



RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

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SK Joseph Dongo, Grand Commander

****Living as Children of Light: A Charge for the Templar Year****

Each year, the Grand Commandery embarks anew under the guidance of a chosen verse and a noble motto, words that anchor our collective spirit and chart our course forward. This tradition is more than ceremonial; it is covenantal. It binds us as brothers and warriors in the service of the Divine, inviting us to reflect, reorient, and recommit to the holy and knightly ideals we uphold.

For the 2025–2026 term, I have chosen a verse and a motto that call us beyond mere duty and into discipleship. These are not passive meditations; they are active commissions. They summon us to step fully into our calling, not only as Masons, not only as Knights, but as **Children of Light**.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”

Ephesians 5:8

“You are the light of the world.”

Matthew 5:14

From Darkness to Light: The Masonic and Christian Mandate

The journey “from darkness to light” lies at the very heart of Masonic thought. It is more than a ritual motif, it is the soul’s awakening to truth, moral clarity, and divine purpose. In our Craft degrees, this represents the emergence from ignorance into understanding. But for the Knights Templar, the symbolism takes on a deeper, spiritual gravity: a pilgrimage from sin to sanctity, from bondage to freedom, from self to service.

To live “as children of light” means not merely to possess illumination, but to become instruments of light in a dark and weary world. Christ’s affirmation: *“You are the light of the world”* is not a poetic abstraction. It is a command. It entrusts His radiant truth to us. And we, as Templars, are duty-bound to carry that light with clarity, courage, and compassion.

We do not shine for our own glory. We shine that others might see the path to hope.

A Knightly Prayer and Daily Rule

Alongside this verse, I have chosen a motto, a prayer of practical devotion and spiritual discipline:

*“Pray to have eyes that see the best in people,
A heart that forgives the worst,
A mind that forgets the bad,
And a soul that never loses faith in God.”*

This prayer-form motto reflects not just noble sentiment but knightly action. It outlines the daily interior work required of those who would bear the Cross and the Crown. These are not traits acquired overnight; they are cultivated in silence, tested in adversity, and revealed in how we treat the least among us. It is not enough to wield a sword; one must temper it with mercy. Not enough to stand firm; one must be impartial. Not enough to

endure; one must do so in faith. This motto beautifully aligns with the triune essence of our knightly creed:

- **Eyes that see the best in people** affirm the Templar virtue of **Justice Impartial**, an unprejudiced discernment that looks beyond fault to potential, that listens before it judges.
- **A heart that forgives the worst** reflects **Mercy Unrestrained**, the capacity to extend grace even when the world deems it undeserved.
- **A mind that forgets the bad** embodies **Fortitude Undaunted**, a strength not held in vengeance or bitterness, but in holy resilience.
- And a **soul that never loses faith in God** is the eternal wellspring from which all three virtues flow.

These qualities are more than ideals. They are the strategy of a spiritual warrior.

The Strategy of Light

Our Grand Commandery's strategic plan is not only administrative, but also aspirational. We aim to reverse decline not merely by recruitment but by renewal. We will grow only to the extent that we shine. Programs and plans must rest upon purpose and passion. And our purpose is found in Christ, our passion drawn from the fire of the Great Light.

To that end, this year's verse and motto are not decorative, they are directional. They are our compass. Whether we are in full regalia or our daily attire, they remind us of who we are and why we serve.

As Masons, we are seekers of light.
As Knights, we are bearers of it.
As Templars, we are warriors for it.

Let this year be marked not just by events and meetings, but by transformation of our Commanderies, our communities, and our character. Let the world know us not by our titles but by our testimony. Let us speak kindly, serve boldly, and lead with the quiet authority of men who walk in the Light of the Lord.

So, I charge you, Sir Knights: **Live as Children of Light.**

To let justice be blind to ego, to meet trials with holy fortitude, and to offer mercy where the world withholds it. Let our light not be borrowed, but kindled anew from the flame of Scripture, Masonic insight, and sacred tradition.

Let our sword be truth, our shield be faith, and our banner be love.

For when we walk as Children of Light, we honor the One who called us out of darkness, and we fulfill the ancient mission of the Temple, to heal, to protect, and to illuminate.

And in all things, may Christ be seen in us.

In the Bonds of the Order!

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Grand Commander

