



RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWS

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

**** Walking Together in the Light: From Renewal to Lifeblood ****

Sir Knights,

The year has not begun in quiet reflection, but in decisive motion.

January alone witnessed seven Commandery installations across California - seven moments where vows were renewed, leadership was entrusted, and the ancient charge of Christian knighthood was once again solemnly accepted. Each installation reaffirmed a simple but enduring truth: leadership in our Order is not about position, but responsibility. To be installed is to accept a sacred trust: to lead with conviction, to serve with humility, and to safeguard the Light placed in our care.

These installations did more than mark transitions of office. They set the tone for the year ahead: a year shaped by movement, unity, and purposeful action.

Fellowship Beyond Jurisdictions: Walking Together in the Light

That spirit of unity was vividly on display during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in San Diego, a weekend that reminded us that fellowship, when rooted in faith and shared values, naturally transcends jurisdictional boundaries.

On Saturday evening, I had the honor of installing Eminent Commander Michael Thibodeaux for the ensuing Templar year at San Diego Commandery No. 25, in the presence of Right Eminent Raul Randle, Grand Commander of Prince Hall California, Inc. The evening stood as a compelling witness to mutual respect, Christian knighthood, and our shared commitment to service.

The following day, that same unity moved from the sanctuary into the public square. Together with the Sir Knights of San Diego Commandery No. 25, Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons of California, Inc., District 11, led by the Most Worshipful Robert Eagle Spirit, Sr., we marched proudly in the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade, bearing visible testimony that when Brothers walk together in Light, their message is unmistakable.

From the solemnity of installation to the joy of public service, the MLK weekend affirmed our shared calling: to translate faith into action, unity into witness, and brotherhood into service before the world.

The Lifeblood of Chivalry: A Call That Demands Our Action

With leadership renewed and fellowship strengthened, the question before us is no longer *who we are*, but *what we will do*.

This month, the Grand Commandery of California launches the **Lifeblood of Chivalry Campaign** - a statewide mission to save lives through blood donation, in partnership with the American Red Cross and

Vitalant. This initiative is not symbolic. It is practical. It is immediate. And it requires the active engagement of every Sir Knight.

Let us be clear:

This campaign will succeed only if you act.

In medieval times, a knight shed blood to defend the innocent.

In our time, a knight gives blood to preserve life.

This is not a ceremonial gesture. It is modern chivalry made visible.

Accordingly, I call upon every Sir Knight to take personal ownership of this effort:

- Donate blood personally during this campaign.
- Bring your family members: spouses, adult children, relatives.
- Invite your friends, coworkers, neighbors and fellow congregants to stand with you.
- Promote this effort boldly within your Commandery, your church, and your community.

This is not a campaign for “someone else.”

This is not an initiative to be delegated.

This is your charge, our charge.

Each act of donation stands as a quiet yet powerful testimony that our vows are not confined to ritual spaces. They are fulfilled wherever life is preserved, suffering is eased, and hope is renewed.

We will measure success not merely in units collected or forms submitted, but in lives touched, families sustained, and communities strengthened. Through disciplined participation, transparent reporting, and fraternal encouragement, let California Templary be known as a body that does not merely speak of service, but consistently shows up to deliver it.

Though our swords are symbolic and our armor ceremonial, our capacity to serve remains real, immediate, and transformative.

May this campaign:

- Strengthen the bonds of fellowship within and across our Commanderies,
- Elevate the public witness of Christian Knighthood throughout California, and
- Inspire future generations to see in our Order not only tradition preserved, but compassion actively lived.

Preparing the Way Forward: Leadership in Alignment

As our service reaches outward, our leadership must remain firmly aligned inward.

Later this month, Grand Officers and Past Grand Commanders will gather at the Officers Conference in Burbank to prepare for the Annual Grand Sessions of May 2026. This gathering is an act of stewardship where experience, wisdom, and vision converge to ensure that our momentum is sustained and our mission clearly advanced.

Leadership that plans together stands stronger when it acts together.

A Charge to Every Sir Knight

Sir Knights, the opening of this year has already shown us what is possible when we move as one: leadership renewed, fellowship deepened, and service elevated.

Now, the **Lifblood of Chivalry Campaign** calls us from affirmation to action.

Do not ask whether this matters.

Do not wait for others to lead.

Be the Knight who gives.

Be the Knight who invites.

Be the Knight who acts.

May Almighty God - the Giver and Sustainer of life - bless this work of charity, protect those who give, sustain those who receive, and guide this Grand Commandery as faithful stewards of the sacred trust placed in our hands.

So proclaimed.

So committed.

So carried forth -

in Faith, in Service, and in Chivalry,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph Dongo".

Joseph Dongo
Right Eminent Grand Commander

