



Pennsylvania Crusader

Since 1948

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
pagrandcommandery.org

S.K. Larry D. Horath, Grand Commander
larryhorath@gmail.com

Editor: SK Mark G. Mattern, PGC email: grandrecgcktpa@gmail.com



March 2025

What does it mean to be a Templar Knight today? Each of us needs to define that for ourselves. However, those who witness us outside the asylum define us by our actions. Historically, the Latin Rule, containing 72 clauses and attributed to Bernard de Clairvaux and Hugues de Payens, outlined and specified the ideal behavior of a Templar Knight. Briefly, knights were expected to exhibit bravery in battle, uphold the values of justice, and protect the weak and innocent. Do we still exhibit these characteristics?

This code of behavior prescribed strict moral conduct at all times, ensuring that Templars acted with integrity and respect toward all. Collectively, this moral code taught one: “To fear God and maintain His Church, to protect the weak and defenseless, to give aid to widows and orphans, to refrain from offending others, to live honorably and not for glory, to fight for the welfare of all, to obey those placed in authority, to guard the honor of fellow knights, at all times to speak the truth, and to respect the honor of women” (Alchin). Let us strive to always live honorably in the service of others according to these principles. Recalling an earlier charge, we are to be diligent, prudent, temperate, and discrete.

Ash Wednesday (March 5th) begins the forty days of the Lenten period leading up to Easter. It marks the start of Lent, a period for people to focus on the act of repentance through fasting and contemplation on their sins. It is a time for self-assessment and repentance for those who regret their sins. In celebration, Grand Encampment’s Easter Sunrise Service is held annually in Alexandria, VA. You are all welcome and encouraged to attend, details of which were sent to your recorder and can be found at usagekt.org.

We celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day on March 17th to honor the Patron Saint of Ireland who went to Ireland in 432CE as a missionary, converting the population to Christianity. He built numerous monasteries, churches, and schools to spread religion. Legend states that Saint Patrick also repelled snakes from Ireland, with some suggesting this may symbolize his efforts to rid the country of pagans and non-believers. Further stories suggest that he used the shamrock to symbolize the Holy Trinity. Therefore, as we celebrate let us keep in mind the Christian aspects and symbolism of this day. Slàinte.

We, Sir Knights, must continuously strive to improve, evolve, and grow. This is our commitment to our Commanderies, our communities, our families, and ourselves. Your contributions to our growth and success remain truly appreciated.

Anniversaries:

Crusade No. 12 – March 5, 1856

Warren No. 63 – March 16, 1885

Yours in Templar Service,



SK Larry D. Horath, Grand Commander

Associate Grand Prelate's Message

Who Am I?

As I pondered what to share this month with you, I kept coming back to things I have heard being said about certain individuals at some of our meetings, I remembered seeing on Facebook folks writing about individuals in our community, I remembered the things I kept seeing on the internet being said about folks, and I remembered being asked “have you heard this about so and so ... ?” Much of what I heard, and saw was not true about these folks who people were talking about. But what was being said, unfortunately, was leading others to form opinions about these people. The thing that bothered me most about this was the people who were doing the talking were supposed to be Christians. We have a name for this type of behavior. Let me tell you about it.

Who am I? I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cruel and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face. To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I'm nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and ruin marriages. I destroy careers and cause heartache and sleepless nights. I wreck churches and separate Christians. I spawn suspicion and generate grief, making innocent people cry on their pillows. Even my name hisses. I am **gossip**.

Now the Bible has a lot to say about this topic and in fact there are at least 43 passages that speak to this deadly sin. The seven deadly sins, by the way, are pride, anger, indifference, envy, greed, lust, and gluttony. The seven deadly sins include nearly every kind of human sin imaginable. But there is a deadly sin that failed to be included in the list of the 7 deadly sins. The 8th deadly sin is gossip.

All the sins of the tongue are deadly. Profanity, insults, lying, negativism, complaints, and criticism are all harmful. Gossip is a particularly deadly sin. Gossip has destroyed more people, tarnished more reputations, broken more friendships, and split more organizations than any sin I'm aware of. Gossip is

quickly told, quickly heard, and quickly spread. Worst of all, gossip is quickly believed. People will confess to theft, adultery, even murder. But no one confesses to gossip.

Now why do I share this topic with you? Well as I mentioned at the beginning this type of behavior is alive and very active among those who call themselves Christians in our community, in our government, in our families, even in our fraternity.

Ephesians 4:29 says, *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”*. Watch your tongue. If your words tear people down rather than building them up, keep quiet. As my grandmother used to tell me, “if you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all, Bobby”

What can we do to help change this kind of behavior? Well, we could begin by subscribing to a simple formula, “THINK” before speaking of any person or subject that is perhaps controversial. If what we are going to say doesn’t pass the following tests, Don’t say it. T--Is it true? H--Is it helpful? I--Is it inspiring? N--Is it necessary? K--Is it kind?

Perhaps Paul put it best when he said, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8). By doing this gossip will be stopped. Let us all strive to use the power of our words for healing.

God’s Blessings,
SK. Rev. Robert A. Witmyer
Associate Grand Prelate

