



Royal Ark Mariner Assembly

08 December 2025

Brethren, we are gathered in the sight of the Supreme Commander of the Universe, for the dispatch of important Royal Ark Mariner business.

I start by bringing greetings and best wishes from our Most Worshipful Grand Master, His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, who is unable to be with us today. He has particularly asked that his thanks and congratulations are conveyed to all those he has promoted to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank.

Our Pro Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother John Prizeman is unable to be present because he is undergoing a course of medical treatment. However, he wishes you to know that he is responding well to the treatment, that he hopes to be back amongst us soon, and that he too sends his greetings and very best wishes.

In the absence of the Most Worshipful Grand Master and Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master I have the honour to present this address on their behalf.

Brethren, most of the business before us has been dealt with, including the investiture of the brethren who have been promoted to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank.

This year 135 brethren have been promoted. Most of them are in attendance and I now address them directly.

Brethren, your promotion is richly deserved. It is a significant milestone in your masonic journey which acknowledges and rewards your dedication and faithful service to our Order.

It was an honour and a pleasure to invest you on behalf of the Grand Master, and I extend warmest congratulations to each of you.

Your promotion of course comes with the expectation that you will continue your dedication and faithful service.

Brethren, I am sure you noticed that you were all invested with identical regalia.

If you look around this Grand Assembly you will see very little to distinguish any of us by the rank we hold. Whatever our rank, we all wear very similar regalia.

Our Pro Grand Master drew attention to this in his address last year and suggested it was very special and perhaps unique to Royal Ark Masonry. He developed his point by quoting from our ritual which says, "that the highest is he who performs his part the best, not he who fills the most exalted position.

So brethren, wear your regalia with pride, but remember that your preferment and standing come more from your performance in the part you play than the regalia you wear. So continue your excellent work and be an example to others!

Brethren I would like now to briefly update you on the membership of our Order. The head count has remained steady for the last three years and stands at about 17000 Royal Ark Mariners. There is a small reduction in memberships, perhaps due to brethren pruning back on their multiple memberships whilst remaining in at least one of their lodges.

Our membership is of course drawn from the pool of Mark Master Masons, in which the head count is just under 32000 members. So, about 53% of Mark Master Masons are Royal Ark Mariners. This is quite a satisfactory level, which is maintained and where possible improved on a Provincial and District basis. However, a foot note to this is that there are about 15000 Mark Master Masons who are not Royal Ark Mariners. It would I think be sensible to ensure that every one of them has enough information to be able to decide for themselves whether and when they might like to join our Order, and whether or not they decide to join us, that they have an accurate and positive view of the Order. Brethren, if our Order is to prosper and thrive, so must the Mark, and so must the Craft. Let's do all we can to see that they do.

Brethren, no doubt you are familiar with the Grand Master's Keystone Fund Bursary Scheme, the purpose of which is to provide financial support to people in their academic, vocational and sporting aspirations. All Companion Orders are eligible to make donations and seven are doing so. Seven Marks Provinces have made donations in the Name of our Order and seven bursaries have allocated. These bursaries will be life-changing for the beneficiaries, and I commend the fund to you.

On the 1st of November the Leaders of several Companion Orders attended the Masonic Remembrance Service at the National Arboretum. This was a very well attended and moving service. The leaders of our Orders were invited to join the procession and lay our wreaths.

Brethren, It is now my great pleasure to introduce and welcome our distinguished guests. I would ask that you bridle your enthusiastic applause and release it when I have named all of them.

First, I welcome the following Heads of other Orders.

R.W.Bro. Paul Clement, G.M.R.A.C. (H.C.) – The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master of the Knights Templar;

R.W.Bro. Graham Flight, G.M.R.A.C. (H.C.) – Grand Sovereign of the Red Cross of Constantine;

W.Bro. Dr Paul Mycock, PGJD, First Grand Master mason of the Operatives.

Most Illustrious Knight Priest Christopher Gavin Maiden Grand High Priest of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests & Order of Holy Wisdom.

R.W.Bro. David Kenneth Williamson, G.M.R.A.C. (H.C.) – Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Rite.

V.W. Bro. Tony Llewellyn, PGJO, Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia.

I would also like to welcome two of our former rulers, these being:

M.W.Bro. Raymond John Smith, Past Pro Grand Master.

R.W.Bro. Herbert Keith Emmerson, Past Deputy Grand Master.

From Overseas I am delighted to welcome the following.

From R.W.Bro. J Verbist of Belgium to W.Bro.Paul Simon Mansell of Spain.

From Lodge Sanct Elmo No 1863, an Unattached Lodge, I welcome W.Bro. John William Bond O.R.A.M.G.R.

From other Constitutions I welcome the following.

From Greece,

Bro Ioannis Benetatos R.A.M.G.R.

From South East Asia,

R.W.Bro. Ian Philip Ellston, G.M.R.A.C., Grand Senior Warden.

Bro. Ashveen Chakravarthy Sekaran.

Before I close this meeting, I wish to thank the Grand Secretary and all the members of his team, for their work in planning and delivering this meeting, and for all their work for the Order during the year.

My thanks also go to the Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team for the excellence of the ceremonial we have seen today, and on the many visits we make during the year.

My final thanks go to Right Worshipful Brother Frank Spencer for so readily agreeing to act as Deputy Grand Master. It is a pleasure to be working with him and provides an opportunity for his recent retirement to be formally acknowledged here in Grand Assembly, to thank him for all his work on behalf of the Order, and to wish him well.

Brethren, the Festive Season is upon us and I hope we will be surrounded by peace and goodwill, and that whatever our circumstances, the Festive Season will be the best it can be for everyone.

On behalf of our Grand Master and our Pro Grand Master I pray that the Supreme Commander of the Universe will bless you, guide you and keep you safe.