



# RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



## Grand Commandery Of Knights Templar Of The State Of California

APRIL 2026 NEWS

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

**\*\* April: Bearing the Light Together \*\***

Sir Knights,

April stands before us as a sacred threshold.

It is the month in which the Christian heart turns more deliberately toward the great mystery at the center of our faith: the triumph of life over death, hope over despair, and light over darkness. It is a season of holy preparation, solemn remembrance, and joyful expectation. For us as Knights Templar, it is also a time to ask whether the light we profess is truly the light we bear - in our conduct, in our leadership, in our fellowship, and in our service.

If the months behind us have shown anything, it is this: our Order is strongest when faith is visible, fellowship is active, and leadership is lived by example.

This Month's Strategic Plan Spotlight: **Leadership by Example**

A thriving Commandery is not built merely by offices filled or meetings held. It is built when leaders embody the spirit they hope to inspire in others. Titles may organize the work, but example gives it life.

That truth has been beautifully reflected in the public activities of recent weeks.

On February 27, I had the distinct honor of attending the Grand Court of California Session of the Order of the Amaranth in Visalia, where I joined Honored Lady Joji Sayo, Grand Royal Matron, and Sir Knight J.D. Hammett, Grand Royal Patron, for an evening marked by dignity, grace, and fraternal warmth. It was a moving reminder that throughout our wider Masonic family, noble virtues such as truth, faith, wisdom, and charity continue to shine through faithful hearts and devoted service. Such occasions strengthen not only relationships, but the moral fabric that binds us together across our appendant bodies.

Then on March 7, in Whittier, the spirit of Templary was on full display at a wonderful Three-Way Reception in Department II, bringing together Whittier St. Johns Commandery No. 51, Golden West Commandery No. 43, and Foothill Commandery No. 63. It was an evening of fellowship, recognition, and visible unity; a reminder that when Commanderies gather in friendship and shared purpose, the bonds of our Order are renewed and strengthened. Fraternity thrives when we come together not only in ceremony, but in mutual encouragement.

That same spirit continued during the weekend of March 21–22 on a beautiful and memorable Southern California tour on this final leg of our Templar term. On Saturday in Escondido, we were warmly received in an unforgettable three-way reception hosted with San Diego Commandery No. 25, Beauseant Commandery No. 81, High Desert Commandery No. 79, and St. Bernard Commandery No. 23. On Sunday, the weekend continued with another gracious and uplifting reception with Santa Monica Bay Commandery No. 61. These gatherings were

more than pleasant events. They were living testimony that the true strength of our Order rests in fellowship, hospitality, shared purpose, and faithful service.

That same spirit of leadership through action is also being expressed through the **Lifeblood of Chivalry** campaign. This effort continues to gain momentum across the state as Commanderies partner with other Masonic bodies and local communities to turn compassion into tangible service. On March 29, San Luis Obispo Commandery No. 27, in partnership with King David Lodge No. 209, will hold a joint blood drive, a meaningful example of fraternal collaboration in service to a cause that truly saves lives. Likewise, St. Bernard Commandery No. 23, teaming up with the Scottish Rite, has another blood drive scheduled for April 11. High Desert Commandery No. 79 is also actively engaged in this noble effort planned for June. In addition, many Sir Knights and individuals across our jurisdiction have already donated multiple times, while others are scheduled to do so in the weeks ahead. These acts may be quiet, but they are powerful. They remind us that chivalry is not only ceremonial; it is sacrificial, practical, and life-giving.

These moments matter.

They matter because they remind us that leadership is not abstract. It is relational. It is seen in the hand extended in welcome, in the effort made to gather the brethren, in the care taken to honor one another, and in the willingness to serve beyond oneself. A healthy future for our Order will not be built only through plans and programs, but through a culture in which leaders at every level model commitment, humility, generosity, and joy.

It is in that same spirit that, on March 24, a General Order was issued establishing the **Knights of the Lamp – Officer Circle of Sight** Commandery Recognition Program. Because the full General Order and announcement letter appear elsewhere in this newsletter, I will be brief here. Suffice it to say that this new recognition is intended to strengthen a culture of officer leadership by example in support of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. Its purpose is simple, visible, and meaningful: to encourage officers to stand together in charitable witness as they lead their Commanderies. In the end, people are far more likely to follow what leadership demonstrates than what leadership merely describes.

And now Easter approaches.

Across our state, constituent Commanderies will soon gather in reverent observance of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These Easter observances are among the most sacred and defining expressions of our Templar identity. They remind us that ours is not merely a historical order, nor simply a fraternal society with Christian symbolism, but a living Christian knighthood grounded in the cross and the empty tomb.

This year, I will also have the privilege of joining other Grand Commanders and the Grand Master at the Grand Encampment Easter Observance Ceremony in Washington, D.C. I look forward to representing California in that solemn and inspiring gathering, even as our own Commanderies across the state lift up their voices and hearts in observance of this holy season. It is a beautiful picture of our Order at every level - local, statewide, and national - united around the central truth of Easter.

So let April be more than a page on the calendar.

Let it be a month of holy preparation.

A month of visible leadership.

A month of faithful observance.

A month of charitable action.

A month in which our fellowship deepens, our witness strengthens, and our hearts are drawn again to the risen Christ.

May every Commandery in California shine with renewed purpose in this sacred season. And may each of us bear the light together with reverence, with courage, and with joy.

**In the Bonds of the Order,**



**Joseph Dongo  
Right Eminent Grand Commander**

