



# RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



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

MAY 2026 NEWS

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

**\*\* From Light Received to Light Entrusted \*\***

Sir Knights,

May 15 stands before us as both a closing and a beginning.

At our Annual Grand Session in Burbank, I will have the honor of placing into worthy hands the mantle that was entrusted to me just one year ago. Such moments are never merely ceremonial. They are sacred. They remind us that leadership in our Order is not possession; it is stewardship. We hold the light for a time... and then we pass it on.

And so, as this final article in this series, I write not to conclude a story, but to reflect on a journey, to give thanks for the labor, and to entrust the future to the hands of faithful Knights who will carry it forward.

### **A Year of Purpose: From Vision to Movement**

When we began this Templar year, we did so with clarity of purpose and unity of direction. We introduced a Strategic Plan grounded in a simple but powerful vision: **“Faithful Stewards of Chivalry and Community.”** That vision was never meant to remain words on a page. It was a call to act, to lead, to serve.

And you answered that call.

We moved from vision to movement.

From intention to execution.

From aspiration to measurable impact.

We affirmed that we are not merely caretakers of tradition; we are builders of the future.

### **What We Proved Together**

If this year has demonstrated anything, it is this: when Knights act with unity and purpose, transformation follows.

### **We Restored the Bonds of Brotherhood**

We faced our membership realities with honesty and resolve. We recognized that behind every inactive name was a story, a relationship, a Brother still within reach. And instead of accepting decline, you chose restoration.

Not perfectly. Not completely. But meaningfully. Because restoration is not about numbers - it is about reconnecting hearts.

### **We Made Chivalry Visible Again**

Through the **Lifeblood of Chivalry Campaign**, we redefined what it means to serve in our time. No longer confined to symbolism, our chivalry became tangible:

- Blood donated
- Lives touched

- Communities served

We proved that the modern Knight does not merely speak of sacrifice; he lives it.

### **We Strengthened the Fabric of Unity**

Across this great state, we witnessed something powerful:

Commanderies working together.

York Rite bodies aligned in purpose.

Partnerships strengthened with Prince Hall and our broader Masonic family.

We stood not as isolated units, but as one Order, moving forward together.

### **And We Reached the Summit**

There are moments in leadership when a goal once set in faith becomes reality through collective will.

This year, we achieved one such moment. Our statewide goal of **100% Life Sponsorship of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, originally set for the 2027 Triennial has been accomplished ahead of time.**

Let that sink in.

Every Commandery.

Every Sir Knight.

Standing together in a unified act of charity.

This is more than a milestone. It is a statement. It declares to the world that California Knights Templar are not defined by intention, but by action. That our philanthropy is not peripheral, it is central to who we are. Most importantly, it affirms that our faith is not theoretical. It is expressed through healing, through compassion, and through the restoration of sight to those in need. This is what it looks like when leadership by example becomes culture.

### **Leadership: The Lesson of the Year**

If I were to distill this year into a single principle, it would be this:

**Leadership is not a title; it is a testimony.**

It is seen in:

- The call you made to a Brother who had drifted away
- The hour you gave to organize a service project
- The example you set without seeking recognition

Programs matter. Plans matter. But culture lived daily through your actions is what gives them life. And this year, you brought that culture to life.

### **Gratitude: The Strength Behind the Work**

No Grand Commander accomplishes anything alone.

To the Grand Officers, your dedication, resilience, and willingness to lead have been the backbone of this year.

To the Past Grand Commanders, you are the living memory and steady counsel of this Order. We stand because you stood.

To every Constituent Commandery, you are where the work truly happens. You are the living heart of California Templary.

To our Ritual Staff, Inspectors, and Adjutants, thank you for your steadfast guardianship of our ritual. Through your discipline and devotion, you ensure that in every Department and every Commandery, our sacred work is practiced, taught, and transmitted with clarity, dignity, and uniformity.

To our partners across the York Rite and beyond, your collaboration has strengthened our light and extended our reach.

And to each Sir Knight, whether you led from the East or served quietly in the ranks, thank you. You are the reason this year mattered.

### **The Passing of the Torch**

Soon, a new Grand Commander will assume this sacred office.  
He will not begin at the starting line. He will begin from strength; because of what you have built.  
The Strategic Plan is not ending; it is continuing.  
The momentum is not fading; it is accelerating.  
The light is not dimming; it is being entrusted.  
Support him. Stand with him. Walk beside him.  
Because the success of this Order has never depended on one man, but on all of us, united in purpose.

### **A Final Charge**

As you move forward, I leave you with this simple call:  
Continue the work.

- Restore one more Brother
- Serve one more community
- Mentor one more future leader
- Give not out of obligation, but out of conviction

Be:

- The Knight who shows up
- The Knight who leads by example
- The Knight who brings others along

Because that is how movements endure.

### **The Enduring Light**

Sir Knights, when I reflect on this year, I do not think first of programs or events.

I think of light.

Light carried into rooms where hope was needed.

Light rekindled in Brothers who returned.

Light reflected in acts of quiet, faithful service.

We are not the source of that light. We are its bearers. And if we have done our work well, that light will continue to shine stronger, farther, and brighter, long after any one term has passed.

**Non Nobis Domine, Non Nobis, Sed Nomini Tuo Da Gloriam.**

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory.*

**In the Bonds of the Order,**



**Joseph Dongo**  
**Right Eminent Grand Commander**