

CALIFORNIA KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

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by SK David W. Studley

My Esteemed Brothers, Companions and Sir Knights

I am thankful for so many things on the advent of this Holiday season. It's the Saturday following Thanksgiving as I write this message, Michigan vs. Ohio State has yet to kickoff, I'm being dilatory in putting up the Christmas lights, but I wanted to gather together a few thoughts for you.

This is the start of the season of family, friends, fraternity, and faith. We have just finished celebrating Thanksgiving, the most American of holidays, where we (hopefully) had occasion to sit down with families and close friends to share the companionship and social warmth of caring about each other. This year was my first Thanksgiving without Hallie, but close neighbors invited me to celebrate with them and it turned out to be a joyful experience. I hope all of you were as blessed as was I to share a moment of thankfulness with people who care.

We are entering into the time when we remember our friends and how much our shared experiences mean to us. I've enjoyed the Thanksgiving emails from many Brothers and tried to reply to each. As we think about Christmas cards (sort of an antiquated form of greeting but who doesn't appreciate festive and decorative remembrances), our friends are close in our thoughts. I'm particularly thankful for all the notes of gratitude that I received in the past year and extend similar heartfelt wishes of good cheer to our Companions and Sir Knights who have endured losses this year. You won't forget the sadness but time will moderate the pain and replace it with recollections of happiness. I encourage all of you to take a moment to communicate with those who have shown friendship to you.

Fraternity is on our minds as well. This is the season of new beginnings. Installations are upon us. The next two months will herald the beginning of new Masonic and York Rite leadership, accompanied by fresh enthusiasm. For those of us asked to install our brethren, remember the excitement of your first installation as a leader of your body and try to communicate that awe in our installation programs. For those being installed, I salute each of

Sir Knight

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you and encourage you to discharge your new authority with delight and in the best interests of your brethren.

And finally, our Faith. Christmas can be a stressful time as many of us try to recreate the joys of our youth. Magical decorations and bedecked trees, presents beautifully wrapped to be opened always in just a few more days, cookies and homemade candy (my mother always made some sort of almond cookies dusted with powdered sugar, delicious). But somewhere along the line, the pressures of the season seem to camouflage the reason for our celebration. We as Sir Knights and our Christian Companions recall as the angel and heavenly host proclaimed to shepherds while tending their flocks:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11.)

This is the message I offered to you in my motto for the year:

“Fear Not: Proclaim and Celebrate our Faith.”

I am so thankful of my many York Rite and Masonic friends this year and the blessings your friendship has bestowed on me. God Bless you all, each and every one.



In His Service,

David W. Studley
Grand Commander

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar in the State of California

From the Apartments of the Grand Prelate

And the Religious Activities Committee

On behalf of all Sir Knights in California



A Toast of our Grand Commander Christmas 2021

In the Second Chapter of the Gospel of Luke the good news of our Savior's arrival occurs: "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." It is our firm belief as Christian Knights, that this is the greatest event that has ever occurred on earth -- A gift of Peace, Dedication, and Sacrifice from our Father.

Your guiding Scripture passage this year is from II Peter 1:5-8: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." This passage should serve to remind us that as Christian Knights, we should dedicate ourselves to the improvement of our lives so that we may "Fear not: proclaim and celebrate our faith."

Sir Knight David, we join you in being inspired by the memory of the Faith of your Lady Hallie as you have led us on this still difficult path of re-uniting the Sir Knights of this Grand Commandery, and display the light of God's love that you always have with you. During this time of celebrating the birth of our Savior, the Religious Activities Committee is both honored and pleased, on behalf of all Sir Knights residing in California, to wish for you, your family and extended family a very Blessed Christmas; and our prayer is that you will continue to receive our Father's Comfort and Support throughout the New Year as you continue making a difference leading us on an ever-challenging path.

In His Service;

Sir Knight Raymond E. Davies
Grand Prelate

Religious Activities Committee:

Sir Knight Rev. Raymond E Davies
Sir Knight Rev. Stephen E Alderete PGC
Sir Knight Rev. Paul D Erickson

*Sir Knight David W. Studley, R.E. Grand Commander
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar
State of California*



Grand Commander's Response Christmas 2021

To Reverend Sir Knight Raymond E. Davies, the Members of the Religious Activities Committee and all Sir Knights of California, I offer the most joyful Knightly Greetings:

My heartfelt thanks for your Toast this Christmas season. I am deeply touched by your kind words. In return, I wish all of you a happy and healthy Christmas and a rewarding and peaceful New Year.

SK Davies quotes a familiar passage from the Gospel of St. Luke in reciting the glorious events of the first Yule. To me, one of the curious facts about the story is the modest circumstances of our Savior's birth. We might imagine Jesus born in the temple of a King or the house of a Nobleman, a manner befitting the arrival of the Son of God. Yet the Gospel of Luke records no such impressive trappings. "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7.)

A manger. Webster's Dictionary defines "manger" as "a trough or open box in a stable designed to hold feed or fodder for livestock." In other words, a place in a barn where sheep eat. Humble beginnings, far from the palatial circumstances one might have expected.

But humility is foundational to Jesus's teachings. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven", and later, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:3, 5.) It may seem paradoxical that humility before God is the path to salvation but we as Christians are told in many ways to embrace that concept. (1 Peter 5:6-8.)

So let us keep these lessons firmly in mind as we face the challenges of the coming year. Be humble in your interactions with each other and before the Lord as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Recall, if you will, the Bible passage quoted by our Excellent Prelate Sir Knight Ray that concludes, "for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God Bless you all, Sir Knights, as we raise our glasses in toast to celebrate Christmas and its true meaning to all devoted Christians.

In His Service,

Sir Knight David W. Studley
Grand Commander

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