

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of the District of Columbia

Monthly Knight Templar Magazine Supplement Message – November 2026

Editor: Sir Knight Carter L. Diggs, REPGC



Sir Knight Raymon W. Bacchus, KTCH
Grand Commander

Greetings Sir Knights,

As this message goes to press, our Grand Commandery mourns the loss of our dear Sir Knight Uzo Eric Chukwu, Eminent Grand Captain General, who laid down his working tools on October 27 at approximately 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time. We had hoped and prayed for his recovery, and it is with heavy hearts that we now commend him to the loving care of our Heavenly Father. We give thanks for his life, his service to our Grand Commandery, and the privilege of sharing in fellowship with him. His absence will be deeply felt among us.

To Uzo's family and all who loved him, we extend our heartfelt sympathy. Words cannot fill the space he leaves in your lives, but we pray that you will find comfort in cherished memories, strength in your faith, and support in those who surround you with love. Please know that you remain in the hearts and prayers of his Templar family.

Sir Knights, let us honor Uzo's memory through the care we extend to those he leaves behind. May our concern continue beyond these first days of sorrow, with patient listening, thoughtful contact, and practical assistance guided by his family's wishes. Our theme, Building Bonds, carries a solemn responsibility in moments such as this: to remain present for one another when the burden is greatest.

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May our beloved Sir Knight rest in peace, and may Almighty God grant comfort and strength to his family and to all who mourn him.

Even as we grieve, this season invites us to give thanks for the fellowship we share and the opportunities we still have to serve one another.

As autumn deepens and we approach Thanksgiving, I am grateful for the fellowship, dedication, and shared purpose that sustain our Grand Commandery. October provided several opportunities to see those qualities in action, both within our jurisdiction and among our neighboring Sir Knights.

Our Semiannual Grand Conclave on 3 October brought us together to conduct the business of our Grand Commandery and look toward its future. The only legislation being considered this year, an amendment requiring reports to be submitted, not only in advance of the Semi-Annual Grand Conclave but also the Annual Grand Conclave as well, passed. Thank you to Washington Commandery No. 1 for hosting us and to everyone whose preparation and participation supported our work. These gatherings give us time to renew friendships, exchange ideas, and take shared responsibility for the health of our jurisdiction.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the Sir Knights elected to lead our Grand Commandery in the coming year. Nicholas J. Sampogna, KTCH, KCT – Grand Commander Elect, Thomas W. Morrison – Deputy Grand Commander Elect, Kevin L. Coy – Grand Generalissimo Elect, Philip J. A. Palmer Jr. – Grand Captain General Elect, Jean-Claude Eugene – Grand Senior Warden Elect, B. Chris Ruli, KTCH, OC – Grand Junior Warden Elect, Craig R. Lasher, KCT, REPGC – Grand Treasurer re-Elected, Gerald W. Peeters, KCT, REPGC – Grand Recorder re-Elected and Robb C. Mitchell, KCT, REPGC – Grand Trustee Elect. Your willingness to serve is deeply appreciated. Leadership carries both the confidence of your fellow Sir Knights and the responsibility to earn that confidence through your actions. As you prepare to assume your offices, know that you have my encouragement and support. I ask every Sir Knight to offer yours as well, helping our incoming leaders build upon the work of those who have served before them.

On 19 October, we continued our work of developing and strengthening our membership through the conferral of the Order of Malta upon six Knights. To those who received the Order, may its lessons of faith, humility, and compassionate service remain with you throughout your journey. To those who prepared and participated in the conferral, thank you for giving your time and talents to make the occasion meaningful. Our responsibility continues as we help these Knights deepen their understanding and find a purposeful place within our fellowship.

I also had the pleasure of attending the Grand Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Maryland on 23 and 24 October. The warmth of their welcome reflected the bonds of friendship that unite our jurisdictions. I was deeply honored to be made an Honorary Member and Honorary Past Grand Commander of their Grand Commandery. I extend my sincere appreciation to our Maryland Sir Knights for these distinctions and for their gracious hospitality. Their friendship reminds us how much we gain by visiting, supporting, and learning from one another.

These experiences bring me back to our theme: Building Bonds. Those bonds grow through the attention we give one another and the work we willingly share. They are strengthened by the Sir Knight who prepares the room, offers a ride, makes a telephone call, or quietly attends to

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someone in need. Each contribution helps make our Commanderies places where men feel welcomed, valued, and connected.

This Thanksgiving season, I ask that we make our gratitude personal. Thank a Sir Knight whose service has made a difference to you. Recognize the families whose patience and support make our participation possible. Reach out to someone you have not seen recently, ask how he is doing, and give him time to answer. Our concern for a Sir Knight should extend well beyond his attendance.

The reflections in this month's supplement invite us to consider the gifts entrusted to us and the obligations expressed through the crosses we wear. We give those teachings life through patience in disagreement, kindness toward others, and service offered with discretion and respect. For someone experiencing grief, illness, loneliness, or financial strain, a thoughtful gesture may carry more meaning than we realize.

Having reached our goal of 200% Life Sponsorship in the Knights Templar Eye Foundation in September, we have another meaningful reason to give thanks. This achievement reflects the generosity and shared commitment of our Sir Knights and Commanderies. Thank you to everyone who helped make it possible. As we celebrate this milestone, let us continue supporting the Foundation's work and carrying that same spirit of charity into our daily lives.

Looking ahead, please make plans to support the conferral of the Order of the Temple on 14 November. Your presence will help welcome those taking this important step into Christian Knighthood and demonstrate the fellowship that awaits them. I also ask you to review the upcoming events listed at the end of this supplement, place them on your calendar, and encourage another Sir Knight to attend with you. Each gathering offers an opportunity to strengthen a friendship, support our work, and build another bond.

Faith, Virtue, Honor, Courage, and Charity remain our guide. Our motto, Dux Servit, reminds us that leadership finds its purpose in service. May we carry that spirit into our Commanderies, our homes, and our communities throughout this season.

I am grateful for the privilege of serving alongside you. May you and your loved ones enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving, and may those who need companionship and encouragement find both among us.

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

Ray

Raymon W. Bacchus
Grand Commander (2026-2027)
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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:

- All Saints' Day – Honoring Virtues
1 November 2026
- Communication Initiative (Virtual) - Elected Grand Officers and the Commander of each Constituent Commandery
3 November 2026
- Columbia Commandery No. 2 hosts the Jurisdictional Conferral of the Order of the Temple
14 November 2026
- Grand Lodge Annual Communication
21 November 2026
- Invitation to provide a Program at Mithras Lodge of Perfection, D.C. Scottish Rite
1 December 2026
- Christmas Observance – Hosted by Potomac Commandery No. 3
3 December 2026
- Grand Lodge Banquet
11 December 2026
- Grand Lodge Installation (Providing an Honor Guard Team of 8 Sir Knights)
12 December 2026
- Call to Annual Grand Conclave Issued
5 January 2027
- Communication Initiative (Virtual) - Elected Grand Officers and the Commander of each Constituent Commandery
5 January 2027
- Annual Awards Submission Deadline
9 January 2027
- Religious Freedom Day
16 January 2027
- Deadline for the Submission of Reports and Business Items for the Annual Grand Conclave
20 January 2027
- Masonic Week
2-7 February 2027
- Grand Visitation and Installation of Subordinate Commandery Officers hosted by Washington Commandery No. 1
10 February 2027
- Anniversary Banquet - Commanderies of the District of Columbia
13 February 2027
- Grand Commandery of Louisiana Grand Annual Conclave
25-28 February 2027



*We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand;
He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.
All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love.*

November 2026: Thanksgivingtide

My dear Sir Knights,

A 250-year-old hymn of praise still sung today reminds us Knights Templar that November is the time when we Americans pause to give thanks to God for all of our many blessings. Cultures all over the world have since time immemorial had some form of harvest festival in autumn, celebrating their crops and giving thanks to their deities. Our famous American Thanksgiving Day, though, stems from 400 years ago, after a boatful of English Puritans arrived on Cape Cod. By the time of their 1621 feast that we commemorate today, they had a lot to be thankful for, not least of which was their lives.

Less than half of the original 102 Mayflower passengers survived that first bitter winter, succumbing to scurvy, pneumonia, tuberculosis, malnutrition, and exposure to the cold. By the time of the "first Thanksgiving," the Puritans were down to just 22 men, 4 women, and 25 children. Yet, they found time to give thanks to God, and to welcome at least 90 Indigenous tribal guests who had helped them plant crops and survive. In those days, the food preparation was all left to the busy hands of the women, and it strikes me that there were only four women to do all the planning, cooking, and cleanup for all of these people, all while supervising two dozen children. Our culture, even today, leaves much of domestic duties to women, so we should most especially give thanks to our wives and our mothers during this festive holiday, and remember their contributions as they labor in the kitchen washing dishes, while we unbuckle our trousers and sit down to watch yet another football game.

Playing football was not a skill with which the Lord gifted me. He did, however, inspire me to cook, and Thanksgiving is one of my favorite meals to prepare. The Bible tells us, "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10) Accordingly, you'll likely find me in the kitchen Thanksgiving Day. God has given each of us various gifts and talents. We can use those things to provide for and support our families, but more importantly, we can use them to benefit mankind.

We see many instances in the Bible where God has called those to whom he had given special gifts and talents. We recall Bezalel and Oholiab, who were gifted workers in gold, silver, and bronze, as well as in cutting stones and carving wood, who were called by Moses to assist in decorating the first tabernacle. (Exo. 35:30-35) Templars also know of Hiram, the son of a widow from Tyre, who Solomon called to work on the temple because of Hiram's renown as an artisan in bronze. (1 Kings 7:13). Hiram made the pots, the shovels, and the basins for the temple, and progressed to grander achievements, such as a pair of pillars for the vestibule of the temple that he named Jachin and Boaz. (1 Kings 7:21)



It becomes apparent in reading the New Testament that when God gives us special gifts and talents, he expects us to use them. Luke wrote, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (Luke 12:48) We also learn from a parable where three servants were entrusted with a great deal of money while the master traveled, those servants who used the money to increase the master's estate were rewarded, while the servant who was fearful and buried his share of money in the ground for safekeeping was punished. The lesson of the parable is, "For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away." (Matt. 25:29)

Yes, we all have gifts, talents, and abundance. What do we do with those things? The Sermon on the Mount tells us, "People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:15-16) We are also admonished that using our gifts, we should do good works, but Jesus calls us to do something unexpected: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matt. 5:44-45) Then, Mark's Gospel tells how Jesus summarized all of the law and the prophets, saying, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:30-31)

In our divided and troubled world, we are called as Christian Knights to consider what it means to love our neighbor. Does our compassion extend to those who disagree with us, who are not Masons, or who come from another community or country? We may differ sincerely about public policy and how best to meet society's needs, yet Scripture calls each of us to care for the sick, visit the prisoner, honor the elderly, feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and assist widows and orphans. Jesus cautions us against storing up treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19) and, in His encounter with the rich young man, challenges the hold that possessions can have upon our hearts (Matthew 19:21). Providing for our families and pursuing success need not diminish our concern for others. The question for each of us is whether we are using the blessings entrusted to us with generosity, compassion, and a willingness to serve, especially when doing so asks something of us.

This is difficult, because modern society is not like society in biblical times, when there were universal duties of hospitality to strangers and giving alms to the poor, while today we have families to support and taxes to pay in very costly Washington. At least as Templars, we know our Masonic tenets to love our brothers; to offer Masonic relief to them, their widows and orphans; and to seek truth. That

requires us to study all of our working tools and the scriptures that have been quoted in our ceremonies. We have to determine just how literally we should take the Bible in offering our alms and charity. Unfortunately, neither Templary nor our Craft lodges give us a clear answer as to what to do, they just offer those working tools for us to figure things out for ourselves. This is a question for your personal religion and faith. Hence, we study. We think. And we pray.

Meanwhile, in this season of thankfulness, I can only ask you to remember the unmet needs of the disadvantaged of our community. Remember the homeless and the hungry. Remember the lonely. Remember the uninsured. Remember the un- and under-employed. Remember the growing number of working poor, a group that will significantly increase after the first of the year. Remember that we have many Sir Knights who are quietly falling into these categories of need, and many are becoming aged and infirm with their own special requirements. How many of these needs are within forty miles of you?

We Templars are blessed to be prosperous, having so many special gifts and talents given to us by our Lord. Some of us have been given wealth. Some of us have been given creative or technical skills. Some of us have been given wisdom. Some of us have the gift of time to visit and serve others. Some of us have the gift of healing. Some of us have the gift of patience.

Happy are those who consider the poor;
the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble.
—Psalm 41:1

It would be wonderful if we could use our abundant gifts and talents to help others during this Thanksgiving season. What do our obligations call us to do? Pray on this. The poor and the needy need more than just our thoughts and prayers. They need action. I encourage each Sir Knight to contact an isolated member, offer practical assistance, or support a local food effort during November.



May the blessings of Almighty God our Creator and our Redeemer be with you, your families, and your loved ones during this Thanksgiving season.

In the name of Christ our Lord,

Mark A. Wright, E.P.C.
Grand Prelate, District of Columbia

The Maltese Cross: Eight Paths to Spiritual Regeneration and the Living Mission of Christian Knighthood

*By Sir Knight Eloi P. Kpamegan, 33°
Past Right Eminent Grand Commander, District of Columbia*



The Order of Malta, one of the distinguished Orders of Christian Knighthood within the York Rite, embodies a profound spiritual teaching that transcends its historical and ceremonial dimensions. Rooted symbolically in the noble traditions of the Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem, the Order represents a sacred pilgrimage toward purification, spiritual illumination, and selfless service. Its central emblem, the eight-pointed Maltese Cross, is not merely a heraldic insignia but a spiritual compass calling every Knight to transform his inner nature and become a living instrument of divine love.

The Eight-Pointed Cross: A Path Toward Spiritual Perfection

The eight points of the Maltese Cross may be contemplated in relation to the Eight Beatitudes pronounced by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–10). Humility, compassion, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, and steadfastness under persecution become eight spiritual virtues through which the Christian Knight progressively purifies his character.

Mystically understood, the Cross represents the harmonization of human consciousness with the Divine Will. Its four principal arms suggest the universality of Christ's message, while its eight points invite the Knight to cultivate spiritual equilibrium in every dimension of his existence. The Cross becomes an inner compass, directing his thoughts toward truth, his heart toward compassion, and his actions toward righteousness.

The Rosicrucian Mystery of the Cross

In the Christian Rosicrucian philosophy of Max Heindel, particularly in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (1909) and *Gleanings of a Mystic* (1922), the Cross may be understood as symbolizing the Spirit's experience within material existence and its progressive liberation through spiritual regeneration. The Rose Cross expresses the unfolding of spiritual consciousness as the lower nature is purified and transformed.

Applied contemplatively to the Order of Malta, this teaching suggests that true initiation does not end with the conferral of the Order. Rather, it inaugurates a lifelong process of inner transformation. Pride must yield to humility, selfishness to charity, resentment to forgiveness, and spiritual ignorance to divine wisdom. The Christ principle must become more than an intellectual ideal; it must become a living spiritual reality within the Knight's heart.

The Hospitaller Ideal: From Illumination to Sacred Service

The historical mission of the Knights Hospitaller was founded upon the care of pilgrims, the sick, and the vulnerable. This sacred vocation reveals a fundamental mystical principle: **spiritual illumination remains incomplete unless it manifests through compassionate service.**

The Knight of Malta is therefore called to become a healer of human suffering through kindness, reconciliation, charity, and the defense of human dignity. His spiritual sword is discernment; his shield is faith; his armor is righteousness; and his greatest victory is mastery over his own lower nature.

A Living Tradition: Six New Knights of Malta

On Monday, October 19, 2026, the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the District of Columbia conferred the Order of Malta upon six Brethren, marking a significant milestone in their journey toward Christian Knighthood. Beyond the solemnity of the ceremony, this occasion carries a profound spiritual meaning. Each newly received Knight is reminded that the eight-pointed Cross is not merely an emblem of distinction but a sacred obligation to cultivate the virtues of Christ throughout his earthly pilgrimage.

Their reception into the Order represents not the completion of spiritual development, but the beginning of a deeper commitment to purification, regeneration, and selfless service. These six Brethren now join their fellow Knights in preserving the enduring Hospitaller ideals of faith, charity, courage, and spiritual dedication.

The Maltese Cross as a Living Spiritual Obligation

The ultimate lesson of the Order of Malta is that the Cross must be lived rather than merely worn. Each of its eight points represents a continuing invitation to embody the teachings of Christ in daily life.

Thus, the central question confronting every Knight of Malta is not simply, “*What does the Maltese Cross symbolize?*” but rather:

“What does the Maltese Cross require of my life?”

To our six newly received Knights of Malta, may the eight points of the sacred Cross become eight guiding lights along your spiritual pilgrimage. May humility govern your thoughts, mercy inspire your actions, purity illuminate your hearts, and divine love become the foundation of your service.

For the true dignity of Christian Knighthood lies not in the honors we receive, but in the spiritual virtues we manifest. The highest expression of the Order of Malta is not simply to bear the Cross upon our mantle, but to become a living reflection of its divine meaning.

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.

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

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