



Washington Supplement

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REGC

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This article appears during the time of Lent (from the Old English word ‘lencten’ meaning spring season) in the Christian liturgical calendar. Lent in 2021 officially begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17 and lasts for 40 days until Maundy Thursday of Holy Week, which occurs this year on April 1. Thus, March is a Lenten month and it behooves us as Sir Knights to be calm, do penance, perform almsgiving and seek comfort that Easter Sunday, the celebration of our Lords Resurrection is just around the corner.

In our jurisdiction of Washington, the Grand Commandery is planning two significant events during Lent. One is the Grand Commandery Workshop via Zoom tentatively scheduled for early March. It will be led by my trusted Aides de Camp, REPGC SK Karl Reith and REPGC (FL) SK Davis Aponte. The workshop will feature topics ranging from educational resources for Sir Knights, to a review of tactics, procedure and floor work to help us prepare for the day when we can once again hold in person conclaves.

The other event is a jurisdiction-wide Easter observance, again via Zoom, to held on the evening of Maundy Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. It will feature Scripture readings commemorating the events of Holy Week from the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday through the days of His betrayal, trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Appropriate music will be interspersed with the Scripture readings and the lyrics will be posted on share screen for all to follow along. It should be a moving event similar in format to the successful Christmas Observance held this past December and will not conflict with the Easter Observances currently planned by Grand Encampment.

Before I leave you, let me tell you about another great hymn which I came across. During the political turmoil of the Thirty Years War in Germany and with the plague of 1637-8 raging at about the same time, a German pastor in the town of Eilenberg was confronted by these two dilemmas facing his small group of parishioners. The Swedish army had just invaded the town and the Commander was demanding a huge tribute of money, food and stocks from the already impoverished townspeople. Pastor Martin Rinkert approached the Swedish Commander on behalf of the people and pleaded with him to lower the tribute demanded. The Commander at first adamantly refused and threatened harsh retribution if the tribute was not paid. Pastor Rinkert then turned to the assembled parishioners behind him and said: “Come, my children, we can find no mercy with man; let us take refuge with God.” They then fell on their knees in the sight of the Commander and began singing a familiar hymn. The Commander was so moved by this demonstration of spiritual fervency that he reconsidered and greatly lowered the amount of tribute demanded.

Rinkert went on to write the famous hymn, Now Thank We All Our God. The first stanza is a general expression of gratitude to God for His countless gifts of love. The second is a petition for God’s continued care and keeping and the third is a grand doxology of praise to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One Eternal God. The words of this hymn I am sure are familiar to all of us, but let me just give you the first verse: Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices. Who wondrous things hath done in whom His world rejoices. Who from our mothers’ arms hath blessed us on our way, With countless gifts of love and still is ours today.

Yours in Christ,

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Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Washington