

Connecticut

S.K. James S. McNeely, IV, KTCH
Grand Commander



Knightly News

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Sir Knights,

I bring you bring you greetings and the hope that you are well. I am not sure that many have started as Grand Commander in like manner. In fact, for those of you who took the time to call in to our Grand Conclave a few weeks ago, you took part in Grand Encampment history as we were the first to conduct a Grand Conclave in the manner in which we did. Thank you for all who did participate in the Grand Conclave while we may have set a standard of how to do it, I hope that we never have to do it this way again. There is truly something about being able to come together and celebrate. As life starts to return to normal in the coming weeks and Masonry is able to re-open you will see Grand Commandery officers right there with you to get your Commanderies moving forward. While this period in time is unique it is not the first time that Templary has faced a challenge nor is it the darkest of Masonic times. While we have had to take a timeout from Masonic activities it is my hope that Sir Knights will realize that they are missing their fraters and will make every effort to come out and spend time in their Commanderies once we can safely re-open. We will get through this together! Due to the uncertainty of Templar activity during the suspension of activity we have missed many of our normal activities including Good Friday Order of the Temple, installations, and other events. When these are being rescheduled, I would ask that you send notices to not only me but also your Zone Officers. We want to be with you as you celebrate and work but we need to know when these events are being held. Much of the calendar at this time is wide open due to a lot of uncertainty. If you joined us for the Grand Conclave you heard me discuss three areas that I think we as Knights Templar have in common and they are what make our Order unique and special; these are FAITH FAMILY FELLOWSHIP.

FAITH

The first one that I want to focus on is Faith. We as Knights Templar share one faith, a faith in the Risen Savior, regardless of how we worship we all have Christ as our mediator and intercessor to God. It is that faith that we should all lean on during both the good as well as tough times. As Knights Templar we have the opportunity to live that faith with both our Masonic and Christian values and obligations on a daily basis. The importance of our shared faith was evident in the fact that historically the Prelate was an elected position within Commanderies, and in some it still is. It is the responsibility of each Prelate to lead the devotions along with obligating every new Sir Knight. I was taught many years ago when I first became Prelate that not only should we have prayers but also something a little more, be it a devotional a lesson or something to

meditate on. It can be long or short but it should provide something to reflect on and grow. As Christians we have an opportunity to apply our faith to our Masonry and this is truly part of the Prelates job within each Commandery.

Over the years I have spent much time reading and learning of how Templary has viewed our faith and exemplified those beliefs not only to our membership but to society as a whole. In a 1903 Tactics and Ceremonies Manuel there were designs for holding three religious observances: Christmas, Easter, and Ascension for these are the three most important Holy days as Templars. In many Commanderies they would assemble in the Asylum and parade to the Church where the appropriate observance would be held under the direction of the Prelate and in many cases open to the community as a whole.

While all of our Commanderies still hold Christmas Observances, we currently only have three that loosely observe Easter with the conferral of Order of the Temple on Good Friday, and only New Haven observes Ascension, thankfully they have opened it to all Master Masons and it is one of the most beautiful and moving observances. Traditionally, the Grand Commandery of Connecticut has held a religious service as part of our Grand Conclave and also observed St. John's Day. With a focus on faith I have appointed three Associate Grand Prelates to aid our Grand Prelate. I have asked that each of them be responsible for certain pieces throughout the year and to help provide for all of our Sir Knights. The Grand Prelate SK Varjabedian will be responsible for the religious service at the Grand Conclave, SK Bellmore the winter St. Johns Day service in addition to New Haven Ascension Day, SK Krusienski the summer St. Johns Day service, and SK Weisert will lead a new Ascension observance for the eastern Commanderies. Together these four will also be asked to develop an appropriate memorial for those Sir Knights who pass during the year that we may acknowledge their passing at the Grand Conclave. It is my true hope that these four will help further develop our understanding of Templary and the faith that we all share.

Until I see you down the road...

James S. McNeely, KCT, KTCH
Grand Commander

Bakeless Bakesale

I would like to thank all the Sir Knight's who once again supported our efforts to raise monies for the "Knight Templar Eye Foundation". With the current environment and the cancelling of our Conclave this campaign is more important than ever. If you have NOT yet sent in your donation, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,
Lady Lori Cowie, CT
Chairperson