



the Surrey knight



Issue 12 – DECEMBER 2024

A Christmas Message from our Provincial Prior



Dear Brother Knights of the Province.

Christmas is a time of Giving, Remembering, Caring, Believing and, most important, of Peace and Good Will.

During this year you have contributed to the development of the Order in so many ways, and I commend and thank each one of you and your families for the support given to me in my role as your Provincial Prior.

Let us remember those who have departed during 2024 and cherish their memory. Reflect on the good deeds, however large or small, you have carried out during the year. Continue to exude the principles contained in our Precepts and of most importance, continue to look after your health and that of your family, in the year ahead.

I have no doubt there will be many challenges to be faced during 2025, but I do believe our Blessed Saviour will keep us under his protection, whatever aspects of life we have to deal with.

May you and your family have a very Happy Christmas, a Healthy New Year and one that is filled with Peace and Good Will. Fingers crossed in the hope that Father Christmas will leave that special present you wished for.

Please remember to Raise your Glass at 5pm on Christmas Day and toast: To All Knight Templars.

I offer my sincere thanks for your support and friendship in allowing me to perform the role of your Provincial Prior in the Province. There will be many new and varied challenges in the year ahead, but I am confident that with your support these can be successfully addressed.

Every best wish.

Yours in the Bonds of the Order

Patrick

*Provincial Prior.
December 2024*





Service of Rededication and Thanksgiving



The Biennial Church Service was held in October 2024 at the lovely old church of St Mary's in Thorpe. We received a very warm welcome back to Thorpe by the Vicar, Fr. Stephen Girling and his team.



It is impossible to say exactly when St. Mary's Church was built, although portions of the building are of venerable antiquity which leads one to believe it is a Medieval Church. In 1963 a Roman cinerary urn, dated to 120 - 150 A.D. was discovered buried in the Churchyard, establishing that this site has been of religious significance for nearly 1900 years.



The beginnings of the church seen today may have been instigated by Abbot Hugh in 1110. The present Church building, with earliest sections dated around the 10th / 11th century is part of the conservation area along with several other listed and protected buildings, possibly dating from the 17th century onwards.



Permission for the Province to use the Church had been given by the Vicar, Fr. Stephen Girling, who opened the service by warmly welcoming everyone present.

There were several Executive members of Surrey Orders present, including from the Mark and the Allied Masonic Degrees, E.Kt. John French; from the Knights Templar Priests, E.Kt. Jack Love; from The Operatives, E.Kt. Dr Miguel Godfrey; and from the Order of the Scarlet Cord, V.E.Kt. Chris Eley.

After the first hymn the Confession and the Collect were led by Fr. Stephen Girling. The first Bible reading, 1 Peter 2 vs 11-17 was by our Provincial Prior, R.E.Kt. Patrick P Crossan. The second Bible reading, Ephesians 6:10-17, was by our Provincial Sub Prior, E.Kt. Dr Miguel Godfrey.



A very thought-provoking Address was given by Fr. Stephen Girling. E.Kt. David Thompson, Provincial Vice Chancellor, read the Precepts of the Order. Fr. Stephen Girling led the prayers for the State, the Church, the World, for those in need, for the departed, and for the Order. The carefully chosen hymns were not only very appropriate to the Christian Precepts of the Masonic Knights Templar Order but all very well known.

After singing the Templar's Hymn, For all the Saints, Fr. Stephen Girling led us in rededicating ourselves in service to God saying together the Prayer of St Ignatius Loyola.

To end a very enjoyable afternoon, the Knights of the Province of Surrey gathered together for a splendid cream tea organised by the ladies of the church.

Many thanks to Fr. Stephen Girling and his team for making us feel so welcome.





Address by the Vicar of St Mary's Church Fr. Stephen Girling



As a pilgrim in Jerusalem some years ago, I enjoyed a remarkable degree of freedom and joy in the city. This is in stark contrast to the fear that will have gripped pilgrims travelling there in previous periods of history, including during the crusades and this present day with pilgrimage now paused completely.

Let's not take for granted the freedoms we enjoy in this country. Freedom of movement, of religion, of expression. Let our gratitude be to God, the source of all freedom and let our gratitude lead us to intercede for those who insulate to fear. There is of course freedom FROM and freedom TO. The Apostle Peter is writing to Christians across a vast swath of the Eastern Mediterranean. He instructs those who live as free people to live as servants of God AND to refrain from using freedom as a pretext for evil.

There's no shortage of examples of how people have used their freedom as a pretext for evil, even those claiming to be followers of Christ

- Church leaders who have abused authority.
- Those have demonstrated nepotism in the business community or in politics.
- Those who have evaded tax through non-disclosure.
- Online abuse under the cloak of freedom of expression.

Teresa of Avila, the 6th century saint and mystic said there are three essential elements for living a holy life as servants of God.

1. **Humility** - which gives us a right and guarded estimation of ourselves.
- **Prayer** - which keeps the surrender to God who is holy
- **Self-knowledge** - which guides us into integrity. Self-knowledge, as long as we're willing to be honest with ourselves, helps us to identify how we're inclined to use our freedom as a pretext for evil.

As a Catholic Christian, Theresa was rooted in the collective mentality, Christians are one in the body of Christ. Because we are inclined to confirmation bias, self-reward and hearing what itching ears want to hear, accountability and vulnerability, to the other people greatly assists us in living holy lives as servants of God.

We have to choose to be accountable, to make ourselves vulnerable. I choose to do within my order of priests of the Church of England under the authority of the Bishop of Guildford. You choose to do within your order of Knight Templar under the authority of your Provincial Prior as prescribed by the precepts which will be read in a moment.

Accountability and discipline may be unfashionable concepts in a modern liberal democracy like ours, but our Christian faith teaches us that because of our human predilections they are essential to the good ordering and flourishing of society.

At my licensing at the beginning of the month I was reminded of my priestly orders and pledged obedience to King Charles and the Lord Bishop of Guildford in all things lawful and honest. I also took responsibility on behalf of the Bishop for the cure of all souls in this parish.

Our orders, yours and mine, as Christian orders, must never be solely self-serving, inward looking, self protecting. This would be their downfall. As Peter instructs us in his letter, love the family of believers, honour everyone, fear God, honour the Emperor, or in our case the King.

God is the source of authority. He shares his temporal authority in this realm with the Emperor. Under their protection and with their authority, an order, a family of believers lives with love as its authority. And this family of believers, as servants of God, are to honour everyone with whom they have any dealing. This is the right ordering of things for a Godly and good society, that will promote the flourishing of all and will be hospitable with the hospitality of Christ.

Yes, hard to achieve. Which is why Paul instructed Christians in Ephesus to gird themselves with the armour of God as a faced temporal and spiritual warfare. Stand ready in faith, in truth, in righteousness, ready to proclaim the gospel of peace, to declare the word of God. Stand and what? Pray in the spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.

Stand ready, and there, remember you are first and foremost servants of God. So pray otherwise you'll lose because the powers of evil and self-deception are strong. Charles Spurgeon the Baptist preacher in the second half of the 19th century said, "*What position is nobler than that of a spiritual father: Who claims no authority yet is university esteemed: Whose word is given only as tender advice, but is allowed to operate with the force of law: Who consulting the wishes of others, finds that they are allowed to defer to him, who loving firm and graciously gentle, is chief of all because he is a servant of all. Does not this need wisdom from above? What can require it more?*"

May we all, in your order and mine, use our freedom to live as servants of God. In humility let us keep returning to him in prayer for in Christ he is our supreme authority, our wisdom, our strength, and our joy.

Amen



The Provincial Priory of London Annual Meeting



In September, the Provincial Priory of London held their Annual Meeting at Mark Masons Hall under the banner of Kemeys Tynte & Cressing. Before the meeting we met up for refreshments and the chance to up with old friends, including many Right Eminent Knights who had travelled to London to support the Province.



The Malta Delegation and Visiting Provincial Priors entered in procession under an Arch of Steel. The Right Eminent Provincial Prior then entered the Temple preceded by the Provincial Sword Bearer and followed by the Provincial Banner Bearer.

Provincial Priory was opened in due form and the Provincial Prior was saluted with seven under the direction of the Provincial Marshal. The memory of those Knights of the Province who had passed to the Holy City was honoured. The Provincial Prior then welcomed all the guests from other Provinces, who were saluted under the direction of the Provincial Marshal.

The Muster Roll was called and the Preceptory Banners were paraded into the Temple while the roll of Preceptories was called. After the regular business of Provincial Priory had been concluded, the Provincial Prior re-appointed E.Kt. Anthony Fabian Legge, **P.Gt.Her.**, as Provincial Sub Prior,

thanking him for all his support. He then appointed and invested his Provincial Officers, thanking his 2023 Officers for all their support over the past year. He appointed the Commander and Deputy Commander, and received the members of his Bodyguard

In his address, the Provincial Prior thanked everyone for the way he and his Sub Prior had been revived on their visits round the Province. He congratulated those he had appointed and invested today and thanked everyone for their support at this Annual Meeting. After the collection of Alms, Provincial Priory was closed in due form and the RE Provincial Prior retired in procession. After a drinks reception we were called in to lunch. The Brother Knights of the Province of London and their guests enjoyed a most enjoyable meal together.



The Toast to the Provincial Prior was given by the Provincial Sub Prior, E.Kt. Anthony Legge. In his reply, the Provincial Prior thanked E.Kt. Anthony and all the Knights of the Province of London for their support over the past year, and wished everyone a successful and enjoyable year ahead.





Great Priory of Malta



On Tuesday the 19th of November 2024, Brother Knights from across the Constitution, and the worldwide Great Priory of Malta community gathered at Freemasons' Hall, London for the Annual Chapter of the Great Priory of Malta.



The meeting was presided over by the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master, Paul Raymond Clement, G.C.M. A first and pleasant duty was to appoint to the honour and dignity of Knight Grand Cross of the United Orders, R.E.Kt. Reverent Father Malcolm Clifford George Lane, Knight Commander and Great Prelate, followed by the appointment of R.E.Kt. David Jordan, Provincial Prior for Kent, to the honour and dignity of Knight Commander of the United Orders.

Provincial Priory of Surrey web site: <https://www.surreycompanionorders.com/welcome-knights-templar>



The next item of business was to announce the re-appointment of R.E.Kt. Jonathan Charles Whitaker, K.C.M., as Great Prior of Malta, followed by the appointment of V.E.Kt. Alan Thomas Howls as Great Sub-Prior of Malta.



The meeting was then handed over to the Great Prior of Malta to begin the Installation of Knights, William Arthur Duval, Oliver James Coddington, and Thomas James William Milner as Knights of Malta.

This is unique among our Orders, being the only Annual Investiture Meeting during which a full Masonic Degree Ceremony is worked on a true Candidate.

While the Candidates retired to the Guard room to receive the Degree of Knight of St Paul, The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master was delighted to confer appointment to, or promotion in, Great Rank on 129 Brethren and invest those present.

When the Candidates were re-admitted the ceremony proceeded with the degree being conferred by the Officers of Great Priory, led superbly by the Great Prior of Malta.

Everyone who attended the meeting were thanked for their wonderful support for both the meeting and our Order. It has become an annual event to look forward to for many Brother Knights and it is hoped to see you again next year.



