

SUPREME



COUNCIL, 33°

## *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*

OF CANADA

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Dear Brethren

As we move into 2021, I wish each one of you a very happy, healthy, and joyful New Year.

Reflecting back on 2020, despite its many disappointments and challenges, I focus on the happy in person visits that I enjoyed during the early months of the year with many of you in your own Valleys. Although all such visits were forced to an abrupt halt in mid-March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many Valleys adapted and moved forward with a variety of “virtual” events thereby permitting brethren to maintain contact, further their masonic education, listen to speakers, and stay in touch with each other. As a result, we all have enjoyed an increased ability and opportunity to “visit” with each other right across our country. Many of us have enjoyed these times together and the resulting ties amongst our brethren are stronger as a result. I have no doubt that, when this terrible Covid-19 pandemic is banished into history, we will come through with an increased appreciation of how meaningful and important our Scottish Rite brotherhood is for all of us.

While recognizing these “pieces of silver lining”, I am very conscious that, for many, 2020 was a year of profound loss, illness, hardship, isolation, and loneliness. To all of you, I want you to know that your brethren are with you. Never have our fundamental principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth been more important. The many quiet acts of kindness, benevolence, and support that have been taking place during these times, have reaffirmed to me, and I am sure to all of you, why being a Scottish Rite mason is so important.

Now, as we begin 2021 with the good news of vaccines on the horizon, we look forward to better times ahead. Nevertheless, it seems clear that we continue to face some dark days for a while yet. Your Supreme Council’s priority has been and continues to be the health and well-being of our members-hence our ongoing suspension of all Scottish Rite meetings, as well as all other activities, and events (other than by teleconference). In my communication to you on September 21, 2020, I indicated that we would be assessing that situation further in mid-January. While we are filled with hope and look forward to better times, we need to be realistic. We read that wide-spread vaccinations likely will not be completed perhaps until September. In the meantime, case counts in many areas of our country continue to escalate and we all are cautioned to stay at home as much as possible. Accordingly, I conclude, based on the information that we have at this time, that the current suspension of all Scottish Rite

meetings, as well as all other Scottish Rite activities, and events (other than by teleconference), must continue until at least June 30, 2021. Having said this, it may be that positive changes occur sooner than we expect. Hopefully, that is the case and if so, then perhaps we may be able to revisit this decision earlier than expected, perhaps nationally or perhaps only for specific Provinces; but, for now, we all must “stay the course”.

As this period of suspension continues, I realize that By-laws in some Bodies call for elections and installations at specific times which fall within our period of suspension and consequently cannot take place. In such cases, I remind you of my letter dated April 29, 2020 stating that no specific dispensation is required if a decision is made for the Officers simply to continue in office until the dates of the next Election and Installation as prescribed in the By-laws (i.e. thereby extending the terms of Office until the next prescribed dates are reached). Alternatively, if a Body decides, once we can meet again, to hold a separate “make up” Election and Installation on a date which is different from that specified in the By-laws, then a Dispensation must first be obtained from the Deputy as required by Article 26(a)(iv)(11) of our Statutes and Regulations.

While it is very disappointing for us to face a further period of not getting together, not welcoming new candidates, not meeting friends, and not doing what we all enjoy, I hope that all of you understand and appreciate the reasoning behind this further extended period of suspension. Hopefully, we can look forward to resuming our customary lives together sometime after June 30<sup>th</sup> but, as always, we simply will need to wait and see.

I thank each of you for your continued support, understanding, and dedication as we all move forward through these difficult times together.

Yours fraternally,



Ill. Bro. Robert S. Whitmore, 33°  
Sovereign Grand Commander