

Grand Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

March 2023 News



SK Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander

www.mayorkrite.org/grand-commandery

March Greeting Sir Knights,

Lent is the forty-day period of preparation in which the people of God get ready to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection in Holy Week. It is a time for seeing ourselves and God clearly, sharpening our vision through prayer and fasting. As we progress through Ash Wednesday, the forty days of Lent and the drama of Holy Week, we begin to see ourselves and the world as they are in God. These six weeks are a season of preparation for Christians as they anticipate the joyous celebration of Easter morning and the fifty days of that season until Pentecost. In the spirit of preparation, Christians undertake self-examination, penance, and renewed devotion to God.

This practice of taking six weeks to focus on one's relationship with God is said to have begun with Jesus himself. The Lenten season is meant to reflect the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness at the onset of his ministry (Matthew 4.1-11; Mark 1.12-13; Luke 4.1-13). There he prayed, fasted, and resisted the temptations of Satan. Christians mirror this period of spiritual renewal by acts of self-denial, which are meant to help them deepen their relationship with God. Many Christians choose to give up something that they enjoy, like desserts or alcohol, as a way of fasting. Others skip a meal once a week or take on a specific discipline, like extra prayer or scripture study, for the season. Orthodox Christians undertake a much more rigorous fast by giving up whole food groups for the entire six weeks.

This Lenten season, let us focus on the Scripture passage from Romans 12:12, in which we are advised to "Be joyful in hope, be patient in affliction, be faithful in prayer." As we take this time to reflect on our preparation for the joy of Easter, we understand that our hope is in Christ. We must never lose sight of our hope of things in the future that God has promised us. Even amid the trials of this life we can have hope because of what God has done for us and for what He has promised us in the world to come. Jesus also promised that we would face troubles in this world, but, as Christians, we should not be shocked when we face affliction. After all, we follow a King who faced more than his fair share. But we can be patient in affliction, because of Jesus. Prayer

is our great resource whenever we are facing the trials of this life. Prayer should be of the highest priority for each follower of Jesus. This is what Jesus modeled for us; He frequently withdrew from the crowds to pray. We would be better off if we simply persevered in prayer. The Romans 12:12 meaning reminds us that it is through prayer and connecting with Jesus that we can find hope and joy.

This month, we are also reminded of the trials that the ancient Templars endured in the light of persecution from the King and Church in the 14th century. We are also faced with hardships and tests of our courage and constancy in our daily lives and yet we must remain faithful to our vows as Christian Knights and prayerfully fulfil our mission of charity and hospitality as we look forward with hope to the promise of a better world.

At this point in the Templar year, are well into our Inspection Season and I have been deeply impressed by the devotion and dedication of our Sir Knights to excellence in the performance of the Templar Orders. It also pleases me greatly that many of our Commanderies have chosen to perform the Orders on live candidates. It makes the event that much more special when we do our best work for the candidates who deserve to see us at our best. I am so proud of your commitment to our Order.

It is my hope that you will use this Lenten season as a time for reflection and renewed faith as you focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

In His Knightly Service,

Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander

From the Apartment of the Grand Prelate

The power of good deeds!

This past winter I found myself in the unenviable position of waiting for a medical test, alone, with a dead cell phone, no TV and nothing to read. In the new age of COVID there were no longer gossip magazines to thumb through and no telling how long I would be waiting. I needed plan C at this point if I didn't want to be bored to tears. I briefly thought about practicing ritual but quickly realized the medical staff might mistake me for a psych patient. As I leaned back in my chair and closed my eyes, I reflected on my New Year's resolution to be more open to the movement of the spirit and thereby touch lives in more meaningful ways. I wanted my personal ministry to be more impactful and that meant being more mindful of the possibilities that life has to offer. For me it meant not missing those once in a lifetime opportunities to do good that come along our way when we least expect it. It meant not committing the sin of omission, of failing to do the right thing. It was then I was soon joined by another gentleman in the waiting room. It

became clear he was in a lot of pain, but he was going to have to wait his turn since he didn't have an appointment. I felt compassion for this man and, as ready and anxious as I was to have my test and be finished, the Lord spoke to my heart, "Let this man go ahead of you." The words were almost that clear. This man was passing a kidney stone and now I had an opportunity to make that urgent path to pain relief a little shorter by simply letting him take my place in line. The man was most grateful when I asked the tech if we could trade places and they hurried him off, anxious to help. I felt glad for the man and felt the inner glow that came from my New Year's resolution to be more open to the spirit.

An opportunity to live the faith had presented itself almost immediately in this man but it also had an impact on all the staff involved. Two plus years of COVID had taken its toll on morale with staffing shortages, short tempers, and an impatient public. When my turn came, they were incredibly gracious toward me, thanking me profusely for forfeiting my place in line, being more used to people guarding their place in line. I told them trading places with the man in pain was an opportunity to do a good deed and such opportunities, for people of faith, should never be missed. My job wasn't done though, and I thanked them on behalf of the Masonic community for their service during COVID, and for their selfless sacrifice. I thanked them for their courage and for facing their own fears. I encouraged them to be strong in each other and stay strong as a department. They were pumped and they showed their appreciation and I left feeling grateful for the faith and hope that comes from following the spirit and the power released by a simple act of charity. May we always be reminded never to underestimate the simplest act of kindness and never fail to give glory to God always staying humble.

Stay strong in the Spirit SK 's

Rev. Phillip R Winders
Associate Grand Prelate



SK Kenneth Shaw receiving the Order of Merit
at United Commandery No. 21



Fraternal Visit with the Sir Knights of
Bay State Commandery No. 38



Illustrious Order of the Red Cross at South Shore Commandery No. 31



Companion and Sir Knight Jeffrey Arnold receiving the Benjamin Hurd Medal from the Most Excellent Grand High Priest, ME Ernest A. Bean at joint meeting of Tabernacle Royal Arch Chapter and Beauseant-Palestine Commandery No. 10