



RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

DECEMBER 2025 NEWS

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

****The Advent of Hope: Light Born in Bethlehem****

Sir Knights,

December arrives clothed in wonder. It is the month when the world grows still, when the breath of winter calls the soul to reflection, and when the Knights Templar turn their hearts toward two sacred duties: **the election of new officers for the 2026 Templar year and the solemn celebration of our Christmas Observances.**

This is a holy season, a season of transition, of thanksgiving, of hope. A season where duty meets devotion, and where our labors are illuminated by the Light of Christ Himself.

As Scripture reminds us: **“The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” - John 1:5**

In these blessed weeks of Advent and Christmas, we remember that the Light we serve is not symbolic, it is living, eternal, and triumphant.

Elections: Choosing the Stewards of Tomorrow

November and December mark the period when every Commandery throughout California selects its officers for the coming year. These elections are more than organizational necessities, they are acts of stewardship. They determine who will carry the banner, who will guard the flame, and who will guide our Commanderies into a future shaped by faith and service.

To those stepping down from office: **thank you for your labor, your sacrifice, and your devotion to the Craft.** Your leadership has added another stone to the edifice of our Order.

To those newly elected: **may you lead with humility, serve with courage, and shine with the light of Christ.** Remember always: authority is given not to exalt oneself, but to lift others.

A Pilgrimage of Fellowship—The Southwest Department Conference

Last month, I had the honor - alongside several leaders of our California Grand Commandery - to attend the **Southwest Department Conference in Las Vegas**, representing the Golden State among our Templar brethren.

There, under the guidance of the **Most Eminent Grand Master, SK David Kussman** and the Grand Officers of the **Grand Encampment**, we received insight into the challenges and opportunities facing Templary worldwide. We heard updates on legislative matters, membership trends, financial stewardship, the Eye Foundation, and the

emerging priorities for the 69th Triennium.

Equally importantly, we engaged in heartfelt, candid exchanges with leaders from across the Department. We shared our victories, our Restoration Program, our march toward 100% Eye Foundation Lifetime Sponsorship, our unity with Prince Hall, and we listened to the stories of our fellow jurisdictions, learning from their trials and triumphs alike.

What became clear is this: **California is not alone in its challenges, nor is it alone in its calling.**

Across Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Hawaii, Knights are striving to strengthen their ranks, refine their leadership, and rekindle the light of Templary in every Commandery.

In those conversations, I was proud of our California delegation.

Proud of your work.

Proud of our momentum.

Proud of our willingness to lead.

The Department Conference reminded me that **Templary thrives when we move together, not as isolated jurisdictions, but as one fellowship, one faith, one light.**

Christmas Observances: Returning to the Manger

December is also our sacred month of **Christmas Observance**, one of the most beautiful traditions in all of Freemasonry.

In these gatherings, we lay aside the rush of the world and kneel - symbolically and spiritually - at the cradle of Bethlehem. We remember that the Infant we adore is the Captain of our Salvation, the Prince of Peace, the Light that darkness cannot extinguish.

Let every Commandery this month become a Bethlehem of its own:
a sanctuary of hope,
a chamber of prayer,
a place where the spirit of chivalry is renewed in the presence of Christ.

May our Observances echo the angelic proclamation:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” - Luke 2:14

Let the hymns rise,
let the candles burn,
let the prayers ascend like incense before the throne of God.

A Charge for the Holy Season

Sir Knights, in this final month of the year, I call upon each of you to perform three acts of devotion:

1. **Renew your vow** to walk as a Child of Light, reflecting Christ in all you do.
2. **Reaffirm your brotherhood** by reaching out to a Sir Knight you have not seen in some time.
3. **Rejoice in the Lord**, for unto us a Savior is born, the true Light of Templary.

Looking Toward a Bright New Year

As we stand on the threshold of 2026, let us go forward with confidence.
Our Strategic Plan is in motion.
Our restoration efforts are bearing fruit.
Our philanthropy is changing lives.
Our partnerships—local, statewide, and interjurisdictional—are stronger than ever.

We step into the new year not in darkness, but in dawn.

Closing Benediction

“May the Star of Bethlehem guide your steps,
May the Peace of Christ guard your hearts,
And may the Light of Templary shine ever brighter through your works.”



In the Bonds of the Order,

**Joseph Dongo
Right Eminent Grand Commander**

