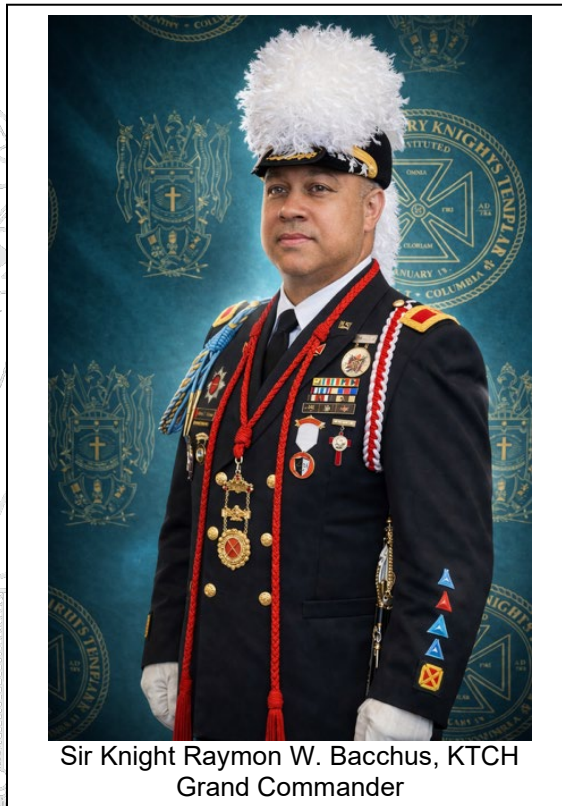


# Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

Monthly Knight Templar Magazine Supplement Message – May 2026  
Editor: Sir Knight Carter L. Diggs, REPGC



Greetings Sir Knights,

With the foundation of our year firmly set in April, May offers us the opportunity to deepen our engagement and refine the momentum we have established. Spring surrounds us with symbols of growth and renewal, reminding us that the seeds planted early in the year must now be cultivated with care, attention, and discipline. In this season of progress, we are reminded that the bonds we seek to build require both intention and sustained effort. This month invites us to reflect upon the virtues that bind us together and guide us forward in our Templar journey.

May presents several civic observances that call for thoughtful reflection. Mother's Day brings to mind the virtues of compassion, guidance, and quiet strength, qualities that shape us into better men and inform our leadership within the Commandery. Memorial Day, solemn and reverent, reminds us of the ultimate sacrifice offered by countless men and women in service to our nation. Their devotion to duty and to the principles of freedom reflects the knightly virtues of courage, loyalty, and selflessness. In honoring them, we are reminded that true leadership is rooted in service.

Eleven Sir Knights from our Jurisdiction attended the Grand Encampment Easter Sunrise Service at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The Grand Encampment has designated this as its official service, and it is my hope that our Jurisdiction will continue to

# Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

increase its support in the years ahead, strengthening both our presence and our shared commitment to this beautiful observance.

On behalf of the Jurisdiction, Washington Commandery No. 1 hosted a meaningful Easter and Ascension Day program, which also included a thoughtful discussion on the significance of Pentecost. Sir Knight Mark E. Wright, Grand Prelate, is to be commended for both developing and delivering an excellent program. The evening was further distinguished by the presence of the Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of the District of Columbia, Most Excellent Companion Mark E. Wright, and the Grand Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons in the District of Columbia, Most Illustrious Companion Michael O. Spencer. Their attendance and active participation served as a clear and visible example of York Rite unity and servant leadership, demonstrating that leadership is most powerful when it is lived in service to others.

Within our Grand Commandery, the work continues with purpose and clarity. Our Grand Officers are undertaking their quarterly outreach to the membership, strengthening communication and ensuring that every Sir Knight is both valued and heard. Their visitations to the Commanderies provide insight into local needs and opportunities, helping guide decisions that support growth and stability throughout the Jurisdiction. This month also marks the beginning of a structured communication initiative that will continue on a bi-monthly basis, bringing together the elected Grand Line Officers and the Commanders of each Constituent Commandery to improve coordination and increase effectiveness. These efforts, carried out with consistency and intention, serve as the practical expression of building bonds across our Commanderies and ensuring that no Sir Knight stands disconnected from the whole.

May is also a significant month across our broader Templar and Masonic communities. Several sister jurisdictions will hold their annual Grand Sessions, and where possible, our presence strengthens the bonds of fraternal respect and mutual support. These engagements reflect a shared commitment to the enduring principles of Templary and to the relationships that sustain it.

As we continue our journey, let us embrace this season with renewed dedication. May our words be measured, our actions deliberate, and our fellowship sincere. Let us lead through service, strengthen the bonds entrusted to our care, and carry forward the spirit of unity and purpose that defines our Valiant and Magnanimous Order. In all that we do, may we remain steadfast in belief, guided by principle, honorable in conduct, resolute in adversity, and generous in spirit.

*With all Knightly Courtesy, sincerely and fraternally yours in friendship and service,*

*Ray*

*Raymon W. Bacchus*

*Grand Commander*

*Direct Line: 1-703-899-8590*

**Motto:** *Dux Servit - A Leader Serves*

**Theme:** *Building Bonds*

**Guide:** *FAITH · VIRTUE · HONOR · COURAGE · CHARITY - A year grounded in Faith, guided by Virtue, lived with Honor, strengthened by Courage, and expressed through Charity.*

# Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

**From: Our Deputy Grand Commander**

Greetings Sir Knights,

As you would have read in last month's supplement, we have elected and installed our dear friend, Brother, and Sir Knight Raymon W. Bacchus to serve as Right Eminent Grand Commander for the ensuing Chivalric year.

With a new Grand Commander comes new energy but that doesn't mean that with every changing of the guard we must "reinvent the wheel." In fact, it is the goal of our Right Eminent Grand Commander that we do the exact opposite! Our Grand Commander has tasked all our grand officers with codifying our best practices and our traditions so that we spend less time asking, "how to best do it" and spend time **doing it**.

This is not just a goal for officers at the Grand Commandery level, but one that all our commanderies can, and should, participate in as well.

So how do we plan to achieve this? Like everything we do in our jurisdiction: **together**. The several committees of the Grand Commandery are having their first meetings of the year and one especially is tasked with taking the minutest of details alongside largest of questions and synthesizing this information for all the Sir Knights to benefit from. Here are some of the topics the committee on Strategic Planning and Implementation will tackle:

- **Documentation and Record-Keeping:** As Freemasonry moves into a digital-first world, the Grand Commandery will look to develop easy-to-file reports that will take the guess work out of formatting and provide a clean document that can be standardized across the jurisdiction.
- **Standardization:** Every new grand presiding officer should be able to enjoy the benefits of leadership, but we want to ensure that processes, form, and ceremonies are being followed to a T. If we all know the form of a ceremony, it makes it easier for each of the Sir Knights to participate. No member should feel "lost" during a meeting of their Grand Commandery.
- **Transition Planning:** With our eyes looking toward the future, we **must** learn as much from those leaders of the past and present. The committee, in consultation with senior grand commandery leadership, will make recommendations on how, what, and who we prepare for the future of our organization.

All of this said, it is important to remember that all of this is in service of our Sir Knights of today AND tomorrow, so please give us your feedback and your thoughts so we can succeed together!

*In His Service,*

*Nicky*

*Nicholas J. Sampogna, KTCH, KCT  
Deputy Grand Commander*

# Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

## From: Our Grand Generalissimo / Grand Commandery Representative to the Knight Templar Eye Foundation

On 10 April 2026, the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of Maryland hosted a landmark collaboration at the Cockeysville Constituting Banquet for the Social Order of the Beauceant. The event featured the Wilmer Pediatric Anterior Segment Team, a distinguished group of specialists whose work in research, education, and clinical care has been advanced through the mission of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation to prevent blindness in children. They served as the keynote presenters, offering a compelling look into how philanthropy directly fuels life-changing outcomes.

### The Team Behind the Transformation

Led by Dr. Peter J. McDonnell, Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute and a globally recognized leader in corneal surgery, the presentation demonstrated how charitable investment translates into meaningful medical breakthroughs. Dr. McDonnell introduced a multidisciplinary team representing the forefront of pediatric ophthalmology:

**Dr. Courtney L. Kraus (The KTEF Professor):** As the Knights Templar Eye Foundation Professor of Ophthalmology, Dr. Kraus specializes in pediatric cataracts and corneal diseases. Her research focuses on early surgical intervention for infants born with elevated eye pressure. Through refined and delicate techniques performed at the earliest stages, her work has shown that eye pressure can be stabilized and a child's vision preserved for years to come.

**Dr. Jefferson Doyle (The Genetic Pioneer):** Serving as the Rising Professor of Ophthalmology and Co-Director of the Genetic Eye Disease Center, Dr. Doyle bridges the gap between genetics and diagnosis. His work has revealed how specific genetic markers contribute to lens instability and increased eye pressure. By identifying these risks at the DNA level, he enables physicians to anticipate conditions and intervene before vision loss begins.

**Dr. Megan E. Collins (The Public Health Advocate):** Dr. Collins brings a vital public health perspective, focusing on expanding access to vision care for school-age children. Through her work with the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Berman Institute of Bioethics, she has demonstrated that providing proper vision correction leads to measurable improvements in educational outcomes. Her efforts have helped deliver more than seven million pairs of eyeglasses worldwide, reinforcing that vision care is fundamental to both health and learning.

**Dr. Bo Wang (The Imaging Expert):** Specializing in non-invasive imaging, Dr. Wang utilizes advanced technology to evaluate pediatric cataracts and glaucoma with remarkable precision. Through high-resolution three-dimensional mapping, his work allows clinicians to detect the earliest signs of eye damage. This capability provides a critical advantage, enabling intervention before conditions progress to irreversible vision loss.

### How KTEF Funding Fuels the Mission

The banquet served not only as a celebration, but as a clear demonstration of the KTEF "Success Loop," which supports this work at every stage:

**Research:** Grants empower innovators like Dr. Doyle and Dr. Wang to uncover the genetic and structural complexities of eye disease, identifying conditions before they become symptomatic.

# Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

Education: Endowed positions, such as those held by Dr. Kraus, ensure that world-class expertise remains in place to train future generations of surgeons and specialists.

Clinical Care: Funding supports the equipment, outreach, and multidisciplinary programs led by physicians like Dr. Collins, delivering high-quality care directly to children who need it most.

## A Legacy of Shared Commitment

The collaboration at the Cockeysville Banquet reflected a shared conviction: that no child should lose their sight to a preventable or treatable condition. Through the combined efforts of Wilmer's team and the philanthropic strength of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the presenters made clear that the future of pediatric vision is not only promising, but within reach.

Building upon this momentum, the Grand Commandery has set an ambitious and meaningful objective for the year ahead: to achieve 200 percent KTEF Life Sponsorship within the Jurisdiction. This goal is more than a benchmark. It is a call to action that directly supports the life-changing work so clearly demonstrated through this collaboration. Each Life Sponsorship represents a lasting investment in research, education, and clinical care that restores and preserves sight. By embracing this challenge with unity and purpose, the Sir Knights can transform inspiration into measurable impact, extending the reach of KTEF and ensuring that more children are given the gift of sight for generations to come.

*In His Service,*

*Tom*

*Thomas W. Morrison  
Grand Generalissimo  
Grand Commandery Representative to the Knight Templar Eye Foundation*

