

Connecticut

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



Knightly News

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Sir Knights,

It is now October and we continue to see the sands of time flow. During this time, I have had opportunity to not only spend time with my family but also to read and reflect on many of the important things in life. Part of the reading and reflecting has included the Great Light and I came across what has always been one of my favorite lessons.

In his letter to Titus, Paul reminds us that we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, and enslaved by lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

As I reflect on this lesson it reminds me that none of us are perfect and that we may look at the world from a different perspective but we all are saved by the grace of God. Also, as I read this lesson one of the other pieces that has always seemed to me to be just underneath all of this is the commandment that Jesus gave to love God and one another.

During this trying time of civil unrest, global pandemic and political campaigns we must keep in mind that we are all children of the same God. Regardless of where one may stand on certain issues, we need to love one another and not hate. While I don't know what the near future holds, I do know that we need this reminder more now than ever.

We are a Christian Order and it is the duty of every Commander to bind up the wounds of the afflicted and that applies to all. We should not be the ones causing the wounds by our words or actions.

Until I see you down the road, be safe and keep your Fraters in your prayers...

James S. McNeely, KCT, KTCH
Grand Commander

HAPPY

HALLOWEEN

Holly Land Pilgrimage

There are moments in life that erupt with the sheer wonder that is the mystery of God's presence. Of course, God is present in all things; yet, moments arise that invite you to ask the big questions: "What is the meaning of my life?" "Do I, a simple human blip on the cosmic screen, matter to the Holy?" The holy scriptures of Christian tradition are filled with stories of sheer wonder. Moses' experience of the burning bush, Jacob's wrestling match with the divine, and Jesus' miraculous life within humanity are a few of the moments that shine brightly with mystery and awe. A friend of mine calls God's presence in these moments, "the holiness of sheer existence," and these moments invite us to recognize God's invitation to stand on holy ground.

My trip to the holy land this past February was one of these moments. The trip, sponsored by the Knights Templar, is an event through which religious leaders like myself are invited to reflect on and examine God's call to ponder the "sheer wonder of being human in this thing called life." The holy land was filled with these moments: a boat ride on the sea of Galilee, walking through the ruins of biblical cities where Jesus most likely walked, kneeling at the purported birth place, death place, and resurrection place of Christ filled my heart with powerful moments wherein I knew I mattered to God and that my calling to do the Christian work of a priest is my calling to stand on holy ground, not in an elevated way, but in a manner that humbly recognizes the sheer amazement that God calls us humans to trust in the promise that every one of us is important in the eyes of God. We are called by the mysterious presence of the holy to simply meditate in the midst of an inescapable love.

The holy land is a place where the sheer wonder of God's presence in our ordinary lives is monumentally made visible. We know the holy land is a place where conflict has existed and religious groups have, for centuries, persecuted one another. It is a holy place where religious groups have co-existed in harmony. The city of Jerusalem is the burning bush that is not consumed before the eyes of Moses, the stairway to heaven for Muhammad's night journey, the holy walk of Jesus into the storm of death and the rising from the ashes in resurrected life. Jerusalem embodies the divine presence that makes you stand in wonder at the beauty of God's uncompromising willingness to summon us as humans to a better place in this life. Jerusalem is where I discovered that my story is part of God's story and your story is part of God's story and the beauty of God's presence is that it erupts into our lives to remind us that everyone of us is valued in the eyes of God.

Jerusalem, the holy land, is the place where the holiness of sheer existence invites us to know that we are significant and that God calls us to make sure the world knows that it is important to God, too. I am deeply honored that the Knights Templar invited me to walk with God in the land of the holy and I am graciously humbled that this experience reminded me that God has called me and God calls each of you to make a difference in the world. This pilgrimage shines with the bold reminder that each of us is loved by God and we are called to make sure the world knows that truth.

Rev. Timothy Squier