

OHIO SUPPLEMENT



SK R. Thomas Starr, KCT
Right Eminent Grand Commander
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Greetings Sir Knights!

For a boy reared in the small village of New Straitsville in the heart of Appalachia in southeastern Ohio, becoming Grand Commander of the greatest Templar jurisdiction in the world is tall cotton. Many years ago, when I was a first-year Deputy, I was talking with a good friend in the anteroom of my home Commandery. Just the two of us. He said to me matter-of-factly, "Tom, you're going to be Grand Commander some day!" "Not in a million years," I said, laughing out loud. That million years has flown by! I am grateful to the Sir Knights of the great state of Ohio for their confidence and friendship. I will do my best for you and for someone else I could not bear to disappoint. That boy from Perry County never wanted anything more than his dad, a 6-time Past Master of his Lodge, to be proud of him as a man and a Mason. I hope that he is.

My theme is "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds", a nod to a favorite hymn written by English minister John Fawcett. As Brothers, Companions, Ladies, and Sir Knights, we are bound together by a love of God, family, friendship, and our fraternity. That powerful connection is our common bond to care for and help one another through prayer, thought, word, and deed. My emblem features two of our iconic Templar symbols, the cross and shield, contained within an eternal Celtic knot illustrating our "indissoluble chain of sincere affection." We demonstrate it each time we support the work of our philanthropies or simply help a Brother, a friend, or a neighbor in need.

During this unusual and difficult time when we, as Templars, are unable to meet in person due to the pandemic and share the traditional activities of fellowship and conferring our beautiful Orders, perhaps the only way we can show our Knightly character is by returning to our Christian roots: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you and good unto all as we turn to our Blessed Savior for strength.

So, what do we know about upcoming events on our Templar calendar? As of this writing, our Grand Master's General Order No. 12, which has been in effect since May, remains in place. We plan to reschedule our November 21st Grand Commander's Reception at the Crowne Plaza Columbus North.

As for our upcoming Commandery inspections, all are still on as scheduled, but that is subject to change. **All updates will appear on the Grand Commandery website, www.ohioknightstemplar.com, and through our Division and Deputy Division Commanders communicating directly with our Commanderies.** Communication is always essential for success, but especially now. We will use our website and our Division Facebook pages to share updates as we receive them, and our Division leadership teams will regularly e-mail and call Records and ECs so we can keep our membership informed.

Several Commanderies are effectively holding stated Conclaves on videoconferencing platforms like Zoom. No, it is not the same as meeting face-to-face but, if you have not yet tried it, some of the benefits will surprise you. You may very well see someone virtually you have not seen for many years, including Sir Knights who live a long distance from their home Commandery. Those who do not drive at night or in bad weather, or simply do not get out much at all might join the meeting. All these services have a phone-in option for those without computers, tablets, or smartphones, and all have some level of service that is free to use though it may limit the time or the number of participants. Try it, Sir Knights! It is much better than doing nothing at all.

As we enter the Thanksgiving season, let us not dwell on what we don't have or what we can't do. True Christians are thankful for all the blessings we receive from our Creator. Miss dining in at your favorite restaurant? There are plenty among us who do not have enough to eat. Wearing a face covering in public inconvenient? Think of those on oxygen or never leave home due to physical frailties. Remember the poor and weary Pilgrim who depends on the kindness of strangers now and during every season and may we all share the bounty of the table in each other's presence very soon! May God Bless you and yours.

Courteously and fraternally,

R. Thomas Starr

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