



RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

JANUARY 2026 NEWS

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

**** From the Manger to the Morning Star: Christmas Reflection and a New Year's Charge ****

Sir Knights,

As we enter this sacred season of reflection and renewal, I am reminded of the enduring legacy entrusted to us by the ancient *Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon*. Their steadfast courage, unwavering faith, and devotion to service continue to illuminate our path centuries later. We are heirs to that legacy - not as caretakers of memory alone, but as living witnesses to a faith that must be practiced, proclaimed, and faithfully passed forward.

As a Christian institution, the celebration of Christmas stands among our most sacred obligations. In the Nativity, we behold the mystery at the very heart of our Order: **the Word made flesh**, the true Light entering the world in humility, obedience, and love. Christmas calls us beyond remembrance into recommitment - challenging us to live as men transformed by Christ and resolved to serve others in His name, not only within our Commanderies, but in our homes, churches, and communities.

Since my last message, I have been richly blessed to share in Christmas Observances across our state, each bearing its own witness to the unity of faith and fellowship that defines California Templary. I first joined **Sacramento Commandery No. 2** for a reverent observance that set a solemn and joyful tone for the season. Shortly thereafter, I traveled to the **Masonic Homes in Union City**, where the celebration took on a particularly moving character as Sir Knights from **California Commandery No. 1, San Jose Commandery No. 10, Oakland Commandery No. 11, Palo Alto Commandery No. 47, and Siminoff Commandery No. 80** lifted their voices together. To honor the Nativity in a place devoted to care, dignity, and gratitude was a powerful reminder that our faith finds its truest expression in compassion and service.

The season continued in Yuba City, where I shared a beautiful joint Christmas Observance with **Marysville Commandery No. 7, Nevada City Commandery No. 6, and Auburn Commandery No. 4**. Gathered as one, these Commanderies proclaimed the birth of our Savior in a spirit of harmony and brotherly love - a living testimony that unity strengthens our witness and magnifies our Light.

In the midst of this holy season, I also had the distinct honor of installing the 2026 Officers of **Orange County Commandery No. 36**, joined by the presence and participation of the Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America, Sir Knight David Kussman. This occasion beautifully united the joy of Christ's birth with the continuity of leadership and service that sustains our Order from generation to generation. Leadership succession, faithfully undertaken, is itself an act of stewardship - ensuring that the Light we have received is not

diminished, but strengthened.

Beyond these gatherings, I sought to reach every Commandery in a simple yet meaningful way - by sending a holiday season card celebrating the birth of Christ. It was a modest gesture, but one rooted in a profound truth: whether near or far, large or small, we remain bound together by faith, shared purpose, and brotherly love. Connection matters. Presence matters. And in a membership organization such as ours, these small acts often carry lasting impact.

As this message reaches you between Christmas and the New Year, we stand at a threshold. One year closes; another opens. The New Year invites us to look forward with hope, clarity, and resolve. January will bring numerous installations across our state, each one marking renewed commitments by Sir Knights who have stepped forward to serve. Every installation is more than ceremony - it is a covenant, a public promise to lead with integrity, humility, and faithfulness, not unto ourselves, but unto His glory.

Christmas teaches us humility; the New Year calls us to action. The Christ Child came not crowned in gold but wrapped in swaddling clothes. That is our enduring model of leadership. As we step into the year ahead, may we lead with servant hearts, steady hands, and eyes fixed firmly on the Light. May we live our Strategic Vision as *Faithful Stewards of Chivalry and Community*, ensuring that our faith remains visible, our fellowship strong, and our service impactful.

May the peace of Christ abide with you and your families.

May the New Year bring renewed strength, clarity, and unity to our Commanderies.

And may we go forward together - carrying the Light from the manger into every corner of our lives, our Order, and our world.

Merry Christmas, Sir Knights, and a blessed and purposeful New Year.

In the Bonds of the Order,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Dongo', is written over a faint background illustration of a knight's legs and feet.

Joseph Dongo
Right Eminent Grand Commander