

Templars of the Plains

A Publication of the Grand Commandery of Kansas

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Gary Mason, REGC 2024-2025

From the Grand Commander

Sir Knight Gary B. Strout, Eminent Grand Senior Warden

The Right Eminent Grand Commander has asked the current Grand Commandery Officers to write articles for this supplement. This month we hear from our Eminent Grand Senior Warden, Gary B. Strout.



Are You Living Your Life According to the Precepts of the Knights Templar and Freemasonry?

As members of the Knights Templar Order of the York Rite, you are part of a rich tradition that traces its lineage back to the medieval Knights Templar and carries forward the moral and spiritual principles that Freemasonry holds dear. The teachings of the Knights Templar and Freemasonry overlap in profound ways, emphasizing honor, faith, service, and brotherhood. While we stand in a modern world far removed from the battlefields of the Crusades, the values of our forebears remain relevant, guiding us in our daily lives. But as Templars and Masons, do we live according to these precepts?

The first and most essential principle of the Knights Templar is faith — a profound devotion to God, the Great Architect of the Universe. As Christian Masons, we are called to live our faith not only in moments of ritual but in the decisions and actions that shape our lives. The original Templars viewed their mission as a sacred one, a physical and spiritual defense of their beliefs. Today, we are not engaged in physical warfare, but the spiritual battles we face — the conflicts between right and wrong, between justice and selfishness — are no less significant. As Knights Templar, how do we show our devotion to God in our daily lives? Are we living as examples of faith, both in word and deed, upholding the sacred principles we vowed to protect?

Courage and discipline are also at the heart of Templar and Masonic tradition. The medieval Templars were known for their unshakable bravery in battle, and we, too, are called to be courageous — but in a different way. Freemasonry and the York Rite teach us the importance of moral courage: the strength to stand by our convictions, to defend the weak, and to uphold justice, even when it is difficult. Discipline in our modern lives might not be about preparing for physical combat, but rather about preparing our minds, bodies, and spirits to act with integrity and resolve. Are we disciplined in our pursuit of Masonic light? Do we face the moral challenges of life with the same steadfastness that the Knights of old brought to the battlefield?

Service to others is a core tenet of both the Templars and Freemasonry. The Knights Templar were protectors of Christian pilgrims, risking their lives to safeguard the innocent. As Masons and modern-day Templars, we are called to a life of service. Freemasonry teaches us that true brotherly love is shown through charity and benevolence. In our Templar vows, we pledge to assist the distressed and defend those in need. But service is not limited to grand gestures. It is found in our everyday actions — supporting a fellow brother, helping those less fortunate, and striving to improve our communities. In what ways are we living up to our Masonic and Templar obligations to serve others?

Honesty and integrity are values that both the Knights Templar and Freemasonry demand of us. The medieval Templars took strict vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, living with unflinching moral integrity. Today, we are asked to hold ourselves to the same high standards. Freemasonry teaches us

that truth is one of the greatest virtues, and as Templars, we are sworn to live lives of honor and righteousness. Are we truthful and transparent in our dealings with others? Are we living with integrity in all areas of our lives, even when it may be inconvenient or challenging? Integrity is not just about outward actions but also about our internal moral compass, guiding us in every decision we make.

Brotherhood and community form the foundation of the Knights Templar and Freemasonry. The medieval Templars relied on one another for survival, and their bonds of brotherhood were unbreakable. As Masons and Templars today, we are part of a vast fraternity bound by the principles of mutual support, respect, and love. Our strength lies in our unity. When one of us is in need, we rally together to provide aid, and when we are strong, we help others to rise with us. In our lodges and commanderies, we forge bonds of friendship and brotherhood that carry us through life's challenges. But do we actively nurture these bonds? Are we contributing to the strength of our Masonic and Templar communities, or are we standing on the sidelines?

Humility and modesty were at the core of the Templar way of life. Though they wielded great power and influence, the Knights Templar lived modestly and humbly, guided by their vows of poverty and service. Freemasonry likewise teaches us the importance of humility. As Masons, we are reminded that no matter how much we achieve, it is not for personal glory but for the greater good. In our Templar vows, we pledge to live not for ourselves but in service to our faith and our fellow man. Do we practice humility in our daily lives, remembering that our successes are gifts to be shared and our actions should be rooted in service rather than pride?

The precepts of the Knights Templar and Freemasonry are not just relics of the past; they are living principles that guide us in our roles as Masons and Templars today. As we reflect on our journey through the York Rite, from the Royal Arch to the Commandery, we must ask ourselves whether we are truly embodying the values that we have sworn to uphold. Are we living lives of faith, courage, service, integrity, brotherhood, and humility?

The ancient Knights Templar may have fought with swords and shields, but today we fight with our actions, our principles, and our commitment to the moral and spiritual growth that Freemasonry teaches. By living according to these precepts, we honor the legacy of the Templars and the values of our beloved fraternity, ensuring that we leave the world better than we found it.

So, as a Knight Templar of the York Rite, are you living your life in alignment with these sacred precepts? The answer lies not just in our words or rituals but in our daily actions and how we choose to serve, lead, and live.

South Central Department Conference

The South Central Department Conference for 2024 was held on Saturday, September 21, 2024, in Tulsa, Oklahoma and was hosted by the Grand Commandery of Oklahoma. The members of Oklahoma did a fantastic job in hosting the event and organizing the meetings for the bodies in attendance.

From Kansas, the Sir Knights who attended included Sir Knight Gary Mason, Right Eminent Grand Commander, Sir Knight Fred Kemp, Very Eminent Deputy Grand Commander, Sir Knight Patrick Carr, Eminent Grand Generalissimo, Sir Knight Justin Crippen, Eminent Grand Captain General, Sir Knight Ivan DeTevis, Eminent Grand Junior Warden, Sir Knight Allan Jackson, Right Eminent Grand Recorder, Sir Knight Andrew Mosley, Grand Sentinel, Kelly Long, Grand Piper, Sir Knight Wayne Rollf, Aide de Camp, and Sir Knights Wayne Rector and John Staton, both Right Eminent Past Grand Commanders.

The Most Eminent Grand Master, Sir Knight David Kussman, Right Eminent Deputy Grand Master, Sir Knight Jeffrey Bolstad, Right Eminent Grand Treasurer, David Studley, Right Eminent Grand Recorder, Lawrence Tucker, Right Eminent South Central Department Commander, Robert Rolseth, and Right Eminent Grand Master's Chief of Staff, Brian Dimateo, were in attendance and provided several excellent programs on membership, the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, ritual development within each jurisdiction, and a special guest presentation by one of the research doctors with the KTEF.