



**NORTH DAKOTA
SUPPLEMENT**
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SK David Bickel
RE Grand Commander



A Grand Commander's Farewell Thoughts

First and foremost, I want to thank every Companion and Sir Knight both in North Dakota and elsewhere for all the help, encouragement and guidance given me, not only as Grand Commander but throughout my Grand York Rite leadership years. I alone have done little; but we, all of us, have done a lot. This will be my strongest and fondest memory of North Dakota Grand York Rite. We do Fraternity well.

Institutions great and small and the lives of everyone on Earth have been impacted in degrees by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have fared well while millions have suffered death and permanent injury in its wake, and those less fortunate need our remembrance and prayers. It is human for us to look upon the trivial impacts on our lives regardless of how well we have fared. Our plans for moving ahead with revitalizing York Rite Masonry were affected. Knighting had to be deferred to better times in those areas of North Dakota where there is keen interest among potential Companion/Sir Knights. But, those better times are underway.

One of the joys of leadership in any state or national Masonic organization is meeting and interacting with Brothers. Our collective wisdom of adhering to prudent health advisories kept the Masonic Community largely untouched by COVID-19, but it cost us more than a year of our cherished tenet – Fraternity –and modern communications eased but did not replace the loss. I feel empathy for Most Worshipful Bob Wedberg, Jr. Grand Master of Masons

In North Dakota and Most Eminent Grand Master Sir Knight Jeff Nelson for their loss of those priceless moments among us. And, I thank them for their wise leadership. Each and every one of us has suffered some of this loss of true in-person fellowship. I sense this loss has made us recognize and appreciate our human bonds more as a true secret of Freemasonry.

My view of the future for Knights Templar in North Dakota remains bright. We are moving from past reliance on one or a few men doing everything for us to keep York Rite alive in North Dakota to a culture of “we” – that is, one of distributed leadership. We are far from being finished with this work, but we are growing on good footing. Every active Commandery is bringing new Sir Knights to us. We are open and accepting of new ideas, and those ideas are coming from our newest and oldest members alike. Appendant Bodies are active. SRICF is flourishing. Interest in re-enacting as historic Knights Templar is taking root in Bismarck/Mandan and Grand Forks. Our new generation of Knights is seeing that degree conferrals can be fun rather than uncomfortable chores. Our small number is being recognized as a sign of quality where we invite the best and brightest of the Masonic Community to join us.

Personally, I am far from being burned out, but it is time for me to emulate the Roman general, Cincinnatus, and return back to the other aspects my life outside of the Grand York Rite Bodies of North Dakota. And as one old wag has said, it is easy to slip from leading into meddling when surrounded by good leaders.

Thanks, again,

Dave