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Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Nebraska

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Daniel J. Marr, Grand Commander

Nebraska Supplement:

Message from the Grand Commander: What is your next step?

Sir Knights,

Last month, I challenged each of us to elevate our ritual work and the ritual work of our Commanderies. We talked about learning the work of our chair, taking on a new part, practicing together, and continually striving to become a little better than we were yesterday. This month, I would like to build upon that challenge by asking every Sir Knight in Nebraska one simple question:

What is your next step? We are all at different places in our knowledge and experience with Commandery ritual. Some Sir Knights are still becoming comfortable with the basics. Others know several parts and have years of experience. Still others have become accomplished ritualists whose knowledge is an invaluable resource to their Commanderies.

Because we are at different places, our goals should be different as well. If you don't currently know much Commandery ritual, start small. **Set a goal to learn your chair.** Become comfortable with opening and closing from your station. Perhaps choose a small part from one of our Orders and begin learning it. You don't have to master everything at once. Pick something achievable, work on it, and experience the satisfaction that comes from knowing you have taken a step forward.

If you already know your chair and several portions of our ritual, **challenge yourself to take the next step.** Learn a larger part. Volunteer for something you haven't done before. Perhaps there is a role you have watched another Sir Knight perform for years and thought, "Someday I'd like to learn that." Make someday this year.

And what if you are already one of our experienced ritualists? Your next step may not be learning another part at all. **Your goal might be teaching one.** Find a newer or less-experienced Sir Knight and offer to work with him. Invite him to practice. Help him learn a part you know well. Share the little lessons that aren't always obvious from simply reading the ritual—the

movements, timing, confidence, and understanding that come only through experience. Most importantly, give him permission to make mistakes. None of us learned this work by performing it perfectly the first time. Someone was patient with us. Someone answered our questions. Someone corrected us when we went the wrong direction, forgot a line, or completely lost our place. Now it is our turn to provide that same patience to someone else. This is also something our Commanderies can do collectively. Set ritual goals together. Identify portions of the work that need improvement. Hold practices with specific objectives rather than simply saying, "We need to practice more." Cross-train Sir Knights so that several members know important parts. Celebrate progress when you see it.

Our goal is not perfection. Our goal is **progress**. Imagine what could happen across Nebraska if every Sir Knight chose just one ritual goal this year. Some would learn their chairs. Others would learn new parts. Experienced ritualists would begin preparing the next generation to take their places. Hundreds of individual steps forward would become one tremendous step forward for Nebraska Templary.

So I challenge you this month: **Set one ritual goal.** Make it appropriate for where you are today, but challenging enough that accomplishing it will make you better tomorrow. Learn the work. Improve the work. Teach the work. Then, when you accomplish your goal, set another.

Yours in Service and Brotherhood,

Daniel J. Marr
Grand Commander
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Nebraska