



WISCONSIN

Supplement

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See you in the Asylum!

Courteously,

Charles (Mick) Olson, KCT, REG

Greetings, Sir Knights!

December in Wisconsin. As I write this there are flurries in the sky. Winter is here and if we don't yet have snow as you read this, it won't be long before we do. As you read this I am certain many are preparing for the holiday season. Whether making travel plans, or simply dinner plans, this year will be unlike any other. While COVID 19 will affect our holiday plans, it will not stop our celebration of Christmas. While our gatherings and celebrations will be fewer and smaller, Christmas this year will offer us an escape from an otherwise tumultuous 2020. Last Christmas, who would have guessed what this year would bring?

But then, 2000 years ago who would have guessed that angels would announce the birth of a child? Who would have guessed he would be born in a stable? Who would have guessed that boy would grow to become a carpenter, and that simple carpenter would become the savior of the world?

Life is full of surprises, but the birth of Christ was not one of them. Christ's birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that a Messiah would be born of a virgin. While I'm sure that Mary was quite surprised when she was visited by an angel and informed she would bear the son of God, Christ's birth was the first step in fulfilling that promise, that a savior would be born to the world so that man might have eternal life.

Thus, the birth of Christ established the cornerstone of the Christian religion and through that religion the Templars were born. The recent pandemic has caused us to change the way we conduct our lives and our business as Templars. We must NOT allow it to stop us from celebrating the birth of our Blessed Redeemer. As Templars we are obligated to observe Christmas and to celebrate that birth. Find a way to fulfill that obligation. While you may not be able to gather in person, I hope you may find a way to bring your commandery 'together'. Please bring Christ into your hearts and fulfill your Templar promise, just as God has fulfilled his.

So while we feast and give each other gifts this season to celebrate Christmas, let us remember that God's gift to man is the real reason for the season.

Soon, with luck, we will be gathering in-person to resume our labors as Templars. Just how that will look remains to be seen. It may look like a 'M*A*S*H' episode with masks and gloves, but I hope to soon cast aside my 'Brady Bunch' box. As we meet, be cautious and mindful of our fraters. Exercise the necessary precautions that we all remain healthy as we enjoy the camaraderie of Templary. Perhaps we will be able to have Inspection Season after all. My fingers are crossed.

To you and yours, from Lady Jewel and I, we wish you a very healthy, joyous and merry Christmas!

Great Expectations

Handel H. Brown, author of Christian books, states, "To prepare our hearts for Christmas, we must cultivate the spirit of expectancy." Is this good? Bad? Who knows?

Another author, Bill Adler, in his book, Letters to Santa Claus, reveals the hostility children can develop because of their excessive expectations. He writes of one letter, "Last year you didn't leave me anything good. The year before you didn't leave me anything good. This year is your last chance." Know anyone like this?

Expectation, in itself, is not foolish or contrary. There are many enjoyable expectations ahead. We look forward to Christmas longer, and with greater anticipation (and expectations) than all other holidays combined. The day itself may not be so great, but the overall positive impact of the season cannot be argued. Oft times we see the best in people during the holidays.

As parents and grandparents, we need to approach Christmas with the spirit of expecting the unexpected. It is nearly impossible to predict the responses of a child today. If we become dependent on all things going just right in order to be happy, then we are setting ourselves up to fall. Things do not go just right for everybody all of the time, even Mary and Joseph had to do their parenting in a fallen world, and birthed the babe in a manger. Nature does not promise us a white Christmas, but the expectation is there. In fact, we in Wisconsin do often have snow on the ground. In Isaiah 1: 18 we read "Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." That is the white Christmas we should dream about and anticipate. We are all made clean from sin. What a gift we have been given! We need to make Christmas a time of thankfulness and a time of growth in our knowledge of and belief for our newly born Jesus Christ, Immanuel.

Oh, and don't forget the presents. Children do have basic expectations and fortunately, we have the means and the spirit of Christmas to help us along that path. Who said it is better to give than to receive? Oh yeah, Jesus taught that to us as well. So, give often and give generously of yourselves and your bounty. As Christian Masons, this should be our expectation.

Glory be to God on High. Alleluia.

Kenneth A. Bales, KCT, Grand Prelate