



14th January 2017

Dear Grand Prior

I acknowledge receipt of your letter in pdf format of 7th January 2017 which I received by email on 13th January 2017.

Here is my rebuttal...

"to support and defend the Order and my brother Knights, sister Dames, and Companions, doing nothing harmful or injurious to the welfare of either"

It is my view that is exactly what I have done. I have made no criticism of any of these fine people and instead have been critical of the Officers of this order.

Carrying out any conduct which may be detrimental to the Corporation (Order) as determined by the Board (Grand Priory Council).

That is of course a moot point as by defending the order I am critical of the officers of the order who I believe are damaging the order in Canada to the detriment of our Knights and Dames and to the order as a whole.

In particular I was most critical of you as our Grand Prior who I believe has let this order down by being a very poor leader of our Canadian Order.

In particular you agreed to serve our order as Grand Prior for 3 years with a 4th year being optional but only in the case of some crisis of which there has been none.

You simply decided to do a 4th year and at no time did you explain why you were serving for a 4th year and of course you are now on your fifth year. When you told us you wanted to serve for a fifth year I raised the point that I thought there should be a vote where you'd have to explain why you thought you should serve for a further year. None of that happened of course and you are now on your fifth year.

I have no problem in an excellent Grand Prior seeking to serve longer but in my opinion you are a poor Grand Prior and so serving longer is not in the best interest of our order. I have tried my best to avoid using names but I can tell you many are also critical of your performance.

I had a serious phone call from our Commandary in Edmonton in which he was furious that you had made him cancel his planned investiture and banquet so that you could attend an event in the USA. He went on at some length how he thought you were a disgrace to the order and you seemed to have forgotten you led Canada and not the USA and so Canada should always come first.

It was my opinion at the time that you could have attended the USA event if it was that critical but as we have other Grand Croix officers others could have stood in for you. But that didn't happen and instead of Edmonton growing into a full Priory it is now dead.

I understand that to be a Priory you need to have 25 members but in the case of Ottawa I believe they are down to just 8 members and at the intended investiture in 2016 it was cancelled due to the Priors ill health but it later became known that not a single person was to be invested had the event gone forward.

Efforts to get a Commandary going in Nova Scotia have gone nowhere.

I further understand that the Toronto Priory is now down to some 34 active members whereas they used to list over 80. In a conversation I had with the Prior just the other day he told me that he had zero response to his invite to the January AGM so I also have to wonder what he means when he talks about "active" members.

I will also note that in October 2016 I emailed you about interest from BC. To my knowledge you still haven't followed up on this. Certainly over Christmas the person contacted me by phone to ask if anything was happening as he hadn't heard anything back.

I believe just these points raised show you to be incompetent to be our Grand Prior. However, there is more...

As you know the Order states that any communication with the top of our International order must go through the Grand Prior. I asked you to raise two points at the last meeting which you didn't raise although you said you would.

The two points I wished you to raise were about the lack of communication within the International order which is I believe part of the reason that so many Knights and Dames are leaving the order.

The second point was that all I have ever been told about why osmth.org has so little news is that no-one sends in any. I thus asked you to raise the possibility of using our own Knights and Dames to be the contact point with International Grand Priorities so that we could deal with them in their own language. Then our Knights and Dames could then translate into English their news that could then go up on the web site.

You didn't raise either of those and certainly didn't get back to me on these topics. That's your job and you didn't do it.

I also noted that our Canadian Templar newsletters had been removed from the osmth site.

In our Brussels Declaration it states...

The principles of active charity, courtesy, dedication and honesty, inherent in the highest ideals of a code of chivalry and a personal rule of life, are spread wider and wider in society.

Note the honesty and tell me how you have been honest with the Knights and Dames of our order.

In my role as newsletter editor I have talked to many Knights and Dames as well as other officers of the order. There is genuine concern that we know little or nothing about what our International order is doing. They are unable to do much about this but I felt I could do something myself which is why I asked you to raise these two points.

I would also note that we have never had a report on how much we have raised within the order nor on what it was spent. We are meant to be involved with local and national charities and projects in the Holy Land. Again you have made no report to us on how we are doing.

All this shows total lack of any communication skills on your part.

However, at that July meeting at the RCMI, you told us of the security concerns of the International order which I believe put to shame our leadership and then you also said you wanted to serve for a fifth year. Frankly I was disgusted and as it was clear I had no route to the top brass of our International order I did that video to vent my frustration which I hoped would circumvent your

obstruction and somehow get to the top brass of the International Order.

In reviewing the video I realize I went over the top on our Vicar General and I do regret that but again our Brussels Declaration states...

Today's Templars in OSMTH - Knights Templar International seek, by their collective action and individual personal example, to put into practice in the modern world the highest ideals of the code of chivalry and the personal rule of Christian life inspired by the spiritual father of the medieval Order, St Bernard of Clairvaux.

As newsletter editor I felt this Christian message needed to be reinforced and is why I created a Religion section within it. I wanted to give a Christian message to our Knights and Dames to reinforce their Christian belief and to provide material that would do that.

I have since learned that our Vicar General sends out a weekly Prayer which is to be commended although I never received a copy.

I am seeing a real decline of the Christian religion around the world and to my mind there are few ministers around today that can inspire Christians to keep their faith and to help convert others. I would have hoped for better from our Vicar General.

And as the Vicar General was at that meeting where you agreed to serve for 3 years it's clear he hasn't done anything to keep you to your word on that.

Also note that I had previously done a video promoting the order and you can see that at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7n7XgGHuuk> where last time I looked it had had 271 views.

So at the end of the day I feel I have done more than anyone else to protect our Knights and Dames and to try and prevent more erosion in our membership. By calling out the leadership of our International Order and also yourself as our Grand Prior I sought to achieve that.

I would note that you have not even tried to justify your own position or actions in this. In my view it really is yourself that should be removed from this order or at the very least be made to resign your position as Grand Prior.

And it should be noted that when you took over as Grand Prior your first meeting was to tell us that communication was the priority. You wanted a regular quarterly newsletter and you wanted a Grand Priory web site. I volunteered to do the newsletter and the now Deputy Grand Secretary said he'd do the web site. Well I kept my word and gave you plenty of notice that the 1st September 2016 would be my final issue having completed 4 years in the post. I note that (1) the next newsletter should have gone out on 1st December 2016 and to date there has been no newsletter received. I even forwarded you a report from Ottawa and even suggested that if you couldn't get out a newsletter you could still send out an email to include your own report along with the Ottawa one and be able to at least wish us all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. You couldn't even do that. (2) Now into your fifth year and we still don't have a Grand Priory web site. I would submit that is just incompetence and another reason you need to go.

And even in November 2016 when I was sat next to you at the Windsor banquet you told me you were working on several projects and when I showed interest you just smiled and said nothing. That just reinforced my view that you had to go. I mean why even mention it if you didn't want to say anything?

It's been indicated that removal of the video would perhaps help this situation but I have to say that in my opinion all that will do is sweep all this incompetence under the rug. There has to be consequence on both sides.

And so I protest most strongly at this decision by the Grand Priory Council and instead call on them to justify their decision as I have told no lies and sought only to protect our order from mismanagement. The reasons you quote for my removal are not consistent with my actions.



Alastair

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