



William J. Jackson, Grand Commander

Greetings Sir Knights,
Happy New Year's

What is New Year's? It is the time of day that a new calendar year begins. For the first time in history it was celebrated by the Romans on January 1st. Soon after Julius Caesar became a Roman dictator in 45 B.C. the Julian calendar was instituted. But since this initially followed the lunar cycle, it was frequently out of phase with the seasons and had to be adjusted. Add this to the fact that the pontifices, the Roman body that was charged with overseeing the calendar, often added days to a cycle to extend political terms or interfere in elections; the calendar was most always out of sync. Caesar then enlisted the help of Sosigenes, an Alexandrian astronomer. The year was then calculated to be 365 1/4 days. They made the year 45 B.C. begin on January 1st and decreed every 4 years a day would be added to February, thus keeping the calendar from falling out of step. But they failed to calculate the correct value of the solar year, 365.24199 days. This failure added 7 days by the year 1000 and 10 days by the mid-15th century.


The Christian Church became aware of this problem and in 1570's Pope Gregory XIII commissioned a Jesuit astronomer, Christopher Clavius, to come up with a solution; In 1582 the Gregorian calendar was instituted. This established a 365-day year and only added one extra day to February every 4 years.

Since that time people have gathered in mass every December 31st to celebrate the New Year's arrival. There are all kinds of superstition followed in this. Not only do people stay up all night and drink themselves into an alcoholic coma, dance the night away, shoot off

fireworks at midnight, and sing "Auld Lang Syne"; there has to be a midnight kiss and watching a ball drop at Time Square. But it doesn't stop there. On New Year's Day one is supposed to keep one's cupboards and wallet full; eat collard greens and black-eyed peas while avoiding crab or lobster. Many feel that what you do New Year's Day sets the stage for how the year will go. If this is true, then from the outcome of 2020 there were an awful lot of people who didn't do their part.


But do we as Christians need all this superstition? The answer is NO! For just a few short days ago on December 25th, we celebrated the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He was sent to us by a loving God to forgive our sins and save our souls that we might have eternal life. That whom so ever believes in him shall not perish but have ever lasting life. We don't need superstition or luck! We have a risen Savior! All we need to do is confess our sin, ask for forgiveness, and then try to be better men tomorrow than we were today. As Christians we are not perfect, but we are forgiven. Saved through the blood and the Grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Courteously,
William J. Jackson,
Grand Commander



Sir Knight John Baxter Hitt, II,
KCT, Past Grand High Priest 1986-1988
May 10, 1939 – November 17, 2020

Among his many other Masonic accomplishments, J. B. served as editor of the Kentucky supplement to the Knight Templar Magazine from 2007 to 2018. Farewell, Sir Knight; Rest in Peace.



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