

OHIO SUPPLEMENT



SK R. Thomas Starr, KCT
Right Eminent Grand Commander
April 2021



Happy Easter, Sir Knights!

For many, many years, prior to 2020, I made the annual pilgrimage to Alexandria, VA, to attend the Grand Encampment Easter Sunrise Service. I have always been inspired marching up Shooter's Hill and sitting on the steps of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial on Easter morning, singing, praying, and worshipping in the company of our fraters. I have missed that experience the past two years, especially this year when I would have had the honor of leading the Grand Commandery of Ohio up that hill.

We took a step toward returning to a traditional Templar experience when, on March 1st, the doors for Commanderies in Ohio were opened for in-person conclaves. This decision was not made lightly. I wrote in a letter to our Sir Knights regarding in-person meetings, "Just because you can, does not mean you must." Virtual meetings are still permitted in Ohio and, in my mind, they remain the preferred way to meet with a virus that is still dangerous. However, we have seen progress in our fight against the pandemic. As more vaccines become available, hopefully we will gain even more ground. I trust our Eminent Commanders to make wise decisions on what is best for their Commandery.

There are restrictions on in-person meetings in "Phase One" of our reopening, and we have shared those details with all Eminent Commanders and Recorders along with our Grand Commandery leadership. **General Order No. 16** is also posted on our website, ohioknightstemplar.com for review. Restrictions include limiting attendance to voting members of those Commanderies that choose to meet in-person (no visitors), all present wearing a mask or face covering upon entering the building until they walk outside to return home and maintaining at least six feet of physical distance within the asylum.

The Order of the Temple cannot be conferred in Phase One. However, there are modified versions of the Order of the Red Cross and the Order of Malta that are available upon request from our Grand Recorder that may be conferred on qualified Companions in Phase One. Should a Commandery choose to conduct "hybrid" conclaves where an in-person conclave is made available via a secure online connection to members, no ritual work may be performed.

This year, annual inspections are limited to a review of each Commandery's administrative, financial and membership records. Inspecting officers have been in contact with Eminent Commanders rescheduling inspection dates that were postponed in January and February. Since administrative-only inspections are limited in attendance and scope, many will be held on dates other than Saturdays. The Commandery will receive a certificate for successfully completing the administrative review. It is possible for Eminent Commanders who would like to earn their proficiency certificate to do so. Consult with your inspecting officer.

Even when we move to the next phase in our reopening, we know that it will not be a matter of "flipping a switch" for our Commanderies to return to what we have long considered "normal". Now is a critical time for the officers in each Commandery to plan for the next six to eight months assuming we are able to ramp up our activities. We cannot get the time back that we have lost to the pandemic. All we can do is be ready to go when that time comes.

I love the traditional Paschal Greeting or the Easter Acclamation where one Christian greets another during the season with an enthusiastic, "Christ is Risen!" and receives the response, "He is risen indeed!" It is an outward expression of understanding and faith in the resurrection and the promise that it brings. We too will rise from the events of the past year. I believe it with all my heart.

Share the news of our faith: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

In Knightly Courtesy,

R. Thomas Starr

R. Thomas Starr, KCT, Grand Commander