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Greetings Sir Knights,

After a long period of cancellations and delays caused by the pandemic, the Grand York Rite bodies have finally convened on April 19, 2021 for their annual conclave. As it was the first time this was conducted in a virtual setting, some technical challenges were encountered, but we ultimately prevailed, and the conclave proceeded to conduct its business. In the course of this, I received the great and humbling honor of being elected the 135th Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of North Carolina. I sincerely thank you for the trust and confidence you have put in me.

During our Grand Conclave we also elected four new members to the Grand Commandery officer line. I would like to introduce the following officers to you:

Grand Junior Warden- Raymond B. Casey (Goldsboro #26)

Grand Standard Bearer- Edward Allen (Mt. Lebanon #7)

Grand Sword Bearer- Mark Alexander (Wilkes #40)

Grand Warder- Sam Henline (Salisbury #13)

Please join me in welcoming these new officers of the Grand Commandery of North Carolina! I am excited about the prospect of working with them to serve you through the Grand Commandery.

In addition to this, I would like to remind you of my first general order which was to extend “phase 2” COVID-19 restrictions. This allows the bodies to meet in person and to conduct ritualistic work, but still necessitates adhering the social distancing and sanitation requirements as declared by the Grand Lodge and the State of North Carolina. This will remain in effect until further notice. If you have any questions regarding the specifics about conducting the ritual work, please feel free to contact me directly.

As we seem to be slowly emerging from the grip of the pandemic, we are hearing more and more about “getting back to normal.” I have an issue with this, particularly as it applies to the Commanderies of North Carolina. It raises the question about what this term “normal” really means. In many ways, it is positive in that we are able to meet in person to conduct our business and ritual work. We get to enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie we had come to enjoy.

However, it also means something else as well- returning to the status quo that prevailed prior to the pandemic. In a great number of cases, this often meant substandard ritual work, if it was even attempted at all. It meant a dispirited and despairing view of the future of the bodies. It meant wondering if the Commandery even had a place anymore in the world of twenty-first century Freemasonry. Do we really want to return to that?

We have a unique opportunity in front of us to restart our activities with fresh energy and perspective on who we are and what we do. In the time we were absent from one another, I hope that we had begun to realize just how important the fellowship has been to us. Conducting the ritual work – even just the openings and closing—had continuously reminded us of what we value and what our fraternity represents. Perhaps most of all, that the fraternity and its ritual offers a sense of stability and continuity that seems to be vanishing from world outside of our Asylums.

The analogy I like to use for this is when re-booting your computer, are you simply turning it back on again to run as it was, vulnerable to viruses and bugs? Or will you “restart and install updates”? Our chance is now. We waste this opportunity at our peril.

Courteously,

Ludwik J. Wodka
Grand Commander

“No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction.” –John Donne