



**ILLINOIS SUPPLEMENT**

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Grand Commander

*Pro Deo et Patria*

Greetings Sir Knights,

My plan for this month's article was to write about the coming of Spring, the rebirth of nature, with flowers blooming and birds nesting. As you may know, I have to write the articles about two months ahead of time for the editor to have them ready for the April issue. Well, as I sit at my desk on 12 February 2021 it is very cold, has been snowing for the past week and the low temperature tonight is forecasted to be 8 degrees, 4 degrees tomorrow night! I am trying to resist temptation but if there is no article in the May magazine, it is because I am on an island in the Caribbean sipping a tall glass of ...milk!

Oh well, back to reality! Seriously, I want to focus your attention on the rebirth of our Commanderies. Just like nature, we have endured a long dark winter of lockdowns, no meetings and missing our fraternal brotherhood associations. Unlike nature, our rebirth is not automatic! I fear for the future of our Commanderies unless we aggressively concentrate on the necessary tasks of rebuilding what has been lost during the past year.

Each Commander should have an idea of those Sir Knights within his Commandery who have suffered loss of jobs or income during the past year and ensure they are contacted to ascertain if they need financial assistance. Remember, we have funds available to assist those in need. Also, each Commander should have an active "40 Miles Project" whereby the Prelate or his committee is contacting our Templar widows to remind them we still care and ask if we can be of assistance. It is sad to see how many of our senior members have succumbed to this health crisis. I encourage each Commander to consider a memorial service at some point in the near future to remember our fallen Sir Knights.

Each Commander should be in contact with waiting candidates and explain the plan going forward for them to receive their Orders of Knighthood. We should not be waiting for them to contact us!

Recorders, please ensure you are keeping the Grand Encampment

MMS data system updated. The new updated MMS system is working great but if you don't put the data in, then we can't get the data out! For example, if you don't enter critical data like email address, spouse's name or telephone number, we won't be able to contact our members/spouses during stressful times like we have experienced the past year.

By now the restrictions for all areas of the State of Illinois should allow for in-person meetings so be aggressive in notifying all members of when your next conclave is scheduled and invite them to attend. In many cases, getting members back in the habit of attending will be our most challenging task.

Remember, all of Masonry has been affected by the lack of in-person meetings and other social gatherings, so word-of-mouth recruiting for membership in our Commanderies is suffering. Support your R.A.M. Chapter, because if the Chapter is not doing well, our Commandery membership recruiting will not go well! Are you supporting your local Craft Lodge and attending meetings? Why not attend their meetings in Templar uniform and ask the Worshipful Master if you can present an educational talk about Knights Templar.

As we begin to reopen Templary, each Commander **shall** ensure his Commandery complies with the Grand Master's General Order #14, Reopening 2021 Safety Protocols, dated Nov. 1, 2020; you can find the Order on the Grand Encampment's website homepage.

Unfortunately we could not attend our Midwest Department Conference nor our Easter Observations in person due to COVID-19 restrictions, but hopefully we can attend the upcoming 68<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conclave at the Marriott Minneapolis City Center, MN on 14-18 August 2021. I look forward to seeing you there!

Remember, we will be interviewing candidates for the position of Grand Junior Warden in the June/July 2021 timeframe (specifics to be announced at a later date) and we need you to start thinking about this opportunity. The 5-year journey through the Grand Line is both rewarding and educational. If you are wondering if this is something you might want to do, please feel free to contact me or one of the other Grand Line Officers to discuss the duties and interview process.

In summary, Spring is here, get out of the lounge chair and get active! Break the habit of depending on a "teleconference" to keep in touch with your fraternal brothers and Sir Knights. Help me rebuilt what we may have lost during the past year.

Unfortunately I only have three months left and so much to do! I need each Sir Knight to mount up and help me rebuilt our membership!

AUSTON EUGENE SMITH, Grand Commander