

# GRAND COMMANDERY OF ARIZONA

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## Grandfather's Sword (Part 2 of 2)

No doubt, we can each tell a tale of our personal adventure, a quest to unravel the mystery which Masonry presents. Some, perhaps, look at Masonry as a way of solving the mystery of life, as though it could be deciphered. They would then have a code that they could put over their eyes like a pair of 3-D glasses, to reveal that which was not seen. But what is not seen is the Spirit of Templary, which is within the breast of each Knight Templar. It is not to be deciphered; it is to be acted out so it may be seen by others.

In the Orders of Knighthood, the sword is a symbol which provides a lesson. In the Order of Red Cross, it is Faith, Hope and Charity. It is also an instrument which dramatically portrays the penalty given with the words.

In the Order of Malta, you deposited the sword upon the altar and, upon taking it up again, were admonished to wipe it spotless as a reminder of your future life, to wield it virtuously without fear, to maintain justice and protect the helpless. The sword was also pointed to the center of the cross to remind us of the passion of Christ.

In the Order of the Temple, your hands were placed on the sword in taking your obligation. You were challenged by the sword and, upon giving the cuts, communicated the password under an arch of steel. It was with the sword raised overhead that you gave the declaration to defend the helpless and the religion of Christ. When you sealed your faith, alone at the altar, you were given mystic assurance under a shining arch of swords. It was also under an arch of steel by which you were knighted by the Commander's sword. The sword represents Justice, Fortitude, and Mercy, and you were reminded to let your honor remain as pure as the glittering blade. You are also reminded of the words found in Isaiah 2:4: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares."

To us as Knights Templar, the sword has a utilitarian value. It is presented as a salute to our country's flag, it is at carry when giving instruction, it is at order during prayer, it is inverted during the Apostle's Creed, it is the instrument which sings the proclamation in the Installation of Officers, it is crossed in an arch of steel when receiving the Grand Commander, and it is the voice of authority when declaring the Conclave open.

The sword, furthermore, is a two-edged sword which symbolically teaches us to fight for truth while at the same time cutting out our own imperfections. We are reminded in Ephesians 6:17 to take, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." And in Romans 13:4, "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In both the Old and the New Testament, we find references to the sword as symbolizing the word of truth; to slay the enemy and to cut through falsehood. Christ also is referred to as the Word of God, like a two-edged sword, symbolically cutting through to show us the way, the truth, and the life.

As Knights Templar, the sword we carry reminds us of our authority as Christians, our quest for truth and the spiritual word above all words. It also demands from us an accountability to stand up for, to take from a popular comic book character, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way".

As the Arthurian legend of the "Sword in the Stone" provides colorful imagery, so should the Eminent Commander be a shining example of what is expected of every Knight Templar. Each Knight Templar can likewise draw his sword from the mystical stone of Templary and symbolically wield it as he goes forth in everyday life.

While we each may find different images that encouraged our becoming Knights Templar, they are also part of our collective unity that allows us to understanding the meaning of Templary. Psalm 133 notes, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Our shared experiences should strengthen each of us that we may attract others. Just as grandfather's sword was one Sir Knight's stimulus, so should the unity and fellowship of the Commandery be as shining as an upheld sword, a beacon to welcome others.