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From the Deputy Grand Commander:

Greetings, Sir Knights

This month I would like to draw attention to some of the core principles that define chivalric orders, including the one to which we all belong. The editor of this magazine has been running monthly articles on this topic recently (“Focus on Chivalry”), but I have chosen to address the topic from a slightly different perspective. If I should echo what has been written in Sir Knight Palmer’s articles, it bears repeating.

I found in a book (*Chivalry*, written in 1891) by the French author Léon Gauthier what he defined as “the ten commandments of chivalry.” While these form a reasonable framework to help define this system, there is risk that some of the points held by the old military orders could be construed to run afoul of the constitution and laws of our fraternity. I have therefore adapted these “commandments” into the following list and shortened it somewhat to reduce the redundancies and overlap in the Gauthier’s version, but also to convey in spirit the same message as it applies to our modern fraternal order.

- ***Defend your belief in Christianity and the free practice thereof.*** Your faith is the defining qualification for membership in this order. Never be ashamed of your faith. Defend those who are attacked for professing theirs. This is why the ancient Templars were founded in the first place.
- ***Respect those in weakness or difficulty, and constitute yourself the defender of them.*** You have already promised to defend the innocent, the helpless, and the destitute. It is unfortunate that we live in a time when the notion of who is wronged or oppressed has become a complicated question fraught with political and social consequences. However, such complications do not absolve you of your charge.

- ***Love your country and patiently submit to lawful authority.*** Once again, this is another point that has become complicated in recent years. If you love your country and honor its institutions, then this requires respect for the authority of those who have been lawfully elected or appointed to their respective offices and positions.
- ***Do not recoil before your enemy.*** All three of the previous points demand courage and fortitude if their faithful execution is to be meaningful. You might not win every battle. Not all battles are with other people; most are within ourselves. Of the vices we combat in spiritual warfare, fear is the knight’s worst enemy. If you cannot defeat fear, you are sure to lose every other fight. Engage this enemy so that the best version of yourself prevails.
- ***Do not lie, and always remain faithful to your pledged word.*** As Masons, this is a precept we often hear repeated. We can all attest to how difficult it can be to keep our word, even when we are trying with all of our strength to do so. But like before, this applies just as much to yourself as it does to others. Be true to yourself if you intend to count on yourself, for how else can anyone count on you?
- ***Be generous and charitable to all.*** Our charitable institutions and programs within Templary and other Masonic bodies are well established and deserve your support. Yet generosity is not always about money, it can also include your time, your patience, your strength, and your kindness.
- ***Be everywhere and always the champion of what is right and good against injustice and evil.*** This summarizes all the preceding points and in one sentence defines what it means to assume the title of Knight. The key word here is *champion*, implying your active participation, your resolution to stand for your beliefs, and defense of your principles. A lot of people like to talk about what is wrong with other people, with politics, with the world. A knight is one who not only seeks to do something about it, but *do the right thing* about it. Most of these points include an active verb. Therefore, if a knight is what you are, chivalry is what you do.

Fraternally,

Ludwik Wodka
Deputy Grand Commander