

NEW HAMPSHIRE KNIGHT TEMPLAR NEWS

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By now, some of you may have an inkling of the *Sturm und Drang* surrounding the Grand Encampment and the allegedly improper actions of the Most Eminent Grand Master, Sir Knight Michael Burke Johnson, G.C.T. My hope is that I can put to rest unfounded allegations and allay any concerns that some Sir Knights may have.

Grand Master Johnson is alleged to have unilaterally reversed the actions of the voting delegates at the 68th Triennial Conclave convened in Minneapolis last August. This is patently false. All Proposed Resolutions that were adopted by the delegates are in force. The Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment, on September 1, 2021, issued a Memorandum to all Grand Recorders of the Grand Commanderies entitled "Legislative Action at the 68th Triennial Conclave," summarizing the disposition of all Proposals put before the voting delegates. The Memorandum is posted on the Grand Encampment website, together with the Notice of Conclave containing the text of the Proposals. The allegations apparently arise out of the Grand Master's removal from office of Sir Knight David J. Kussman, Right Eminent Deputy Grand Master, and his noting that the Decision of one of his predecessors remains in force and is unaffected by the Proposed Resolutions adopted last month in Minneapolis.

Regarding the latter, Resolution No. 1 from 2012, declared the Great Priory of America, Order of Knight Beneficent of the Holy City (*Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Cité Sante*) or C.B.C.S. "a Masonic Templar Order ... unsanctioned or unrecognized by the Grand Encampment operating in the United States in violation of Section 3 of the *Constitution* of The Grand Encampment." It further declared membership in such an unrecognized or unsanctioned Masonic Templar Order "inconsistent with membership in the Grand Encampment ... or any of its subordinate Commanderies, Grand Commanderies, or their constituent Commanderies."¹ Proposed Resolution No. 2021-23 called for the rescinding of "2012 Resolution No. 1, as amended by S.K. Duane Vaught Decision No. 5." The Proposed Resolution was adopted and Resolution No. 1, as amended, is, accordingly, no longer in force.

It is claimed that, by rescinding 2012 Resolution No. 1, as amended, the voting delegates also repealed, or rendered "moot," Koon Decision No. 2 from 2010, which had been affirmed at the 65th Triennial Conclave in Alexandria, Virginia and which was, in pertinent part, substantially identical to the rescinded Resolution for which it formed the basis. This may have been the expectation or intention of the sponsor, but Proposed Resolution 2021-23 simply failed to address Koon Decision No. 2.

Decisions, opinions and rulings made by the Grand Master are binding until overruled by the Grand Encampment. If approved by the Grand Encampment they become a part of the law of the Grand Encampment. (1940, p 69 & 279, No. 35, Norris)

Since Resolution No. 2021-23 was silent concerning Koon Decision No. 2, it was not overruled and remains settled, Templar Law.

Turning to the removal of the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Master had reason to question Sir Knight Kussman's loyalty to the Grand Encampment based upon, among other things, his negotiation, and urging the adoption, of a Concordat which would have put the Grand Encampment on record that

¹ For additional background on the underlying issues, involving the Great Priory of America, see the "Grand Encampment and Rectified Scottish Rite" link on the Grand Encampment webpage.

the Great Priory of America of the Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cite Sainte has sole custody of, and prerogative to confer, the system of degrees within its charge ... under the Rectified Scottish Rite, namely *Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason*, Scottish Master, Perfect Scottish Master, Squire Novice, Knight Beneficent of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Professed Knight and Grand Professed Knight

The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar ... recognizes and affirms the sovereignty of the Great Priory of America over the rites and observances of ... the Rectified Scottish Rite, and the Rite of Strict Observance”

I leave to your imagination how the Grand Encampment’s endorsement of that proposition would sit with our Most Worshipful Grand Master, Sir Knight and Brother David S. Collins, and his counterparts in the Conference of Grand Masters. Whatever benefit Sir Knight Kussman hoped to gain from advocating for the Concordat, it was not unreasonable for the Grand Master to conclude that the interests of the Grand Encampment had not been uppermost in his mind.

There are those who claim that the Grand Master lacks authority to remove an elected Grand Encampment officer. This, too, is patently false. The Grand Encampment *Constitution*, in Section 23, vests in the Grand Master “power and authority to do and perform *all such acts as he may deem for the interests of Templary.*” His enumerated powers and duties in Section 23 are not “a limitation on the general grant herein contained.” Whether one agrees with the Grand Master’s action or not, his authority to act is clear.

Since assuming office, Grand Master Johnson has issued four Decisions. They are available on the Grand Encampment website. You may find them under the “Downloads” link. I believe that his decisions speak for themselves, but it should be noted that they are not *retroactive*, rather they operate prospectively.

Don’t forget that our Grand Commandery will confer the Commandery Orders in full form Friday and Saturday, October 22 and 23, next, in Manchester. We expect to Knight a score of candidates whose receipt of the Order last year was obviated by the outbreak of COVID-19. All Sir Knights are invited to attend the conferrals, to refresh their recollection of the ceremonies, and to welcome our new Sir Knights. Watch the New Hampshire York Rite website for additional details.

The officers of our Grand and Constituent Commanderies are ever mindful of the COVID-19 contagion and will observe precautions to minimize risks to those who attend our Conclaves and other events. Notwithstanding those precautions and in view of the resurgence of the disease, we urge any Sir Knight who is feeling unwell or who has an underlying health concern to not feel obligated to join us for any particular event. We will miss your companionship, but will understand fully and know that you are with us in spirit.

Courteously,



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York Rite Calendar -- <https://nhyorkrite.org/calendars>