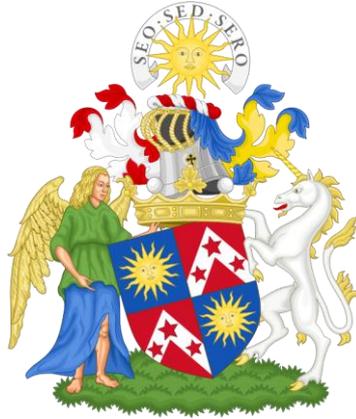


Easter Letter from the Grand Prior, England and Wales



Easter, 2020

Knights, Dames, Confreres, Consoeurs,

As we enter the dark days of Holy Week heading towards the glorious dawn of Easter Sunday I want to wish you all the seasonal blessings that are available at this high Christian time. As we are reminded of the despair and fear of the apostles as that week unfolded it must put into some perspective the concerns which face so many of us today. And as in the end we are faced with the glorious light of the Resurrection it surely must fill us with hope and inspiration for the days which lie ahead and whose promise must never be gainsaid. That central assurance of Christianity should be our guiding light as we stare into an uncertain future.

The founders of our Order in war torn Palestine all those hundreds of years ago must in the sight and suffering of great illnesses and grave disease, not least the oft forgotten and hidden tentacles of leprosy, have experienced even greater uncertainties, even deeper moments of despair and fear, than anything we face today. But they met them with faith and courage and determination from which we in turn can learn much in our own time. That, as I see it, is the burning lantern which in moments of darkness, and there have been many, has lightened the hearts and souls of those members of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem who have gone before us and held high the banner of our Order.

Today we in turn can, within our individual capabilities, do the same and I am greatly heartened by reports of what many in our Order are undertaking. The greatest act which most of us, particularly the less able, can offer is that of prayer. Prayer for those who are afflicted and those who have died, prayer that this dread Corvid 19 disease should soon pass, and prayer that our people and nations will quickly recover; and also that the fight against leprosy and its dire effects will find new inspiration as a result.

I am currently in isolation at my home in the Scottish Borders. Having been assessed by the NHS as 'a high risk' from the Coronavirus owing to underlying health conditions and age I have been told to remain in isolation for the next twelve weeks. At least I will have time to read and think – and pray.

Once this is over and we can see again the lie of the land ahead we will need to think how best to take our activities forward. There could well be some new hurdles but equally some unexpected and unforeseen opportunities which we will need to identify. As so often in the past we must make the most of both these in ensuring the relevance and momentum of our Order in the years ahead.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

With best wishes and prayers

Michael Lothian
ATAVIS ET ARMIS