



The Florida Knight

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Right Eminent Grand Commander 2020
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Greetings Sir Knights,

As you receive this May issue of the Knight Templar Magazine the Grand Officers and I are preparing for our upcoming Annual Conclave in Lake Mary, Florida, along with the Grand Officers of the Grand Chapter and Grand Council. It is hard to believe that almost a year has passed since we last met, albeit virtually in 2020, to start our Quasquincentennial (125th) Anniversary Year. I wonder what those founding Knights of our Grand Commandery would think of us now? I believe that they would be pleased with the dedication of our current membership and how we have continued in keeping the traditions alive that they started so long ago. I am sure that they would be in awe regarding the money we raise each year for the Knight Templar Eye Foundation, along with our efforts to send ministers to the Holy Land. We truly are Templars in a modern world, and I know that when I reflect upon these things, I am extremely proud to call myself a Florida Templar.

Masonry teaches us to spend time in contemplation and reflection so that we may learn and grown from our experiences. As I reflect upon the past year, I would like to share a few things with all of you that I believe will help the Order in Florida grow and prosper for many years to come. I know that this past year has forced Masonry in general to conduct itself differently. We have had times during which we were unable to meet face-to-face, and when we did, we were unable to embrace our Brothers with the normal handshake or embrace of friendship. We did, however, overcome these challenges by finding alternatives to our normal meetings. We utilized technology to keep in touch with our Brothers and to continue to conduct the business required. While I am in 100% agreement that I did not join Masonry to meet on-line, I do think what we accomplished this year can provide a new light on how we can expand Masonry as we move into the next decade and beyond.

Have you ever wondered about those members of our Fraternity that no longer attend because they either live too far away or maybe they cannot attend because of poor health or have decided that driving at night is no longer safe? We now have demonstrated that they no longer need to be left out of our gatherings. While we cannot hold ritualistic meetings online, we certainly can hold social and educational events virtually which will allow them to participate. We have demonstrated that our members do not need to give up precious time away from their families to drive to and from the lodge for minor planning sessions or educational gatherings that can now be done virtually. Please do not misunderstand, we still must operate our Masonic Fraternity as we have always done in the past – FACE-TO-FACE. However, we can absolutely add value to our Fraternity by embracing technology to provide a wider audience to our educational and planning events.

Another area that I have reflected on this past year is the educational aspect of our Fraternity. It seems that more Masonic organizations than ever before have started providing education for their membership. I think that I have attended more speaking events (online) this past year on a variety of topics than I have during the past 33 years since becoming a Mason. I think these educational events have allowed our membership to better understand what Masonry means for them, as well as, providing new perspectives on Masonic topics ranging from ritual, protocol, history and esoteric subjects. Until this year, most of us probably only learned about Masonry from a few books we were able to purchase, or through limited discussions with a few Brothers from our local area. How wonderful it is now, that we can learn from Brothers around the globe how they perform ritual, what they understand from our teachings, and how they are putting Masonry into practice in their daily lives. As I mentioned in one of the Summer inserts to the Knight Templar Magazine, I have made more friends from around the world this past year than I ever thought possible. My Masonic family has grown exponentially because of my eagerness to hear and learn from other members of our Gentle Craft using a virtual platform.

So, what does this mean for our local Commanderies and the Grand Commandery of Florida? First, I hope it means that we all take a greater interest in our Masonic Education. The Grand Commandery has sponsored numerous virtual speaking events this year and I hope it demonstrated how easy it can be for your local Commandery or District to support an event for their membership. These can also be used as recruitment tools to express that joining the York Rite is the best pathway for gaining Further Light in Masonry. Secondly, it also means that in the modern fast-paced world we live in, with all the various Masonic meetings we need to attend, we should think about how we can give time back to our membership so that they are not taken away from their families for “just another meeting where we open, read the minutes, close and then go home.” We need to add value to their experience and to provide them with the opportunity to experience Masonry and Templarism beyond what they have been receiving at the local level.

This year, while certainly not what I expected it to be, has been an eye-opening experience for me as your Grand Commander. It has been my honor to represent you, the Sir Knights of Florida, in all my travels. While many of these “travels” have been done virtually to other jurisdictions, I have none-the-less attempted to demonstrate to those I have come into contact with, that Florida Masonry – specifically Templar Masonry – is practiced by dedicated individuals that have a passion for the Craft and an eagerness to help their Brothers and the world at-large. Prior to the pandemic and during my rise through the Grand Commandery, I had the opportunity to travel to Lodges, Chapters, Councils and Commanderies in various States of our Great Nation. I have experienced how others perform their ritual and how members from different jurisdictions express their form of Brotherhood. It is with great enthusiasm that I can say Florida Templars are among the most dedicated, loving, and charitable Masons. We are really the best of the best that our Fraternity has to offer to the world. I am, therefore, ready to turn over the leadership of this Grand Commandery to the next group of elected officers with the knowledge that they will take our Fraternity to new heights.

Again, it has been my honor to serve you and the Grand Commandery this past year and I look forward to seeing all of you in Lake Mary Florida in a few weeks.

Donec Totem Impleat Orbem,

Brett A. Gordon, KYCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander