

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Nebraska

June 2025

Joseph Charbonneau, Grand Commander

Ascension Day

I am sorry to admit that I had never heard of Ascension Day until I became Commander of Mt. Calvary and saw in the Grand Commandery Statutes that it is one of the holidays that we are required to observe. I had to look it up, not that I was unaware of the ascension of Jesus, but that it wasn't anything that we ever focused on or celebrated specifically in my church. I really had not known that it was a specific and marked day on the liturgical calendar.

Ascension Day is celebrated 40 days after Easter, which always falls on Thursday. This year, it happens to fall on May 29, and it marks the day that our Lord, after ministering to his apostles and making several appearances to his disciples, ascended to Heaven. The period between Resurrection and Ascension is marked by many such marvels. Jesus meets disciples on the road to Emmaus, but they don't recognize him, and what is probably the best known of these stories, the encounter with Thomas which we recount and memorialize in the Order of Malta.

Ascension is marked in the Gospel according to Luke 24:50-51 and tradition informs us that this occurred at the Mountain of Olives (Olivet) and Jesus instructed them to wait in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit, which would be 9 days later at what we now celebrate as Pentecost, which marks the day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and many miracles occurred.

These days are days of reflection, celebration and hope. As Knights Templar, there is the assurance of the resurrection, the fulfillment of Christ's promises, hope for the future, and the strength to endure, to confront evil when we see it, to stand in the face of trial, and to be a light of compassion and grace to the world. Remember always, we are Sir Knights of the Temple, and the Lord has indeed blessed us with fellowship and opportunity to serve. As we commemorate this day, I sincerely hope that it provides you an opportunity to deepen your connection to the Lord, to your faith, and to the marvelous brotherhood which through God's grace we have been blessed.