

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Maryland KT Magazine May message 2022

Greetings Sir Knights. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday// May Day.

These words have many meanings. May Day is celebrated throughout the world to usher in Spring and festivals abound. It goes back to Pagan times when the flowering season was celebrated. In later times festivals were held throughout Europe with baskets of flowers abounding and dancing around the Maypole in festive dress of bright colors and traditional garb.

In recent years May Day has been used to celebrate the International Day of Celebrating Workers and even protests for Labor movements.

'Mayday' was conceived as a distress call in the early 1920s by Frederick Stanley Mockford, officer-in-charge of radio at Croyden Airport England. He had been asked to think of a word that would indicate distress and would easily be understood by all pilots and ground staff in an emergency. Since much of the air traffic at the time was between Croydon and Le Bourget Airport in Paris, he proposed the term "mayday", the phonetic equivalent of the French *m'aidez* ("help me") or *m'aider* (a short form of *venez m'aider*, "come [and] help me"). (Wikipedia)

This has been used subsequently for air and ship verbal distress signals throughout the whole world when the morse code 'SOS' could not be used.

I hope you all have a great 'May Day' and not so much need for 'Mayday'

May is also the month for our Semi-Annual conclave marking halfway through our Masonic year. I hope any of you that are available can attend the conclave on May 14 in the Gothic room at the Grand Lodge in Cockeysville. All Sir Knights are welcome. Dais officers of each Commandery are expected.

This first 6 months I the Grand Line of Maryland Grand Commandery of Knights Templar have been on the move. My own logbook reveals 70 events that have kept me busy and seeing to the many aspects of York Rite and especially Grand Commandery events and business. Almost all of the Grand Visitations have been completed, getting an early start to jumpstart the business of the Grand Commandery. We wanted to make sure visits to all commanderies took place so the program I have outlined here before was understood by all. In addition in January I made many visits to Lodge installations and participated in flag ceremonies in some.

Commandery installations are going on now and I have been honored to install several Commanderies wit new officers. A couple more are scheduled and if you are reading this and have an installation scheduled that we are not aware of yet, please contact myself of the Grand Recorder and the Grand Commandery will be quite happy to assist.

I was gratified to see great participation by Maryland Templars at the annual Easter Sunrise Service at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial with the Grand Encampment. We had two busses carry members to the service from Cockeysville and Frederick. We hope to do this annually and also add a bus to the Eastern Shore. This year's event planning was a bit late starting but next year, with plenty of notice, I think we can have an even better opportunity to support the event and transport our members. There were plenty of Templars that drove and brought their families. It's always great to see everyone.

The normal event, held outdoors on the steps of the Memorial had to be changed some due to a renovation to the building exterior. We had to move the event indoors to the auditorium. While it was a little chilly it would have been a really nice to do this on the Eastern facing steps of the memorial because the sunrise was really lovely and clear. Regardless the Grand Encampment produced a fine service and the attendance from around the country over filled the auditorium and additions folding chairs were required to seat those in attendance. By my count there were about 400 people in attendance.

As a member of the Easter Sunrise Committee I have ample opportunity to be around the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment and his officers. The comments on the preparation, Service and attendance were favorable in the extreme. Congratulations to Michael Kastle, chairman of the Committee and the rest of the crew. The local DeMolay Chapters that usually assist in setting up the event did a fine job of removing the wooden benches from storage for disposal even though they were not used in the event. The committee is currently changing the way the set up is done, which should make things much nicer in future.

Stay tuned for more on the memorial. The current renovations will soon be completed. Already the interior of the building has undergone renovations in a five year long effort to prepare for the 100th anniversary celebration in 2023. All of the displays representing Masonic groups which are housed on the several levels of the building and reached by elevators have been re-envisioned and refreshed. We had opportunity to visit them during the weekend and I think all who have visited in the past will be wanting to go for a fresh look. Those of you who have not visited, this is a great time to go.

Later this year we will outline the role that Maryland Knights Templar and the rest of Maryland Masonry will take on during the coming Anniversary celebration next February.

You will all be happy to learn that most of your Commanderies have stepped up their activity and Templary is on the move again. York Rite Degrees and Commandery Orders are being practiced and plans are underway for many new Companions and Sir Knights to enter the roles of membership this year. Those commanderies that are a little behind will receive all the help the Grand Commandery can muster in their own efforts to shake off the rust and get back into the habit of attending conclaves and practices for the work of our Magnanimous Order.

Everyone enjoy this great Spring weather and get out in those gardens and woodlands to enjoy the wonders that the Lord has bestowed upon us each.

Yours In His Service,
John H. Austin
Right Eminent Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Maryland