



RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWS

Sir Knight
JOSEPH DONGO, KYGCH, KTCH, KCT
Grand Commander

**** A Season of Gratitude: Faith in Action and Light Renewed****

Sir Knights,

November is the sacred pause between harvest and Advent - a time when the fruits of our labor are gathered, and our hearts turn toward gratitude. It is the month when we remember that thanksgiving is not a date on the calendar but a discipline of the soul.

It is the time to look back upon what God has wrought through our hands, and to look forward with faith toward the Light that is to come.

As the Apostle reminds us:

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” - *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

Gratitude, like light, multiplies when it is shared. It transforms duty into joy and leadership into service. For the Knight Templar, thanksgiving is more than sentiment - it is the armor of the soul. It shields the heart from pride and fills it with praise.

A Harvest of Light - Forty-Eight Newly Knighted Sir Knights

In October, in proud partnership with the **East Bay York Rite Association**, we completed the crowning Chivalric Orders and welcomed **forty-eight newly knighted Sir Knights** into the ranks of California Commandery.

What a powerful testament to unity and devotion! This momentous occasion was more than a ceremonial triumph - it was a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to faith, service, and the enduring values of Christian knighthood.

To all who labored to make this day a success: your dedication speaks louder than words. We know you by your works, and we are grateful. And to our newly invested Sir Knights, welcome. May your journey ahead be one of devotion, humility, and noble purpose. May you wear the mantle of knighthood with courage and compassion, and may your life reflect the light of the Order that now claims you as its own.

Faith Made Visible - The Knights Templar Eye Foundation

Our collective gratitude this season is especially deep for the progress we are witnessing in our **Knights Templar Eye Foundation (KTEF)** campaign.

I am delighted to report that **Sacramento Commandery No. 2** and **Palo Alto Commandery No. 46** have both achieved **100% Lifetime Sponsorship**, joining fifteen other Commanderies that have already reached this noble milestone. That brings us to **17 of 30 Commanderies** - more than halfway to our statewide goal!

Each of these Commanderies has demonstrated that philanthropy is not a sideline of Templary - it is its heartbeat. Let us continue working until every Commandery in California proudly bears the title of **100% Lifetime Sponsor**.

Our faith is also being made visible through direct engagement with the very researchers whose work our donations make

possible. During my recent visitations to the **University of California, San Francisco** and the **Stanford University School of Medicine**, I met the scientists who are turning our generosity into miracles of sight.

At UCSF, we met

- **Dr. Yao Tong**, *Postdoctoral Research Fellow* and recipient of the **2025 Career Starter Grant**, and
- **Dr. Aparna Lakkaraju**, *Principal Investigator in the Department of Ophthalmology*, whose pioneering research investigates *mitochondrial dysfunction in the retinal pigment epithelium in Stargardt inherited macular degeneration*.

At **Stanford University**, we were welcomed by

- **Dr. Aniket Ramshekar**, *2025 Career Starter Grant Recipient*,
- **Dr. Mary Elizabeth Hartnett**, *Director of Pediatric Retina and Professor of Ophthalmology*, and
- **Dr. Jeffrey Goldberg**, *Chair of Ophthalmology*, whose study focuses on *VEGFR2-mediated signaling in retinal ganglion cells in a model of retinopathy of prematurity*.

These brilliant minds represent the living fruit of our charity. Their dedication affirms our credo:

“To ensure that every child has the chance to see the beauty of God’s creation.”

Through the Eye Foundation, our faith touches lives far beyond our halls - transforming science into service, compassion into healing, and vision into hope.

Unity in Brotherhood - Department 1 Festival and Prince Hall Partnership

This season also saw a beautiful example of cooperation and chivalric unity in **Department 1**, which completed its **Orders Festival in San Bernardino** in partnership with the **Pacific Prince Hall Grand Commandery**.

Together, **nine new Sir Knights were knighted**, including **two Prince Hall candidates** - a visible testimony that Templary’s light shines brightest when shared in brotherhood. We were honored by the presence of **Right Eminent Grand Commander Raul Randle**, whose participation symbolized our commitment to deepening fellowship between our Grand Commanderies.

Our goal remains clear: to strengthen our fraternal bonds with Prince Hall Sir Knights, working hand-in-hand in service to Christ, our communities, and our shared mission of chivalric renewal.

Pilgrimage of Faith - The Colorado River Fall Festival

Last month, I also journeyed to the **Colorado River Fall Festival**, where I had the privilege to serve as **Commander in the Order of the Temple**, conferred by **Los Angeles Commandery No. 9**, for **twenty-nine candidates**.

The Festival, a long-standing tradition of York Rite fellowship, is a living river of unity and devotion, joining Knights from across the western states. Like Colorado itself, it flows through arid places, bringing life wherever it passes.

When we gather in one accord - California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and beyond - we demonstrate the strength of our unity and the vitality of our faith. These collaborative festivals exemplify the **Strategic Plan’s goal of Leadership Development** and Interjurisdictional Partnership, building bridges of light across every border and bond and proving that the York Rite family thrives when we labor together in one spirit and one purpose.

Gratitude as Stewardship - Living “Non Nobis Domine”

True gratitude must lead to stewardship - of faith, fraternity, and the future.

I give thanks to the Commanderies who are leading the way in **Restoration**, reaching out to bring our suspended and demitted members home again. I give thanks to every Sir Knight whose generosity supports the **Eye Foundation**, turning compassion into vision. And I give thanks to those who, through service, outreach, and fellowship, have carried our banner of light into their communities.

Gratitude is faith remembered; stewardship is gratitude enacted. Let each Commandery perform one deliberate *Act of*

Thanksgiving this month - whether a service project, a restored brother, or a prayer lifted for another. These are the small flames that together illuminate the whole temple.

The Knight's Charge for November

1. **Thank God daily** for the privilege to serve.
2. **Thank a Brother** for his unseen labor.
3. **Thank your community** through an act of service.

Let every conclave this month open or close with a **Prayer of Thanksgiving**, remembering that all blessings come from the Father of Light. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." - *Matthew 5:16*

Looking Ahead - The Advent of Light

As Thanksgiving closes the harvest, Advent opens the season of hope. Gratitude prepares the heart for the coming of Christ, the true Light of the world. In the coming weeks, we will gather for our **Christmas Observances**, lifting our voices in unity to proclaim: "*You are the light of the world.*" May every Commandery be a sanctuary of gratitude and every Sir Knight a living lamp of faith.

Closing Benediction

"May our hearts remain grateful,
our swords faithful,
and our light unextinguished."



In the Bonds of the Order,



**Joseph Dongo
Right Eminent Grand Commander**