



Missouri Supplement
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Two Steps Forward, One Step Back!

GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights,

As I pen this message, the news about the COVID-19 pandemic is again looking serious. We all thought that with the wide-spread availability of three COVID-19 vaccines that we would be turning the corner on the pandemic in July. However, vaccine hesitancy is beginning to catch up with many Missouri communities.

I live in Madison County and our County Health Department is asking the residents of the County to take the following measures to protect against COVID-19 Delta Variant exposure even if a person is fully vaccinated.

First, stay home and consult with your family doctor if you are ill.

Second, wear a face covering (mouth and nose) when you are visiting with elderly or immunocompromised persons.

Third, when indoors maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet and wear a face covering if you are unable to socially distance.

And fourth, Consider Getting Vaccinated!

Sir Knights, I know that I have been pushing our Commanderies to move up to reopening status Phase Two, so we can all return to normal Commandery operations including the conferral of the Orders and Drill Practice. However, protecting ourselves from the COVID-19 Delta Variant must be our top priority right now. The 2021-2022 Grand Commandery General Order No. 2 that I issued on June 14, 2021, provides instructions for both moving up in reopening status as well as moving down in reopening status. It may be necessary, due to the seriousness of the health issues that we are experiencing, to vote to move from Phase Two back down to Phase One (restricted in person meetings) or even back down to Phase Zero (virtual meetings). Just like when your Commandery voted one month to move up to a new reopening status the following month, your Commandery can vote one month to move down to a previous reopening status. The requirements and procedures explained in General Order No. 2 work both ways - moving up in reopening status or moving down in reopening status.

I sincerely encourage all Sir Knights to strongly consider getting vaccinated as soon as possible. I hope and pray that all of you will stay safe and remain

healthy. I look forward to seeing some of you at the 200th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Missouri on September 27th and 28th.

Walking with Christ in a Return to Normalcy!

Sir Knight Harry L. Tripp, Jr., Grand Commander

RECHARGING THE SPIRIT

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens not only our physical health, but it also threatens our spiritual health. The shock of the initial surge of the virus caused a complete shift in our personal worlds. We isolated ourselves and stayed home. We stopped going out to eat. We stopped going out to entertainment events such as movies and concerts. Those limited times that we did venture out to get groceries, we wore coverings over our faces further cutting ourselves off from other people. The necessity of face coverings removed the many visual cues that we use to enhance human communication.

The COVID-19 viral variants have surged multiple times and we are dealing with the Delta variant surge right now. Regardless of our hopes for a return to the way life was, we are all dealing with the "new normal." The new normal threatens to leave us spiritually dry and cause us to neglect the nourishment that God's love can give our soul. God can bring the rain, but we must be willing to let it drench our souls and recharge our spirits.

Our condition and hopeful salvation is summed up in Psalm 63: 1-11 (NIV) which begins with, "You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water." Psalm 63 is about King David. He was being persecuted by King Saul. Saul wanted to end David's life both physically and spiritually. The Psalm expresses David's experience in the desert of Judah.

The poem continues with, "I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you." David remembers the strength that God's love has provided him and pledges to continue to be faithful.

The Psalm adds, "On my bed I remember you; think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your right hand upholds me." David believes in God.

It concludes with, "Those who want to kill me will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth. They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals. But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced." David has faith.

The first time that we encountered God in our lives was so wonderful. In this time of adversity we need to be like King David. We need to recharge our spirit with the water of God's love. We need to be strong and have faith.