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2020-2021 TEXAS SUPPLEMENT

Greetings, Sir Knights! Due to the unprecedented effects of the Year of the Coronavirus, a slight damper has been put on the implementation of my program this year. This does not mean that we cannot still attend to the basic principle the program envisions, Service. Even though our regular movements are currently restricted, we can still serve God, our fraternity, and our fellow man in many ways, while also remaining within the health and safety guidelines established to reign in the spread of this deadly virus that has taken the lives of almost 200,000 Americans.

We can still **serve God by spreading our love of His Word and teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ**, through interactions with others. The world has not come to a standstill, and life goes on, although we have had to modify our methods of human interaction. The Knights Templar is not just another club. It is a congregation of Christian masons, and of leaders of men who are to lead and inspire by example. I have always been a profound supporter, and hopefully a proliferator, of the Golden Rule. While none of us are perfect, I pray that we can all strive to show the world that, by treating others with the kindness and respect we would hope to receive from our fellow men and women, we can better provide an example for all to follow that will help to make the world a better place for us all to share and to live in peace.

We all long for those days of fraternity when we could mingle with our brothers, companions and fellow sir knights. We long for those days when we could see them face to face, give them a hug, and heartily shake their hands before proceeding with the regular business of our fraternity. I am confident that those days will return to us, perhaps not soon enough, but they will return nonetheless. Patience is a virtue that we must all strive to employ, and our patience shall be rewarded when we are able to meet again after we bring this virus to heel.

Although new knightings will undoubtedly be at a historical low this year due to meeting restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, there are still other methods we can employ to guard our numbers against a sharp decline. We have but to revisit the programs of past leaders or our fraternity for inspiration.

No doubt most Texas masons are familiar with the various forms of “Recruit, Retain, Reinstate” programs implemented by several of our past masonic leaders. Reiterating again that we must still guard the health and welfare of our brethren by using common sense and following established guidelines, we still have opportunities to recruit new Knights Templar from our Blue Lodges and other masonic bodies.

We are all masons, and one thing many of us have in common is the thirst for education and knowledge of our fraternity. Offering to provide informational programs on the York Rite and the Knights Templar is a perfect way to generate and maintain interest, which is still a very valuable tool to us while we bide our time until we can again bestow the Orders upon new masons. This, along with regular communications among the sir knights through email, phone contact, internet and social media, will also help to address retention of our members.

Now, perhaps the most effective way of maintaining our membership this year, without the aid of new knightings, is focusing our efforts on Reinstatements. I have directed our Membership Committee to follow this path, and to encourage the constituent commanderies and their membership committees to search their records for prior NPD suspensions and demits. While some of these sir knights may no longer have an interest in our Christian branch of masonry, I have no doubt that many others may have inadvertently let it go, and are waiting to be called back to duty. We must use this opportunity to re-connect with our past sir knights, and let them know that we want them back with us to join our efforts in Service.

We must also remember that masonry is not the only institution affected by the pandemic. Our communities need us to be a guiding light to them, be it personally, civically or spiritually. **We not only have obligations to God and our brethren, but also to the rest of mankind.** We have the ability to provide inspiration to those civilians who do not have what we have in masonry. We can show everyone that we care about and support our communities, our churches, our first responders and our men and women of the Armed Forces. Attend your churches, wear a mask and sit six feet apart. Participate in a parade, or perform a flag presentation, all while setting an example for others that we know how to fight this scourge of a health crisis.

Sir Knights, get out there and show everyone how it’s done. We can still do our duty to God, our country, our fraternity and ourselves. Is it a challenge? Unequivocally, yes, and I know we will meet it head on.

Lead by example, stay safe, and God bless!

In His Service,

Gary H. Freedman, Grand Commander