



Digital Missouri Message

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Plans for Visits this Fall!

GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights,

I look forward to visiting our Missouri Commanderies as we head into the fall. I would like to take some time to set expectations for my visits and communicate three objectives that I would like to accomplish while working with our Missouri Sir Knights.

1. It is my plan to build a digital repository that contains an image of the Charters for every Missouri Commandery. Please make sure you have it on hand when I visit so that I can capture an image to upload. Many of these documents are historically significant and I would like to include these images in the historical archives of the Grand Commandery.
2. Secondly, I would like to collect a copy of the by laws of every Missouri Commandery so that I can make sure that our Grand Commandery records have the current version. Commandery Recorders are being asked to please have a printed copy of their Commandery by laws that I can take back with me.
3. A visit is merely a snapshot of the activity of a Commandery and only provides me a brief glimpse of all the good works. It is my plan to supplement this with the meeting minutes from the last meeting of each Missouri Commandery. This will allow me to gain a slightly deeper appreciation for the good works being performed by our Commanderies and their Sir Knights. Commandery Recorders are being asked to please have a printed copy of their previous meeting minutes that I can take back with me.

Forgive me if these requests appear mundane, but we have been in a pandemic operating environment for a few years now and I would like to dust off the way we conduct our routine business.

Along these lines, you can look forward to communications from our new Grand Lecturer, SK Corey B. Huntsucker, and his team of Assistant Grand Lecturers. They are here to help with the work of opening and closing our Commanderies. Please engage them for support. They are working very hard to make sure that our ritual is executed in a standardized manner and communicated with clarity in such a way as to support your needs.

The heat of summer may be waning, but the zeal of our Sir Knights is just beginning to heat up. I would like to take a moment to give thanks to those Sir Knights who have purchased coins to support my Four Chaplains Program. It gives me great pleasure to announce that sales have been so brisk that we have ordered a second batch of coins. Please keep in mind that the net proceeds from the

coin sales will be used to support the Holy Land Pilgrimage operating fund. Additional information regarding the Four Chaplains Program will be forthcoming.

Dei Gratia - By the Grace of God!

Sir Knight Michael C. Rohman, Grand Commander

AUTUMN OF THEIR DISCONTENT

September holds a date of particular note for Chivalric Freemasons interested in the history of the Poor Knights (or Fellow-Soldiers) of Christ and the Temple of Solomon better known to most of us as the Order of the Knights Templar. But first a little speculative historical background on our operative namesakes.

It has been reported that sometime between 1118 and 1119 the French Knight Hugues (Hugh) de Payens suggested to the King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II, that the large numbers of Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Land could benefit from some form of organized protection. The King was keen on the idea and sanctioned the new Order. The nine original Knights Templar even got to use the ancient stables in the Temple of Solomon as a headquarters.

Allegedly, our namesakes didn't really do much for the next seven or eight years. It is written that they rarely left the Temple and weren't providing a lot of protection to the poor pilgrims. Of course, there were only nine of them initially and we don't know how quickly or to what extent they were able to attract new Knights to the Order. Possibly they were just too busy searching for the Ark of the Covenant or the Holy Grail to be bothered with their duties.

Sometime between 1126 and 1129 stuff began to happen for the Order. It appears that Count Hugh de Champagne graciously donated his vast estate property to Bernard of Clairvaux (who much later doggedly became Saint Bernard, but that's another story). Anyway, the Count was on his way to join the Knights Templar and really didn't have any need for the place. In fact, his generous gift allowed Bernard to finance the construction of a Cistercian monastery in northeastern France (yep, the famous though now ruined Clairvaux Abbey).

Supposedly, Bernard was so thankful that he decided to show his appreciation by petitioning Pope Honorius II to recognize the Knights Templar as an official Order of the Catholic Church. It took more than filling out the right form and it didn't happen overnight. Bernard had to do a lot of fast talking (and fast writing) to finally win support for the idea and get the Council of Troyes to sanction the Knights Templar as a Monastic Order.

Around 1139 Pope Innocent II issued a decree essentially giving the Knights Templar free rein over Christendom under the auspices of the Pope. This provided them with unprecedented power. The Church's endorsement really got the ball rolling for the Knights Templar. As their popularity grew, so did their membership and influence. They developed an extensive economic base which, together with their innovative financial infrastructure, provided the Order with a considerable amount of power both in the Holy Land and back in Europe. They invested their wealth in Monasteries and Abbeys and to protect them they built fortifications. While most of the Order's members were non-combatants they still had the means to defend themselves and protect their property.

In 1305 King Phillip IV (a.k.a. Phillip the Fair) of France took control of the Holy See and moved it to Avignon. The King was supposedly in hock to the Knights Templar and wanted to welch on the debt.

So he strong-armed the newly installed Pope Clement V to issue decrees maligning the Order and setting the stage for his move against the Knights and their considerable wealth.

Allegedly, on September 13, 1307, the King issued a secret warrant for the arrest and detainment of all members of the Order as well as seizure of all their assets. However, I believe that this is the date when the letters were mailed so to speak, because most accounts specify that the actual raids occurred about a month later on October 13, 1307. This would have given the Order time to load up their 18 or so ships and quietly depart for parts unknown. And the rest, as they say, is the stuff of legends.

OF LEAVES

I have something to show you. Autumn leaves and their colors are beautiful! One of the reasons to walk in the woods during the fall is the leaves. Their colors can be striking and it can be very refreshing to the spirit. The feeling is expressed in Psalms 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

We may also discover that God can "talk" to us through little things like leaves. God can remind us of some very important truths about Him as we look at the leaves. Every year God replenishes the leaves on the trees. Every year He gives us colors that are beautiful and exhilarating. Every year He lets the leaves fall to the ground and decompose in order to nourish the forest. God is always taking care of His world in quiet little ways that we might miss. God is always giving us evidence that He is with us. God "whispers" his presence to us in a reassuring manner. Start looking at the beauty of nature and listening to the whisper of God as He uses things like leaves to give us a warm feeling of love.

LIVE IN THE LIGHT!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1, NIV) Some of us may recognize these biblical words from a certain honorary ceremony that we have received.

However, all Knights Templar should know that the message of John declares to us that God is Light! When we walk with Him, then there is no darkness. If we choose to walk without Him, then we walk in darkness and in evil. There is no truth in the darkness. But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, then we may enjoy fellowship with one another. In the Light, the blood of His Son, Jesus, purifies us all from sin.

If we walk in darkness and claim that we are without sin, then we deceive ourselves. If we claim that we have not sinned, then the Word of God has no place in our lives. But, if we confess our sins to Jesus, then He will be just and will forgive us of our sins. Jesus will purify us from all unrighteousness. We will enjoy the Word of God in our lives.

John wrote his words to us so we would know not to sin. However, if we do sin, then we have an advocate with the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. His ultimate sacrifice has atoned for the sins of the entire world. All we need to do is to obey his commands and we will know God's love.

The trees are beautiful this time of year with the Autumn sun shining on them. The leaves show awesome colors ranging from yellow through the color scale to dark red. Walking through the trees during good and pleasant Autumn weather allows us to appreciate the glory and splendor of the

season. However, during inclement weather, the dark, wet leaves are deprived of their color and look dingy. This phenomenon should make us think about the Light and how our lives take on a different shape without it.

We all take Light for granted. The Light changes the way we perceive the world around us. On a bright sunny day, we see items clearly, but when the Light fades so does the clarity and the same items look duller. In a way, John's words capture the essence of the Autumn time of year.

Sir Knights, the Holy Bible only asks of us to perform a few tasks on behalf of God. We are to be faithful to Him and enjoy His love. We are to do good unto others and live in love with each other. And, we are to go into the world and spread the Word of God with others. Sir Knights, we are God's ambassadors every where we go. This is our great commission and each one of us has the authority to spread the Word of God.

However, doing God's work is difficult for us. When it comes down to walking the walk and talking the talk, we tend to shy away from doing God's work. Unfortunately, we go undercover because it is a little scary to own up to the greatest truth on Earth. We are good Sunday Christians, but during the rest off the week we fail to carry "Sunday Christianity" into the rest of our lives.

Sir Knights, we don't need to travel to exotic lands to do God's work. Doing God's work starts at home and continues to every place we go.

God has put us here to pass on the good news of the Gospel. Like the extraordinary colors of the Autumn trees, be bold and shine for Jesus Christ. Let God's Light shine into the darkness.