

The United Religious, Military, and Masonic Order of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta of England and Wales and its Provinces Overseas

by **Eminent Knight Stephen W. Gorman**
Past Provincial 2nd Grand Constable of
the Provincial Priory of North and East Yorkshire

The earliest reference to Masonic Knights Templar in England was in 1777. At that time, they worked under the authority of Royal Arch Chapters as appendant degrees. In 1791, a Grand Conclave which is now known as Great Priory was formed comprising seven appendant "Encampments" with Thomas Dunkerly as Grand Master. Now we have almost 600 Preceptories (what we call our Commanderies) listed with Great Priory.

In England our ceremonies differ from the United States in many ways. The most obvious difference is that a candidate first becomes a Knight Templar, and only then can he receive the culmination of the degree, which is to become a Knight of Malta.

A candidate for Knighthood must declare a belief in the Holy Trinity and is first received in the guardhouse as a Royal Arch Mason where he gives the signs of a Royal Arch Companion. He is then given an address called the "Anterior Address" before being prepared and clothed as a Pilgrim. The Anterior Address is as follows:

"Worthy Companion, your zeal for Freemasonry having prompted you to seek an introduction to this Order, I deem it my duty first to give you some account of the nature of our mysteries.

When you were initiated into Masonry, you were taught that its principles were based on the exercise of brotherly love, relief, and truth, conveyed under the symbols of the tools and materials used in operative masonry. As a Fellowcraft and as a Master Mason, the history of the building and completion of the Temple at Jerusalem by King Solomon was dilated upon, and the historical traditions of our Brotherhood were impressed upon you.

The temple being completed, the period of your probation you underwent represented to you its existence. When in the Royal Arch you were taught the history of its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. During the ceremony of your exaltation, you figuratively commenced the erection of a new temple, which by the permission of King Cyrus, the three Principles of the Jewish Sanhedrin were enabled to complete.

This temple was, in its turn, destroyed by Titus, as recorded by Josephus and other ancient writers, but not before the coming of the Blessed Redeemer, who built a new temple more glorious than the preceding one, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. The object of this Order is to represent the process by which the old virtues of brotherly love, relief, and truth, become consummated in the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The Hebrew coloring under which the Craft has previously been represented to your view, now gives way to the clearer light of Christian revelation.

This then is what, as a Knight Templar, you will be required to contemplate, viz: - the progress of the religion of the human race from its earliest institution through the successive steps of the Craft to the perfect ashlar, the good Christian. But let me inform you that as the symbols we use are of a far more sacred character than those of the degrees through which you have already passed, so we expect a corresponding degree of respect and reverence for the holy subject we contemplate, and we hope and trust that this order may be esteemed by you, as by others, as an emblem of that religious life which the laws of God and our country render incumbent upon every man who believes in the great truths of the Christian faith. I now demand of you whether you are willing to undergo the ceremony of being installed as a Knight. Candidate answers 'I am.'

The Marshal will now conduct you to the preparation room where you will be properly prepared for your pilgrimage."

We have only four meetings of Knights Templar per year, one of which is the installation of the Eminent Preceptor. In January we hold our one and only Malta Degree.

All Knights Templar who have been Installed during the year are now Installed as a Knight of Malta in a completely separate and unique ceremony.

After a small passing degree known as Knight of St. Paul, or the Mediterranean Pass, which is conferred in a room outside the Priory, the Knight is admitted to the Priory and is installed as a Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta, a degree of Christian knighthood which recounts the history of the Knights of Malta and their long struggle against the infidel.

This ceremony of installation is in addition to installing the incumbent Eminent Prior into the chair. In effect, there are two separate ceremonies of installation, one for a Knight Templar and one for a Knight of Malta. This is also true for the incumbent Preceptor-Prior of the Preceptory as he is installed into two distinct chairs of office.

Below are listed the ranks of officers in the Preceptory and the Priory of Malta:

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Below are listed the ranks of officers in the Preceptory and the Priory of Malta:

Templar Degree

Eminent Preceptor

1st Constable

2nd Constable

Chaplain

Treasurer

Registrar

Marshal

Deputy Marshal

Almoner

1st Herald
2nd Herald
Standard Bearer
Standard Bearer
Captain of Guards
Guard

Malta Degree

Eminent Prior
Captain General
Lieutenant General
Chaplain
1st Lieutenant
2nd Lieutenant
Mareschal
Deputy Mareschal
Hospitaller
Admiral
Baillie
Beauceant Turcopolier
Vexillum Belii Chancellor
Captain of Outposts
Guard

In addition, every Preceptory-Priory has an Organist as the singing of hymns to accompany the candidate during the ceremony is an integral part of the proceedings.

Our prayers during any meeting are usually done in Latin in my own province of North & East Yorkshire which also adds to the solemnity of the ritual.

At the end of every meeting we are reminded of the precepts of being a Knight Templar by the Chaplain, which are as follows:

The Precepts of a Knight Templar:

"Love, honor, and fear God; walk after His commandments. Maintain and defend the Christian faith and the honour, dignity, and interests of our Order. Be loyal to your Sovereign, dutiful to the Grand Master, and obedient to those who rule over you. Prefer honor to wealth. Be just and true in word and deed. Give no willing offence to any; but while opposing wrong and injustice, deport yourself courteously and gently. Eschew all debasing employment, recreation, and company; abhor pride and selfishness, and so raise the standard of chivalrous honour, striving for the welfare of your Brethren."

As Knights Templar we are also encouraged to remember our Brother Knights on Christmas Day by saying the following prayer when we sit down to our meal:

"Preserve O Lord our Brother Knights, by land and sea and air. And as we hold them in our thoughts, so keep them in Thy care."

I hope I have been able to give a small insight in this short article into some of the differences between the ceremonies in our two countries. If any Knight has any specific questions, I would be only too happy to discuss them by e-mail.

Eminent Knight Stephen William Gorman has moved to the United States and is now a member of St. Johns Commandery No. 8 in Oklahoma. He can be contacted at stevegorman07111953@yahoo.com

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