

## **PROVINCIAL PRIORY OF MALTA – 6 MARCH 2025**

### **ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT EMINENT PROVINCIAL PRIOR**

Good evening Brother Knights, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for attending.

Firstly, let me thank the distinguished Very Eminent Knight for acting as Prior of Malta this evening in the absence of the Provincial Sub-Prior, who is on holiday. I also express my sincere appreciation to all the Knights who have assisted him in such a dignified manner. Your combined efforts have ensured that the candidate was able to witness, and I hope to enjoy, what I thought was a meaningful ceremony. I extend my warmest congratulations to our newly Installed Knight of Malta, the ceremony this evening adds another dimension to your Masonic journey. I trust it has further stimulated your interest in this wonderful Order.

Brother Knights, although our newly Installed Knight is new to the Order he has decided to dedicate his personal fund raising activities in 2026 to the Jerusalem Eye Hospital. He is to undertake a number of strenuous activities such as the three peaks in Yorkshire, and then in the UK and finally climbing Mount Kilimanjaro at Christmas. Let me assure you that I will not be pursuing the former Provincial Chancellors suggestion that I join him on that occasion to share the Christmas Observance from the top of Kilimanjaro, no matter how much it may impress the Grand Master. In addition there will be less strenuous events which I am sure we can all participate in such as a wine and charcutier evening and beer and quiz night. Further details will be circulated. Please support him in his efforts to reach the target he has set himself to raise over £3,000.

This evening I have conferred the equivalent rank in the Order of Malta on those Knights I appointed and promoted in Provincial Priory last October, with the exception of those who have no ceremonial duties in the Order of Malta. I thank you all for your continued support and may I remind you that I expect to see you around the Province supporting Preceptories and Pories during your year in office.

Brother Knights, as some of you will be aware preferments in Great Priory were announced this week – and I am sure you would wish to join with me in congratulating these five Knights who have received this worthy recognition (applause).

At the Provincial meeting in October I reported progress in developing the Order. Since then a successful awareness evening has been held in Rotherham and one is planned for Sheffield, and work is apace to develop a new Preceptory in Ripon.

Our year end figures for December show a record number of 38 new Knights Installed and a net increase of 3.3% in members. However, I am concerned that we have two Preceptories with less than 10 members and five Preceptories that suffered net losses of more than 10% of their members through resignations from the Province. Brother Knights we cannot be complacent and it is incumbent on us all to look at ways of retaining our current membership, whilst at the same time attracting new members. I do urge you that if you have members who haven't been attending regularly to find out why and encourage them to attend.

There are a number of significant dates for your diary in the coming months. Firstly the Provincial Church Service on Low Sunday, 12 April to be held once again at St Thomas'

Church, Batley followed by refreshments at Blenheim House. I look forward once again to welcoming Knights and their wives, partners and family to the service. On 20 May, Great Priory meet in London and I hope Knights will support those members of the Province who will be receiving preferment in Great Priory. The Emmaus Society will meet on 23 June at Morley; Brother Knights this will be a significant meeting, something the Society haven't done before. A demonstration team from the King Edward VII Preceptory of Improvement will be attending. It is incumbent on us all to strive to improve the way we deliver our ceremonies, and I would expect - yes expect - every Preceptory to be represented at this meeting by their Eminent Preceptor and Marshal, together with any other Knights who wish to improve their contribution to our ceremonies. Further information will be circulated in due course. To conclude the first half of the year we will be holding the ever popular Annual Dinner at Drighlington on 17 July.

It would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the efforts of those who have worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure the success of this meeting - the Provincial Mareschal, the Vice-Chancellor and First Lieutenant, together with their teams. Your hard work, dedication, and planning have not gone unnoticed, and for that, I extend my deepest gratitude.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Provincial Chancellor for his efforts, with the assistance of Registrars, to resolve problems with respect to those Knights who have been installed as Knights of Malta but not recorded as such at Mark Masons Hall. Some of these anomalies go back 40 years and I am pleased to say that these Knights are now starting to receive their Malta Certificates.

In this period of Lent let us reflect on the sacrifices our Lord and Saviour made for us. Is it any coincidence that we hold this Malta meeting just before or during Lent? Possibly not, but it does offer us the opportunity to reflect on the significance of this period in the Christian calendar. Lent gives us the opportunity to deepen our faith and strengthen our resolve to live according to our values. I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist – “Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me”

Brother Knights, I thank you all once again for your presence and contributions this evening. Let us move forward with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication. May we continue to work together in harmony, building a brighter future not only for yourselves but for this wonderful Order.