



Washington Supplement

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Greetings Sir Knights—

Constituent commanderies across our jurisdiction are starting to meet via Zoom, Go to Meeting or other virtual means. Now that the end of the calendar year is approaching, we must conduct our elections and installations. These can be done via your virtual meetings. As long as we do not invoke ritual or attempt to confer the Orders, we are permitted to conduct most of our business, including elections and installations. If desired, any of our elected Grand Officers can be called upon to install. Of course, installation can still be done by Past Commanders or by the outgoing Eminent Commander.

Fortunately, very few of our Sir Knights have contracted the COVID-19 virus to my knowledge, and of those, none have suffered any severe health problems because of it. Nevertheless, we must be alert to the happenings around us to stay healthy, but more so, to be ready to assist any Sir Knight or, for that matter, any Companion or Masonic Brother who needs our assistance, be it financial, social or otherwise. We are now in “Twin flu” season (seasonal flu and Covid-19) and the dangers of succumbing to overconfidence and hubris about our situations can still afflict us.

We Soldiers of the Cross plod on in these pandemic times as best we can mindful of the Heavenly Grace available to all of us if we just call upon His name. John Henry Newman’s great hymn, Lead, Kindly Light, reminds us of the Divine help available to us when experiencing great emotional and physical despair. When Newman was 32, his busy life and spiritual troubles took a toll on him physically and mentally. As a respite he took a trip to Italy, but

while traveling throughout that country he experienced a frightening and almost fatal experience. He contracted Sicilian fever (a form of typhoid fever). As he became weaker and weaker, he sought a return to England, but could find passage only on a fruit freighter heading to France. While stalled by lack of wind and a heavy fog off the straits of Bonifazio between Corsica and Sardinia and feeling like all was lost, he penned the words to this hymn in June 1833 pleading for God’s divine guidance. Hear now his plea and let it be an example of the kind of prayer we can all pray when faced with overwhelming difficulty:

Verse 1: Lead, Kindly Light amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on. The night is dark and I am far from home, lead Thou me on. Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene. One step enough for me, lead Thou me on.

In 1867, John B. Dykes composed the present tune of this hymn specifically for these words.

John Henry Newman eventually did make it back to England where he recovered and began a famous minister in both the Anglican and later, the Roman Catholic churches. His last years were spent as an administrator of a school for boys. He lived to be 89. At his passing, he was widely regarded as a “great Englishman and a great saint”.

Peace and good health to all. I remain yours in Christ,

Sir Knight *Richard M. Kovak*

Right Eminent Grand Commander

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Washington