

## PROVINCIAL PRIORY - 18 OCTOBER 2025

### ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT EMINENT PROVINCIAL PRIOR

Once again, it is good to see you all, particularly our distinguished guests who have travelled from other Provinces. I extend a very warm welcome to everyone gathered here today at our new venue in Huddersfield for this Provincial meeting. I sincerely hope you all have an enjoyable day, and I am pleased to see new Knights of the Province here today at their first Provincial meeting..

Brother Knights, I am delighted to begin my address with a note of optimism, reflecting on the growth of our Order within the Province. This year, between January and September, we have welcomed 29 new Knights into our ranks. Notably, 14% of these new Knights are under 40 years of age - a significant rise compared to just 6% over the previous three years. Furthermore, this positive trend has continued, with an additional four Knights Installed already this month. It is particularly encouraging to witness Preceptories that have previously struggled to attract Candidates now successfully Installing new Knights. This is a testament to the dedication and enthusiasm shown by all of you in promoting our Order. As a result of your efforts, we have achieved a net increase of 14 members over the twelve months leading up to the end of September, representing a 4% growth on the previous year. This achievement is not merely a statistic; it is a clear and encouraging indication that our Strategy for Growth is bearing fruit. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your ongoing commitment in attracting new Knights. Let us continue this excellent work.

At last year's Provincial Meeting, I addressed the theme of change with a clear message - that we would not simply 'sit back and rest on our laurels.' I emphasised the importance of examining our actions, questioning not only what we are doing but also why we are doing it, and, crucially, considering whether our approaches truly serve the best interests of the Order, our members, and the Province as a whole. Little did I know at the time what was in store, but the Provincial Executive have not stood still and change is afoot.

- We have restructured the administration arrangements for the Province, which I hope will avoid duplication of work, continue to provide a responsive service to Preceptories whilst at the same time easing the burden of work for several Provincial Officers.
- Revised the Provincial By-Laws, which you have thankfully approved today
- We are looking to create a new Preceptory in Ripon which should afford us greater opportunities to develop the Order in the North of the Province.

- We are also actively working to strengthen the Order in the South of the Province and in this respect have held an awareness evening in Sheffield.
- and lastly
- We have updated and revitalised the management and recruitment policy of the Provincial Prior's Bodyguard.

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 am delighted to have re-appointed the Provincial Sub-Prior. Over the past year, he has approached his responsibilities in the measured and thoughtful manner I anticipated, carefully observing developments within the Province and providing invaluable advice to both myself and the Provincial Executive. He has also been instrumental in maintaining strong links with other Provinces, making himself known to colleagues across the length and breadth of the country through numerous visits. These efforts have ensured that our connections remain robust and collaborative. I am most grateful to him for his help and support. I look forward to our continued work together and the positive impact your guidance brings to the Province.

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. The Provincial First Constable comes to the end of his term and I thank him for his work in that role, and prior to that as Second Constable. I was pleased to promote the Second Constable to be First Constable. He stood down during the year as Bodyguard Registrar, for health reasons, after occupying that role for a number of years. It is good to see him here today and I thank him for the work he has and is doing for the Province. Our Warden of Regalia has stood down this year and I thank him for his valued contribution in that Office, he is however to continue his work as Provincial Archivist and Co-Convenor of the Emmaus Society. During the course of the year I appointed a new Development Officer and I am pleased to re-appoint him today. This is an important role and I am most grateful to him and his team for the work they are doing. I look forward to the Acting Officers supporting me and the Preceptories' in the coming year.

Today we say goodbye to two senior Officers

The Provincial Chancellor has stepped down from that role, having served with distinction since 2019. His tenure marks him as one of the longest serving Chancellors in modern times. The Province has been fortunate to benefit from someone of his calibre, whose vast experience and knowledge - gained through holding high office in other Orders - have proved invaluable. His wisdom has shaped many aspects of our

work and helped guide our progress, contributing significantly to the success and stability of the Province. On a personal note, I am deeply indebted to him for his wise counsel during my formative years as Provincial Prior - his guidance has been a source of reassurance, inspiration, and clarity.

Our Provincial Vice-Chancellor has also stepped down from office. His service spans some thirteen years, a period during which he has held several pivotal roles and contributed tirelessly to the advancement and success of the Province. He began his journey as Provincial Registrar in 2012, a role he fulfilled with great diligence and attention to detail. His dedication and capability soon led to his appointment as Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2015, where he continued to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to the Province's work. In 2019, he assumed the office of Vice-Chancellor, a position in which he has truly excelled, consistently exceeding expectations through his work ethic and untiring discharge of responsibilities. He has also been an outstanding representative of the Province during visits to other Provinces. His knowledge of the railways and ability to navigate the country by train has become well known, and his presence has always been warmly received. The high regard in which he is held by our sister Provinces is a testament to his enthusiasm for the Order and the positive impact he has had on all those he has encountered. On behalf of myself and the entire Province, I extend our deepest gratitude to him for the significant contribution you have made to the work of the Order. Your diligent manner, unwavering commitment, and exemplary service in the various offices you have held has set a standard for others to follow. Your legacy will endure as a shining example of dedication and service to the Province. Thank you for everything you have done.

I must express my thanks to the other 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; 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 and I look forward to his support in his new role as Provincial Chancellor.

I thank the Bodyguard Commander, his Deputy 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. I am also most grateful to the former Bodyguard Commander for stepping in to take over the duties of Bodyguard Registrar.

Brother Knights I know a number of Preceptories deliver the Anterior Address before the admission of the candidate, and I have approved its general use in the Province. Can I therefore ask that all Preceptories look at adopting this ritual. It forms a fitting prelude for what is to follow since it reminds the candidate of how this step into

Knight Templary fits into whatever other steps he has taken in his Masonic Career. I have no objection to it being read, I would rather it was read than being littered with numerous prompts.

I wish you all well, Brother Knights, in your endeavours. May you continue with vigour to uphold the excellent ideals of this Order, and find the strength to profess our Christian faith with steadfastness and humility. Let us move forward together in unity and purpose, ever committed to the values that define our wonderful Order.