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# KNIGHT TEMPLAR

WINTER 2024



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**ADORATION OF THE MAGI**  
**TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TEMPLAR**  
**GRAND LODGE OF D.C. MASONICON**

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# Grand Master's Message

**Sir Knight David J. Kussman, GCT**

Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

To the Sir Knights of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

**Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!**



The Kingdom of Christ does not come with pomp and spectacle, but slowly, unobtrusively but irresistibly in the hearts of men.

**T**his Christmas Season, Knights Templar will meet in their asylums throughout the world and symbolically gather around a cradle. In spirit they will kneel at the feet of Bethlehem's Babe, renewing their fealty to the Gentle Christ and once again dedicate themselves to His splendid service.

To the earnest Knights Templar, Christmas is more than a celebration, it is a time of heart-searching, an occasion for the renewal of vows.

Christ came to establish His kingdom, a kingdom of love, of truth, of righteousness. He came to show us that all men are brothers, and brotherly love should prevail among them. Some will argue that He failed. The life journey that began at Bethlehem ended at Calvary. Over twenty centuries have passed since the angels' song startled watching shepherds, yet today we are appalled at the prevalence of hatred, lawlessness, and error. But the failing is only seeming. In reality the Gentle Christ is achieving the greatest triumph in history.

The Kingdom of Christ does not come with pomp and spectacle, but slowly, unobtrusively yet irresistibly into the hearts of men. As growing intelligence, broadening sympathy, and deepening love irradiate the souls of men, so comes Christ's kingdom. Faith and hope see its

gradual and certain conquest of the world. To help its realization, the swords of the Knights Templar are consecrated, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end!

Lady Kim and I wish for you and your families this Christmas Season the peace the world discovered that first Christmas. May our Lord and Savior continue to bless each of you in His own incredibly special way.

Merry Christmas!

Our journey continues...

**David J. Kussman, GCT**  
Grand Master



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# KNIGHT TEMPLAR

VOLUME LXX WINTER 2024

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar  
of the United States of America



**David J. Kussman**  
Grand Master

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# Grand Prelate's Message

Sir Knight Paul Erickson, GCT

Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31.



**A**s I prepare this message for the Winter 2024 issue of the *Knight Templar* magazine, I have the birth of our Lord and Savior on my heart and mind. I carry all Sir Knights, their wives and families, wherever they may be, in my thoughts and prayers as well.

I also wish a prayer on our Most Eminent Grand Master, David Kussman, his Lady Kim, his suite of officers, and their ladies as well. I know there are those of you who will be traveling to spend the Christmas Holidays with your family and friends, so blessings of safe travel for you.

To all of you who have taken – or are currently taking – the Templar Chaplain course; for those of you who have received the call, good on you for answering it. Blessings to you as well.

Because there are so many miracles surrounding the birth of our Savior, I will share only a few of my favorites. First, in Isaiah 7:14, the profit Isaiah prophesied of our Savior's virgin birth: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (NIV). It is a wonder to know that those people living during Isaiah's day were already aware that the Messiah was on His way thanks to this prophecy.

In Matthew 1:18-25, not only was foreknowledge given, as in Isaiah's time, but the text describes to Joseph how that birth came to be. And, if that were not enough, Joseph learned from the angel what name Jesus would be known by. The angel also declared Jesus' destiny to Joseph:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her



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away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-25 is the miracle as told through Joseph's eyes, but in Luke 1:26-35 it is told through Mary's eyes.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what

kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. "For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The angel was busy that night, because in Luke 2:8-14 he also appeared to shepherds who were watching over their flock. And, in case they didn't believe their eyes, the angel brought some friends; and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host

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"Because there are so many miracles surrounding the birth of our Savior, I will share only a few of my favorites. "

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praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Luke 2:13-14:

In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; or today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

The last miracle is the miracle of the Magi, or as some translations say, "wise men." I call it a miracle because they had been following a star, given to them as a sign, but they ended up before Herod where they asked him "where is he who has been born king of the Jews? (Matthew 2:2) Herod, who was king at the time, did not

like the fact that the Magi had just told him there was a new king in town. The miracle here is that the Magi had already been warned in a dream not to return to Herod after finding the baby Jesus. So, after giving their gifts to the babe in the manger, they returned home by another way ignoring Herod's command. We would call the path they took, a circuitous route.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and

when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him." After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Merry Christmas, and blessings to you all,

*Paul*

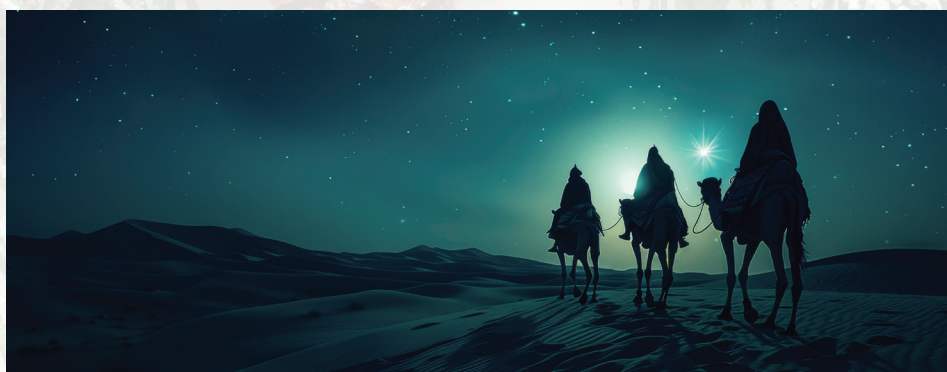
**Paul Erickson, GCT**  
Grand Prelate

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### Editor

**Ben Williams** is a Registered Patent Attorney based out of Denver, Colorado. He's a Past Department Commander for the Northwest Department and has held many Masonic offices in his home state of Colorado. He's married to his patient and caring wife, Tiffany, a history teacher. They have a daughter, Adelyn, and a beagle, Warwick.



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On the Cover: Santa Claus with his newest ornament for the North Pole.





Merry Christmas!

Photo by Adam Goldman



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# Window Pains

by Boondoggle



# FROM THE EDITOR



**S**eaon's greetings! Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of the *KnighT Templar*. As we round the lowest corner of the year – when the nights are longest – Christmas reminds us that, even in the dark of winter, there is light eternal. Time marches ever onward. But some things yet stay the same.

My wife is a fan of Christmas traditions. While we know that Christ was probably not born in December, nor were most of the traditions now associated with Christmastime Christian in origin, it is hard to shake the conditioning of youth or avoid the mass acculturing foisted by commercial impulse. Everywhere the agencies of commerce are seized by the *magic* of Christmas – the iconography of market largesse and the talismanic fat Santa tiptoeing impossibly in his little black boots. Millions rack up as we are caused to trade in the hollow luxuries of the modern age.

But there *is* magic in Christmas. In the shared image of the Christ child, the incarnation of God Himself, brought to Earth to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament, to complete them, and

bring forth a new law – the law of love where the golden rule alone distinguishes value – must be archetypal. The old is obsolete. Christ promises renewal, a new life filled with the freedom only forgiveness can bestow. This shared image can be espied through the commercialism of the holidays, out there somewhere beneath the plastic Jesus and the tangled reindeer. Look closely, you can see it.

The commercial impulse, while tawdry, yet focuses society toward a more benevolent occupation, usurping the everyday friction, competition, and the ever-present hankering for war. Indeed, the passions are not surpassed but they are at least distracted. Surely there are worse things to do than pile up material goods in a merry-go-round of commercial appetites? If we can remain impartial to the ceaseless persuasion – the black magic of the market – and rise above the largesse to see beyond today's goods which will overflow tomorrow's trash pits – if we can pause and breathe the cold air – we can take a moment to observe how the endless Christmas lights rhyme with the milky way, like frosted

constellations fallen to Earth.

Here is the shape of man.

The Christmas tree, far from a symbol of everlasting life, transforms into a memory palace as the ornaments appear, one by one, collected through the hard times and the times of joy. My wife makes a point to purchase an ornament everywhere we go (something I always complain about), but each Christmas they appear like tears and blur blues and reds and greens as nostalgia opens the moment and swallows my heart. The tree may symbolize everlastingness, but all things fade beneath the Moon. In rediscovery is quiet delight, a welcome knowledge that *it has been*.

So put on a record (or stream a tune) and sit back. Pop a cork of something old. Look out across the black expanse and thank God for the rise and fall that here, in the valley of the kingdom, you took breath, reached into the void with both hands, and found Christ playing hide and seek with Himself.

*Merry Christmas!*

Ben Williams

## The Kingdom

by Ben Williams

**Cross the divide  
This Christmastide  
And bring the Spirit hence**

**Let angels stand  
Upon your hand  
To shine in recompense**

**Open up your heart  
Let love upstart!  
That Christ may dwell within**

**For in His Name  
The Holy Flame  
Washes out the stains of Sin.**

**Do unto others  
Ye sisters and brothers  
As ye would be done by**

**Be unafraid  
But quick to praise  
When stars open up the sky**

**In rampant flesh  
Beset with death  
A savior is born!**

**The lamb of God  
Whose Holy blood  
Can never be forsworn.**

**Ring out the call  
In all snowfall  
Christ is to be risen!**

**And forgive all those  
Unrepentant foes  
That you, too, may  
be forgiven.**

# Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.



## How to join the Grand Commander's or the Grand Master's Club

**Grand Commander's Club:** Any individual may send a check in the amount of \$100 or more specified for the purpose of beginning a Grand Commander's Club. (Make payable to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation). This initial contribution will begin your Grand Commander's Club membership. In addition, members of the Grand Commander's Club pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more.

**Grand Master's Club:** Once contributions total \$1,000, the individual is enrolled in the Grand Master's Club. Membership is open to individuals only, and commandery credit is given for participation.

## Qualified Charitable Distributions

Congress has now made the qualified charitable distribution (QCD) option permanent for those who wish to make direct contributions from their IRA to charity. The tax law allows individuals required to make minimum distributions due to age to transfer up to \$100,000 a year from their IRA to a qualified charity. This distribution counts toward their required minimum distribution but isn't added to their adjusted gross income the way a normal IRA distribution is. This can provide a tax savings of up to 40% depending upon an individual's tax situation. Please discuss with your tax professional whether this option could benefit you in your charitable and retirement planning.

## Planned Giving - Create a Charitable Legacy

Your Foundation now has a full web site dedicated to Planned Giving which you can access from our web site, shown at the bottom of this page. So if you're thinking of ways to make a lasting legacy for yourself please check out the tab on the home page that says "Planned Giving". Leaving your mark on the future is so simple with a gift in your will. To leave a gift in your Will or Trust it is as easy as asking your attorney to include a sentence that says:

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# Grand Encampment of Knights Templar



## THE APARTMENTS OF THE GRAND PRELATE

*and*

## THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Year of Our Lord 2024 to all valiant and magnanimous Knights of the Temple,  
wheresoever dispersed throughout Christendom

~

Salutations and Knightly Greetings:

## A TOAST TO OUR MOST EMINENT GRAND MASTER

### CHRISTMAS 2024

Most Eminent Grand Master as we enter the season where it is righteous and good to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we, your Sir Knights, gather and offer a toast to you in your honor.

In this Holiest of times, as we go outside and brave the cold, and the hustle and bustle of crowds to bring home that prized gift, a representation of the presents brought to our Savior by the wise men. Our hearts and minds turn towards the precious babe lying in a manger and we realize, even if only for a little while the world is a kinder, gentler place. It is only then that we remember the Angel saying to the shepherds “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:10-11 ESV

And so, as you travel with a servant’s heart across this great country of ours, and to other parts outside its borders where Grand Commanderies reside under the jurisdiction and banner of the Grand Encampment we, your Sir Knights, ask our Lord in prayer that He would watch over you and keep you well protected and safe. And, on those rare occasions, when your Lady Kim travels with you, we ask those same blessing upon her, for we know what great comfort it is when your wife and companion is traveling with you.

And now it is with a shout of joy that we raise our glasses and say thank you, for we are well served.

A Prayer and toast to you Most Eminent Grand Master!

In Jesus’ Holy Name,

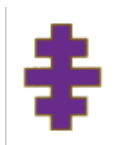
The Reverend Sir Knight Paul D. Erickson, KGC, Chairman  
The Committee on Religious Activities

The Reverend Sir Knight Robert J.F. Elsner, KGC

The Reverend Sir Knight Terry L. Plemons, KGC



*The foregoing toast to the Most Eminent Grand Master and his response thereto are transmitted to you with the request that you extend an invitation through the proper offices to all Sir Knights within your jurisdiction to join in the sentiments thus conveyed at some convenient hour, on or near the birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day, December twenty-fifth, in the Year of Grace 2024.*



## GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

### CHRISTMAS 2024

To the Right Eminent Grand Prelates, the members of the Committee on Religious Activities, and to all Knights wheresoever dispersed:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I tender to you all my profound thanks and appreciation for your recognition as a “Servant Leader” within our humble Order; filled with likeminded, and inspiring men.

As Knights Templar assemble this season for their annual Christmas Observance, paying homage to Emmanuel, and once again re-live the Christmas Story – let me encourage each of you to remember your vows of Christian Knighthood and rededicate yourselves to the love that manifests itself in the Word of GOD. May this season be one of joy and happiness for you and your family.

Let us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, strive to profit by the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of that divine Master, and remain His faithful soldiers unto death. Seeking strength to continue that struggle let us now offer this prayer of grace.

#### PRAYER.

*ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, remember us with pity, we beseech thee, and blot out the multitude of our transgressions, for thy beloved son's sake. And may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

*FATHER in heaven command thy blessing to rest upon all true Knights of the Temple wherever dispersed; bestow upon them a spirit of Truth, Justice, Courage, Constancy, Faith, and Humility, and make of them valiant defenders of thy holy religion. Teach them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted, for Jesus' sake. Amen!*

The officers of the Grand Encampment and their families join with Lady Kim and me in wishing each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a most fruitful New Year.

Courteously,

⚔ *David J. Kussman*

David J. Kussman, GCT

Grand Master

# GRAND LODGE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRST EVER MASONICON



Photos provided by Adam Goldman

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – Over one-hundred and twenty Brethren convened at the D.C. Scottish Rite Temple on November 23, 2024, for the first esoterically themed *Masonicon* sponsored by the Grand Lodge, F.A.A.M., of the District of Columbia.

The all-day event contemplated esoteric streams influential to the evolution of the Craft.

In attendance with the F.A.A.M. Grand Lodge officers were Ill. Bro. Len Proden, 33°, Sovereign Grand Inspector General for the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction, Orient of the District of Columbia, Grand Master Glenn Ruffin of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia and Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Prince Hall Scottish Rite for the District

of Columbia, Ill. Bro. Eric Kono-hia, 33°.

The Brethren assembled in the upstairs Lodge room of the Scottish Rite Temple around 8:30 a.m. for a full day of presentations. Lunch and dinner were provided.

Presenters included Jaime Paul Lamb (author of *Myth, Magic, and Masonry*), Ben Williams (editor of the *Knight Templar* and publisher at Laughing Lion), Piers Vaughan (author of *Renaissance Man and Mason* and publisher at Rose Circle Books), John Michael Greer (author of *The Druidry Handbook* and over one hundred other titles), Aleister Lees (author of *The English Illuminati*), and Darcy Kuntz (author of *The Complete Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscript*).

Talks were geared toward the influence of secret and magi-

cal societies upon Masons and Masonry. The presentations touched upon Rosicrucianism; the Elus Coën and Martinism; talismans and regalia; evidence of crossover between the Bavarian Illuminati, the Ordo Templi Orientis, and the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia and thus, by extension, Masonic circles in the United Kingdom; the resurrection and role of neo-Druidry by Masons and adjacent Masonic streams; and the symbolism of the Golden Dawn – all of which demonstrate (at least to some degree) origination by Masons and a proportion of Masonic membership, reciprocity, influence, and inspiration.

The day of presentations and discussion was followed by a catered dinner and an after party at the Pierce School, a private venue near the Capitol owned and oper-

ated by cryptocurrency billionaire Brock Pierce.

“I believe Freemasonry to be sacred,” said Jacob Bressman, Grand Master of the District of Columbia. “Not in the religious sense, but rather, at its essence, it is pure and unwavering; its teachings are universal and must be applied and actualized within our daily lives. Through Masonic education and conferences such as these,” he said, “we challenge our understanding of the Craft and its teachings and encourage our Brothers to explore further.”

The event underscores a growing interest in philosophical and esoteric themes underpinning the Craft. The presupposition is that Masonry is not merely camaraderie, or a way of life (although these are important parts of it), but more a way of *seeing* – a system

# TRICT OF COLUMBIA HOSTS IN THE NATION'S CAPITOL

by Ben Williams

Photo by Adam Goldman



with which to decode consciousness and make sense of the world. In some respects, by entertaining a broad spectrum of ideas, Masonry opens like the vesica piscis in the center, where all religions overlap and an essential truth is revealed.

It should be beyond reproach that Masonry treats of esoteric themes. According to the ordinary meaning of the term (that is, “understood by a few”), Freemasonry *must* be esoteric. In a country with a population of 335 million, there are now less than a million Masons (approximately 875,000). That’s less than 1% of the population (approximately 0.25%). Masonry’s forms and ceremonies, then, are clearly understood by a few. (And, of course, of those, many Masons will willingly agree that they don’t understand it all either!)

Thus, esoteric themes and hidden influences were a focus of the event.

“For many Masons, the word ‘occult’ has been misunderstood or, worse, maligned,” Adam Goldman, Grand Secretary, said. “In planning for our Grand Lodge’s first ever Esotericon-type event, we wanted to apply that expression’s true meaning, ‘hidden,’ and reveal the hidden or ‘occulted’ influences behind many secrets in Craft Masonry.”

The purpose was contemplation. At least some interchange between Freemasonry – the archetypal fraternity – and other Orders and Societies that forward varying doctrines intending “more light,” cannot be denied. Whether such influences are benign, constructive, or the opposite is perhaps debatable. But Freemasonry has



Photos by Ben Williams

certainly informed Brethren to find other societies which have, in turn, recruited Freemasons.

Freemasonry appropriates, compiling ideas wherever it finds them useful. Part of Freemasonry’s universalism, then, must be free conscience – facilitating investigation of the hidden laws of nature, to reveal hidden truths about the world, the cosmos, and ultimately ourselves. In the process, Freemasonry necessarily fosters a type of self-governing society where freedom of conscience must be maintained – even enforced. Through such ideals, philosophical inquiry arises beneficially to chart the extent of the human condition and raise up new men.

“We practice Freemasonry so that we may become better and so that we may repair the world around us,” Bressman said. “To

live and breathe Masonry – to practice it and to devote ourselves to its lofty precepts will elevate our souls and better enable us to connect with the divine. This was the purpose of our conference – to inspire the Brotherhood to think differently regarding Masonic education, that we may seek that revelation of Light within the soul of every Brother which will enable him to overcome adversity, to master and know himself, and become a force for truth and morality in the world around him.”

“Everyone loved [the conference],” Goldman said. “They want more.” **KT**

# Kings of the Sun





# Rising Sun

by Ben Williams



**T**he three wise men, the three kings, the three magi – whichever appellation they are known by – remain a fixture of Christmastime. Yet they are mentioned only once in the Bible, in twelve verses in Matthew, mysteriously appearing to venerate the Christ child before vanishing like the star they followed.

Their brief appearance in the New Testament is Matthew 2:1-12 (*see sidebar, over*). They do not feature in any other book. Their number and names are never revealed in the

text. Yet tradition has filled in the gaps. They have name and number, and despite no formal canonization of historical note, bear the status of saints in the Catholic church.

Their triplicate number was probably derived from the number of gifts mentioned (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), the apportionment of which seems symbolically expedient. Three wise men: three ages of man (youth, middle-age, old-age); three continents joined at the Holy Land (Asia, Africa, and Europe, and thus significant of peoples of the ancient

world); three parts to man's being, (mind, body, and soul). They are variously depicted at three distinct ages, and of three distinct races, depending on the tradition at hand. (It should be noted that not all traditions number them thus. In the Syriac Orthodox Church, for example, the tradition is that there were twelve Magi.) Three figures presenting gifts to the Christ child are depicted on a third century sarcophagus in the catacombs of Rome.

The word used to describe them in Greek is μάγοι, “magoi,” variously translated as “wise



Third century sarcophagus slab from the catacombs of Rome depicting the three wise men. The inscription reads, *Severa In Deo Vivas*, "Severa, may you live in God."

men," a distinctly Persian appellation inferring the ancient philosophy of Assyria and Babylon, where even Abraham was said to have been instructed in the knowledge of the stars.<sup>1</sup> That they were astrologers is widely accepted – the word *magi* itself connoting such, but also the Gospel states they came from the East (*ἀνατολῶν* "anatolōn," literally, the dawn, or the rising of the sun) having seen a star rising (*ἀνατολῆ* "anatolē") in significance of the birth of the Christ child. The word *magi* shares the etymological root with "imagination" and "magic" in English, and was applied in the Latin world to mean priests and members of the priest class and followers of Zoroaster. In the Patristic sense, then, the word symbolizes the wisdom of the ages deferring to the new age; the subordination of the old religions in the supremacy of Christ's birth. In some respects, this is not unlike the symbolism of Exodus 7:8-12, where Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of Pharaoh's magicians: not only did Aaron's rod turn into a serpent (to match the power of the great magicians), it *ate the magicians' rods*, thereby surpassing them and absorbing them until it alone remained.

In the Gospel, the Magi are not expressly kings. However,

1 *Babylonian Talmud*, Baba Batra 16b, "Eliezer the Modiite said that Abraham possessed a power of reading the stars for which he was much sought after by the potentates of East and West."

In the Gospel, the Magi are not expressly kings . . . . Isaiah provides pretext, "And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord," and Psalms the elevation, "May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him."

reading allusively,<sup>2</sup> Isaiah provides pretext, "And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord,"<sup>3</sup> and Psalms the elevation, "May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him."<sup>4</sup> Thus the three wise men came to represent another triplicity – that of the philosopher, priest, king, the height of all knowledge, temporal and celestial, in all cultures united by Christ's appearance.

Writing in the fourteenth century, Ludolph of Saxony (1295-1378) wrote in his *Vita Christi*:

The three pagan kings were

- 2 A "remis" reading under the levels of Biblical exegesis, signified Kabbalistically by the acronym PRDS ("Pardes," or "orchard," the root of the word *paradise*, anglicized here as *Pshat* (literal), *Remis* (allusive), *Drush* (homiletic), and *Sod* (secret)).
- 3 Isaiah 60: 6 (NIV).
- 4 Psalm 72: 10-11

called Magi not because they were magicians but because of the great science of astrology which was theirs. Those whom the Hebrews called scribes and the Greeks, philosophers, and the Latins, wise men, the Persians called Magi. And the reason that they were called kings is that in those days it was the custom for the philosophers and wise men to be rulers.

Matthew tells us that the wise men came to Jerusalem in search of the "king of the Jews," whose birth they determined from the appearance of a star which, after their visit with Herod, "went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was." They find the child in a "house" (not a stable or cave) where they worshipped him and gave the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, they return home by a different route, avoiding Herod, whom they had been warned them not to trust by agency of a dream.

Herod had "found out from



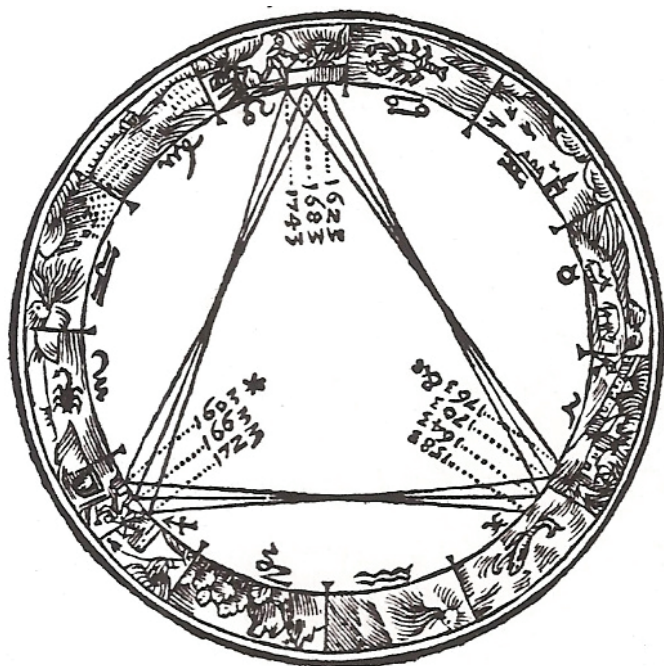
them the exact time the star had appeared" and had ordered his priests and teachers of the law to assist in determining the location of the Christ child. The exact time of the appearance of the star may allude to the erection of a horoscope by which Jesus' birth was forecast. An illustrative example can be drawn from the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B.C. There is a technique employed by ancient astrologers for forecasting the birth of prophets which is preserved by the famed ninth century astrologer, Abu Ma'shar.<sup>5</sup> It is one of the so-called longer cycles, one culminated when the Great Conjunction switches into zodiacal signs of a different classical element.

Notably, the Great Conjunctions repeat in roughly twenty-year increments twelve or thirteen times in signs that are 120° apart, signs that comprise a so-called "trigon" (being one-third of the zodiac) and having a common elemental rulership assigned. After approximately 250 years or so, the Great Conjunction occurs in a new trigon – switching from the fire trigon, say, to the water trigon. According to the technique communicated by Abu Ma'Shar, when the Great Conjunction switches trigons, the birth of a

5 Abu Ma'shar Jafar ibn Muhammad ibn Umar al-Balkh, *On Historical Astrology, the Book of Religions and Dynasties*. For a more detailed account of this technique, see *Knight Templar*, Winter, 2023.



Zoroastrian Museum of Fire in Yazd, Iran



Zodiacal longitude of the Great Conjunctions of the fire trigon from 1583 to 1743, as depicted by Johannes Kepler in his *De Stella Nova*, published in 1606.

prophet may be signified.

The Great Conjunction in 7 B.C. occurred on Friday, May 29, in Pisces, of the water trigon. The previous Great Conjunction (in 26 B.C.) occurred in Leo, of the fire Trigon. Thus, the Great Conjunction of 7 B.C. switched trigons, from fire to water.<sup>6</sup> A

6 It should be of interest that the Great Conjunction occurred in Pisces, as its movement to this sign may signify the onset of the Age of Pisces, in which Christ's appearance as a "fisher of men" became demarked by the symbol of the fish. This may be contrasted with the bull in the Age of Taurus (whence it is alleged cows remain holy in

prophet is signified.

Abu Ma'shar tells us that the place where the prophet is born is the place where the Great Conjunction perfects in the ninth house (that is, the physical location where the stars would be seen to

... continued on page 36

eastern religion), which Mithra came to slay, and the ram Abraham sacrificed in lieu of Isaac on Mount Moriah as significant perhaps of the onset of the Age of Aries. Interestingly, the Great Conjunction of 21 Dec 2020 occurred in Aquarius, having changed elemental rulership from Taurus (that is, from earth to air) and is thus, under this philosophy, significant of the onset of the Age of Aquarius.

## The Adoration of the Magi



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

<sup>9</sup>After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

an interview with Sir Knight

## **PHILIP DOYLE** **Doctor of Music**





### Dr. Phillip J. Doyle

Urbana Lodge No. 157  
Champaign Royal Arch Chapter No. 50  
Urbana Council No. 19  
Urbana Commandery No. 16

## 1. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?

I teach a number of subjects at a school called Tonlistarskóli FÍH in Iceland, including (three levels of) Improvisation, Music Business, Music Technology, Songwriting, Jazz Piano, Forums, and Jazz History.

I'm also fortunate to regularly play professionally with some of the most renowned pop and jazz artists in Iceland – including a recent featured soloist performance with TodMobile live at Harpa (the city's Cultural Center) alongside Tony Hadley of Spandau Ballet, Midge Ure (who started LiveAid), and Nik Kershaw, with full orchestra.

Most recently, I recorded tenor and soprano sax and “EWI” (electronic woodwind instrument) with Peter Erskine (one of history's greatest jazz drummers), Matthew Garrison (bass player and son of Jimmy Garrison – who was a member of John Coltrane's quartet), the drummer for the Sugar Cubes (which was led by Björk when active), and many other stellar musicians on a project called Jack Magnet Science (on Spotify and other channels), currently getting excellent reviews.



Photo by Kristinn R. Kristinnsson

**Fun fact:** I recorded in Akureyri, Iceland for Will Ferrill's *Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga* feature film and recently worked with renowned Icelandic composer Atli Örvarsson in my home studio for the Netflix Films' feature film *No Limits*.

## 2. WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Reykjavik, Iceland.



### 3. WHEN DID YOU START PLAYING THE SAXOPHONE?

In third grade, they were starting a band program and passed out a sheet of paper asking what two instruments I want to play and why. I wrote “saxofon” because I “like the scratchy sound it makes” and “oboh” because I like the sweet sound it makes (thinking clarinet in my mind.) I’m extremely thankful they put me on saxophone.

Couldn’t get a sound of it for weeks . . . then the teacher made some adjustment to the ligature, which holds the reed, and said try again. The result was a honk louder than a foghorn! I ran around the halls of my school shouting at the top of my lungs – was hooked ever since – though I try to keep the foghorn to a minimum these days.

### 4. WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

The University of Miami Frost School of Music, The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (bachelor’s and master’s degrees), and again the University of Miami Frost School of Music for my D.M.A. (Doctor of Musical Arts).

### 5. HOW DID YOU BREAK INTO THE INDUSTRY?

When I was twenty I got a serendipitous call to tour all over the world with KC and The Sunshine Band, one-hundred and twenty-five shows a year, for roughly two years. During this time, I performed on the Ellen Degeneres Show, the NBC Today Show, numerous venues in Italy, Canada, Australia, the Cayman Islands, Amsterdam, and many more places – it was a hard-working band, and I had a great time.



### 6. WHAT WAS ONE OF YOUR MOST MEMORABLE PERFORMANCES AND WHY?

To answer this candidly, it was a KC show, in which a few disabled audience members were in the front row. As we played, through my sunglasses, I saw one of them moving in perfect sync with the music, and it moved me to tears. I’ll never forget that. That moment trumps any big names I’ve shared the stage with.

### 8. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MASON?

Since May 5, 2010 – so fourteen years, hard to believe time moves as fast as it does.



### 7. WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU KNIGHTED?

In Paxton Lodge No. 416 in Illinois . . . and I want to mention the Fellow Sir Knights that made that possible. I was visiting the University of Illinois from abroad, had only a few days near campus and, despite an annual Grand Encampment a few days away, they rallied all the Knights together to perform my last three York Rite degrees – which I had been waiting for nearly a decade to complete (having left off on the Cryptic Council degrees).

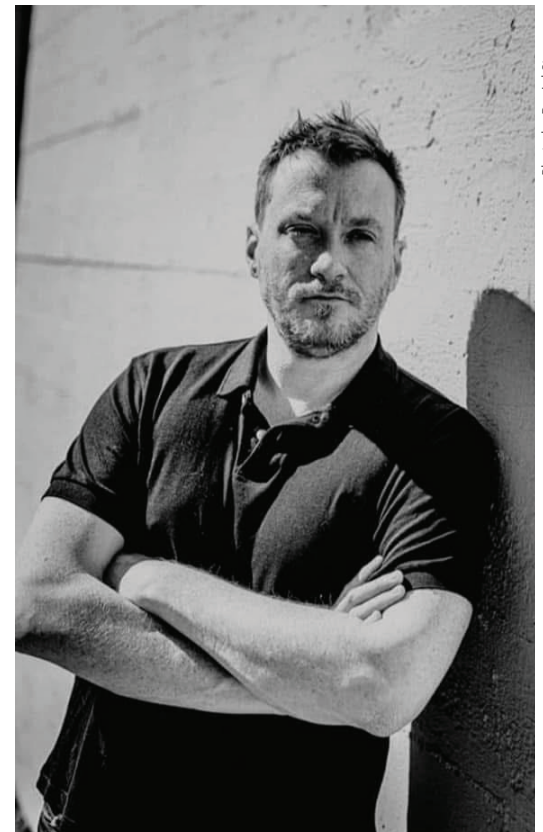






Photo by Kristinn R. Kristinsson

**9. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY OTHER APPENDANT BODIES? WHICH ONES?**

I had a very brief opportunity to join AMD [Allied Masonic Degrees] when I was living and working in New Jersey years back, but was moving at the time. My interest in AMD is still quite strong – I would be honored to contribute to the Fraternity in this way in the near future, and welcome any opportunity to do so. While not an appendant body, I am a member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 Research Lodge correspondence circle.

**10. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DEGREE?**

Wow. Tough question. At first glance, I have to say both my EA [Entered Apprentice] degree, and the OOT [Order of the Temple]: In both of these degrees, the commitment and steadfastness of the Brothers to the solemnity of the proceedings is forever etched in my mind. But in the final analysis, my answer is every degree I've ever secondarily participated in. We all share this journey, and I don't take lightly the Grace afforded me to stand in similar shoes with countless other Brothers across centuries of time.

**11. ARE YOU STILL ACTIVE IN YOUR BLUE LODGE? WHY OR WHY NOT? SAME WITH COMMANDERY?**

Blue Lodge: I keep up with the minutes and occasionally say hello when I can from abroad. Urbana Lodge No. 157 will always be home. Commandery is similarly geographically out of reach. I have attended the Masonic Temple in Reykjavik and plan to participate more frequently there in the coming years.

**12. DO YOU FIND MASONRY COMPLEMENTS YOUR MUSICAL CAREER? IF SO, HOW?**

Practically, I think hard work in any field complements Masonry, and vice-versa. If you are dedicated to your craft, there is virtue within it. From a more philosophical perspective, music is a medium for which divine aspects may be – if only momentarily – glimpsed, like a spark through endless cosmos. If we are to say that Masonry allows us the same spirit of contemplation and Light, then we are indeed speaking about the same thing.





### 13. DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER SINGER-SONGWriters WHO ARE MASONS?

I'll take the opportunity to mention that it is known Mozart, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and (certainly!) many more musicians were Masons.

### 15. ARE YOU MARRIED? KIDS?

My partner and I own our home together and have discussed marriage and having kids. We'll see what the future holds!

### 14. WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE PERSON TO SHARE THE STAGE WITH?

I've played with Gloria Estefan, Gloria Gaynor, Barry Manilow, James Newton Howard (Hunger Games Composer); jazz greats like Mike Stern, Dave Douglas, James Moody, and many more – but there is one singer here in Iceland named Andrea Gylfadóttir, and she commits like no one else I've seen on stage! If you want to hear something different, look up TodMóBILE on Youtube.



Photo by Kristinn R. Kristinnson

Photo by Kristinn R. Kristinnson



Photo by Daniel Starrson

### 16. WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO MASONRY? AND THE YORK RITE?

Before I knocked on the door to the Lodge, it was the search for discernible Truth – what is real versus what is an illusion – what is at the *marrow* of life? I think many of us feel like we are, and have always been, connected to something greater than what we see and hear with our eyes and ears, but daily life can easily distract us from that. Over the years, unpacking the allegories and mysteries of our Fraternity continues to fascinate me.

York Rite spoke to me spiritually, as a search for Christ within, and offers unique insights into the Three Great Lights – and though I've just completed the degrees in the Rite, I've only started unraveling what is there. My experience with the York Rite was profoundly impactful. I really want to emphasize how all these Sir Knights – within days – helped me finish a Rite I had started nearly ten years prior. Of the many things Masonry is – that kind of Brotherhood – it most certainly is one.

### 17. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW CAN MASONRY REMAIN RELEVANT IN THE PRESENT AGE?

Education, education, education. Without Masonic education – further Light – are we not simply in a dark room, where all paths lead in any and all directions?

The most helpful instruction and insight I've received has always been from a Brother in Lodge. Far for me to say what Masonry should or should not be – I leave that to more intelligent and capable Brethren. But I feel that by augmenting our visibility in public, charitable works, and providing much more insight to all new and continuing members as to the *art of building this Temple not made with hands*, we will be eternally successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story, and my best wishes for the Fraternity. **KT**

Do you know a Sir Knight who you think would be good to interview? If so, please send recommendations to the editor. Please include a brief statement why you think the Sir Knight would be good to profile in the *Knight Templar*.

# GRAND CO



**ALABAMA**  
Sidney R. Cooley



**ALASKA**  
James W. Hogg



**ARIZONA**  
John Lervold



**ARKANSAS**  
William R. Frizzell



**CALIFORNIA**  
Jordan Yelinek



**COLORADO**  
Ricky Benish



**CONNECTICUT**



**DELAWARE**  
Joseph Dawson III



**FLORIDA**  
Ronald A Naumowicz



**GEORGIA**  
Tyler W. Pledger



**HAWAII**



**IDAHO**  
Barry Newell



**ILLINOIS**  
Jamie A. Emery



**INDIANA**



**IOWA**



**KANSAS**  
Gary A. Mason



**KENTUCKY**  
Jon S. Dawson.



**LOUISIANA**  
Allan K. Bean



**MAINE**  
Randy Lee Adams



**MARYLAND**  
Scott G. Lapp



**MASSACHUSETTS/  
RHODE ISLAND**  
Stephen D. Whitmore



**MICHIGAN**



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**NEVADA**



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Arthur W. Stauff



**NEW JERSEY**



**NEW MEXICO**  
James Ernest Bungard



**NEW YORK**  
John W. Scott



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
Scottie Cox



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
Leo Anthony Roglin



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**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
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**SOUTH DAKOTA**



**TENNESSEE**  
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**TEXAS**  
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**UTAH**  
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Kirk C. White



**VIRGINIA**



**WASHINGTON**



**WEST VIRGINIA**  
James Winzenreid



**WISCONSIN**  
Shawn P. Noble



**WYOMING**  
Tim Forbis



**TOGO**  
Marc Kpakpobi Ata Adote

# CYBERNETIC RABBIT

Kabbalistic allusions in cyberspace

by Ben Williams



**F**or purposes of contemplation, the hard drive presents a useful metaphor by which more complex themes can be explored analogously.

Consider, then, that the manifestation of consciousness – indeed, the very cosmos itself – can be likened to a hard drive.

First things first, to write to memory, any hard drive must be formatted. The metes and bounds of its extent must be first determined and “written,” in such a way that space is partitioned against space. Space is created in space wherein a boundary is made known. Here, self-reference becomes possible in receipt of a name, and the “C” drive is born (here, “C” might stand for cosmos).

C is the root directory from which and by which all other memory will be ordered. There is a mainframe which existed independent of C (a plurality of switches and gates wherein

electron states may encode information and memory of potentially infinite expression), but without C, that drive cannot be known.

The first precept is a limit, and a name. C is required to write to the drive, but also to retrieve any data written there.

Thus, C is the *nominative* by which the drive is rendered sensible (even unto itself), whence C is not – and cannot be – independent from the drive. The drive and C become reflections of each other – a limit within the unlimited, the first word that enables all speech.

C is *always* in the center. No matter where data is written, or from whence it is retrieved, C is the first pronunciation. In the hard drive, every directory must include C; every file name is wrought first through C: *e.g.*, C:/Documents/Fiction/The-Reluctant-Messiah.doc.

These directories order the tree: C:/Archangels/Angels/Material-World. Thence the files

are ordered and executed, each retrieved and informed by, in, and through C.

Drivers (called *demons* appropriately enough) communicate peripherally to execute commands to external apparatuses, in operational communication via the hard drive.

All things communicate through the matrix that leads ultimately from and to C.

So, in this analogy, what, then, is man?

Man is like the virus check – an .exe file that runs through all the directories one by one to determine ultimately that the drive is *good*.

C://Aziluth/Beriah/Yetzirah/Assiah/The-Relucant-Messiah.exe.

“The drive is Good.”

I said that C stands for cosmos.

But in this analogy, the C is Christ. **KT**

BECAUSE LOVE NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE



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**TWENTY-FIR**

**KNIGHT**

The tenets of Templary hav

# 21ST CENTURY

by Ben Williams

# KNIGHT TEMPLAR

we never been more relevant

**W**hat does it mean to be a Templar in the twenty-first century? Templars no longer share a horse between two knights, nor keep battlements in defense of the Holy Land. However, symbolically, the tenets of Templary should be alive and well in the modern day. Here are ten ways you, as a modern Templar, can exemplify the code of conduct that should inform every Knight Templar.

## 1. CHIVALRY

**B**y virtue of their designation, Knights Templar have sworn vows of knight-hood. Such fealty necessarily informs chivalry, an admixture of commitment to an ideal and modesty. Chivalry requires modesty because knights are commissioned in service of others.

Ultimately, this means putting other people first. Modernly, examples for the twenty-first century Knight include honor guards and arches of steel, where Knights Templar show up in dress uniform to lend an air of dignity to a proceeding which would otherwise be diminished absent their participation. This illustrates the simple act of presence – of taking time to show up, of standing straight, in application of the tactics employed to elevate a reception, even if just for a few minutes. A lot of effort is required beforehand, and most

people will be unaware of how much time and energy it takes to maintain the Class A uniform, to march straight, and stand to attention, often in the background to frame a proceeding and focus attention on its object, not the Knights themselves. The goal is service. Our protocol assists us here: for example, on a long table, a lady should never be sat at the end.

## 2. PILGRIMAGE

**T**emplars no longer man the roads to the Holy Land to protect pilgrims en route to the sacred sites there. But symbolically, the new Jerusalem must still be defended. This “city of peace” is within each of us, the extension of which reaches the community as a whole. Thus, twenty-first century Templars must guard the sacred space within – the route to discovery – in defense of truth. All peoples should have the right to come to God in their own way, for the glory of His revelation. Templars should stand guard over this fundamental liberty, never hammering the Bible, but safeguarding it as a treasure to be shared with those ready to receive it. Twenty-first century Templars should safeguard their own inner sanctum, too, using the sword of liberty to cut away excess and vice, to lead by example. The road to the Holy Land is best exemplified, that others may follow assuredly that they are heading in the right direction.

"Templars no longer man the roads to the Holy Land, to protect pilgrims. But symbolically, the new Jerusalem must still be defended!"



### 3. ABSTEMIOUSNESS

In the twelfth century, Templars were required to maintain an austere diet. Today, some scholars credit this self-denial and discipline with the longevity members of the Order achieved. Moderation in food and drink, then, is a credit to mental and physical health. Just as a Templar must stand guard over his thoughts, recognizing that he is not the thoughts themselves, nor necessarily their origin, but a space wherein they resonate, the twenty-first century Templar should watch over his mouth. Christ informs us that:

whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile

the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man (Mark 7: 17-20 [KJV]).

Yet certainly some foods are better for us, and lead to well-being, while other foods affect the opposite. Some influences tend to impure thoughts and speech, opening us to pernicious influences, impatience, rage, inflaming the passions and confounding the mind. Others tend to elevation and health. Thus, the twenty-first century Templar should seek nutritious foods and avoid toxicity and intoxication. In so doing, he will be better enabled to be of service to others.

### 4. PHYSICALITY

Not all Templars were knights. Indeed, the majority of the Order was comprised of clerics and squires. Yet physical capacity, wherever possible, was a must.

The twenty-first century Knight Templar can work to ensure physical capacity, to be of better use to his Brethren and neighbors.

The body and the mind are not separate: one is an expression of the other. *Mens sana in corpore sano*, says the Latin adage (“a healthy mind in a healthy body”). Indeed, we are not our minds. We are not our bodies. We *have* mind and body. Somewhere, the source of our being is beyond these dipoles, and yet attained by way of them. The body must be the container for the mind – the vase wherein the flowers are

caused to bloom. Without the partition, the water bleeds into the soil and mixes with the clouds.

In differentiation, similitude is made known.

Thus, the corporal vessel is the temple, from it the life’s work necessarily extends. The temple emerges along the road to Jerusalem, for through these winding avenues of years, which reduce everything to memory, God is made known, “to His own, unto whom He reveals Himself.”

“Contain Thyself, O Trismegistus!”





## 5. FEARLESSNESS

The medieval Knights Templar were notorious for their fierceness, their fearlessness, in battle. Their vows prevented retreat. As such, they had already resigned themselves to the inevitability of death. There was freedom in such resignation: they leaned into the storm.

Modernly, our war is against ignorance, vice, and tyranny. Our duty is to truth and honor. A Knight is modest, but never weak. He will speak out in the cause of truth, even if it means his disapprobation. He stands with truth, not the crowd. His voice is tempered. But his words decisive. Indeed, his speech is like a sword, wielded in defense of the widow and orphan, the weak and the underserved. Just as a Templar does not draw his sword unless ready to wield it in defense of the innocent maidens and the Christian religion, so the twenty-first century Templar never wastes words. He knows that “reasonable speech is the servant of *nous*. When you talk, you just talk,” and your words are a crowd.

Thus, the twenty-first century Templar does not retreat from his duty to uphold truth, to speak thoughtfully. He *will* speak out. He *will* give wise counsel. He will stand with those unfairly accused and repressed. Yet, he is careful never to offend anyone unintentionally.

## 6. FRIENDSHIP

The vows of fealty attach to the provenance of God Himself. And yet, they bind Knights Templar together in eternal brotherhood.

Knights Templar should be ready to assist one another, to maintain priority of supplication, to support a Brother Templar whenever necessary (but never at the expense of his obligation).

United, Knights Templar represent a significant force in our society, a benevolent force that welcomes charity and uplifts our communities. We are an invisible Jerusalem, God’s city of peace in the midst of the desert. Together, we span the city’s walls, demark her boundaries, and welcome the weary and downtrodden into the shelter of her urbanity. With each new member, her bounds increase, toward that day where gentleness reigns throughout, and all her paths speak peace.

## 7. PRACTICE

To maintain excellence in battle, the medieval Knights Templar were consummate swordsmen. They trained hard for combat in heavy armor in the heat and aridity of the desert.

Modernly, Knights Templar should train their minds and bodies in determination of the work of their Commanderies. Knights Templar should be informed. They should be up to speed on the practical and the mundane and versed in the philosophical and empyreal. This means keeping abreast of local politics, being a good citizen, attending church, and continually seeking self-improvement – reading at least one book each month, learning a new language or discipline, volunteering in support of a charitable or benevolent cause, constantly applying oneself to expand one’s capacity for usefulness and understanding. The modern Knight does not eschew technology; he avails himself of the tools of the age by which to extend his reach.

Daily, a modern Knight must exercise tolerance and spar against laziness and comfort. His gift is his labor.

## 8. JUSTICE

The martyrdom of Jaques DeMolay impresses starkly on all Knights Templar the image of justice, rendered distinct and apparent by means of its absence.

Justice is brought into the world in society of men; absent such society, justice is nascent and impalpable. Indeed, the virtues are made known, by, in, and through humankind.

Nature itself cannot be unjust – only man (who is the sum of all natures) wreaks injustice. Everyone can sense it, every soul unjustly treated thirsts for justice.

The personification of Justice is endowed with a blindfold – an image of impartiality. This blindfold may be a Masonic hoodwink of a kind, but her sword is a Templar blade.

Justice pairs rightness and correction. Justice is the great law of equilibrium in extension. All things have come to be for rectification in judgment. To the twenty-first century Knight Templar, there can be no greater duty. He stands for what is right: he does what is right, come what may.

## 9. VIGIL

The Knight Templar makes time for God. In medieval times, a Knight's schedule was highly regulated. Knights Templar were, after all, monks of a poor and devoted obedience: Matins, Lauds, Terce, Mass, Vespers, Compline, Grand Silence, Lecto Divina, many devotions.

Thus, the modern Knight Templar must make time for contemplation and the study of the logos. The modern Knight Templar must pray and meditate. He must read the Psalms and the New Testament. He must become accomplished in spiritual exercises, empowered over the lower impulses, to order his house, and slay those intemperate demons that seek expression in sensation of the body.

## 10. LEADERSHIP

Where a Knight Templar succeeds in exemplification of the previous attributes here enumerated, he naturally emerges as a leader.

There is no title he seeks, other than Knight Templar. His leadership arises by his example and in the renown of a good name.

By adopting Knightly conduct, influence spontaneously appears. Ambition and aggrandizement he leaves to the worldly. He knows that an idea by itself is not enough – it must evolve and change – creativity is an arc that evolves across the span of the Commandery – a new expression, one fulfilled by others. So, he gives freely, content to let direction emerge without clinging, forcing, or demanding obeisance or declaiming ownership. He gives unconditionally. His satisfaction is in completion, not recognition.

By speaking honestly and forthrightly, by counseling privately while esteeming publicly, by acting truly in the service of justice, by loving unconditionally, he raises up those around him and gains the veneration of his peers. His goal must always be the progress of others. His mission is to be surpassed – to be replaced by others better than he. He will make the space for other Knights to fill.

*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam!*



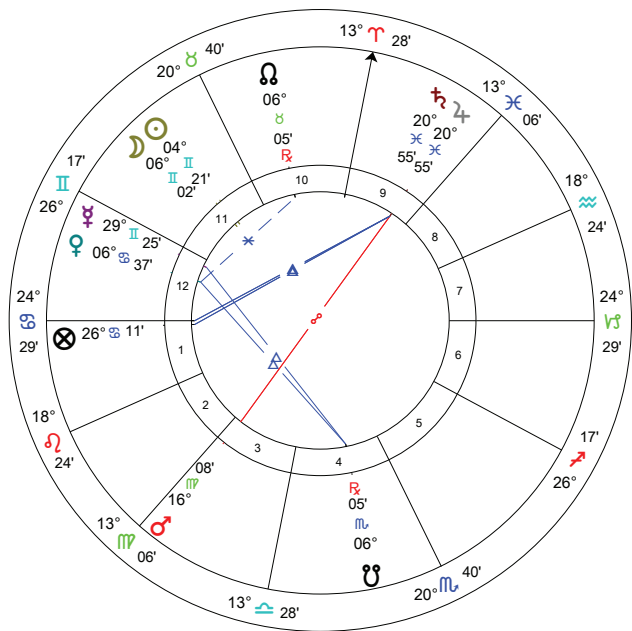
# WRITERS WANTED

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**The Great Conjunction, as set for Jerusalem, occurred at 8:33 a.m. Local Time on May 29, 7 B.C. with the conjunction perfecting in the ninth house.** The conjunction is in Pisces, of the water trigon. The prior conjunction, in 26 B.C., occurred in Leo, of the fire trigon. The Great Conjunction switched trigons (from fire to water) and thus, according to the techniques transmitted by the eighth century astrologer Abu Ma'shar, the birth of a prophet is signified. Following Abu Ma'shar, the birth is calculated from the above chart as occurring on September 16 at 10:44 p.m. Local Time in the year 1 A.D. (there is no year zero in the Christian calendar).

... continued from page 19

conjunction in the sky at about the position the Sun occupies around approximately 2 p.m., or between 1 and 30° West of the meridian). Interestingly, the Great Conjunction of 7 B.C. perfected early in the morning on May 29 in the ninth house, as seen in Jerusalem. Thus, were the Magi to set a chart for the Great Conjunction, they would view Judea as the country wherein the birth of the prophet was signified. Should the Magi have employed this or a similar technique, their visiting the capital to inquire about the birth seems reasonable, since they would not have the exact location. The prophecy transmitted by Micah, that Bethlehem would yield a ruler of Israel, was made known to them by the priests at Herod's palace, thus directing their inquires further. (How the star reappeared to lead them to the exact location of Christ's birth remains a mystery; perhaps another chart was erected or perhaps they were guided by an

angel through some other divinatory or supernatural means.)

Abu Ma'shar next says that the time of the birth is determined by taking the longitude of the Great Conjunction from the ascendant (or the position of the sunrise) and turning the arc into years, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. Had the Magi performed this calculation, they would have surmised that the degree of the conjunction was approximately 218°45' from the ascendant, thus signifying a birth in 7 years, 106 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 54 seconds – or around September 12, 1 A.D. at 10:44 p.m. local time.<sup>7</sup> Intriguingly, this is the right time, in the night, around Rosh Hashanah in the ancient Jewish calendar.

7 Note that, due to an error by the Scythian mathematician, Dionysius Exiguus, there was no year zero in the Christian calendar, so Christ would be born in the year 1 A.D. under the current calendar.



Detail of portal on North facade of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, depicting the Massacre of the Innocents.

Remarkably, all this aligns with the story of Christ's birth where Mary and Joseph were forced to take shelter in a cave because there was no room in the Inn. This also would give the Magi sufficient time to plan for and undertake their journey to Israel.

Further, the fact that Herod extracted the "exact time the star appeared" from the Magi makes sense were he interested in erecting a chart by which his own priests might draw inference. But Herod was not able to find the location with precision and the Magi's decision not to report back to him left him darkened. Fearing for his throne, and ashamed of prophecy, Herod's recourse was to murder all male children under two years old in and around Bethlehem, a margin of error that would encompass variations as may arise in application of this ancient mathematical technique and ensure his rival, as "king of the Jews," would be annihilated. The killing spree became known as the Massacre of the Innocents. Jesus escaped the carnage because Joseph and Mary escaped to Egypt, again following oneiric intervention by an angel.

The Magi have various names,

but the most popular in the West were probably derived from a sixth century Greek manuscript, translated into Latin as the *Excerpta Latina Barbari* in Alexandria, Egypt, which listed them as Bithisarea, Belichior, and Gathaspa. The names seem to have stuck in the Latin West by the eighth century. We find in *Excerpta et Collectanea*, by the Venerable Bede, the names Melchior, Balthazar, and Caspar (sometimes, Gasper):

The magi were the ones who gave gifts to the Lord. The first is said to have been Melchior, an old man with white hair and a long beard . . . who offered gold to the Lord as to a king. The second, Caspar by name, young and beardless and ruddy complexioned . . . honored Him as God by his gift of incense, an oblation worthy of divinity. The third, black-skinned and heavily bearded, named Balthasar . . . by his gift of myrrh testified to the Son of Man who was to die.

These names are by no means exclusive, however. In Syria, they are known as Larvandad, Hormisdas, Gushnasaph; in Ethiopia,



Depiction of the three Magi as different aged men (middle aged, youth, and old age) from the Basilica Saint Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy (sixth century, renovated in the nineteenth century). From left: Balthazar, Caspar, Melchior. These Magi are all Persian, as indicated by their Phrygian caps.

Hor, Karsudan, and Basanater; in Armenia, Kagpha, Badadakharida, and Badalilma.

The gifts they bear symbolize the majesty, divinity, and sacrifice (or restoration and transcendence) of the Christ – gold, the symbol of kingship and temporal dominion; frankincense, the holy incense said to be among the only substances to be able to reach the heavens; and myrrh, a balm symbolic of peace, healing, preservation, and restoration. The ninth century Muslim scholar al-Tabari, citing a seventh century source by Wahb ibn Munabbih, described the symbolism of the gifts.

What is the meaning of the gold, the myrrh and the frankincense, which you are offering in preference to all other gifts? And they said: These are symbolic of Him, for gold, is the lord of the material world, and this prophet is the lord of the people of his time; and myrrh is used to heal wounds and sores and thus God through this prophet will heal the crippled and the sick; and the smoke of incense reaches heaven as does no other smoke, and thus this prophet will be raised to God

in heaven as no other prophet of his time shall be.

The three Magi were early depicted at the three ages of man, youth, middle-age, and old-age. A sixth century mural in the Basilica of Saint Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy, depicts the three kings of different ages.

Traditionally, the three kings became depicted as from three different races, from three different continents of the ancient world. Caspar is typically depicted as the youngest, traditionally from India, bearing frankincense; Balthazar is depicted as middle-aged, black, from Arabia; and Melchior is depicted Caucasian, in old age, from Persia, bearing gold.

According to legend, upon their return to their respective countries, the three kings abdicated and gave their wealth to the poor and took up lives of contemplation committed to prayer, vigil, and the commission of good deeds. Saint Thomas the Apostle is said to have baptized Caspar in India around 40 A.D. The Calendar of Saints (the Martyrology) held in Cologne Cathedral records the deaths of the Magi.

Having undergone many trials and fatigues for the Gospel, the three wise men met at Sewa [in present day Armenia] in A.D. 54 to celebrate the feast of Christmas. Thereupon, after the celebration of mass, they died: St. Melchior on January 1, aged 116; St. Balthasar on January 6, aged 112; and St. Gaspar on January 11, aged 109.

The famed Venetian explorer, Marco Polo visited the tomb of the Magi in the city of Saveh, in modern-day Iran and recorded a remarkable preservation of the bodies, that their bodies were endowed with “hair and beard remaining.”

In Persia is the city called Saveh, from which the three Magi set out when they came to worship Jesus Christ. Here, too, they lie buried in three sepulchres of great size and beauty. Above each sepulchre is a square building with a domed roof of very fine workmanship. The one is just beside the other. Their bodies are still whole, and they have hair and beards. One was named Beltasar, the second Gaspar, and the third Melchior.

Messer Marco asked several of the inhabitants who these Magi were; but no one could tell him anything except that they were three kings who were buried there in days gone by. But at last he learnt what I will tell you.

Three days farther on, he found a town called Kala Atashparastan, that is to say Town of the Fire-worshippers. And that is no more than the truth; for the men of this town do worship fire. And I will tell you why they worship it. The inhabitants declare that in days gone by three kings of this country went to worship a new-born prophet and took with them three offerings – gold, frankincense, and myrrh – so as to discover whether this prophet was a god, or an earthly king, or a healer. For they said: ‘If he takes gold, he is an earthly king; if frankincense, a god; if myrrh, a healer.’

When they had come to the place where the prophet was born, the youngest of the three kings went in all alone to see the child. He found that he was like himself, for he seemed to be of his own age and appearance. And



**An AI generated image of the Magi, as traditionally rendered in the West. From left: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.**

he came out, full of wonder. Then in went the second, who was a man of middle age. And to him also the child seemed, as it had seemed to the other, to be of his own age and appearance. And he came out quite dumbfounded. Then in went the third, who was of riper years; and to him also it happened as it had to the other two. And he came out deep in thought. When the three kings were all together, each told the others what he had seen. And they were much amazed and resolved that they would all go in together.

So, in they went, all three together, and came before the child and saw him in his real likeness and of his real age; for he was only thirteen days old. Then they worshipped him and offered him the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh. The child took all three offerings and then gave them a closed casket. And the three kings set out to return to their own country.

After they had ridden for some days, they resolved to see what the child had given them. They opened the casket and found inside it a stone. They wondered greatly what this could be. The child had given it to

them to signify that they should be firm as stone in the faith that they had adopted. For, when the three kings saw that the child had taken all three offerings, they concluded that he was at once a god, and an earthly king, and a healer. And, since the child knew that the three kings believed this, he gave them the stone to signify that they should be firm and constant in their belief.

The three kings, not knowing why the stone had been given to them, took it and threw it into a well. No sooner had it fallen in than there descended from heaven a burning fire, which came straight to the well into which it had been thrown. When the three kings saw this miracle, they were taken aback and repented of their throwing away the stone; for they saw clearly that its significance was great and good. They immediately took some of this fire and carried it to their country and put it in one of their churches, a very fine and splendid building.

They keep it perpetually burning and worship it as a god. And every sacrifice and burnt offering which they make is roasted with this fire. If it ever happens that the fire goes out,



**Shrine of the Magi in Cologne Cathedral. The gold-work took goldsmith Nikolaus von Verdan fifty years to complete.**



**Three Kings depicted on the architrave of the Basilica Saint Eustorgio in Milan, Italy.**

Photo by Welleschik Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic and 1.0 Generic license.

they go round to others who hold the same faith and worship fire also and are given some of the fire that burns in their church. This they bring back to rekindle their own fire. They never rekindle it except with this fire of which I have spoken. To procure this fire, they often make a journey of ten days.

That is how it comes about that the people of this country are fire worshippers. And I assure you that they are very numerous. All this was related to Messer Marco Polo by the inhabitants of this town; and it is all perfectly true. Let me tell you finally that one of the three Magi came from Savch, one from Hawah, and the third from Kashan.<sup>8</sup>

Relics of the Magi were originally acquired by Saint Helena, mother of Constantine in A.D. 325. They were interred in the

<sup>8</sup> Polo, Marco. *The Travels*. Translated by Ronald Latham. 1958. Penguin Classics. 58-60.

Hagia Sophia. But around 350 A.D. Eustorgio, the Bishop of Milan, procured them for his diocese. Legend holds that the oxcart bringing them to Italy got stuck in the mud near the Porta Ticinese gate, which the Bishop interpreted as a sign and commenced construction of the church around the place the oxcart had sunk. This Basilica of Saint Eustorgio became an important stopover for pilgrims during the Crusades.

The relics were moved from Milan in or around 1163 by Friedrich I (known also as *Barbarossa*, or Red Beard), the Holy Roman Emperor, to Cologne. The relics remain in the cathedral to this day, interred in a golden shrine built by the goldsmith Nikolaus von Verdun. The shrine took fifty years to complete, from 1180 to 1230.

The textile used to wrap the bones has been dated to the second or third centuries. The dye is believed to be Phoenician and the weave of Syrian origin. The cathe-



The altar of Cologne Cathedral includes a traditional depiction of the Three Magi, as kings of different ethnicities and ages. From left: Balthazar, Caspar, Melchior.

dral itself was not completed until 1874 (from architectural drawings made around 1300), a total of 632 years after its construction was commenced. Today it is the largest Gothic church in North-

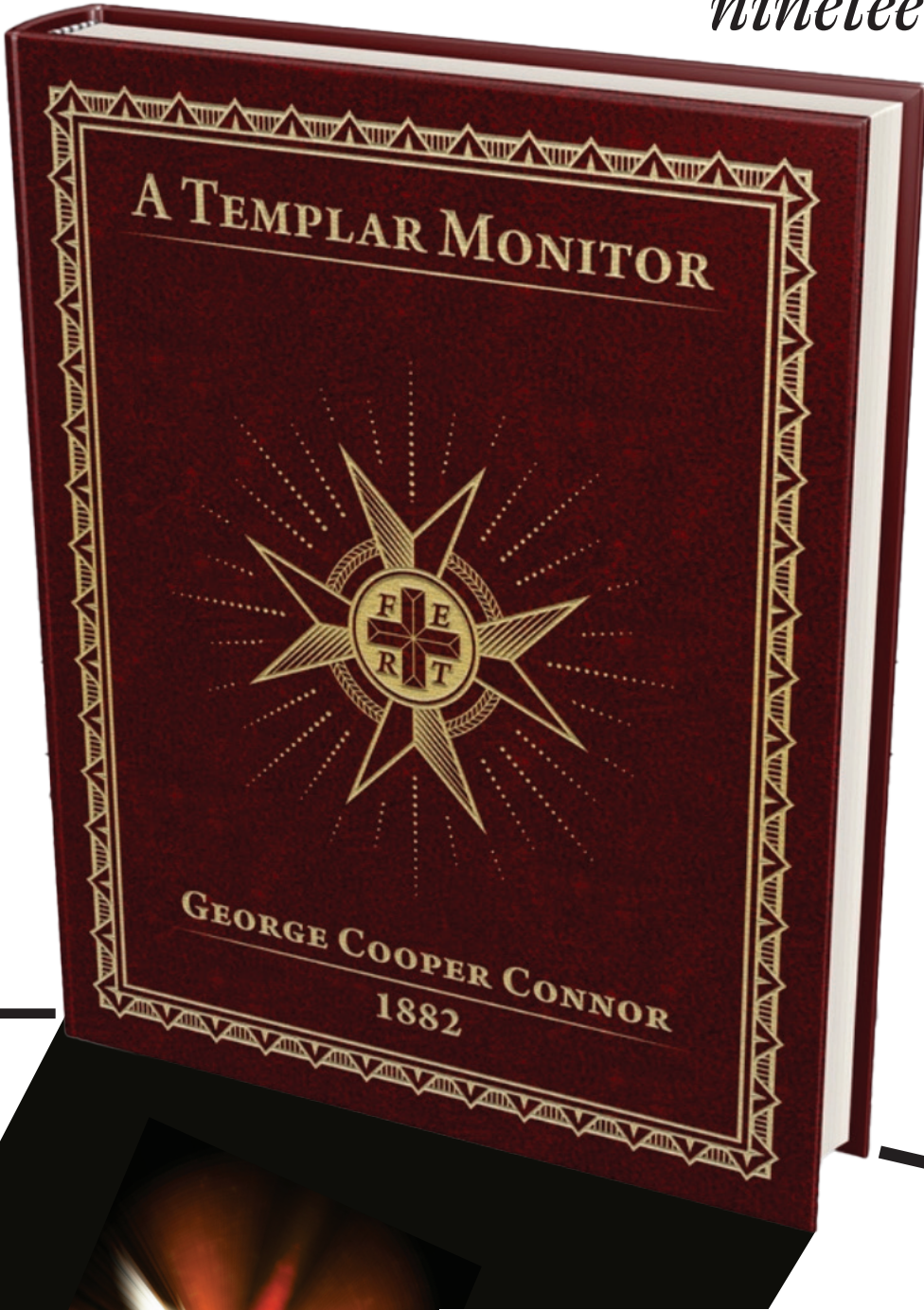
ern Europe. Its twin towers are 515 meters tall. A central spire is topped, not by a crucifix, but by a star. **KT**



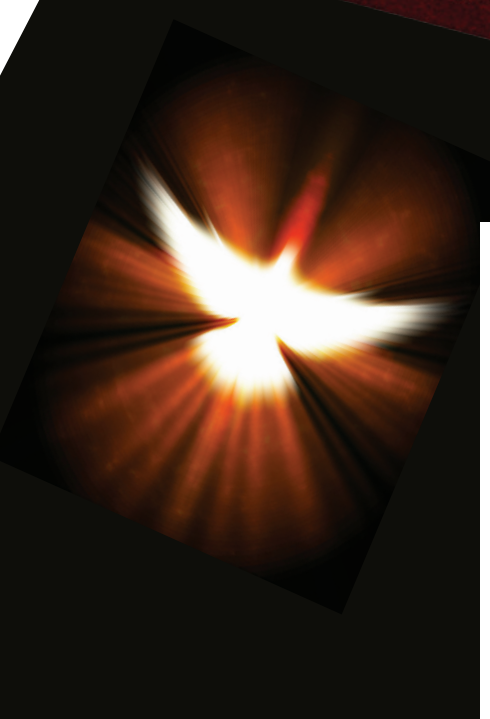
Cologne Cathedral. Work was begun in 1163 and was not completed until 1874. The central spire is capped not by a crucifix, but by a star.

# THE **Templar Monitor**

*nineteenth century ritual*



For the modern knight



A faithful reproduction of the handwritten manuscript of the Orders of the Temple made by George Connor in 1882, a decade before the Orders were standardized across the Grand Encampment. Connor was a PGC and PGM of Tennessee. His skill and effort in recording the Orders are of historical relevance, but also constitute a valuable work of art. This book records the way the Orders were conferred **chronologically**, with the **Order of Malta** conferred last. Includes commentary and comparisons with the current ritual by S.K. George Marshall, KGT, PGC. Original manuscript is in the archives of Lookout Commandery No. 14 in Chattanooga, TN. All proceeds benefit the **Knight Templar Eye Foundation**. Order online at:

<https://www.ktef.org/items/a-templar-monitor>



# The Work Unites Us!

by Ben Williams

**M**ore than anything, Freemasonry is an assignment.

Of course, the other appellations are correct: Freemasonry is the remnant of a mystery tradition, a school of philosophical and moral instruction, a collective exercise in self-governance. And all these are important. But it is the labor that unites the Craft in proximity and brings purpose to bear.

In this sense, Freemasonry is the very forms and ceremonies it comprises – positions moved by people, offices determined by incumbency. Freemasonry is a *locus* in space and time for the occupation of membership. It's a place to be, and something to do there.

Certainly, the Lodge (that is, the congregation of Brethren, not the building) is the focal point. Within its boundaries, Freemasons connect and shape the structure of their society. Freemasonry becomes a fabric of sociability, a construct within which peaceable relationships of mutual respect and meritorious advancement are made to appear.

Hierarchy necessarily emerges of a type; a group cannot be moved without hierarchy to determine the majority opinion, move the Lodge, and safeguard the minority view. But that hierarchy is dependent on the occupation of the Lodge itself – by the promulgation of the forms and ceremonies which Freemasonry *is* – not by external considerations. In the Lodge, men are united by the work only. This is what the word “Craft” must also mean: to craft relationships, to forge a society of Masons, to manifest the Lodge. And by extension, to craft the world around us as each member is improved in his bearing.

The work requires dignity. There is determination in the work – memory is required to apprehend it, acumen to comprehend it, capacity to exemplify it well. When worked to good effect, Masonry dignifies the assembly, without pomposity or affectation. It empowers its officers to extend, by their better natures, the application of truth in the deliberation of the assembly. Men must stand upright. The assembly regulates itself politely, with respect – not due to the surroundings (as in, say, a courtroom or a house of state where the very environment is wrought to command a bearing) but due to the very forms and ceremonies by which the Lodge is promulgated as a Lodge of Freemasons.

The work unites us.



Brethren come to Lodge simply to *open* Lodge. Indeed, the building is unlocked – but that does not mean the *Lodge is open!*

The Lodge is created by the forms and ceremonies embodied by Masons, each like a small gear in the assembly of the whole, which whirs between square corners and punctuations of the gavel to stamp out a new reality shared between the members. The imprint is clear, yet invisible.

Here, in this space, time yields fruits of beneficence. Men join hands and faiths across societal divides imposed by parochialism. Charity results because, in the end, that's all that's left. If there be right action, there comes charity.

Men will drink, work, war, and adventure, seeking novelty with which to slay time. But Masonry is regular, repeating, and unchanging (for the most part) because it is, in its essence,

the occupation of time for the fulfillment of virtues. In this, the baser natures must be usurped (patience quells them) – the Mason may be raised up, to more harmonious intercourse, well-mannered and directed in contemplation of the secret ceremonies that readily exemplify the turning of the spheres, the propagation of destiny, and the ultimate realization toward that unific vision wherein the source of all is glorified.

*Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini Tuo da gloriam! KT*



# Movie Knight

## CONCLAVE ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨ ✨

### Focus Features

**Starring:** Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, Sergio Castellitto, and Isabella Rossellini

**Directed by:** Edward Berger

**Runtime:** 120 minutes

Based on the novel, *Conclave*, by Robert Harris.

Stunning cinematography, a driving score, and memorable performances make *Conclave* a season favorite.



Intrigue and in-dealing inform this dramatic thriller as the College of Cardinals sequesters in the Sistine Chapel to select a new Pope.

The film plays on the Church's crisis of identity, emergent liberal Catholicism at odds with centuries-old perspective, raising argument against a background of shifting allegiances and political jockeying. Should the Church try to adapt to modernity or retrench tradition infallibly? Meanwhile, key Cardinals (played by Tucci, Lithgow, and Castellitto) vie for votes as the Cardinal-Dean (Fiennes) fights to maintain order amidst his own crisis of faith.

The film is well shot, visually composed and structured with drawn out takes devised to raise suspense. Berger (the director) is clearly a student of Hitchcock, the "master of suspense," who once said that "There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it." Closeups compound the tension as the viewer's field of view is shrunk down to a laser focus, away from crucial details, and onto the actors' reactions. Sometimes the object of

the frame is blurred by a reduced focal length that crystalizes on the actor's visage. Fortunately, the cast can carry the scrutiny with admirable performances. Fiennes is outstanding. The turmoil of his duty is almost always apparent.

"The Papacy is the great hunt of the Cardinals in Rome," Martin Luther once quipped. The film exploits such humanity. Ambition supplants candor, conspiracy overrides faith. The dialogue is well matched to the visual palette, which captures the intricacy of the procedure and faithfully represents historical practice to exemplify the burden of electing a new Pope. Nice historical details are depicted, such as the threading of cast votes with scarlet thread, and the modern means of engendering the black smoke to signal inconclusive votes through the chimney at the press of a button.

Visually, the frames capture the viewer, depicting the procedure sufficiently to satiate curiosity and showcase tradition in captivating ways. For example, it is interesting to hear Latin being spoken to unite the diversity of languages

## THE LAND OF NO GOOD-BYES

by Richard Van Doren

Another soul has left today,  
My heart is filled with sighs.  
I wish to also go unto  
The Land of “No Good-byes.”

A land of only “Hi, Hello –  
Good to see you again, at last.”  
A land where I see family, friends,  
Dear souls from my own past.

Yes!, there I meet my closest, dearest ones,  
And perhaps souls I wished to meet,  
For they had all directed me  
To a better life complete

Complete in serving God  
And those He sent me to,  
To bless in some simple way  
As best as I could do.

So, have no heavy hearts today  
For me – I’ve been blessed,  
To serve God – and hopefully you –  
My best work will earn my rest.

God loves us all – and me,  
Among my sisters and my brothers.  
So, to the Land of No Good-byes  
I travel – as have many others.

In missing me – for days or years,  
Shed no tears or sighs,  
Just know, through God’s own love,  
We’ll be together – and No Good-byes.

otherwise expressed, as has been the custom for thousands of years.

The story centers around the arrival of a new Cardinal, one made in secret, ministering in war-stricken Afghanistan, Cardinal Benitez (played by Carlos Diehz).

Favorites for St. Peter’s throne include diametrically opposed Bellini (Tucci), a liberal Cardinal from the United States, and Tedesco (Castellitto), a conservative from Italy who wants the mass performed in Latin. Electing either will entrench one side of a theological divide and propel the Church either forwards or backwards a thousand years. Meanwhile, Cardinal Tremblay (Lithgow) maneuvers to position his own ascendancy, while Cardinal-Dean Thomas Lawrence (Fiennes) uncovers an unseemly plot to discredit a rival. Outside, in the streets, violent extremism arrives at the Vatican’s doorstep, punctuating the deliberations with the imminent severity of their decision.

Immured in the Sistine Chapel and the residences, the plotline is ultimately driven by dialogue. Peter Straughan’s screenplay delivers. Any shallowness must be the product of modernity confronting the Church: deep theological questions are reduced to soundbites, the positions of the Cardinals essentially one dimensional. Yet the sincerity of the characters, who struggle to be more than human in emulation of their Christian ideal, still shines through. The sense is a Church collapsing under its own irrelevance and mediocrity. What matters now is the future, not the past.

Volker Bertelmann’s score dominates scene changes with striking beats and thrumming bars. A still shot is contrasted abruptly as the next scene marches the viewer through the heart of the Vatican. Ordered, horizontal, and well-centered compositions and

symmetries are set against intense closeups and jagged movements. Stéphane Fontaine, the cinematographer, deserves credit. There is a richness to the frames that is not easily forgotten. The viewer is simultaneously drawn in and yet somehow excluded; somehow, you’re in the room, but not a part of it, as if watching from a hundred miles away through a telescope. As a result, the viewer is suspended like his own conscience, brushed to the background as necessity usurps the moment.

The film suffers mildly by stereotype – plying some wokeness – and lacks depth and theological contemplation or critique as in, say, *The Name of the Rose*, where the murder-mystery is set against a debate on canonical law (the essential question being whether Christ owned his clothes and thus, by extension, whether the Church should own property, and be rich) as well as the confluence of natural philosophy and faith.

Here, the narrative moves through the corridors of the Vatican, twisting one way and then another, and ends with a striking realization. But there are no transcendent themes here, only the simplicity of ambition and the regurgitation of doctrine.

Yet the film marches on. The script devolves the storyline toward a fundamental question that is never really resolved. And perhaps this is the vehicle itself: where does the Church go from here? **KT**

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Front: (Mrs. Jerry) Cynthia Marr, Dallas 63, TX; (Mrs. Robert R.) Debi Gannaway, Santa Ana 61, CA / Arlington 189, TX; (Mrs. Daniel) Erin Marr, Omaha 91/N. Platte 177, NE; Ms. Tara B. Shulas, East Liverpool 71, OH; (Mrs. David) Wynn D. Evans, Phoenix 213, AZ; (Mrs. Darryl R.) Michele Burt, Melrose 204, TX; (Mrs. James) Donna McGee, Mobile 237, AL; (Mrs. James) Norma Burkett, Santa Ana 61, CA; (Mrs. Ivan) Judy De Tevis, Wichita 8, KS; Ms. Vera Salley, Waco 199, TX; Back: (Mrs. Joe) Rosemary Alsworth, El Paso 141, TX; (Mrs. Timothy) Kimberley Stenner, Midvale 247, NV; (Mrs. James) Debralee Sturdevant, Sheridan 131, WY; (Mrs. Jerry) Barbara Stephens, Columbus 79, OH; (Mrs. William) Doloras Reinhold, Kingsport 244, TN; (Mrs. Peter H.) Anne Johnson, Phocnix 213, AZ; Mrs. Modena Watson, Phoenix 213, AZ; (Mrs. Robert) Stacie Schwartz, Las Vegas 207, NV; (Mrs. Mark) Lauren Ralston, Denver 1, CO



## Mobile Assembly No.237 Quilt Fundraiser Yields \$2,200 for the KTEF

(Mrs. James) Donna McGee, Supreme Preceptress; (Mrs. Jimmy) Judy Fleischamel; (Mrs. Judd) Joy Wolfe; (Mrs. Ron) Cindy Naumowicz



## Indianapolis Assembly No. 90 Catering Event and Ladies Program for Wabash Valley York Rite College No. 72

(Mrs. Joseph) Tracy Sparks; Mrs. Leah Everett; Stephen Everett; (Mrs. John) Mindy Jones; (Mrs. Matthew) Andrea McLaughlin; Matthew McLaughlin; (Mrs. Roy) Mary Browning



**Omaha Assembly N. 90 Supreme Worthy President Official Visit**

Back (Mrs. William) Judy Pickle; Ms. Jennifer Grass (Initiated 11/1/24); (Mrs. James) Jeane Kearnegis; (Mrs. George) Deb McMullin; (Mrs. Rick) Becky Baker; (Mrs. Ronald) Tami Stites; (Mrs. Donald) Kay Goble; Middle: Mrs. Vicki Helms (Initiated 11/1/24); Ms. Carol Reade; Ms. Bev Pickering; (Mrs. Barry) Wauneta Warwick; Ms. Fritzie Nixon; Front: Ms. Susan Corbin; Mrs. Judy Turner; (Mrs. Richard) Janet Moore; (Mrs. Phillip) Doris Edwards; (Mrs. Daniel) Erin Marr, Supreme Worthy Second Vice President; (Mrs. David) Wynn Evans, Supreme Worthy President; (Mrs. William) Marna Raymond; (Mrs. Dale) Darlene Hix; (Mrs. John) Ann Spiker; (Mrs. John) Pauline Parsons; (Mrs. Richard) Jean Goble



**Supreme Worthy President and her Mother serving as Supreme Courier**

(Mrs. David) Wynn Evans, Supreme Worthy President; Mrs. Modena Watson, Supreme Courier



**Supreme Worthy President with Honor Guard at Supreme Assembly 2024 in Tulsa, Oklahoma**

Sir Knight Ivan DeTavis, Eminent Grand Junior Warden of Kansas; Sir Knight Paul Waterman, Phoenix Commandery No. 3; Sir Knight Mike Matthews, Phoenix Commandery No. 3; (Mrs. David) Wynn Evans, Supreme Worthy President; Sir Knight William Garrard, Jr., Past Right Eminent Southwest Department Commander; Sir Knight Ramsen Ohanes, Phoenix Commandery No. 3 [not pictured Sirk Knight Peter H. Johnson, Jr. Past Grand Commander Arizona]



**Indianapolis Assembly No. 90 Dinner to Honor Two New Sisters: (Mrs. Matthew) Andrea McLaughlin and (Mrs. Vance) Charity Brewer**

Left: Ms Jennifer Herring; (Mrs. Vance) Charity Brewer; (Mrs. Roy) Mary Browning; (Mrs. Paul) Margaret Cole; (Mrs. Phil) Connie Whisner; (Mrs. Randy) Mary Beth Spaulding; Right: (Mrs. James) Darlene Hodge; (Mrs. Willard) Donna Clutter; (Mrs. Matthew) Andrea McLaughlin; Mrs. Leah Everett; (Mrs. Randy) Penny Darling; (Mrs. Tony) Monica Peterson; Mrs. Cheyenne Shriner; (Mrs. Joseph) Tracy Sparks.

# Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

## 57<sup>th</sup> Voluntary Campaign



**T**he gift of eternal life with the Creator and the Savior cannot be matched by any gift we can receive from each other. But we give these gifts, we share our lives and our fortunes with others, because Jesus gave to us His all. He sacrificed His life; He took upon Himself our sins; He suffered tremendous pain for you. And what did He ask in return? Believe in Him. Believe in His message. Accept Him as your Savior. That is all He asked.

He loves us – every one of us. He showed us how to live our lives, how to accept our physical death, but also how to live on in Heaven by His side.

He wants us to love one another as He loves us. He showed us how to forgive, how to accept others for who they are, and how we should help those in need. We cannot match the miracles He performed, but we can help create miracles for many.

There are ways we can carry on the miracles He performed. We can become a part of the miracle of sight for others. Jesus restored sight. You can too. Be a part of the continuing legacy, teachings, and healings of our Savior. During this special time of year, make donations to the Voluntary Campaign of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation.

The dollars you donate are used in research that will affect the lives of millions over the coming years. You can bring light to those in darkness.

The purpose of the Annual Voluntary Campaign is to supplement the income of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. through bequests, gifts, endowments and other sources. The Voluntary Campaign runs from October 1 to April 30. But funds contributed at any time throughout the year will be included in the campaign.

Let us come together for the betterment of mankind and reach our goals. Each Commandery should strive to donate \$10 per member. By doing so your Commandery will receive a plaque and seal. But more importantly, you will become an integral part of the miracles of Jesus Christ because those dollars fund our research and our direct patient care through Seniors Eye Care Program and others.

I was asked, “how much of each dollar donated is used to fund our mission?” The real question becomes, of each dollar spent where does it go? Seven cents (\$0.07) goes towards fundraising – things like the calendar, booklets, label programs, mailers, *etc.* Five cents (\$0.05) goes towards running the Foundation – things like rent, utilities, salaries, *etc.* Eighty-eight cents (\$0.88) goes to program services – things like the Endowments, grants, direct patient care. Your Foundation is a well-run organization, efficient in operation and dedicated to fulfilling its mission in the most economical manner possible.

So how can you become a part of this fantastic service to others? There are numerous ways. The Grand Commander’s Club is an excellent start. Simply enroll in the Grand Commander’s Club by sending your first installment of \$100 or more. As a member of the Club, you pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more for the next nine years. Once the Club reaches a total of \$1,000 you will be enrolled in the Grand Master’s Club.

If you are unsure how to get started with any of these programs, please contact the Eye Foundation or contact me. You can also go to the Eye Foundations website [ktef.org](http://ktef.org) and find all the information you need.

Other ways to donate include memorial gifts in memory of a deceased person; honorary gifts given in honor of a living person, in recognition of service or friendship; wills and bequests are an excellent way to make a lasting contribution to the Eye Foundation.

The Golden Chalice is awarded in recognition of a single donation of \$10,000 or a Sword of Merit for a single donation of \$25,000.

One thousand dollars (either at one time or as part of your Grand Commander’s Club membership) entitles you to be a member of the Grand Master’s Club. This club is available to all individuals – even if they are not Templars – but not to organizations. Your membership in this club entitles you to a lapel pin, an engraved wall plaque, and the Crusader’s Cross which

can be worn on your Class A uniform. There are twenty-five levels to the Grand Master’s Club. As you reach each \$1,000 level you will receive a new Crusader’s Cross to signify your generous donations. Once your donations total \$25,000, you will receive the Sword of Merit.

Another question we are often asked is how to raise funds for the foundation. You can hold projects or fund-raising events. I would especially like to point out the videos (found on the Eye Foundation’s website –[ktef.org/videos](http://ktef.org/videos)). Look them over, hold a special meeting, and show one or two.

Some quick simple ideas: flea market sales, bake sales, various dinners to raise money, auctions, golf tournaments, or domino tournaments. The list is endless and only restricted by your imagination. Mention that the funds are being raised to support the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Bringing the Light to those in Darkness.

Did you know, 80% of learning occurs through vision? Our research helps prevent future blindness. Therefore, you are helping to prevent future blindness. You are making the world better.

Thank you for taking the time to consider making donations to this miracle. The Eye Foundation is the responsibility of every Sir Knight. Continue the miracles of our Savior by helping with your ideas and your work to raise funds. You are Bringing the Light.

In His and your service,

**Richard R. Jernigan, PGC**



Baylor College of Medicine



# The Impact of KTEF Funding

## Past, Present, and Future

### Arlene V. Drack, MD

Ronald Keech Professor of Pediatric Genetic Eye Disease Research

Director, Kolder Electrophysiology Service University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Institute for Vision Research

Member of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee



**T**he KTEF has been a part of my career since the beginning; as an organization specifically dedicated to supporting research into treatments for pediatric blindness, KTEF is perfectly aligned with my own dedication.

I obtained two KTEF grants to study genetic eye diseases in children as a new faculty member in my first job at Emory University. This grant funding started my career as a clinician-scientist, doing general pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus surgery, with a sub-specialty in Pediatric Genetic Eye Diseases.

I went on to serve as Chair of Pediatric Ophthalmology at The Children's Hospital, Denver, where I continued to evolve as a genetic eye disease sub-specialist. This sub-specialty eventually led me back to Iowa, where I had done part of my training, to be an investigator in the first Phase III ocular gene therapy trial designed to treat a type of congenital blindness. That trial was a success, and led to the first FDA approved gene replacement therapy for the eye, Luxturna®. This treatment is now

available around the world to improve eyesight in patients with blindness due to RPE65-associated Leber congenital amaurosis.

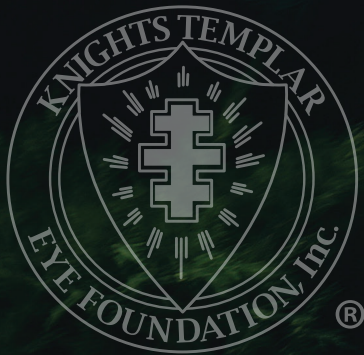
I am director of the Kolder Ocular Electrophysiology Service at Iowa, where we have developed special pediatric protocols to help avoid the need for anesthesia to perform testing in children. I am an investigator in other clinical trials, including as site PI for the current NAC Attack trial. Simultaneously, I started a basic science laboratory in the IVR using mouse models of human retinal degenerations to develop new gene therapies and other treatments for these disorders. I obtained grant and philanthropic funding. As my lab grew, I recruited undergraduates, medical students, graduate- and post-doctoral scholars to participate in this research, adding research mentees to the many clinical trainees I have had the joy of teaching.

Recently, the post-doctoral scholar in my lab, Ying Hsu, PhD, was awarded a KTEF career starter grant to begin a new direction in her research on genetic eye diseases that she started in my lab. In this way, my intersection with KTEF has come full circle: grants from KTEF helped launch my academic career as a clinician-scientist, I am privileged to work with KTEF currently as a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee, and now one of my mentees is extending our work into the future with the support of KTEF. The importance of research funding for new scientists and clinician-scientists cannot be overstated. KTEF has made possible many years of progress and the hope of new treatments to come.. **KT**

Recently, the post-doctoral scholar in my lab, Ying Hsu, PhD, was awarded a KTEF career starter grant to begin a new direction in her research on genetic eye diseases that she started in my lab. In this way, my intersection with KTEF has come full circle: grants from KTEF helped launch my academic career as a clinician-scientist, I am privileged to work with KTEF currently as a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee, and now one of my mentees is extending our work into the future with the support of KTEF.

# Merry Christmas

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE  
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR EYE FOUNDATION OFFICE





*Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.*

# Endowment Funding



**Boston Children's Hospital**

**F**or more than two decades, the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. (KTEF) has supported Boston Children's researchers working to treat, cure, and prevent vision loss. Now, through a \$2 million gift matched by the Children's Hospital Ophthalmology Foundation, Boston Children's Hospital has established the KTEF Research Endowment.

Children's investigators have the potential to improve outcomes and enhance the quality of life for all individuals affected by vision-threatening conditions. "This endowment ensures that our experts can continue conducting basic science and translational research to advance our understanding of sight-threatening conditions," says Ophthalmologist-in-Chief David G. Hunter, MD, PhD.

ing strabismus, or crossed eyes; retinopathy of prematurity, a disease that can blind preterm infants; amblyopia, or "lazy eye"; and nystagmus, a condition with uncontrollable, rhythmic eye movements. They also will explore the use of artificial intelligence to refine ophthalmic imaging, use data science to build a comprehensive database of pediatric eye disease, and work to develop novel therapies to correct or prevent pediatric forms of blindness. **KT**

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Visual impairment in children can lead to developmental delays, learning disabilities, depression, and other negative consequences. Without treatment, these young people may require lifelong assistance. As leaders in pediatric ophthalmic disease research, Boston

## WHAT IT SUPPORTS

The KTEF Research Endowment will be overseen initially by Dr. Hunter and Lois E. H. Smith, MD, PhD, professor of ophthalmology. Scientists selected for endowment support will conduct bold research to advance their understanding of numerous ocular disorders, includ-



# GRAND MASTER'S CLUBS

## AUGUST 2024

AL Daniel W. Robinson  
AL Phil E. Terrell  
AZ Richard G. Young  
CA Craig L. Flagtwet  
CA Michael L. Miller  
CA Gary U. Okamoto  
CA Armen Ulyan  
CO John R. Davis  
CT Mark S. Agnew  
CT Charles A. McCollum  
DC Roger E. Cundiff  
FL John D. Pickford  
GA Harry R. Strazzella  
HI Dustin T. Verity  
ID John W. Zeller Sr.  
IL Kevin A. Skogsberg  
IN Randy J. Darling  
IN Anthony W. Hahn  
IN Rodney A. Mann  
IN Joseph L. Sparks  
KY Donald E. Webb III  
Mexico Adrian Y. Ocana Alvarez  
Mexico Marco E. Rosales Gutierrez  
MI Matthew G. Kent  
MI James D. Rutherford  
MI Adam W. Wygant  
MN Brian K. Dimatteo  
MO Jessie D. Morrison  
NV William E. Cook Jr.  
NH Thomas X. Tsirimokos  
NJ Charles E. Taylor Jr.  
OH Eugene N. Bitler  
OH Edwin D. Dickerson  
OH James K. Lawson  
OH Joseph A. Snyder  
OK Robert L. Bradway

PA Nathan C. Minnich  
TN John W. Whitaker  
TX Jeffrey Goolsby  
TX Gary E. Rock Jr.  
TX Thomas W. Snyder  
VT David W. Schuler  
VA Raymond P. Raehn  
VA Raymond D. Steele  
VA Alan S. Truax  
VA Kevin P. Walek

## SEPTEMBER 2024

AL William A. Carter  
AL Michael Kozlik  
AZ Donald R. Tapia  
CA Edgar Tuna  
DC Nicholas Mastron  
FL Stephen G. Paulsen  
FL Garry M. Paxinos  
GA Timothy P. Kelley  
IL James M. Strong Jr.  
IN Mark A. Elder  
IN Joe F. Gust  
IN Philip G. Hampton  
IN William M. Hecht  
IN James A. Iles II  
KS T. Michael Fegan  
LA Charles R. Bertrand  
LA Joe D. Gibbs  
MD Frederick T. Rossmark Jr.  
MA/RI Peter A. Randall  
NE Joseph P. Charbonneau  
NV Joseph R. Miller  
NJ Brian H. Blades  
NJ Richard W. Westergaard  
OH James K. Lawson  
OK Robert L. Bradway

PA David L. Burrier  
PA Brenden R. Hunter  
PA Adam C. Hyde  
PA Jeffrey R. Jones  
PA Charles E. Knapp Jr.  
PA Daniel W. Lewis  
PA Mark G. Mattern  
SC Richard R. Lee Jr.  
SC Jerry A. Willard Jr.  
TN Richard L. Bowling  
TN Stanley W. Elder  
TN Stephen R. Guendert  
TN George W. Webster  
TN Timothy C. Webster  
TX Jerry M. Wallace  
UT Lonnie M. McCulloch  
UT Timothy L. Stenner  
UT Jason C. Varner  
VA Craig A. Cox  
VA Tommy W. Steffey Sr.  
WI Richard J. Rausch  
WY Jon C. Rowe

## OCTOBER 2024

CA W. Bruce Pruitt  
CA Michael J. Sekera  
CA Robert E. Welch  
CO Grover L. Sardeson  
CT Mark S. Agnew  
DC Roger E. Cundiff  
FL Charles C. Osborne  
GA James G. Mashburn  
GA Jeffrey B. Warner  
IN Jeffery W. Prairie  
IA Kenneth A. Brickman  
KS Gary B. Strout  
KY Clarence W. Browder

MD Robert D. Goldsborough  
MN Alan Mackenzie  
MN Eric J. Thiem  
MN Lowell G. Wakefield  
MS Richard C. Spencer  
MO Russell S. Hanson  
MO Kevin B. Sample  
NH John D. Meader  
NM Randall C. Bond  
NC Timothy M. Cable  
NC Raymond B. Casey Jr.  
NC Douglas R. Collins  
NC Patrick J. Niemann  
NC John M. Smith  
OH James K. Lawson  
OH Martin R. Trent  
OK Robert L. Bradway  
OK John L. Logan  
PA Scott R. Hilsee  
PA Brenden R. Hunter  
PA Alexander R. Micale  
PA Michael M. Williamson  
PA Charles H. Zehnder Jr.  
Philippines Antonio A. Tuason  
SC Richard R. Lee Jr.  
TN Roger L. McDaniel  
TX Charles E. Campbell  
TX Guy R. Niles  
UT Russell D. Newsom  
VA Marion J. Humphreys III  
VA Hans S. Pawlisch  
VA Raymond D. Steele

# GRAND COMMANDER'S CLUBS

## AUGUST 2024

AL Garrett A. Teel  
GA Harry R. Strazzella  
IL Stephen T. Adamson  
IL John E. Brayton  
KS Richard A. Wortman  
ME Paul D. Hamilton  
MI Daniel Ayoub  
MN Brian K. Dimatteo  
MO Budd C. Gilfillen  
MO Derek W. Pope  
OH Robert J. Davis  
OH Douglas K. McLe  
OK John L. Logan  
TN Joseph N. LeBeau III  
TX Charles E. Campbell

TX Billy J. Hamilton Jr.  
TX Franklin A. Zepp  
VA Raymond P. Raehn

## SEPTEMBER 2024

AL Jimmy R. Fleischamel  
CA Edgar Tuna  
CT Mark S. Agnew  
FL Stephen G. Paulsen  
FL John J. Russell  
GA Timothy P. Kelley  
ID John W. Zeller Sr.  
IL James M. Strong Jr.  
IN Mark A. Elder  
IN Philip G. Hampton  
LA Joe D. Gibbs

MI James R. Bradtke  
MI James D. Rutherford  
NE Joseph P. Charbonneau  
PA David L. Burrier  
PA Adam C. Hyde  
PA Christopher D. Reed  
TN Stephen R. Guendert  
VA Craig A. Cox  
WI Richard J. Rausch  
WY James L. Sturdevant

## OCTOBER 2024

AL Michael Kozlik  
CA Robert E. Welch  
CT Andrew N. Triandafilou  
DC Chen-Lun Chang

FL Ralph R. Shollenberger Sr.  
IL Robert W. Bigley  
IN Dominic J. Hamblin  
KS Kenneth E. Foster  
KY Clarence W. Browder  
LA Charles R. Bertrand  
MN Alan Mackenzie  
MN Eric J. Thiem  
MS John B. McKelvy  
MO Jeffrey L. Knight  
MO Kevin B. Sample  
NJ Richard W. Westergaard  
NM Randall C. Bond  
NC Timothy M. Cable  
NC Murray M. Skeen  
OH John W. Huffman

# Knights Templar Eye Foundation Inc.

The New Grand Master Club (GMC) – Crusader Cross Levels and Jewels



1 GMC



2 GMC



3 GMC



4 GMC



5 GMC



6 GMC



7 GMC



8 GMC



9 GMC



10 GMC



11 GMC



12 GMC



13 GMC



14 GMC



15 GMC



16 GMC



17 GMC



18 GMC



19 GMC



20 GMC



21 GMC



22 GMC



23 GMC



24 GMC



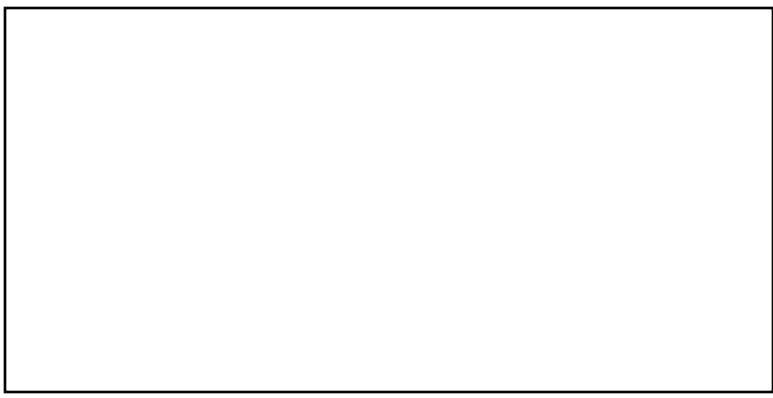
25 GMC



**At the 25 Grand Master Club level a Sword of Merit will also be issued.**



- OH Arthur F. Koeniger
- OH Art Moore
- PA Scott R. Hilsee
- PA Michael M. Williamson
- TN Darryl L. Chapman
- TN Brooke C. Grubb
- TX Charles E. Campbell
- UT Jason C. Varner
- VA Christopher R. Faraldi
- VA Marion J. Humphreys III



**Merry Christmas!**  
*Peace on Earth and good tidings to all!*

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