
Profile of His Most Eminent Highness the Prince and Grand Master Fra' Matthew FESTING

Fra' Matthew Festing, an Englishman, was elected Prince and Grand Master of the Order of Malta on 11th March 2008 by the Council Complete of State of the Order of Malta. He succeeds Fra' Andrew Bertie, 78th Grand Master (1988-2008), who died on 7 February.

Born in Tasset, Northumberland on 30 November 1949, educated at Ampleforth and St. John's College Cambridge, where he read history, Fra' Matthew, an art expert, has for most of his professional life worked at an international art auction house. As a child he lived in Egypt and Singapore, where his father, Field Marshal Sir Francis Festing, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had earlier postings. He is also descended from Sir Adrian Fortescue, a knight of Malta, who was martyred in 1539.



The Coat of Arms of
Grand Master Festing

Fra' Matthew Festing served in the Grenadier Guards and holds the rank of colonel in the Territorial Army. He was appointed OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) by the Queen and served as one of her Deputy Lieutenants in the county of Northumberland.

He became a member of the Sovereign Order of Malta in 1977, and took solemn religious vows in 1991, becoming a Professed Knight of the Order. Between 1993 and 2008 he was the Grand Prior of England. In this role, he led missions of humanitarian aid to Kosovo, Serbia and Croatia after the recent disturbances in those countries, and he attended the Order's international annual pilgrimage to Lourdes.

As well as his passion for the decorative arts and for history, his encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of the Order of Malta is well known.