



The Florida Knight

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Right Eminent Grand Commander 2020
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Fellow Knights of the Temple.

It is with great pleasure and happiness that I greet you as your Right Eminent Grand Commander for the 2020-2021 chivalric year and the Quasquincentennial (125th) year of the founding of the Grand Commandery of Florida. Having followed our immediate Past Grand Commander Ronald L. Parks through the various offices of the Grand Commandery line, I can say with certainty that I have some big shoes to fill. Right Eminent Ron has been not only a valued friend but also a great mentor during my progression in the Grand Commandery to the position of Grand Commander. I wish to thank him personally and to congratulate him on a job well done during his year as Grand Commander.

These past few months have been hard on all of us due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has undoubtedly affected everyone on a personal level, as most of us were restricted in our ability to socialize with our family and friends. Many of you may have lost your businesses and jobs, or know close friends and family that this has happened to during this time. Many of you may have even suffered from the effects of the virus and if this is true for you, I hope that you had a speedy recovery. Even if you were not affected by any of the above personally, one thing that we all share as Florida Masons and Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Florida is that COVID-19 effectively put an end to our normal operation of Masonic Communication. Stated meetings, social events, fund-raisers, and even charitable activities have all been canceled in the name of social distancing and trying to limit the spread of this pandemic. We even needed to change our Convention in Lake Mary, Florida to a Virtual Convention.

However, if only one good thing comes about because of this virus, it is to demonstrate that Masonry is not confined to four walls in a stuffy old building. Masons all over Florida have used alternative means of reaching out to their fellow Fraters to assist them in this time of need, to keep Lodge, Chapter, Council, and Commandery members abreast of what is happening, to plan for future events, and even in some cases to spread Masonic Light through the presentation of Masonic education. The best part is that these efforts aren't just happening in Florida, but they are occurring all around the world! Masonry is evolving, and this virus has helped us move toward a new level of communication and understand of how to operate in our respective Masonic Organizations.

This year we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Templar Masonry in Florida. During the founding of our Grand Commandery the men that comprised the first Grand Line were just becoming accustomed to seeing the automobile, which was invented a mere ten years before, replace the horse and buggy for transportation on city streets. While the invention of the telephone preceded the automobile by a few years, it was certainly not something that was in every home or was being used in Masonry to communicate with the brethren. Fast forward 125 years, and now our members have a

computer in their homes, and many carry smart phones in their pockets. Each of these devices has more computing power than those used by NASA to put the first astronauts on the moon and return them safely home to Earth. However, with all this technology at our fingertips, we fail to use it to manage our great Fraternity and assist in the dissemination of information to our membership. If COVID-19 has taught us one thing, it is that we can use technology to help keep our Brothers and Sir Knights more informed with up-to-date information than ever before. This year, the Grand Commandery will use this technology to hold meetings with local Commandery Dias Officers to regularly communicate with them on ways to increase membership, provide educational events to their members and prospective members, and disseminate what is working and what is not working within the State of Florida. In short, we are going to use this technology to make Templar Masonry a more viable option for Master Masons in their Quest for further Light in Masonry.

We are going to approach the idea of District Meetings in a new light. This year, I will not ask you to give up a Saturday driving an hour to hold a 30-minute meeting where you are provided with information that could have been sent in an email or through a conference call. Instead, we will work together through electronic meetings, where the elected officers from each local Commandery from around Florida will share ideas, present information, and plan events to help Templar Masonry reach its full potential.

While this year will be an experiment in using this technology, we still cannot forget that we must meet in person to implement plans and reach our goals. Each District Deputy Grand Commander has been charged to work with his counterparts in the Grand Chapter and Grand Council to establish dates for Zone and District Festivals. We are also planning a series of four educational events that will take place throughout the State, to recruit Blue Lodge members into the York Rite. Not only will this help provide a much-needed means to educate our Fraternity in general, but it will reinforce that idea that the York Rite in Florida is living up to the maxim of serving and participating in our Blue Lodges by providing further Light in Masonry.

I encourage you to check our Grand York Rite website often as there will be updates on events along with information on when various online meetings will take place. While I am requiring all Commandery Dias Officers to attend these meetings, they are open to every Sir Knight that wishes to have a voice in how to improve his local Commandery and the Grand Commandery.

As we embark on this change of how the Grand Commandery operates, there will be challenges that we will need to overcome. We may need to abandon one plan for another completely. However, if we stay true to our goals, this 125th anniversary year could set the stage for years to come and build a platform for future Grand Officers to launch the Grand Commandery of Florida to even greater heights. I encourage you to reach out to me with your successes and failure throughout the year, as every failure lets us move one step closer to learning how to do it the right way.

Each month I plan to use this platform to let you know what your Grand Commandery is doing for you and how you can participate in this amazing 125th Anniversary Year. The Grand Commandery Officers and I are here to serve you and to make your experience as a Knight Templar the best Masonic experience possible.

Donec Totem Impleat Orbem,

Brett A. Gordon, KYCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander