




**ILLINOIS SUPPLEMENT**

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Auston E. Smith  
Grand Commander

*Pro Deo et Patria*

Hello Sir Knights,

As we approach December 25th, the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, we should remember the "reason for the season." Too often we get caught up in the lights, parties, gift exchanges and other traditions of Christmas with no specific quiet time to reflect on why we celebrate the birth and earthly life of The Man From Galilee. As I was growing up my father insisted that my brother and sisters put on a small theater play for the family on Christmas Eve, complete with costumes and the manger scene, to keep the "Old Story" alive in our memories and remind us of "the reason for the season."

We should remember that Jesus brought us the new law, love! In this period of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns I hear people express their frustrations and loss of hope which too often result in hate aimed at the Government and those around them who don't think like they do. Love has been replaced by hate, destruction and violence. If we believe what is reported by some news outlets, many of those who are creating the violence and destruction are privileged, educated and financially secure in their personal life. Yet, they feel compelled to spread hate and disrespect for the rights of others. Where is the love?

When I refer to love in this sense, I am not referring to a "kum ba ya" moment around a campfire or to the human experience. I am referring to the new law of love as taught by Jesus, the law that requires us as Knights Templar to learn to be still and reflect on what we can do to make the lives of others better, to "feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted." In the Bible (King James Version), Mark 12:31, we read: *"And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."* In Matthew 7:12, we read: *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."* Love!

As Knights Templar we have an obligation to know and tell the Old Story and to remind those who come after us that if they obey the new law of Love, they will reap the rewards of having a fulfilling live. As Knights Templar we are not expected to stand on the street corner preaching our beliefs, but we are expected to go quietly about the mission of spreading love and doing good deeds to those in need.

As a result of the generosity of our fraternal forebearers the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois has the financial resources to provide assistance to those in need. The Illinois Knights Templar Assistance Outreach, in corporation with the Grand Lodge of Illinois' Illinois Masonic Outreach Services, has established a program whereby those Knights Templar, or their family, who are in financial need can receive assistance -- if we know they are in need! In our December celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, what better way is there to remember his life than to help someone in need. In Acts 20:35 we read: *"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

We are blessed to live in a free society in a free Nation and to have the financial ability to give the gift of love to those in need. I encourage you to have fun during our Christmas celebrations and enjoy life, but only after taking the time to be still for a moment to remember the reason for the season and pay it forward by helping those in need. You can change someone's life by a simple act of love!

Remember our Knights Templar widows, contact them, wish them a merry Christmas and find out if they need anything. If you find someone in need that can benefit from the resources of the Knights Templar Assistance Outreach program, contact your Grand Chaplain, Sir Knight Charles E. Hileman, Jr., KCT, REPGC.

If the Grand Master's General Order #12 has been rescinded by December, make the effort to have your Commandery conduct a Christmas Libations ceremony with your families, invite your Masonic brothers, tell the Old Story. Be careful, stay safe and follow local government guidelines in all gatherings.

God bless you and Merry Christmas!

AUSTON EUGENE SMITH, GRAND COMMANDER