



**A Message From  
The Provincial Prelate  
V.E.Kt. Leslie G.T. Retford P.St.Reg**

My Brother Knights,

We find ourselves in troubled times. We have perforce lost so much that is dear to our hearts and our very lifestyles have been greatly changed. Our Lodges, Chapters and Preceptories may no longer meet and even our churches are closed. Not since the Interdict of the reign of King John or the deplorable puritan extremes of the Commonwealth period have our churches actually been closed and public worship forbidden. Even during the great pestilence of the Black Death the churches remained open for so long as there were surviving Christian worshippers and priests to administer to them. For those of us who hold our regular worship as a central, even essential part of our lives this is very hard. It is difficult to imagine Holy Week without the appropriate devotions. Yet perhaps we may be brought closer to the anguish of those disciples for whom the experience of losing their friend and teacher was a reality.

As Knights Templar we are defined as Christians and though perhaps some wear their faith more lightly than others, let us remember the words of our ceremony of installation into the Order. On whom in the hour of danger did we rely...and in whom did we put our trust?

Like many of you, I am finding the experience of virtual "house arrest" challenging with only the occasional foray in search of provisions at the supermarket. Our general age demographic puts most of us at heightened risk and so it is essential that we heed advice and take all precautions. I am sure that we are all trying to observe that and yet how easy it is to forget for a moment and to touch the keypad in the supermarket or at the petrol station and to grasp that supermarket trolley with unprotected hands in ignorance that the surfaces we touch might already be contaminated. I have found that the touch screen at the supermarket self-service checkout doesn't work if you are wearing gloves!!

I am indeed fortunate to have several supermarkets within reasonable driving distance but whether it be to Sainsbury, Asda, Tesco, Lidl or Waitrose, the expedition so often results in joining a very long queue – all of us waiting patiently two metres apart and hoping that when we eventually gain admission the store shelves will not be empty!

So on whom in the hour of danger do we rely? Well indeed we know the answer to that but we must still remember to wash our hands and wear our face-masks, if we have the means to do so. It has been said that the Lord helps those who help themselves. I have been reading the First Epistle of John, Chapters 3 to 5 and commend them to you. Let us remember that though our church may be shut, it is not the building that makes the church, but we ourselves are the church and we can, and should continue to function in prayer and Christian action one to another. That may be to us our communion. Bear always in mind the solemn and sacred ties by which we are bound to the Order and to one another. Brother knights we have been equipped with the whole armour of God and shall surely withstand in the evil day.

As your Provincial Prelate, I pray for you all brother knights and for those whom you love. Let us pray for each other and for those essential workers in the health service, for scientists who are seeking a cure to the virus and for the many thousands of key workers who are keeping our nation going. Our nation will recover but in this dark time many businesses and jobs will be lost forever.

Government has had to act in ways that it could never have foreseen. Huge financial commitments have already been made and these will have to be paid for. Our national lifestyles may be changed forever but our faith has endured for over 2,000 years and our masonic brotherhood for over 200 years. These will continue. Remember always "God is. He is as he is in Jesus, therefore there is hope".

So be of good heart; be steadfast in your faith. Continue to love and uphold one another. Keep washing your hands and observe the health and safety recommendations. May ours still be a Happy Easter.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

V.Em.Kt Leslie Retford

Provincial Prelate