

# Tennessee Knight Templar News

SIR KNIGHT RONALD J. COATES, RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER  
GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE

September A.D. 2025 / A.O. 907

Edited by: Jesse J. Harper, KCT



Murfreesboro Commandery #10 is doing great work in Middle Tennessee bringing in new Sir Knights.

Pictured above left: Conferral of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and the Order of Malta on five in house candidates, along with two candidates from Baldwin Commandery #7 and two candidates from Cumberland Commandery #26. There was a total of 31 Sir Knights in attendance.

Pictured above right: Conferral of the Order of the Temple on two new Sir Knights. There were 28 Sir Knights in attendance for the conferral. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> Order of the Temple conferred by Murfreesboro Commandery this year.

Please be sure to share any photos from your conferrals or events so that they can be publicized.

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If you are aware of any members who are not currently receiving this monthly newsletter, then please have them send an email to Jesse Harper with their name, email address, and Commandery number: [jessharp@comcast.net](mailto:jessharp@comcast.net)

Only about half of our membership is receiving this newsletter on a monthly basis. Assist us in getting this newsletter distributed to every Sir Knight on our rolls.



**From the Right Eminent Grand Commander  
RONALD JASPER COATES  
RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER  
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee**

**September Message from the Grand Commander**



**Andrew Johnson**

Andrew Johnson, the seventeenth President of the United States, was a member of Greeneville Lodge #3, in Greeneville, Tennessee.

He was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1808, to poor but respectable parents. His father lost his life in the effort to save a drowning man, which left the boy an orphan when he was but five years of age. Obligated to help support the family, at the age of ten he was apprenticed to a tailor. He learned to read during his apprenticeship, and although education was not as easy to get in those days as it is now, as a journeyman tailor, he became an earnest student. He was a busy man, always easily approached, never impatient, but ever independent. He did not resent mention of his humble origin, but on the contrary, often spoke of it himself. He married Miss McCardle, whose capacity and devotion worked wonders in his development.

He identified himself with the mechanical classes and won himself their political support, which was a factor in his democratic Jacksonian politics. Johnson was elected to the State Senate in 1841. In 1843, he was elected to Congress and re-elected for ten consecutive years, and in 1857, he was elected to the Senate. In 1862, he was appointed Military Governor Of Tennessee.

A Union man in a secession state, he maintained the letter and intent of the Constitution, urging that the best interests of the commonwealth were served by adhering to the Constitution instead of modifying it to suit the clamor of the public. His course in Congress so displeased the people that his home was assaulted and his slaves confiscated. His sick wife and children were driven into the streets, and his home was turned into a hospital for Confederate soldiers.

Johnson was elected Vice-President in 1864 and inaugurated in March 1865. When President Lincoln was assassinated in April 1865, Johnson became President. The Civil War had ended. It was known that President Lincoln was a lenient, peace-loving man, and it was believed that his feelings toward the Southern states were of the kindest. This knowledge went far towards softening Andrew Johnson toward the men who had burned him in effigy.

His subsequent acts were so lenient, so patriotic, and so free from sectionalism that his political opponents accused him of disloyalty. When we consider who were prominent among his opponents, then a political motive may be suspected. Among them were Thurlow Weed and Thaddeus Stevens, prominent in the anti-Masonic propaganda at the time of the Morgan excitement. Not the least of his accusers was Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who had been so long a power in the Senate and who seemed to feel that the southern states had forfeited all rights, an idea repellent to President Johnson.

When the cornerstone for the Masonic Temple in Washington, DC, was laid at the corner of Ninth and F Streets, a procession was formed and marched up F Street with the Grand Officers being in carriages. The presidential carriage and Andrew Johnson alighted; he took a white apron from his pocket and looked for a place in the line. The Grand Master invited him to a seat in his carriage, but the President replied that his rank was that of a Master and that he would walk with his masters.

After Johnson's term of office expired, he returned to his Tennessee home but was soon elected to the Senate, where he took his seat on March 5, 1875. He fell ill while on a visit to his daughter in Tennessee, where he died in July of the same year.

Respectfully in your service,

Ronald J. Coates  
Right Eminent Grand Commander  
Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

# From the Eminent Grand Prelate

Sir Knight Dickie W. Johnson, PGC

## Prelates Devotion for September

### What Does A Christian Look Like?

Romans 12:20: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

There was an Egyptian tradition of carrying a pan of burning charcoal on one's head as a public act of repentance. Sometimes, when we treat our enemies with kindness, they will become ashamed and change their ways.

In the 12th chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, he tells us how a Christian should look to others. He tells us "to bless and not to curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone with evil. Live at peace with everyone." When we have received the forgiving love of Jesus, we will want others to have it also. When we have experienced God's amazing grace, we will want to pass it on. Paul is also saying that as Christians, we must be willing to forgive others when they have wronged us.

Why would we want to forgive those who have wronged us? Forgiveness may break a cycle of retaliation and lead to mutual reconciliation. Under the old law, the Jewish people usually looked for "an eye for an eye." Jesus taught that we should forgive and turn the other cheek. The best way to get rid of an enemy may be to turn him into a friend. Forgiveness may make your enemy feel ashamed and change his ways. That may be a better explanation of "heaping burning coals on their heads." Even if your enemy never changes, forgiving him will free us!

But remember, forgiveness involves both our actions and our attitudes. What does a Christian look like? Watch their actions and their attitudes. What good does it do if we say we forgive a person and do not mean it? Forgiveness may mean helping others. It may mean lending a hand to someone that is down on their luck. It may mean trying to help heal broken relationships. For sure, it means loving the unlovable! It is always easy to love those who love us back. Loving the unlovable is what Jesus did for us! That is what we call grace.

Grace is undeserved favor. Jesus did not have to die for us, but that was the only way He could free us from our sins. Grace is what verse 20 is talking about. By giving our enemy something to eat or drink, we are not excusing what he has done. It is recognizing him. It is forgiving him and loving him in spite of his sins. Isn't that just what Jesus did for us?

That is grace, amazing grace, grace that is greater than all our sins!

In His Service,

Dickie W. Johnson, PGC

Eminent Grand Prelate

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee

## **Freemasonry and Labor Day**

Robert B. Beam, KCT

Right Eminent Past Grand Commander

The history of Labor Day began with the Labor Movement of the late nineteenth century, which began as a result of the changes in society and economics during the Industrial Revolution. According to the Department of Labor, the day was conceived as a “national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.”

While Labor Day was not created by the Masonic Fraternity, the history of Labor has connections to Freemasonry. Our Fraternity originated in the Guilds of the Middle Ages, which included early craft unions. Those guilds promoted the interests of the members by providing jobs, lodging, and needed assistance, in addition to maintaining production standards and other activities. Historically, Freemasonry evolved from medieval craft and labor unions.

During the later Industrial Revolution, as workers saw the need to band together for their common interest, many of those leaders were Freemasons. Men such as Samuel Gompers and Uriah Stephens were Masons and the Knights of Labor based their rituals on those of Freemasonry. The ideas of social equality and fairness in trade and personal dealings are both found in Masonic teachings as well as being goals of the Labor Movement. The idea of an eight-hour workday can be traced directly to Masonic ritual and teaching.

Labor Day was introduced in 1882, and over the next decade, efforts were made to make it a national holiday. This was done in 1894 when President Grover Cleveland signed legislation establishing the first Monday in September as Labor Day.

Freemasons can take pride in the fact that our Fraternity has been active in promoting the economic prosperity of our nation throughout its history. By promoting the values of hard work, fair dealing, uprightness, and honesty, we have a part in ensuring the strength and productivity of our nation. By promoting social equality and justice, we promote the opportunity for all citizens to share the blessings of liberty and economic prosperity.

### References:

*10 fascinating facts about the Labor Day holiday - National Constitution Center.* (2019). National Constitution Center – Constitutioncenter.Org. <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/10-fascinating-facts-about-the-labor-day-holiday/>

*History of Labor Day|U.S. Department of Labor.* (2018). Dol.Gov. <https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>

*Knights of Labor: An Early Labor Organization.* (n.d.). U-S-History.Com. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://u-s-history.com/pages/h933.html>

## **Christian Knights As Lights In Our Dark World**

By Dr. Howard R. Towne, Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment

Originally printed: *Knight Templar Magazine*, September 1965

No thoughtful person can possibly look out upon our world today and not realize that this is a dark time. This is not because the commentators say so, but they do continually draw attention to the darkness by reporting the rattling of nuclear warheads, the spread of conflict, the wild kids on the beaches, the beatnik, the 300% increase in illegitimacy, the vandals, our enormous crime bill, our 7 million alcoholics and our 395,000 divorces granted in a single year. It is a dark time because the Communists are still dedicated to controlling this world and burying the United States. It is a time of darkness because the Chinese have the atomic bomb.

Ours, however, is not the only era of darkness known to mankind. The Roman world into which Jesus was born was one of history's darkest midnights, filled with the inky blackness of paganism. The dignity of the individual was practically nonexistent. Life was cheap and sordid. As the Man of Galilee matured and began his ministry, he looked out on this dismal setting, with its dark resignation and utter hopelessness, and cried, "I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." On another occasion our great Captain said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Well, recall how that little band of disciples illuminated the dark world of their day. Some of them literally were burned as human torches for their convictions about the Light of the World. No time has ever been darker than the century that followed Christ's coming. The blight of Caesar was upon the face of all things. The terrible persecution of the Christians drove them underground to escape annihilation.

Move on now to the 12th century. That was an era filled with the darkness of man's misdeeds. But the "light-bringers" of that time were the stouthearted Knights of the Temple who went out to rescue and hold Jerusalem against the Infidel and give protection to the poor unarmed Pilgrims traveling from Europe to worship at the Holy Shrine. The world has never witnessed a more unselfish service for Christ than that exemplified by those illustrious Crusaders, filled with the inner glow of the Master. Those devoted Christian Knights established Templary as an institution, resting firmly on a foundation which was secured to the Holy Bible. The light of Christ had broken through and transformed their lives.

The chief mark of a Christian Knight through the years has been that a new light shines in him. He is distinguished from others by a certain illumination of mind. He brings into every human situation the witness of a new spirit, and an influence which is like light shining in the dark. It has been a genuine concern on the part of Templary to carry out Christ's commission, "Ye are the light of the world" that brought the Knight Templar Eye Foundation into being. This wonderful project, national in scope, is one of the world's greatest humanitarian efforts. The foundation files are full of letters from persons brought from darkness to light by this noble work.

However, as marvelous as this project is, every Sir Knight is also challenged to lead the spiritually blind into Christ's marvelous light. It is spiritual blindness today that causes men to reject the Gospel and to look on the preaching of the Cross as foolishness. In the Gospel there is a power which brings a man from darkness to light, from blindness into spiritual sight. Christian Knights working through the Church can know this rewarding experience. They can help the Church in its towering task. The glorious message of Jesus Christ is adequate and relevant today. Let us proclaim it and live it in the main stream of life.

Grand Encampment leaders have long looked at our contemporary scene with grave concern. Ours is the most civilized, the most Christian nation on earth, yet 37 million of our children receive absolutely no religious instruction. How we need to emphasize the light of the Word of God and indicate the part it has played in our American heritage. Knights Templar should strive to see that our religious heritage is taught in the framework of our culture, and endeavor to secure released time or shared time for religious study. What disturbs many today about the Supreme Court's ruling on prayer in public schools, is not the leaving out of prayers, as important as that is, but the leaving out of our heritage. How can our republic be understood apart from the beliefs that produced it?

Because of our concern for the young, which is brought out in our vows, every Commandery needs to promote a plan to combat some of the frightening aspects among our country's youth. The lack of religious instruction is very evident as we witness teen-age morals and the violent things that are done in cities and on certain college campuses. If Russia considers the indoctrination of her youth her most important task, surely our country cannot neglect such a task. Templary needs a closer cooperation with the Christian Youth groups in our country. There needs to be a forward thrust made in the Rainbow Girls, the Job's Daughters and the Order of DeMolay.

Another of the basic tasks of Sir Knights today is an effort to cope with the abnormal behavior and immorality of our country. Will anyone deny that we face a moral crisis in America? Our crime bill is 20 billion dollars a year. Crime is increasing four times faster than our population is increasing. 300,000 are in our juvenile courts each year. Our nation has 7 million alcoholics, 3 and one-half million problem drinkers, affecting 25 million members of families. 8 million persons have been divorced in the last ten years. This is a small indication of our problem. But what is most disturbing is the flouting of the Ten Commandments by respectable people who are not considered lawbreakers by society. Immoral behavior, indecencies and improprieties, which were frowned upon a quarter of a century ago, are now considered acceptable patterns of conduct. How we need to work to lift the level of morality in our country and awaken the American conscience. Charles Kingsley wrote years ago, "The age of chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong left unredressed upon the earth."

In "Charting the Course" our Grand Encampment leaders summoned the whole body of Templary to Christian rededication in this most critical period of national history. We are well aware of the Communistic influence in our country. In Communism we vividly see the alternative to Christian civilization. The gospel of Communism believes there is no God and holds the faith with deadly seriousness. The battle is a battle of ideas. War we do not want, but today we are threatened by a seizure of values. We cannot surrender and must not yield as long as a single Knight is left standing. Communism today provides a mirror in which we can clearly see ourselves, and our own deflections from the Christian faith. Communism provides us with a motive, a rousing challenge, to witness to our Christian faith as never before. Although the world may be dark, the light that shines through Christian Knights can cause people to say once again, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

Most of all, perhaps, it is important to bring light into the Temple itself. How necessary it is to bring a Christian emphasis into every Conclave. It has been suggested that the Prelate, or some Sir Knight selected, bring a brief dynamic message on Christian Templary just before going to the Altar during the full form opening. These should be straight from the shoulder talks on Christian Knighthood. They could do much to increase the attendance of the Sir Knights. Every meeting should bring out the values of Templary, so that the Sir Knights would feel that they were missing something of importance when they were not present. Templary has something to offer that no other organization in the world can give them and they must feel a desire to be present so that they will be enriched by these values.

The light of Knighthood must also extend beyond the Temple. We cannot be true to our vows unless our Christian charity is compassionate and personal. When Masonic charity is intimate and

provides unusual blessing, the Sir Knight performing such acts should be asked to give a written report, not with the idea of publicizing them or seeking praise and approval, but to make evident what is being done and to move other Sir Knights to walk as sons of light and blessing.

When public appearances are planned on special occasions it is important that every Sir Knight be present, to witness before the world in full Templar uniform. Sir Knights in this way can radiate Christ's glory and illumine our dark world.

Robert Louis Stevenson frequently recalled a most memorable night of his boyhood. At dusk, one evening, as he stood at the window watching the darkness moving in on Edinburgh, an old 19<sup>th</sup> century lamplighter made his way down the street, lighting lamp after lamp. "Look," Stevenson cried to his nurse, "Look! there goes a man punching holes in the darkness!" Sir Knights, the militant crisis of this hour calls us to a mission of singular dedication. There must be no sitting back and enjoying the light. We are challenged to be transmitters of the light and the truth and the power of Christ. Christ, the Dynamic of Light and Life, pours into our hearts, however dull and cold, a fiery quickening and splendor. He enables every Christian Knight to be a lightbringer, punching holes in this world's darkness.

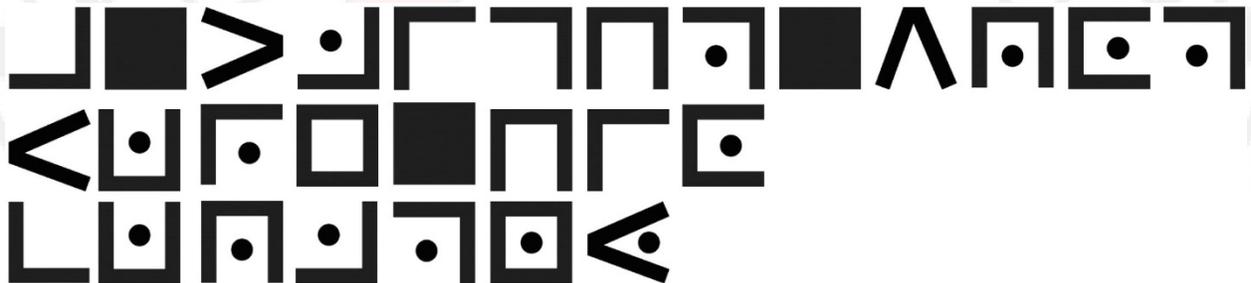
## Upcoming Events

### September

Commandery Inspections-  
Full List on Page 9

Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup> -  
Appalachia Commandery #45  
Order of the Temple  
Meal at 6 PM  
Conferral to Follow

## Something to Decipher



## 2025 COMMANDERY INSPECTION SCHEDULE

Below is the schedule for Commandery Inspections. Meals begin one hour before Inspection time (12:00 PM and 6:00 PM) For more information, contact your Recorder.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>		<b>Commandery</b>	<b>Location</b>
Sat., Sept. 6	1:00 PM	CT	Southwest No. 31	Memphis
	7:00 PM	CT	Phillip Lacy No. 46	Selmer
Sat., Sept. 13	1:00 PM	ET	Greeneville No. 43	Greeneville
Fri., Sept. 19	7:00 PM	CT	West TN Regional No. 13	Jackson
Sat., Sept. 20	1:00 PM	CT	Paris No. 16	Paris
	7:00 PM	CT	Clarksville No. 8	Clarksville
Thurs., Sept. 25	7:00 PM	ET	Appalachia No. 45	Knoxville
Fri., Sept. 26	7:00 PM	ET	Cyprus No. 23	Maryville
Sat., Sept. 27	1:00 PM	ET	Chevalier No. 21	Oak Ridge
	7:00 PM	ET	Coeur de Lion No. 9	Oak Ridge
Fri., Oct. 3	7:00 PM	CT	Cumberland No. 26	Cookeville
Sat., Oct. 4	1:00 PM	CT	Baldwin No. 7	Lebanon
	7:00 PM	CT	DePayens No. 11	Franklin
Fri., Oct. 10	7:00 PM	ET	Watauga No. 25	Johnson City
Sat., Oct. 11	1:00 PM	ET	St. Omer No. 19	Bristol
	7:00 PM	ET	Kingsport No. 33	Kingsport
Fri., Oct. 17	7:00 PM	ET	Carter No. 37	Elizabethton
Sat., Oct. 18	1:00 PM	ET	Cyrene No. 34	Dayton
	7:00 PM	ET	Lookout No. 14	Chattanooga
Sat., Oct. 25	1:00 PM	CT	Manchester No. 40	Manchester
	7:00 PM	CT	Murfreesboro No. 10	Murfreesboro
Sat., Nov. 1	1:00 PM	CT	Nashville No. 1	Nashville
	7:00 PM	CT	Dickson No. 41	Dickson

\*\*\*Please refer to the Grand York Rite Calendar for the most up-to-date information\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*The address for each Inspection is listed on the Grand York Rite Calendar\*\*\*

<http://www.tngrandyorkrite.org/calendar>



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## **MISSION**

The mission of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Tennessee is to provide every Christian Freemason in Tennessee the opportunity and resources to develop, be engaged in, and exemplify a Christian chivalric lifestyle.

## **THE VISION OF THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF TENNESSEE**

The Knights of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee are a group of men who share the Christian faith, exemplary character, a dedication to excellence and the service of others, and a desire to share the chivalric experience with other Christian Freemasons. Our Knights are actively engaged with one another in accomplishing this goal and in maintaining this standard of lifestyle and behavior.

## **Request for Submissions!**

Sir Knights – We need submissions for the Tennessee Knight Templar News. Is your Commandery going to confer any of the orders soon? Did you have some sort of unusual or fun event? Send us an article to share with the other Tennessee Knights and include photos if you have them.

We would also like to have your thoughts and ideas about how we can make Tennessee Templary more fun and exciting. Send us an article!

Please send news and events going on in your Commandery to:

[TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com](mailto:TNKTNewsEditor@gmail.com)