

What Does Templary Stand For?

(A report of the Grand Encampment Membership Committee from years past)

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Few Masons who are not Knights Templar have any idea of the intimate connection between our noble orders of knighthood and the Christian religion itself. They may have been told that our order evolved into and is Christian Masonry, but unless we educate ourselves as to the true meaning of our order and its connection with our Blessed Emmanuel, we will seldom convince a Masonic neophyte that his Masonic education has only begun.

He has no idea what Templary stands for. Its culmination in the Masonic story began on the ground floor of King Solomon's temple and has left him with unanswered questions about a substitute. He has no idea that the Masonic story parallels the story of the Bible which tells of a people who sought God but continually fell short of perfection in God's way. God then set His Son in the middle of them to give them a living, breathing example of His way of life. As the Old Testament prepared the way and set the stage for the coming of Jesus and the New Testament, so Ancient Craft Masonry sets the stage and prepares the way for the orders of Christian knighthood.

It is probable that we have not educated our own Knights in the connection with Masonry; that the Masonic story is not complete until you have received the Christian orders. Without the knowledge of the connection, it is difficult for any Knight to be an enthusiastic salesman for our order. This enthusiasm is the secret to the success of recruiting and retaining members as Knights Templar.

Having then recognized the importance of the Masonic story, what do we as sworn defenders of Christianity have that sets us apart as servants of our Savior? What is Templary? In our estimation, Templar Masonry stands for the highest ideals of Christianity. It represents the best and noblest in humanity. It encourages right thinking and right living. It reveals Christianity in action. The world needs Templary, because it is a positive spiritual force for good.

If you are a new recruit or a new Sir Knight, the best way to answer this question is to tell you the story of our allegiance to protect and defend the Christian religion. As we endeavor to explain to you our commitment to commemorate the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Great Captain of our Salvation, be aware of the witness we must display in everyday life for upright and moral precepts in the community in which we live.

We should emulate the goals of our symbolic ancestors, the brave Crusaders of the Middle Ages when Knighthood was in flower. We should also, through our modern peaceful devotion, adhere to the same noble principles for which they fought. The public parades where we proudly march as a mighty host in step with the stirring battle song of "Onward Christian Soldiers," exhibit our support of civic decency and of patriotic

activities. The modern Templar is a Christian gentleman interested in doing his best for mankind, his church, his city, and his country. The lessons and teachings of the order give him a firm foundation upon which to build his life and enhance his association with his fellow men.

As a Master Mason we declare a belief in God. As a Templar Mason we enlist under the banner of Jesus Christ and join an active order founded upon the Christian religion and the daily practice of the Christian virtues. As a Mason we took an obligation on that Great Light which is the guide to happiness and liberty. As a Templar we stood in silence before the most profound and inspiring scene ever presented to man. We pledged our sword and our life to defend those principles which exalt and embellish human life. As a Knight Templar we passed through several sacred ceremonies which deeply impressed us with the true values of life. Our character has been strengthened by several lessons which allow us to wage war against the vanities and deceits of the world.

Our daily life can be exemplified by the principles of the order. Charity, which is another name for love, is exemplified in the life of Christ, the Christ of the cross and sepulcher. We must live up to the teachings of the order. The man who is esteemed in his community is respected and admired for his principles. A very high honor is bestowed upon a man when he is knighted as a Christian warrior who pledges allegiance to the cross and to the flag of our country.

The precious jewel, the passion cross, is our badge when we dedicate ourselves to this order of Christian Knighthood. This cross, when worn proudly upon our uniform or displayed upon our banners, is the emblem of the Templar's faith in the blessed Savior, the Great Captain of our Salvation. This badge represents the shape of the cross upon which Jesus suffered crucifixion. It is also known as the "Cross of Calvary" or the "Latin Cross" and is sometimes placed upon the three steps emblematic of Faith, Hope, and Charity. When we go forth to parade upon the streets of any of our cities led by our banner emblazoned with the blood-red Passion Cross, we are declaring our fidelity to Christ and a firm belief in His teachings. The unfurled United States flag also proclaims our civic duties as American citizens and the deep responsibility we have taken upon ourselves to proclaim our dedication to our republic.

The Sir Knight of today, as well as the Sir Knight of years gone by, realizes that his vows are sacred. The obligations that he has assumed become the basis of a righteous life. Every true Templar feels that he owes something in gratitude for the peace, consolation, and inspiration which have come to him through this order of Christian Knighthood. He has also benefitted from the pleasant companionship and the inspiring, helpful friendships made possible through his Templar association.

Having thus been inspired by these noble attributes of our order, we should be so filled with the enthusiasm of being a part of the great mission of "The support and defense of the Christian religion" that we would want to share this knowledge with all un-knighted Masons who also believe in our Savior, Jesus Christ. We should want to enhance their lives by encouraging them to devote themselves to the ideals and teachings of our Blessed Emmanuel. This, my brothers, is what Templary stands for.

Our mission as Knights Templar is not complete until we have shared this knowledge with every Christian Mason in our acquaintance. We need to create a mighty army which will spread the tenets of Christianity throughout the world.

Editor's Note

Our state supplement Editor for Oklahoma published this in the Oklahoma supplement to the Knight Templar magazine last January. I don't know which Triennial Convocation it was written for, but sometimes things just bear repeating. I thought you might be interested.

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