



The Florida Knight

S.K. Adam M. Bryan

Right Eminent Grand Commander 2021
4140 SW County Road 341 Bell, FL 32619
Email: adamb1124@gmail.com
Phone: (352) 284-4450



State Supplement Editor

Gary R. Roane - 3632 6th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL 33713 - grrokane123@gmail.com

Greetings Sir Knights,

Let's start things off this month with a question or two. What is it that brought you to Templary? Are the things that brought you here still being used in your Commandery today? Take a moment and really think about these questions. Pretty broad questions aren't they? Now, I do realize that there can be just as many answers to the first question as there are Sir Knights. The second question is usually either a yes or a no.

Let's try to break down the first question a little. New membership is usually gained in one of two general ways: 1. The prospective candidate seeks us out searching for something, or 2. We seek out the candidate, offering him something. Simple, right? Actually, without continual work it can be the most difficult thing a Commandery does.

When a Brother comes to the York Rite inquiring about membership, it can be for many reasons. Some come to us because they feel obligated. Their father, grandfather or other family members may have been, or are currently, a Templar and they are following the family tradition. These Brothers usually have a good idea of who we are and what we do already and can be the easiest to gain. Some Brothers come to us because of public or other Masonic involvement. They see us out and about in parades, events within the community, assisting our lodges or as a presentation given at Lodge or during an Official Visit of the Grand Master within the Districts. Some are searching us out for More Light and have done a lot of their own research by researching information on the internet or other means. When the candidate comes to us, whatever his reason may be, he will have questions. Are we knowledgeable enough to answer those questions? Have we done our research to be able to satisfy him and encourage him to become a member?

Let's look at the second way. When we go out looking to increase new membership, we must have something to offer the candidates right from the start. We are doing all the footwork. They haven't done any of the prior research that the other group has. We aren't trying to supplant the information or knowledge they have gained from the Symbolic Lodge but to supplement it. We have to give them something extra, something to inspire them. This can be something esoteric for those that are ritualists, some-

thing philanthropic for those looking to help their community, a sense of pride or order for those that like the uniformity or structure of a regimented Order, added fraternal relations, or to enhance their faith through the Christian aspects of our Order. Like the first group, they will have questions. This group can be more difficult to gain as we have searched them out.

Now for the second question, are the things that brought you here still being used in your Commandery today? Again, this is a very broad question. This affects the second group more than the first or even the obligatory members, but affects all members nonetheless. We have to have content. We have to have something to offer. Once we gain the new members, we have to retain them. One of the leading causes of loss of membership is loss of interest. We cannot change the losses due to death or members not being able to attend due to family or professional reasons, but we can change our programs. Sometimes when we meet, the focus of the meetings can turn to only business, paying bills, reading minutes, etc. We cannot let this become the main focus. If new members came to us because our Commandery was well known for public appearances, or because we held an educational program every meeting, or if we planned a special social event every month and we have slowly moved away from that, they can feel that what they were inspired by in the beginning is gone and they have no reason to stay involved. The process of membership does not stop at the end of the Order of the Temple. It is continual. It is ever growing. When we stop having something to offer, we fail.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. It just takes work. We have to step up and make it happen. No matter how bad it may seem, we can turn it around. If we renew our focus, join together, and revive the zeal that inspired us to join, we can grow new membership and renew the interest of our Sir Knights that have lost interest. Start a new program in your Commandery, look at all options and don't accept the answer of "that won't work" or "the Lodges in this area are all tapped out" or any other excuses. We have plenty to offer our membership, we only fail if we don't try.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
-Matthew 5:16 KJV

Courteously yours,

Adam M. Bryan, KYCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander

