



Digital Missouri Message

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God's Love Springs Eternal!

GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights,

I would like to share a story with you that I read in Brother Douglas Reece's book "Lessons from the Craft". By the way, the book is available on Amazon and it is wonderful! This story that I am going to relate to you shaped how I approached a particular challenge this year. The story is from a chapter in the book called "The Wooden Bowl."

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl! When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

This story deeply impacted how I decided to approach one of the challenges we faced this year and I hope it will change your perspective ever so slightly when you get upset at a check not getting deposited in a timely manner or encounter administrative delays.

I would like to personally apologize to all Knights Templar impacted by these issues. A special thanks goes out to the York Rite Leadership Team for taking all the barbs and arrows from the membership. Your patience has been extraordinary. I would also like to thank my small army of Sir Knights who have increased their workload in an effort to help cover the gaps that have developed in the performance of duties.

A year or so ago I was jokingly telling Past Grand Commander Charles Cooper that it occasionally feels like we eat our own when they start to fail. I did not realize at the time how difficult a task it would be to keep that statement from becoming fact.

Dei Gratia - By the Grace of God!

Sir Knight Michael C. Rohman, Grand Commander

GOD'S LOVE WILL SPRING FORTH

The faith and hope of God's people was low during their Babylonian captivity and they needed constant assurances that their situation would eventually turn around. These assurances are repeated throughout the book of Isaiah using different word pictures to describe God's love for them. He assures them in many ways that He will find a way to break the power of the oppressors over them, but they had a hard time believing it.

They were reminded of the great things God did for their forefathers when He brought them out of Egypt. Although this generation was in a different situation, the Lord made a way through the wilderness as well as a way through the Red Sea. That same power of God can make a way through our adversity as well. However, sometimes we are able to believe that God can do some things, but that He can't or won't do other things in our lives. We don't see how he can possibly help with our problems. It is important to look to the past and realize that God was able to handle the big problems as well as the little ones. We need to realize that He can handle the hard situations as well as the easy ones. His Word is true and he knows how to handle our troubles. We may think that we can never get out of our situation, but God can help us to help ourselves. He has authority to make good on His promises and we can see that He has kept His promises in the past.

The spring of the year brings the rebirth of nature and a new beginning. The flowers break through the ground with colorful blooms to come forth after the drabness of winter. Our spiritual life is renewed and what God can do in our life shall spring forth, too. Once God begins to answer our prayers, the results can happen very quickly. What the Lord does now will not be inferior in any way to what He has done in the past.

We need to open our hearts to God's work in our lives. We need to thank Him in advance for doing new things in our life and watch for new miracles to spring forth and burst out in this season.

JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT MAY?

In the Northern Temperate Zone, May is one of the most beautiful months of the year. The snow and ice of winter are usually gone, but the hot temperatures of the Summer season haven't arrived. The first gardens begin to sprout in May. Wild flowers, such as forsythia, dogwood, and violets, are blooming. The trees are leafing out. And the grass has turned green.

Here are some little facts about this third and last month of the Spring season.

The month of May was named for the Greek goddess of fertility, Maia. The Romans called the month Maius. The name is related to a Latin word that means increase or growth. The name changed over the years and it was first called May in the 1400s near the end of the Middle Ages.

According to the early Roman calendar, May was the third month. Later, the ancient Romans used January 1st for the beginning of their year, and May became the fifth month. In any given year, no month ever begins or ends on the same day of the week as May does.

Lewis and Clark began their epic trip up the Missouri River on May 14, 1804. Most Worshipful Brother, Companion, and Sir Knight Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States, and a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, was born in Lamar, Missouri on May 8, 1884. Memorial Day or Decoration Day is observed in the United States on the last Monday in May. It was first observed in 1866. It is a legal holiday and is observed in memory of those who died while serving the United States in war.

Mother's Day is celebrated in honor of Mothers on the second Sunday of May. It was first observed in 1908. It was originally designated by Presidential proclamation, but was recognized officially by Congress and the President in 1914. The U.S. began the first regular airmail service on May 15, 1918. May 15th is also National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day!

OF MEMBERS AND MOTIVATION

"My Commandery doesn't do anything, so I don't waste my time going any- more!" Have you ever heard this from a fellow Sir Knight? I have. Have you ever said it yourself? I haven't, but I have thought it more than once in my Masonic career. I have entertained the thought of walking away from Masonry and never looking back. Not that I have any intent of actually walking away from any of the people with whom I share my life or the activities that are my life. I use it as a coping strategy when life seems overwhelming. It's fun to fantasize about leaving all of the stress, work, obligations, and relationships behind and starting a new life somewhere else. Of course, that new, better, imaginary life will be perfect in every way.

However, in the real world life is not perfect and can never be so. We can strive to make it better, but only if we participate in living. By the same token, your Commandery and your Templary experience, in general your Masonic way of life, requires your participation.

"Someone needs to do something or we are going to lose our Commandery!" Again, have you ever heard this statement from a fellow Sir Knight? I have. Have you ever said it yourself? I have and about my own Commandery. I said it several years ago. Unfortunately, in spite of the best efforts of many Sir Knights, we are still struggling, but we are not ready to give up by any means.

There is no cookie cutter solution or formula for saving a Commandery. A Commandery is not an object that can be tested, analyzed, diagnosed, and repaired. It is a collection of Sir Knights, of individuals working together in a common cause, and each Commandery has a dynamic character unique to that collection. We can discuss possible ways of creating motivation. We can describe the potential solution sets in terms of emotional states. We can illustrate the challenges with wise quotations from iconic, historical individuals with whom we can all relate. But in the end, I would hope that we would all come to the realization that what is required to save our Commanderies lies within each of us.

THE GOOD LIFE

We receive a never-ending litany of messages about how to live well, many of them contradictory, and all of it somewhat overwhelming. And in the midst of this advice overload, mental health issues soar, debt skyrockets, and we are left with the bewildered wondering, "What does it mean, really, to live a good life?"

The Teacher who narrates the book of Ecclesiastes is famous for saying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" The word "vanity" means "vapor" or "breath." Read this way, the Teacher of Ecclesiastes appears to suggest that we should eat and drink and be joyful, making sure we've got good drink and a good life partner. You're going to die, and so is everyone else, so live it up now.

And then in the book of Mark, we have Jesus whose advice for a rich man who comes to him asking how to inherit eternal life is to sell everything that he owns and give the money to the poor. Sell the nice clean clothes and the fine wine suggested by the Wise Teacher of Ecclesiastes, give it all away, and then you'll live a good life. The man goes away sad. Perhaps we would have, too.

There is no law against love, against joy, or against peace. All we have is the daily, often mundane work of living life, in all its complexity and challenge. Sometimes, we will do something that we think is loving, and end up hurting someone. And then, we will have to go back to our life's drawing board, and start over. To take a deep breath, and remind ourselves of compassion and grace. And it will be difficult. And there is no easy way out. Nothing to do other than to turn to God in prayer, and turn back to our life and try again.