

Introducing The Commissioned Templar Chaplain Program

by Robert Elsner

"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give." – Matt. 10: 8



In our efforts to improve the fraternity, the Grand Prelates and the elected line have developed a training program for Prelates and Chaplains. Long thought of as simply officers who read a prayer, or pray for the sick, Chaplains and Prelates should be leading officers in all Masonic bodies, but more especially in Commandery.

What is the foundation of our institution? For Templary, it is the Holy Bible. Ask yourself, who should be holding us all accountable in our Lodges or Asylums?

Our Chaplains and Prelates.

To help us all develop and actuate our faith in the world, Chaplains need to be

secure in their own. After taking this training program, we hope that Sir Knights (and any other member of the fraternity, including our ladies and youth organizations who opt to take the course), will emerge as leaders who exemplify servant leadership and service.

Chaplaincy is a ministry of presence, and simply being there for people in real and meaningful ways at the difficult times in their lives is the core of what a Chaplain is supposed to do. This program is designed to help members dedicated enough to serve the Craft and God to be more effective in their positions.

Before presenting more about the

program and what it is, we need to be sure to say what it is not. This is a commissioning, not an ordination. This does not make a person a trained evangelist nor qualify one to be a Board-Certified Chaplain: pretty much only Seminary and CPE courses can do that. This program will not shove a trinitarian view of Christianity down people's throats, but there is certainly grounding in what trinitarian Christianity really is.

The structure of the course is twelve units on the Grand Encampment's official Learning Management System, templared.org. Each self-paced unit requires readings, watching short videos made by our team of Chaplains, quizzes on the materials in the readings and lectures, and then short projects devised to immediately impact the lives of members of the organization. These projects are going to be archived and made available for other Lodges and Commanderies to use to help them as well. The units assume no prior training and even provide help with the mechanics of speech that so few of us are taught nowadays.

The textbook, *On Being a Masonic Chaplain*, was written for this course and edited by more than twenty experienced Chaplains from the Grand Encampment. The proceeds of this book are going to help the Knight Templar Eye Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage.

The cost of the program is \$75 plus the cost of the textbook (purchased separately). We feel that this is a small price to pay to invest in bettering the fraternity – all to the glory of God.

Upon completion of the program, participants will be awarded a distinctive jewel and certificate of commissioning at a beautiful ceremony.

If you are interested, please visit TemplarEd.org, browse the catalog, and register.

Unit	Topic
1	Course Welcome and Orientation
2	Introduction to Chaplaincy
3	Introduction to Trinitarian Christianity
4	Mechanics of speaking and praying in public
5	Composing prayers
6	Extemporaneous and Situational prayers
7	Practicing the art of listening
8	Leading the flock
9	Ministering in and beyond the Asylum
10	Religious training for the new Sir Knight
11	Chaplain conversations to heal in a broken world
12	Tying it all together

