



STATE NEWS - NOVEMBER 2021

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Web Site: www.yorkriteky.org/grandcommandery



*SK Joseph P. Giles,
Grand Commander*

Sir Knights,

Fall has found its way to us in Kentucky. Between the reality of fall cleanup of leaves in the yard, allergies to torment the souls of my brother Knights, and several Commandery and other York Rite obligations that abound in the schedule; we all stay very busy at this time of year.

I personally love fall in that I know the rule of change is required in all things save a very few. Plants grow, live their lives, and die all in a pretty regular order. The same thing happens with my friends and people in life. We are parts of the primordial secession of our species and physical world. We all go the same way.

We can enjoy the process, but we all have differing views of how this inevitable reckoning with the ravages of time will be considered in our own lives. To that thought, there is a choice, but it comes with a cost. You are given RTF or RTF and not much else. What is this RTF or RTF? Well, some folks look at life under the Repair Till Fixed and others see Run Till Failure.

In a world where we don't have time, nor monies, or care to polish things that need to be kept up with, say styles of clothing, painting the house, or yard and garden maintenance; we tend to let the weeds grow and watch the paint peel until catastrophe brings out the repairman in us to "fix" the problem we allowed to go from simple fixes to potential disasters. Others diligently work to maintain the foundations of our homes and put time and effort into these simple tasks daily, but we skip the rewards of the occasional meal with family or protracted nap on a hot afternoon because we were exerting the conscious will to do the maintenance on "needed" projects.

I find this is so in dealing with Masonic issues as well. We can run the organization until it fails by not renewing our commitments and becoming a card-carrying Masonic brother while claiming to let others maintain the fraternity and its principles simply because we gave them our monies in our dues or we can actively get involved, by going to our meetings and polish our cherished principles to a better state of perfection. This run till failure mode will cost us in the long run or when the bill comes due to fix the lodge or asylum due to our lack of care for the short-term little things that cause such great damage if not attended to regularly.

The repair till fixed strategy seems a better and more logical response to these issues to me. Learning daily about the life cycle of the Commandery over the last 100 years and specifically the last 10 years from our records shows we are in a state of decline in numbers. But here you should not be surprised nor disheartened. Since the early 1900's we have been losing numbers and more specifically since 1960 there has been a loss

of about 5 percent in members numbers per year. We also see a gain of about the same number of new Knights coming to the orders over the same amount of time, thus balancing that part on the scales. What makes the difference is the loss by demitting or suspensions. Yet the foundational principles remain. To change from the “I will get to that later when it needs to be fixed” to the “I can see value in preparing it for the future” modes is difficult for most. Change is continual and inevitable in most things so we must make change for the betterment of our fraternity; a principle never to be neglected. I ask you to consider what your principles are that you think should never be changed and consider what we do daily to support them. I have read possibly 20 papers and articles regarding the retention of brothers in our organizations and other large organizations over time. Great meals were mentioned, educational opportunities, trips, spectacular events of pageantry, and entertainment were all investigated and discussed at length in these analytic dissections of organizations that remained over centuries. What the authors did not articulate was that even with changes as drastic as changing borders of countries, loss of Kings, Popes, and other leaders, famines, and natural disasters of fire and floods in the world's largest cities two things remained to bring people back to their organizations. These two foundation stones were brotherhood or familial connections and purpose for the common good. Without these two items the greatest of organizations, even when well-endowed with monies, lands, titles and even history in their corners failed. The organizations that faired the best reinforced their principles with ritual, so that their history was not lost in the daily grind to survive and a way to reinforce the need for each of their members to fulfill a given goal and thus purpose for themselves, or a sense of self-worth in the grand scheme of the world.

The Commandery will attempt to do just that in the coming year. We will attend to the small details and reinforce our rituals but also give our Sir Knights parts and purpose for clearing off the stones and principles laid for our foundations so many years ago. We will be, in our academies, clearing the vines and weeds that retard our growth and allowing us to enjoy the beauty of committing to lofty goals from small projects at every Commandery. Please forgive me but I believe in you and your worth as Sir Knights in a great cause. You are worth the effort to make our flagging rituals sharp so we can remember who we were/are and what we stood/stand for today. I look forward to visiting your commandery and asking the questions of What needs work here? How can I help? What is our purpose and how do we jointly need to proceed to get to that agreed-upon goal?

Foundational stuff I agree, but worthy questions nonetheless.

God bless and keep our country, service members, leaders, Sir Knights, and their families, safe and well as we go forward to protect our principles and foundations.


Respectfully,

Joseph P. Giles

Servant to and Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templars of Kentucky



UPCOMING TEMPLAR ACADEMIES

 Saturday, October 30, 2021 at 11:00 AM CST
308 Joe Clifton Drive, Paducah

 Saturday, November 20, 2021 at 10 AM
400 N 4th St, Danville

 Saturday, December 4, 2021 at 10 AM
746 W Main St, Morehead

Instruction on opening, smaller aspects of Order work, and Funeral Protocol. Chapeaux and sword required, uniform optional.