings, ensuring that we are adequately sustained whilst at refreshment. To the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for his work in keeping Preceptories in line ensuring the Summonses are correct and issued on time - not an easy task. Lastly, but not least, our Provincial Vice-Chancellor, for his continued dedication and work ethic in helping Preceptories and looking after the administrative aspects of the Province. I know he gets frustrated when things don't go to plan, but his contribution is most appreciated by myself, and I know the rest of the Province.

I have already spoken about the retiring Bodyguard Commander, but I take this opportunity to express my thanks to his Deputy, who I have appointed as Commander today, also the Registrar and members of the Bodyguard for being in attendance, not only today but when either myself or the Sub-Prior have officially visited Preceptories. Your work is much appreciated and I know the new Commander is looking forward to a continued recruitment into the Order to enable him to maintain the numbers and quality of the Bodyguard.

Brother Knights the work of this wonderful Order continues and during the coming year we will mark significant milestones for two Preceptories who will celebrate their Centenaries – Airedale No 230 on 30 November this year and Temple No 235 at a date to be agreed sometime early next year. I hope you will support these celebrations.

I wish you all well Brother Knights in your endeavours, with continued vigour to uphold the excellent ideals of this Order, and strength to continue to profess our Christian faith.