



Pennsylvania Crusader

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
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Greetings Sir Knights:

November is upon us. We are now halfway through our Templar year in PA. We continue to adapt and change. We are looking to see if word will come this month from our Most Eminent Grand Master that that we may be able to have in person conclaves as soon as December and therefore have Christmas Observances. That all depends on how the pandemic is going and as I write this in September things seem to be heading in positive direction – at least in Pennsylvania – however time will tell. Obviously with November brings the Thanksgiving Holiday. I wanted to spend some time sharing with you the American Thanksgiving Holiday, from our Federal Government point of view - that had originally started with a religious petition.

On October 3, 1863, after the Union victory at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln announced that the Nation would celebrate an official Thanksgiving Holiday on November 26, 1863. This announcement by President Lincoln reminded the country of a similar time when President and Brother George Washington during his first term in 1789 had proposed for an official celebratory “*day of public thanksgiving and prayer*”. President Washington had proposed it because our young country at the time had recently emerged from the American Revolution and felt that our nation needed a holiday that purported such qualities and values. Though Congress at the time agreed with Thanksgiving Holiday concept an official annual holiday was not created. In fact, from 1815 till 1863, no official proclamation was made for the holiday, mostly because the US Presidents during that time period felt that a public demonstration of piety to a higher power, was inappropriate for a nation based in part on the separation of church and state.

President Lincoln knowing of the events surrounding the proposal of President Washington’s Thanksgiving Holiday applied those same sentiments to thank the Union Army and God for the shift in the good fortunes of our country with the Union Victory at Gettysburg and thus proposed the official Thanksgiving Federal Holiday.

Below, I wanted to share the last part of his proclamation with you.....

- *“No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as*

a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens”.

- *“And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union...”.*

My Fellow Fraters I share this part of the proclamation with you because it was written at a time with a terrible civil war going on in our country. I believe these thoughts in the proclamation were on point for that time. Although we do not find ourselves in a civil war at this time, 2020 has been an exceedingly difficult year for all of us and for our families and loved ones - from pandemic, to political, civil, and economic strife and unrest.

Let us learn from the past and apply our thoughts and prayers in the Almighty Hand that will guide us and heal us through our most difficult time we find upon us. And may our Thanks always be with Him.

I continue with prayers for you, your families and loved ones to be safe and happy not only during these times, but for all times.

Yours in Templary,
Sir Knight Sean M. Tomic
REGC

A Letter from the Grand Prelate:

I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. Psalm 57:2 (NIV)

Well, here we are in November and though it may be difficult to wrap your mind around it, Thanksgiving is right around the corner. I pray that this pandemic will not deprive you of your Thanksgiving festivities. Oftentimes the details of family gatherings—meal planning, shopping, or making travel arrangements—take precedent and we worry over making everything perfect. Not to worry. God is in control. Everything gets done. And instead of trying to make everything perfect, focus on God’s love for you and your family and friends. Focus on the many blessings you have received and include on that list the greatest blessing of all—Jesus, the Bread of Life. Thank Him for His mercy and grace.

Heavenly Father, You love me perfectly! If I get caught up in worrying and planning, bring my focus back to where it belongs, on love.

Rev. & S.K. Orville R. Jones, HPC, IKT, GP

Some Upcoming Events

(Dates are scheduled, but tentative until confirmed due to the pandemic):

November 14 - Line Officers Seminar (Virtual Meeting)