

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

Monthly Knight Templar Magazine Supplement Message – September 2026

Editor: Sir Knight Carter L. Diggs, REPGC



Sir Knight Raymon W. Bacchus, KTCH
Grand Commander

Greetings Sir Knights,

September calls us back to full labor as the summer months draw to a close. Potomac Commandery No. 3 will host the conferral of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross for our jurisdiction at its Stated Conclave on 3 September. This renewed rhythm of labor brings with it opportunities to strengthen our unity, reinforce our discipline, and advance our shared mission throughout the Grand Commandery of the District of Columbia.

Before leaving the summer months behind, I would also like to recognize Columbia Commandery No. 2 for hosting our Grand Commandery School of Instruction during its Stated Conclave on 17 August. I was especially pleased that each of our Constituent Commanderies was represented. Our Grand Instructors General provided valuable instruction in the full form opening and sword drill, giving the Sir Knights in attendance an opportunity to strengthen their proficiency, sharpen their discipline, and deepen their understanding of our Templar work. Instruction of this kind does more than improve what we do today. It develops confidence, preserves our traditions, and helps prepare the Sir Knights who will carry our work forward tomorrow.

As the General Grand Sessions conclude here in Washington, D.C., I want to recognize one particularly memorable example of service and cooperation that emerged from those gatherings. Thirteen Sir Knights from the Grand Commanderies of the District of Columbia and Virginia came together to serve as the Honor Guard and present our Nation's Colors. I had the privilege of serving alongside twelve outstanding Sir Knights whose discipline, teamwork, and professionalism reflected beautifully upon Templary.

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The presentation received exceptional praise from those in attendance, including the Grand Master of Grand Encampment, who personally expressed how proud he was of the inspiring performance and how well the team represented Grand Encampment. Feedback from other knowledgeable observers was equally complimentary of the team and its performance.

To me, there could hardly be a better expression of our theme, Building Bonds. Seven Sir Knights from the District of Columbia and six from Virginia stood and worked together as one team in service to the broader York Rite. Experiences such as these remind us that the bonds of Templary do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. Some of our strongest relationships are formed through shared labor, common purpose, mutual respect, and service alongside one another.

September also continues our Communication Initiative, bringing together the elected Grand Officers and the Commanders of each Constituent Commandery. Our meeting on 1 September provides an opportunity to hear directly from our committees and Commanderies, review progress toward our objectives, identify concerns requiring attention, and coordinate the work ahead.

Communication is more than the distribution of information. Effective communication requires us to listen, understand, respond, and work together toward solutions. Through these regular discussions, we seek to strengthen the connection between the Grand Commandery and its Constituent Commanderies while ensuring that our decisions remain informed by the needs of the Sir Knights we are privileged to serve.

Your Grand Officers also continue their quarterly outreach to the Sir Knights of our jurisdiction and their visitations to our Constituent Commanderies. These remain priority initiatives throughout this Chivalric Year. They help ensure that our members remain connected, that the concerns and ideas of each Commandery are heard, and that the Grand Commandery remains responsive to those it serves.

Building Bonds requires more than meeting together. It requires deliberate contact with one another. A telephone call, a visit, a conversation after a meeting, or simply asking a Sir Knight how he is doing can have greater significance than we sometimes realize. Strong organizations are ultimately built upon strong relationships.

The virtue of Charity stands prominently before us this month. International Day of Charity is observed on 5 September, but for us, Charity cannot be confined to a single day or measured only through financial giving. It is expressed through compassion, generosity, encouragement, patience, understanding, and a willingness to serve another without expectation of recognition. These qualities transcend differences of faith and background and reflect values that unite us in our shared commitment to service and brotherhood.

One tangible expression of that commitment is our support of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. Our plan for this Chivalric Year established September as the milestone for achieving 200 percent KTEF Life Sponsorship within our jurisdiction and then maintaining that level throughout the remainder of the year. I encourage every Commandery and every Sir Knight to continue supporting this important objective.

The significance of that goal is not found merely in reaching a percentage. It is found in what our collective support represents: Sir Knights translating the principles we profess into meaningful service for others. Charity becomes most powerful when it moves from an ideal we admire to an action we practice.

Fellowship is another important part of Building Bonds. Our Annual D.C. York Rite Family Picnic will be held on Saturday, 12 September, from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Fort Hunt Park, Group Picnic Area C 002, in Alexandria, Virginia. This gathering provides our members, families, and friends throughout the York Rite an opportunity to enjoy one another's company in a relaxed setting away from our formal meetings.

I hope you will join us, bring your family, share some food and fellowship, and use the occasion to renew old friendships while establishing new ones. The relationships formed outside our meeting halls often strengthen the work we perform inside them.

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September also provides an opportunity to recognize an important milestone within our own jurisdiction. Potomac Commandery No. 3 was chartered on 22 September 1871. For 155 years, generations of Sir Knights have preserved and carried forward the traditions entrusted to that Commandery.

Anniversaries such as this invite us to consider our own place in that continuing chain of service. We inherited institutions strengthened by those who came before us, and we bear a responsibility not simply to preserve them, but to leave them stronger for those who will follow.

Later this month, the Mid Atlantic Department Conference and the York Rite Emerging Leaders Program will take place on 25 and 26 September. Leadership development remains one of our principal initiatives this year. We must continually identify, encourage, mentor, and prepare Sir Knights who demonstrate the character, humility, discipline, and willingness to accept greater responsibility.

Leadership does not begin when someone is elected or appointed to an office. It is cultivated long before that moment through mentorship, opportunity, experience, example, and service. If we desire strong leaders tomorrow, we must invest in them today.

September also serves as our final month of preparation before the Semi-Annual Grand Conclave on 3 October at Singleton Lodge Hall. That gathering provides an important opportunity to assess our progress, conduct the business of the Grand Commandery, evaluate our initiatives, and establish our direction for the remainder of the Chivalric Year.

As we return to full labor, let us do so with renewed energy and deliberate purpose. Let us strengthen the relationships entrusted to our care, encourage those around us, listen more carefully to one another, develop those who will follow us, and remember that the strength of our jurisdiction ultimately rests upon the strength of the bonds between its Sir Knights.

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

Ray

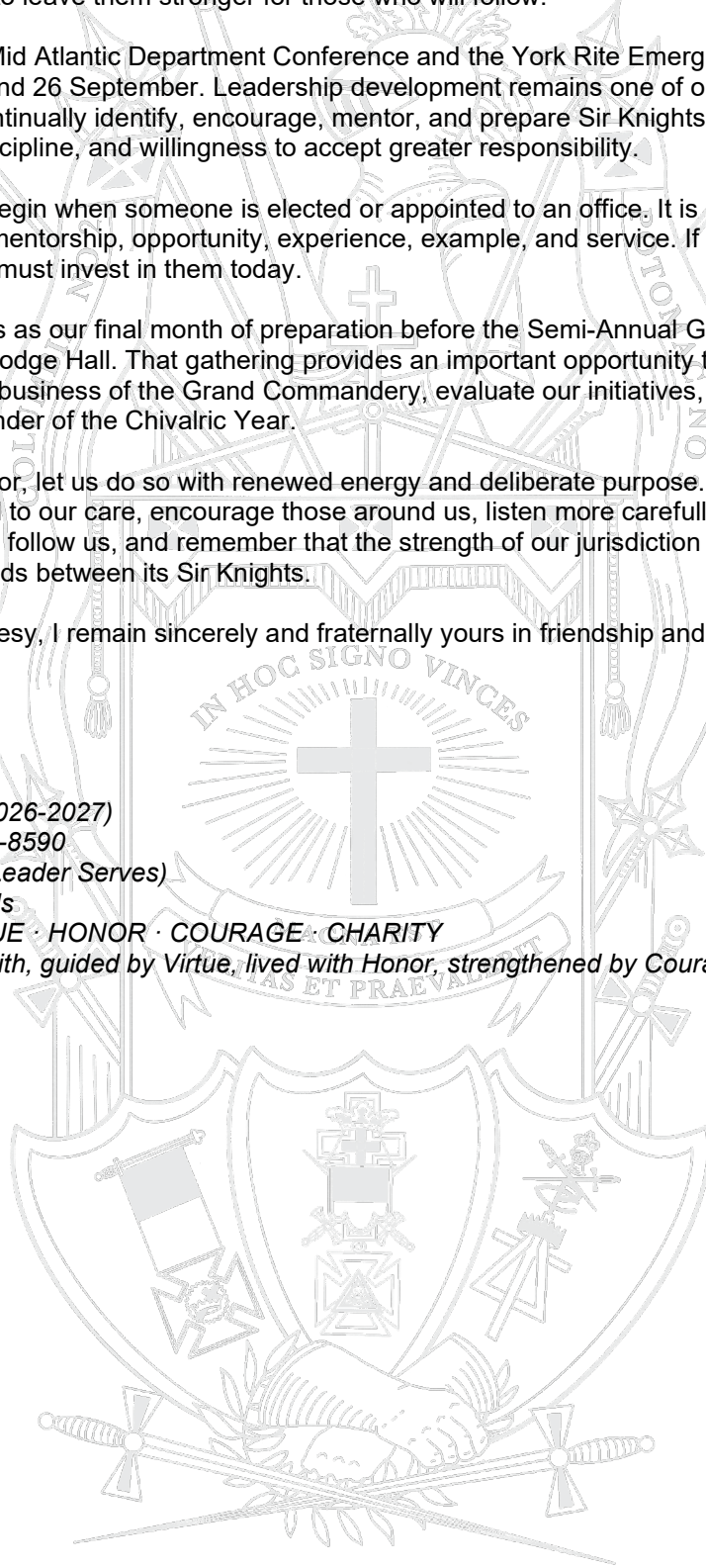
Raymon W. Bacchus
Grand Commander (2026-2027)
Direct Line: 1-703-899-8590

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.



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Upcoming Events:

- Summer Uniform Authorized
1 June through 30 September 2026
- Potomac Commandery No. 3 Stated Conclave and Jurisdictional Conferral of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross
3 September 2026
- International Day of Charity
5 September 2026
- Communication Initiative (Virtual) - Elected Grand Officers and the Commander of each Constituent Commandery
1 September 2026
- Annual D.C. York Rite Picnic at Fort Hunt Park, Group Picnic Area C 002
12 September 2026, 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Potomac Commandery No. 3 was Chartered
22 September 1871
- Mid Atlantic Department Conference
25 through 26 September 2026
- York Rite Emerging Leaders Program
25 through 26 September 2026
- Semi Annual Grand Conclave at Singleton Lodge Hall
3 October 2026
- MESH Charities Annual Gala
17 October 2026
- Columbia Commandery No. 2 Stated Conclave and Jurisdictional Conferral of the Order of Malta
19 October 2026
- Grand Commandery of Maryland
23-24 October 2026
- All Saints' Day – Honoring Virtues
1 November 2026
- Communication Initiative (Virtual) - Elected Grand Officers and the Commander of each Constituent Commandery
3 November 2026
- Grand Lodge Annual Communication
21 November 2026
- Columbia Commandery No. 2 hosts the Jurisdictional Conferral of the Order of the Temple
14 November 2026

From: Our Grand Prelate

August 20, A. D. 2026, A. O. 908

My dear Sir Knights,

On August 20, we remember St. Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090–1153), abbot and mystic, patron saint of beekeepers and chandlers (candlemakers). The Roman Catholic Church has made him a Doctor of the Church, and he is also venerated as a saint in both Anglicanism and Lutheranism. We, as Masonic Knights Templar, are especially interested in Bernard, as he is considered one of the co-founders of the medieval Order of Knights Templar.

In 1128, while attending the Council of Troyes, Bernard formed his outline for the Rule of the Knights Templar. He was known within his own religious order, the Cistercians, for his extreme austerity, and his demands for strict asceticism and discipline were incredibly harsh, physically pushing many of his monks to their limits. Those demands and requirements famously made their way into the Rule of the Templars.

Many scholars and writers have said that Bernard was a “difficult” saint. He was complex. He was controversial. He was outspoken. Perhaps, what they really meant is that for his time, he was incredibly passionate and vocal about his beliefs, and his strict beliefs about God and the teachings of Christ were ideas many others in the Church of his day did not want to hear.

This is something that I personally understand in the context of our modern American culture, and you, too, may know, where the concepts of an all-loving God and Christ’s commands to love one another without exception that I like to preach does not mesh with a growing faction in this country that is far more exclusive as to whom they think is worthy of their (and God’s) love. Now, Bernard was a fierce opponent of anyone who disagreed with him, and he famously clashed with and condemned brilliant, progressive thinkers of his time, calling them heretics. Yet, unlike Bernard, I certainly am no saint, and I am not so arrogant as to think my views are right and those who have another view are wrong. I will continue to pray for guidance, and I bid your prayers for me, as well.

There are three main things we remember today about Bernard. First, he was absolutely passionate and aggressive about the Crusades. His preaching and eloquence is widely credited with launching the Second Crusade, and he managed to attract the support of bishops and royalty alike. Second, he placed new emphasis on the Blessed Virgin Mary, developing the theology of her role as a co-redemptrix and a mediator on our behalf. He

made it clear that Mary was not to be worshipped, as she was the Mother of God, but not herself God. And, third, he emphasized the value of personal friendship and relationship with Christ. He understood that faith was not purely academic, and that we as humans need emotion and conversion to foster a more immediate experience of faith and divine love, and that is what gives us our religious zeal.

As with all saints, we look to Bernard as a role model as we explore our personal journey towards God, wherever that path may take us. May we ever remember the example of Bernard in our witness to the world, and let us be aware that our words have strength, and that our passion for Christ lights the way for others to know that Jesus loves them and wants the best for them.

I bid you peace on this the Feast of St. Bernard.

Let us pray.

O God, by whose grace your servant Bernard of Clairvaux, kindled with the flame of your love, became a burning and a shining light in your Church: Grant that we also may be aflame with the spirit of love and discipline and walk before you as children of light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

In the name of the Living God and the quest for Masonic light, I remain

Yours in the Love of Christ,

Mark A. Wright, P. C.

Grand Prelate, Grand Commandery of the District of Columbia

ART CREDIT:

Émile Signol (1804–1892). Saint Bernard preaching the Second Crusade before King Louis VII, his queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Abbot Suger, at Vézelay in Burgundy, March 31, 1146 (1840). Oil on canvas. Musée National des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.





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WELCOME, COMPANIONS

73rd Triennial Convocation of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International
49th Triennial Assembly of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International
Washington, D.C. • August 29 – September 2, 2026

On behalf of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the District of Columbia and the Sir Knights of our jurisdiction, it is my distinct honor and great pleasure to welcome you to Washington, D.C., for the 73rd Triennial Convocation of the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International and the 49th Triennial Assembly of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International.

To our Companions who have traveled from throughout the United States and nations around the world, welcome to our nation's capital. Your presence is a powerful reminder of the reach of our fraternity and the enduring bonds that unite us across jurisdictions, cultures, languages, and borders.

This gathering holds special significance for our jurisdiction. Most Excellent Companion Teko A. Foly, a Past Grand Commander of the District of Columbia, has served as General Grand High Priest during this Triennium. It is a particular source of pride for our jurisdiction to welcome him, his fellow General Grand Officers, and Companions from throughout the world to his home jurisdiction for this historic Convocation.

Our theme for this Chivalric Year is *Building Bonds*, and there could scarcely be a more fitting expression of that ideal than this international gathering. The friendships renewed, new relationships formed, ideas exchanged, and fellowship shared during these days strengthen not only our individual Masonic bodies, but the greater York Rite family we share.

Your gathering in Washington is especially meaningful as the United States commemorates the 250th anniversary of American independence. The monuments and memorials surrounding us speak of courage, sacrifice, perseverance, leadership, and service. While rooted in American history, these are ideals that transcend national boundaries.

May your time in Washington be productive, inspiring, and memorable. May you return home with renewed enthusiasm for Capitular and Cryptic Masonry, strengthened friendships, new friendships, and a deeper appreciation for the bonds that unite us.

Companions, welcome to Washington, D.C. Welcome home.

Ray

Raymon W. Bacchus, KTCH

Grand Commander (2026-2027)

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