



ILLINOIS SUPPLEMENT

Editor: John T. Riedas, Sr. REPGC
john-olyr@att.net



Auston E. Smith
Grand Commander

Pro Deo et Patria

Happy New Year Sir Knights,

As we begin a new year on life's journey, let us remember the many Sir Knights and their family members who are no longer with us.

I think we can all agree that the year 2020 was full of unexpected events that tested our confidence in governments, society, and our ability to face the challenges of the next day! The one thing on which I hope we can all agree is that we should place our faith and trust in God and never fear tomorrow.

As I pondered on what topic to discuss in this month's article, I reflected on how blessed I am to have survived to age 70. While it is difficult for me to comprehend this number as it pertains to my age, it was always my goal to live this long and more. But goals require a **plan**, and my **plan** included staying active, avoiding most bad habits and eating my vegetables. Working so far (well, except for that healthy weight goal)!

About age 14 or 15 my goal was to be "rich, not have to work, live a long happy life and be able to buy anything I wanted! Even then, I understood I needed a **plan** in order to achieve these goals!

Like many "dreamers" at that young age, my **plan** consisted primarily of winning the lottery or finding a cache of gold to fund my goals. Well, by the age of 16, I realized my **plan** had some major weaknesses. I have revised my **plan** many times between ages 16 to 23 but I never changed my goals with the exception of being "able to buy anything I wanted" changed to being "able to buy anything I needed." I have achieved my goals primarily because I had a **plan**.

Successful organizations have **plans**. Hundreds of books have been written on how to **plan**. Organizations that do not **plan** eventually fail! If we know this to be true, why don't we **plan**? During my past four years of inspecting Commanderies in Divisions One through Five, I can't remember a single Commandery showing me a **5-Year Plan** or a **plan** of any kind. I am sure you have heard the saying "Luck is not a strategy" and that is certainly true in our Commandery operations.

So what happens if a Commandery does not develop a **plan**? Well, some of the most critical indicators that a Commandery has no **plan** are:

- Membership declines from dimitts, suspensions and nature (deaths). Check your own Commandery, see how many members you had 20 years ago (or when your Commandery was Chartered) and how many you have now. Is there a **plan** to replace those lost members?
- Commanderies eventual loose their Charter and disappear into the pages of the history books. Comply with your obligations!
- Local communities may not even know there is a Knights Templar Commandery in their area -- since there is no publicity or involvement in the community -- no plan. Recruit your replacement!

I asked Sir Knight John Loayza to assist me in establishing a 5-Year **Plan** for the Grand Commandery. SK Loayza has published a series of papers on Planning and Organizing and I have asked our webmaster to post these papers on our Grand Commandery website. I strongly encourage you to spend a few minutes reading the papers and then ask yourself what you can do to help your Commandery develop a **plan**.

If you think you can't do anything since you are not the Commander or in the Advancing Line, think again! You are the future of your Commandery. Get involved, do something, be the "Man in the Arena" (T. Roosevelt's speech). If your **plan** fails, change your **plan** and try again. Be the "sparkplug", help your Commandery develop a **plan**.

I know with the current COVID-19, and the restrictions imposed by local governments, hinder proper planning and may frustrate many Commanderies trying to schedule the Orders on new candidates. This is where a flexible **plan** becomes even more important. Imagine yourself as the candidate who has applied to your Commandery and is (or was) excited to complete the Orders. Now, everything came to a halt due to health concerns and no one is keeping the candidate informed of the **plan** going forward. In some cases, it may have been over a year since the candidate applied and he is still waiting, no one is talking to him and he is wondering if he really wants to be a Knight Templar. Do you know how many candidates are in waiting for your Commandery?

My **plan** is to write a personal letter to each candidate in waiting to reassure them that they are important to us and we have not forgotten them. I will attach our Department Commander's letter to my letter (you may find the Department Commander's letter on our webpage at KT-IL.org). I am asking each Commander to get in touch with your candidates and let them know they are not forgotten! Get involved - you can make a difference. What is your **PLAN**?

Auston Eugene Smith, Grand Commander,