

SUPREME



COUNCIL, 33°

## *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*

OF CANADA

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Dear Brethren,

Time marches on and yet most of Canada and indeed the world at large continue to struggle against the Covid-19 pandemic. When will it end? When will our lives return to normal? As I write this to you, we all watch with concern as our schools, churches, and businesses start to reopen and we wonder what the future will hold.

Currently, all in-person Scottish Rite activities remain under suspension. I know how frustrating and disappointing this is to all. Personal contacts, the enjoyment of each other's company, the presentation of degree work, new candidates, and simply having fun together seem to be distant memories notwithstanding the very enjoyable "get togethers" taking place through Zoom, Skype, and similar virtual connections.

Heart breaking as all of this is, the health, safety, and well-being of our brethren and families remain paramount to me and I am committed to doing all that I can to preserve our Scottish Rite, our brethren, and our families during these difficult times. Tempting as it may be to move forward, all of us need to resist the urge to resume our activities prematurely but then to pay the price with serious, negative consequences.

Having said this, I am cognizant of the desire and need for Valleys to have some certainty and to be able to embark on some planning for the future. I can assure you that we are carefully monitoring the overall trends in all of our Provinces, listening to the various public health authorities, and paying close attention to what our various Provincial Grand Lodges and concordant bodies are doing. The reality is, however, that there is no certainty and we all wait with anticipation as we watch the future unfold.

Clearly, there seem, currently, to be significant differences amongst our various Provinces and even within individual Provinces; but overall, much of Canada is still experiencing high numbers of new cases and increasing concerns over a possible second wave. As such, the only prudent approach for our Scottish Rite is to hold firm, follow the guidelines, take care of each other, and wait and see.

Bearing all of this in mind and recognizing the wish amongst our Valleys to be able to plan ahead, I do not expect any resumption in our activities at least until mid-January of 2021.

Whether we have a clearer picture even then remains to be seen but at least I can tell you not to make any plans based on a resumption of in-person activities during the remainder of 2020. While it would be lovely for us to be able to hold our special Easter Ceremonies in 2021, which we missed this past year, we simply will need to wait and see.

You will be pleased to know that, when the appropriate time arrives for us to pick up our work again, I expect that we will be able to provide some specific guidelines for you, including appropriate modifications to the manner of presenting at least our obligatory degrees so as to provide a safe environment for all concerned.

Thank you, brethren, for your patience, your understanding, and your common sense during these challenging times. Scottish Rite teaches us lessons that are not confined to the inside of our lodge rooms. We all are taught to be kind to each other, to support each other, to look out for each other, and to be brothers. Now, more than ever, is the time to put these lessons into practice.

Fraternally and sincerely,

  

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