

Grand Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

April 2023 News



SK Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander
www.mayorkrite.org/grand-commandery

Easter Greetings, Sir Knights;

Sharing the greeting of “Christ is Risen!” and “He is Risen Indeed!” reminds us that Jesus did not die. He lives. He is Risen! Hallelujah!

Easter is celebrated as we remember the sacrifice made on our behalf. As we busy ourselves with activities surrounding Easter, let us pause and acknowledge the depth of what Jesus experienced and how God gave His Son so we may be saved.

John 13:31–35 contains one of the most powerful commands given to Christians: that love for others is the defining sign of faith for all people, marking the life of a true believer. Jesus frames this as a new commandment, using His own example as the standard. In giving this charge, Jesus once again predicts His impending death and departure from earth.

“So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

None of us except Jesus is perfect in loving one another, and it is only through His work that we are saved. It is also only in Him that we can love one another as He has loved us. But the crucified and risen Lord Jesus gloried in giving His life to save us, and He continues to love us forever. In Christ’s self-sacrificing love for us, then, we can indeed love one another.

For Jesus, love did not mean a sweet sentimental feeling. It meant action. It meant actively loving — putting one’s love into real world activities. As Knights Templar, we must demonstrate that our actions reflect the vow that we all took to go to the distance of 40 miles, even barefoot

and on frozen ground, to relieve the distress of a worthy Knight of this Order. As Knights Templar, we must demonstrate how our spiritual beliefs can be passed on to everyone by our acts of Kindness and Charity. We as Knights Templar, demonstrate this great love every time we go to the aid of a Commandery in need of assistance, no matter the distance involved. We as Knights Templar demonstrate this great love by showing the world that we are above the fray in our everyday actions of Tolerance and Brotherly Love. As Knights Templar, we must model the humble acts of Jesus by doing good deeds to show to the world that Christ is alive today in the world and that we Templars are His messengers of joy, peace, and hope.

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen!

In His Knightly Service,

Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander

From the Apartment of the Grand Prelate

“She came to the garden alone...”

by

Sir Knight & Rev. Richard Haley, Associate Grand Prelate

There are many things to like about Easter. The hymns we sing are triumphant and uplifting from the traditional like **Christ The Lord Is Risen Today, Alleluia!**, to somewhat more contemporary ones like **Because He Lives!** by Bill Gaither. Choir anthems are exciting and joyous.

And pre-COVID, churches were full with families, visitors, and many people reconnecting with the faith family and with God. Many of us hope that happens this year too! Often people dress up special for Easter. Even the secular culture with its emphasis on bunnies and Easter egg hunts and chocolate candy and dining out makes Easter very special. It's a big party.

But amidst all the necessary celebration, something deep and profound about Easter can easily be dimmed if not lost. And here is where Mary Magdalene is helpful. Rather than Easter being a celebratory circus-like event, it was for her an intensely personal experience, born out of sadness at the death of her beloved Teacher, wherein suddenly and inexplicably she found herself in a one-on-one conversation with the Risen Jesus. It is that personal, one-on-one encounter with the Risen Jesus that we can easily pass by, forget, or deemphasize amidst the grand celebration that also must be part of Easter.

So as we experience Easter 2023, as Freemasons and Knights Templar, let's join Mary Magdalene who, as the old gospel hymn put it, "came to the garden alone while the dew was still on the roses," and there met the Risen Christ. In that meeting between Mary and Jesus as recorded in John's gospel, please note several things about Mary's encounter with Jesus that I hope and pray inform or are part of our own experiences of the Risen Christ.

The first is this: in a time of great emotional need, Jesus was there for Mary. It is precisely at these times that Jesus meets us too. Bob was a very steady, somewhat unemotional man who had recently recovered from a very serious heart attack. One day after church I saw him weeping in the back. I asked him what was wrong. And his comments live with me to this day, "Nothing's wrong," he said. "It's all right. That last hymn we sang, 'How Great Thou Art' is true. It must be. I'm still alive." In a time of great emotional need, Bob was confronted with the joy at having the gift of life and it led Bob to an encounter with Jesus that Sunday morning. This Easter join Mary and remember where Christ has been in your emotional needs with the sure and secure hope that Christ will always be with you in such needful times.

Second, when Jesus spoke Mary's name – in other words became personally engaged with her – that was when Mary truly recognized the Risen Christ. For us in the 21st century, that holy voice most often comes through the people of God. Father Macy was an Episcopal priest and past master of my blue lodge. As I was struggling with my own vocational journey - education or ministry - he took time to talk with me and help me hear more clearly God's direction on my life. He spoke on behalf of Jesus, and so this Easter I will remember Jesus' voice coming to me through Father Macy. Here's a question: What memories of Jesus' voice do you have this Easter?

Third, Jesus told Mary to go and tell others about him, and most importantly, she did just that – she went and became a witness for his powerful love. And that's what we are left with: will we also go and become witnesses to Jesus' powerful love in our lives? How has Jesus touched you at the emotional level? How has Jesus spoken to you at the personal level? Go and tell those stories.

That's what the old gospel hymn, *I Come to the Garden Alone* is all about – Mary's encounter with Jesus and the challenge of the final verse: **and he bids me go...** Shall we also all go in his name to share his love?



Grand Commandery Officers 2022-2023



Coeur de Lion Commandery No. 34 and Winslow Lewis Commandery No. 18