



New Sir Knight Packet

Sir Knight _____

_____ Commandery No. _____

Knighted _____ day of _____, _____

From the Grand Master

WELCOME TO THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR!

Sir Knight _____,

Congratulations! Today you were accepted into the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of Knights Templar, the greatest order of Christian Knighthood the world has ever known!

The Order of the Temple was founded in AD 1118 by the Knights Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de Saint-Omer as the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon. They existed as a Military and Religious Order until the last Military Grand Master, Jacques DeMolay was arrested on Friday, October 13, 1307, and subsequently burned at the stake in Paris, France on March 18, 1314 after years of torture.

Today, we hold many of the same Chivalric Values as our forefathers. We teach the duty of fighting oppression in all its forms, the protection of widows and orphans, civic righteousness and the upholding of Religious Freedom. This challenges the highest and best in every Knight.

Our charities include the Knight Templar Eye Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage which I am sure you will want to support. May your membership be long and happy. Welcome to the ultimate Masonic Brotherhood, my Frater.

Fraternally,

SK David Joseph Kussman

Most Eminent Grand Master, 2021-24

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America



From a Past Grand Master

You are here today as one of the newest members of the Order of Knights Templar, the greatest order of Christian Knighthood the world has ever known.

When in 1314, after an existence of 200 years, the ancient Order of the Temple, which order we cherish and revere, was brought to a close by the burning at the stake of the last Grand Master of the order, Jacques de Molay, there were those who believed our noble Order had been suppressed for all time, but *"The old order changed, yielding place to new and God fulfills himself in many ways."* And 500 years later, in a new country and in a new time, our own beloved order was born. Today, after nearly two centuries, it is still going forward, and stands *"A glorious company, the flower of mien, to serve as a model for a mighty world."*

The Order of Knights Templar does not usurp the prerogatives of the Christian Church; it does not take the place of the church. The membership of the order is made up of those who believe in the Great Captain of their Salvation, as do those who profess allegiance to His church.

The Order of the Temple teaches that truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. It teaches not a medieval chivalry, splendid as that may have been, with swords drawn in the defense of His cause, but it teaches the duty of fighting oppression in every form, the protection of the widow and orphan, of civic righteousness, and the upholding of the Christian Religion-a splendid program and one that challenges the highest and best in every man. The cross and the flag are the two greatest symbols of human blessing that have ever been raised among the sons of men.

The Order of Knights Templar, with two banners at its head, is steadily marching forward to do battle for the right and truth.

"In this sign we conquer, tis the symbol of our faith, Made holy by the might of love, triumph over death; He finds his life who loseth it, forever more it saith: For truth and right are marching on."

It is my great pleasure to bid you welcome to this magnanimous Christian organization. May your membership be a happy and profitable one. May your future be bright and prosperous. May you catch the inspiration of the mighty hosts here assembled, and having caught that inspiration and the spirit of the Master upon whose life our order is founded, press forward with fortitude undaunted in His cause.

Courteously and fraternally yours,

William Jackson Jones
Most Eminent Grand Master, 2000-03



For the new Sir Knight

Your Commandery is _____ No. _____,
located at _____, _____

Our Conclaves are held: _____.

CONCLAVES: Commanderies have “**Conclaves**”, not meetings; and the room in which these Conclaves are held is referred to as an “**Asylum**”, not a Lodge room. A Commandery confers “**Orders**”, not degrees. Stated Conclaves are held according to the by-laws of the constituent (local) Commandery. The “**Annual Conclave**” is held once each year for the election of officers for the ensuing year. “**Special Conclaves**” are held as scheduled to confer the Orders (Red Cross, Malta, Temple). A “**Grand Commandery**” is the jurisdictional governing body of the state jurisdiction and meets annually. The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America is the primary governing body of the Order and meets on a triennial basis.

OFFICERS: The officers within a Commandery consist of : Commander, Generalissimo, Captain General, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Prelate, Treasurer, Recorder, Standard Bearer, Sword Bearer, Warder and Sentinel.

UNIFORMS: The uniform for our Commandery is: – Class A / – Cap & Mantle. Further information on the uniforms is found in the “Of the Uniform” section. You should be able to provide plain black trousers, white shirt, black tie, black shoes and socks. Officers and members wear silver trimmed emblems. Current dais officers wear shoulder straps of green; past commanders wear shoulder straps of red. Past Grand Commanders and Grand Encampment Officers wear purple. The complete uniform is normally worn at Order conferrals, special observances, parades and Grand Conclaves. Refer to the rules and regulations of your jurisdiction governing the proper wearing of the uniform and accouterments.

PRACTICES: The work of the Commandery consists of both ritual and tactics. The regular exercising of each will improve the execution of the work. Ritual work consists of the drama portions of the three Orders. Tactical work consists of both asylum tactics, such as the 'full-form' opening and field drills, either exhibition or competition. Participation in all aspects of the work can be exciting and fun.

PROTOCOL:

A Commandery confers Orders, not degrees.

The presiding officer is referred to as "Commander" and uses this title below his signature of documents; however, he is properly addressed and referred to by the honorary title of "Eminent Commander".

A Commandery always opens in 'full form'.

Officers of Grand Commanderies or the Grand Encampment are not given Masonic “Public Grand Honors”. They are given a hearty round of applause. Dignitaries may be received under an Arch of Steel or between two lines of Sir Knights presenting their swords.

Introductions in an Asylum are done in reverse order, Junior Officers to Senior Officers. The Grand Commander is always last to be introduced and the last to speak.

All members of a Commandery are addressed as “Sir Knight”, regardless of rank. For example the Commander is addressed as Sir Knight <name>, Eminent Commander. When speaking of one Sir Knight, use the singular "Knight Templar", and when speaking of two or more Sir Knights, use the plural "Knights Templar. The word is always "Templar" for both singular and plural, never "Templars".

Prayers are always ended with “Amen”, not “So Mote It Be.

Insignia of Rank on Class A uniforms are called “Shoulder Straps”, not Shoulder Boards.

It is recommended that the chapeau be stored covered, dry and hung upside down in order to extend the life and appearance of the plume.

Reference Materials You Should Obtain

Ritual of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar (Black Book)

Manual of Knights Templar Tactics and Asylum Ceremonies (White Book)

Manual of Public Ceremonies

A Capsule Chronicle of Templary

Highlights of Templar History by William Mosley Brown

The York Rite of Freemasonry by Frederick G. Speidel

Drill Regulations or School of the Knight and Squad

A Pilgrim's Path by John J. Robinson

Born in Blood by John J. Robinson

Dungeon, Fire and Sword by John J. Robinson

Knights Templar Links of Interest

Grand Encampment —<http://http://www.knightstemplar.org/>

York Rite Information Page—<http://yorkrite.org>

Wikipedia Entry—[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Templar_\(Freemasonry\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Templar_(Freemasonry))

From Templars to Freemasonry—http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitical/templars/knights_templars02.html

Attendance and Special Events

Your attendance at our regular Conclaves is very important to you and to your Commandery. It affords you the opportunity to learn the ritual and workings of your Commandery, participate in degree work and education and benefit from the “further light” which is available to you.

Your Commandery, like any organization, needs all of its members to attend and participate to keep it vibrant and growing. In addition to the normal business each month there will, or should be, practices, educational offerings, and community activities that will need your help. Your Commander or his designate should discuss with you what programs the Commandery has and how you might help.

In each Chivalric Year, there are Special Events in addition to our Stated Conclaves. These are:

- Easter Observance—Commandery observance of Easter, may be opened to the Public
- Commandery Festivals—Throughout the year, there are generally one or more Commandery Festivals where Orders are conferred on new Candidates. They are great opportunities to refresh yourself on the work.
- Mid-year Meeting—a mid-year meeting of the Grand Commandery to discuss business for the Grand Sessions. This is open to all interested Sir Knights and is a great way to meet your Grand Commandery Officers.
- Ascension Day Observance—Commandery observance of Ascension, may be opened to the public.
- Grand Sessions—the annual meeting of your state’s Grand Commandery. All Sir Knights should attend.
- Regional Department Conclaves—meeting with Grand Encampment officers.
- Christmas Observance—Commandery observance of Christmas, may be opened to the public.

As with your other Masonic travels, you should try to travel to other Commanderies and share in the unique Friendship and Brotherly Love that is found among Fraters.



Of the Uniform

Section 19 of the Grand Encampment constitution describes the uniforms in use for Constituent Commanderies. These regulations can be at bit hard to decipher, so the intent of this section is to help clear up a few of the basics that you need to equip yourself properly. Note that if you choose to move up in the ranks, some of the insignia and accessories may need to be updated but the basic uniform will remain largely unchanged.

Each Sir Knight should review the Uniform Regulations and seek guidance from his Commander or Recorder if questions arise. Remember that this is a UNIFORM, akin to a Military Uniform, and should be treated as such. The regulations exist to assist Sir Knights in maintaining their correct appearance. A neat and well-groomed appearance by a uniformed Knight Templar is of fundamental importance to the Order and contributes to building the pride and esprit de corps to furthering the objectives of the Order. It is the duty of all Knights Templar to take pride in their appearance at all times.

Note: When wearing the uniform, some insignia may be optional but the uniform is NOT open to interpretation or modifications with bolo-ties, tennis shoes, black shirts, extra awards and other items, not specified or authorized by the Grand Encampment Constitution.

When do I need a Uniform?

Basically, Knights Templar are in uniform for every function that they participate in, from Stated Conclaves to Observances to Official Visits.

Two Basic Uniforms

Depending on the Commandery that you join, your basic uniform will be either a Dress Uniform (commonly called a "Class A") or a "Cap and Mantle". Either is the acceptable uniform for Convocations, Conferrals, Public Events and Official Visits by Sir Knights to or from a Constituent Commandery. There are Winter and Summer variations of these two uniforms as well as other uniform combinations in the "Uniform Regulations" but if a Sir Knight has the basic Winter version of his uniform and wears it properly, he's covered for the majority of situations where his uniform will be needed.

The Uniform Regulations generally state:

"The DRESS UNIFORM shall consist of: Chapeau, Coat, Shirt, Necktie, Gloves, Trousers, Shoes, Hose, Sword, and Sling. Jewels, and shoulder straps, appropriate to the wearer's rank shall be worn. There are Winter and Summer Dress Uniforms, specified in the regulations. The major difference is in the wearing of the Coat with the Winter Dress Uniform.. The Dress Uniform is required for all Grand Commandery Officers.



Fig. 1 - Example of Dress (L) and Cap and Mantle (R) Uniforms

"The CAP and MANTLE UNIFORM shall consist of: Cap, Mantle, Suit, Shirt, Necktie, Gloves, Belt, Trousers, Shoes, Hose, Sword and Baldric. As with the Dress Uniform, there are Winter and Summer versions of the Cap and Mantle Uniform, also. Similarly, the major difference is in the wearing of the Coat with the Winter version. The Cap and Mantle Uniform is required for all Constituent Commandery Elected Officers if that Commandery has voted to use it in lieu of the Dress Uniform.

Generally, all items of a Dress Uniform are supplied by the individual Sir Knight. In the case of a Cap and Mantle Commandery, the Cap and Mantle may be supplied to the individual Sir Knight.

Silver and Gold

When speaking about Knights Templar uniforms, a common phrase is "color appropriate to rank." For metal and embroidery, Silver is used in insignia for all officer ranks in a constituent Commandery. Gold is used for Past Commanders, Grand Officers, Grand Commanders and Past Grand Commanders.

Green, Red and Purple

Similarly, these three colors are used to identify rank, principally on Shoulder Straps. Green is used for all current officers of a constituent Commandery, Red is used for Past Commanders and Current Grand Officers and Purple is used ONLY for Past Grand Commanders.

Individual Articles of a Dress Uniform

Chapeau -

Along with the basic uniform and sword, the Chapeau is one of the most expensive items to purchase. New ones start are available from various Masonic vendors. Used ones may be found online or by asking at your local Commandery.



Fig. 2 - Sir Knight and Commander Chapeaux

Whether you buy new or used ... or are given one ... be aware that there are regulations for each state that detail the proper Chapeau to be worn. It's always a good idea to check these out before you start investing in your uniform.

- Plume - can be white or black underneath and white on top
- Sides - can be flat or rounded.
- Slashings, lace and rosette - appropriate to rank: Silver - up to Commander, Gold - Commander, Past Commander, Grand Officers, Grand Commander, Past Grand Commander
- Rosettes - appropriate to rank, only on the left side. Some states have Commandery numbers on the opposite side. Again, check your regulations!



Fig. 3 - Chapeau Rosettes

(L-R) Sir Knight; Commander / Past Commander; Grand Commander / Officer; Past Grand Commander



Uniform Coat and Trousers –

Black double-breasted suit with two columns of front buttons. May be purchased new. Some vendors have reconditioned Coats and Trousers as well.

A Chief Petty Officer's service dress jacket with a slit for the Sword Sling and Templar Buttons may be substituted.

Note: order this without sleeve crosses. Order WITH shoulder Velcro if you plan on being a dais officer. Of course, that can always be added later.

Trousers are of the same material as the Coat. They are plain-front and have no cuffs. There is no break

Fig. 4 - Dress Uniform

Shirt, Tie, Belt, Hose, Shoes, Gloves -

Some of these items you may already have in your closet.

- Shirt - white broadcloth with attached collar and patch pockets. If you plan to wear it without the coat (Summer Uniform), you'll need one with epaulets. Also, try to find one with removable collar stiffeners, since they make Collar Crosses difficult to pin on.
- Tie - plain black, four-in-hand
- Belt - black leather. Plain or Knights Templar Buckle in Silver or Gold, dependent on rank. Worn under coat. Gold or Silver belts with integrated sword hooks may not be authorized ... they may look great but don't be tempted, check your regulations first!
- Hose - black
- Shoes - black, leather
- Gloves - buff (not white) and of fabric or unadorned leather. Only Past Grand Commanders may wear Leather Gauntlets with Templar Cross. Note: some fabric gloves have rubber nubs on the palm so you do not accidentally lose control of the sword.

Shoulder Straps -

Shoulder Straps are worn on the Dress Uniform Coat to designate rank. They are positioned lengthwise OVER each shoulder - perpendicular to the outstretched arm. Don't confuse them with Shoulder Boards, which are worn in line with the outstretched arm. See the Dress Uniform in Fig. 1.

Here is where all of the colors that we've been discussing come into play:

- Gold Border / Silver Embroidery / Green Background - Constituent Elected Officers
- Gold Border / Silver Embroidery / Red Background - Constituent Past Commanders
- Gold Border and Embroidery / Red Background - Grand Officers and Grand Commander
- Gold Border and Embroidery / Purple Background - Past Grand Commanders



Fig. 5 - Shoulder Straps

(L - R) Captain General; Generalissimo; Commander; Past Commander; Grand Officer or Commander, Past Grand Commander

Note: Having Velcro on your shoulder makes removing the straps easier for cleaning the coat.

Note: The outer edge of the shoulder strap should be at the shoulder seam of the coat and curved to fit the shoulder.

Sword –

The sword is one of the most distinctive (and possibly expensive) items that a Sir Knight can possess. Though no longer used in battle, it is required for conferrals and ceremonies. Many swords are passed down through family channels or between Sir Knights and it is a rare privilege to have a family or dear friend's sword in your possession.

Many swords are donated to local Commanderies by Sir Knights or their families after the Sir Knight has passed. These may be available on loan or for purchase by newer members. Check with your Eminent Commander or Recorder for details on this avenue.

If you inherit or are given a sword, the Regulation as to its specifications may be modified. Talk to your Commander about this. Should you choose to buy a sword - new or used - make sure to review the regulations so that it meets your State's requirements:



- thirty-four to forty inches in length, inclusive of scabbard
- helmet head at pommel
- Check your regs on the cross-guard and chain
- metal scabbard with three hard metal mountings, two metal rings at upper and one at lower mount
- Check your regs on the grip
- color appropriate to rank: Silver - up to Commander, Gold - Commander, Grand Officers, Grand Commander

Depending on the Vendor and the price of the sword, you may have to do some searching to find a sword that will fit you. Many older swords are too short and will be hard to use for taller people. Whether you purchase or borrow, take time to work with

your Commander to find a sword that fits you.

Note: When you hold your sword at the "Carry" position, the tip of the blade should come to just below the lower tip of your earlobe.

Buying a new sword is like any major investment ... it is recommended that you wait until the appropriate time in your Masonic career - usually if you are in the elected Grand Commandery line, or at least when you are elected Commander of your Local Commandery. Vendors also offer less-expensive or practice swords that meet Arizona regulations and are a good starting sword and will serve well for drills and meetings.



There are two ways to wear the sword, depending on your Uniform. The **Sword Sling** – uses the belt as a mounting point. It is used with the Dress Uniform. The attachment hooks are fed through and poke out of the sword slit in your Uniform Coat. The **Sword Baldric** - goes over your right shoulder and across your body. Baldrics may used with the either the Dress or the Cap and Mantle Uniform. Either the Sling or Baldric should have attachment hooks with color appropriate to your rank - silver up to Commander, otherwise Gold.

Notes: Some states use a sword belt in lieu of the Sling or Baldric. Again, check your local regulations before purchasing.

Individual Articles of a Cap and Mantle Uniform

If your Commandery has chosen this uniform, it may have a Cap and Mantle available for your use. You will still need to provide the basics listed in the regulation above: Black or Navy Suit, Shirt, Tie, Belt, Hose, Shoes, Gloves. The Suit replaces the Dress Uniform Coat and Trousers.

The Sword and Scabbard entries under Dress Uniform apply to this uniform also.

Cap -

The Cap is a prayer-cap shape, red in color and of either silk or velvet. The insignia on the front is appropriate to the rank of the wearer. Past Grand Commanders Caps are purple in color

Mantle -

The Mantle is of the style worn by medieval Templars and by members of the Sovereign Great Priors. It is of white material, with hood, reaching to approximately twelve inches from the floor and is tied closely around the neck with cords with tassels. No ornamentation, Templar jewels, or insignia of recognition are worn on the Mantle, unless the Commandery has a unique Commandery Badge, which is permitted.

On the Mantle, the cross, hood color borders and tassels are appropriate to the rank of the wearer and are carried through from the Cap.



• Fig.7 - Caps and Mantles

- (L-R) Sir Knight, Commander / Past Commander, Grand Commander, Past Grand Commander

Note: Grand Officer Mantles have two stripes on their border,

Of the Sword

One of the documents that you should have in your possession is the "Manual of Knights Templar Tactics and Asylum Ceremonies", often referred to as the "White Book". One section of that book is the "Manual of the Sword." The following article is an excerpt to give you some of the basic sword work that you will need to get started. Emphasis has been added for your instruction

90. The sword consists of the hilt and the blade. The hilt is divided into the gripe and the guard. The gripe is the handle grasped by the hand. The guard is the cross piece between the gripe and the blade. The blade is divided into the edge, back, sides and point. The edge and back are determined by the hilt. The right and left sides of the blade and gripe are the right and left sides in the position of carry swords.

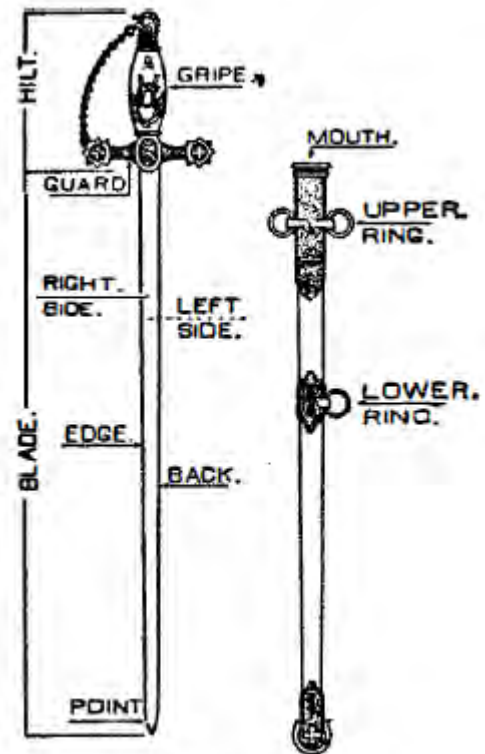
The scabbard is the receptacle of the sword; the opening of same, its mouth. The hand is in tierce, when it holds the gripe, with back of hand up, and in quarte, when it holds the gripe with back of hand down. Unless the formation is in open ranks, the Knights under instruction should take intervals.

91. Being in line at a halt with swords in scabbards:

Command: Sir Knights, Draw, SWORDS.

1. At the command **Draw**, grasp the scabbard with the left hand, near its mouth, incline the hilt a little forward, seize the gripe with the right hand, and draw the blade until the right forearm is horizontal, back of hand against the breast.
2. **SWORDS**, draw the sword quickly, raising the arm to its full length, at an angle of about 45 degrees, the sword in a straight line with the arm, edge down, extending in the same direction as the right foot. (TWO) Bring the back of the blade against the shoulder, the blade vertical, back of the gripe to the rear, the arm nearly straight down, the thumb and forefinger embracing the gripe the thumb against the thigh, the other fingers extended and joined in the rear of the gripe. This is the position of **Carry SWORDS**. From this position all movements of the sword manual begin, unless otherwise provided.

In all marching movements, except route march, at the command **HALT**, unless otherwise provided, the sword, if drawn, will be brought to the carry without command.



The Sword and Scabbard



**Draw Swords
First Motion**



**Draw Swords
Second Motion**

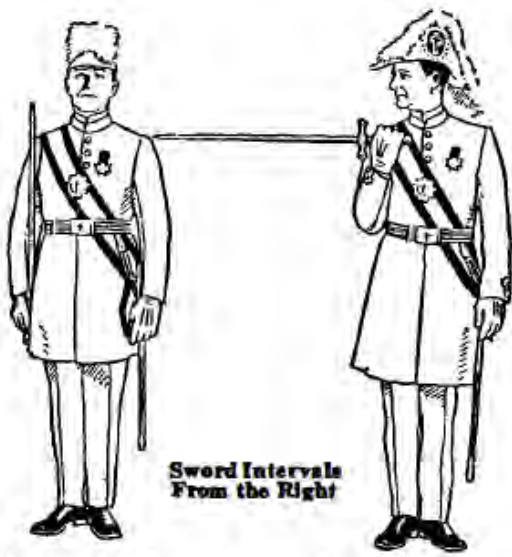


**Carry Swords
(Third Motion)**

92. Command: From the right take sword intervals, MARCH.

At the first command, all the Knights except the one on the right ... who remains at *Carry Swords* ... execute eyes right, raise the right hand in front of and as high as the right shoulder, the back of the hand to the front, and drop the sword blade horizontally to the right, edge up.

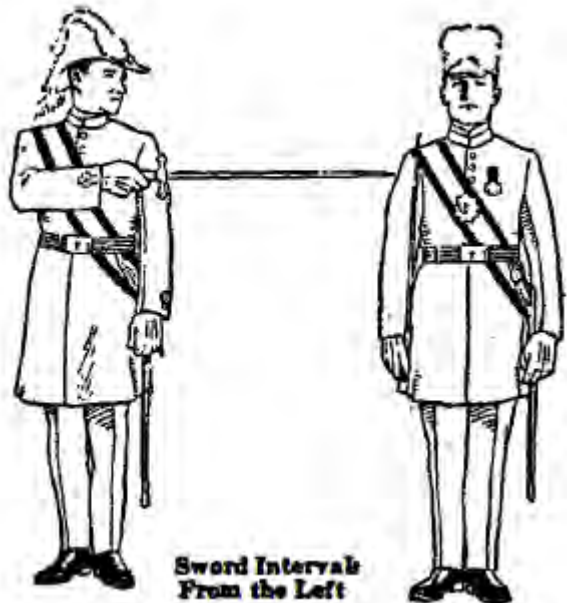
MARCH, all the Knights except the right file, execute *Left Step*. As soon as each Knight has gained an interval so that the point of his sword will clear the left arm of the Knight on his right, he halts, executes front, and resumes *Carry Swords*.



**Sword Intervals
From the Right**

93. Command: From the left take sword intervals, MARCH.

This is executed as intervals from the right (above), except that the eyes are turned to the left, the right hand is carried across the body and touches the left arm, the right forearm horizontal, the sword extended in prolongation thereof, edge down.



**Sword Intervals
From the Left**

94. Command: On the right (left) close intervals, MARCH.

The Knight on the right (left) stays fast, the others face him and march forward halting successively when the interval is closed, and facing to the front.



95. Command: Present, SWORDS.

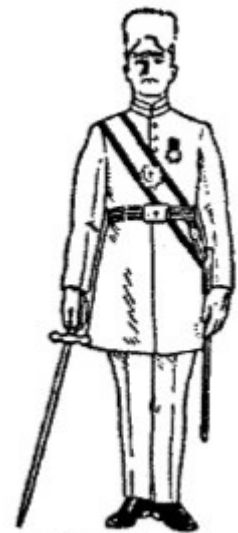
Raise and carry the sword to the front, cross hilt as high as the chin and six inches in front of the neck, edge to the left, point six inches farther to the front than the cross hilt, thumb extended on the back of the gripe, wrist straight, all fingers grasping the gripe.

96. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the carry in one motion, without throwing the right hand to the front, or the point to the rear.

97. Command: Salute, SWORDS.

Execute *Present Swords*. (TWO) Drop the point of the sword, edge to the left, to about fifteen inches in front of and in prolongation of the right foot, arm hanging naturally, the elbow close to the body, the back of the hand down.



Present Swords

98. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the position of *Carry Swords*.

NOTE: The *Salute Swords*, is the *Present Swords*, used by officers. If not in ranks they will at the command present, execute *Present Swords*, and at the command *SWORDS*, execute the second motion of *Salute Swords*. Junior Officers execute the *Present* unless otherwise prescribed.

Salute Swords



Order Swords
First Motion



Order Swords

99. Command: Order, SWORDS.

Drop 't the sword point to the ground, blade inclined to the rear, back of blade to the front. (TWO) Bring the blade to a vertical position against the right toe, and place the hand on top of the hilt, three fingers in front of the gripe, thumb and little finger in the rear, elbow close to the body.

100. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the position of *Carry Swords*, in one motion.

101. Command: Support, SWORDS.

Bring the sword to the position of *Present*. Par. 95. (TWO) Carry the sword vertically to the left side, lowering the right hand until the forearm is horizontal, edge of the sword to the front, the right hand firmly grasping the gripe about three inches below the guard, at the same time grasp the right forearm near the elbow with the left hand, the left forearm along and in front of the right forearm, the thumb of the left hand over and supported by the right forearm near the elbow, fingers of the left hand extended and joined, the guard resting on the left arm near its elbow, the blade vertical, edge to the front.



102. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Bring the sword to the position. of *Present*, at the same time drop the left hand by the side. (TWO) Bring the sword to the carry, Par. 96.



Swords Port

103. Command: Swords, PORT.

Seize the blade in front of the right shoulder with the fingers and thumb of the left hand, the thumb to the rear, the left elbow close to the body. (TWO) With the left hand, bring the sword diagonally across and about one inch in front of the body, edge down, the left hand at the height of the left shoulder, the thumb extended along the blade, the fingers closed, back of the hand down, the right hand grasping the hilt and nearly in front of the right hip.

Support Swords

104. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Bring the sword to the carry with both hands, the left hand as high as the right shoulder, pressing the blade to its place, the fingers and thumb extended and joined in front of the blade, the elbow near the body. (TWO) Drop the left hand to the side.



**Carry from Port
First Motion**

105. Command: Arm Rest, SWORDS.

Carry the hands in front of the center of the body, the arms nearly extended; clasp the hands the left over the right, see Par. 59, the blade resting along the right forearm, the right hand retaining the same position on the gripe as at the carry.



Arm Rest Swords

106. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the carry in one motion.

107. Command: Shoulder, SWORDS.

Raise the right hand in front of the armpit and place the flat of the sword blade on the right shoulder, the edge to the left, the elbow close to the body, the point of the sword obliquely to the left, and in the rear, clearing the chapeau.

NOTE: This is not the same as the position of *Carry Swords!*

108. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the position of *Carry Swords*



Shoulder Swords

109. Command: Reverse, SWORDS.



Drop the blade forward and down until it is directed towards a point about one pace in front of the right foot, at the same time allow the fingers to grasp the lower part of the gripe, and move the hand forward about twelve inches. (TWO) Carry the sword by a wrist movement so that the blade will swing to the rear, the point downward at an angle of about 45 degrees, the edge up. As the sword swings into position under the right arm pit, bring the hand in front of the right armpit and grasp the gripe with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, the other fingers successively curved, resting the blade between the right arm and the right side. The end of the hilt re-mains about nine inches in front of the right shoulder,

110. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Bring the sword to the first position of reverse. (TWO) Resume the position of *Carry Swords*.

On long marches the corresponding position of left reverse may be taken.



Reverse Swords

Reverse Swords

First Motion

111. Command: Left Reverse, SWORDS.

Extend the right hand to the first position of reverse. (TWO) With the right hand swing the sword to the position of left reverse. (THREE) Seize the gripe with the left hand and drop the right hand to the side.

112. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Seize the gripe with the right hand and drop the left hand to the side. (TWO) Carry the sword to the first position of *Reverse Swords*. (THREE) Resume the position of *Carry Swords*.



113. Command: Parade, REST.

Being at *Carry Swords* or *Order Swords*, drop (carry) the sword point to the ground in front of the center of the body on a line with the left toe, edge to the right, the palm of the right hand resting on the end of the hilt; the thumb and fingers extended and joined against the gripe, the left hand clasped over the right; at the same time carry the right foot six inches straight to the rear, the left knee slightly bent, the body erect, Par. 69.

114. Command: Squad, ATTENTION, Carry (Order), SWORDS,

At the command *ATTENTION*, bring the right foot to the side of the left; drop the left hand to the side, and carry the hilt to the right side, leaving the point undisturbed. At the command *SWORDS*, resume the position of *Carry Swords* or *Order Swords* in one motion.

Parade Rest

119. Command: Sir Knights, Return, SWORDS,

At the command *Return*, seize the scabbard near the mouth with the left hand, inclining it a little forward, and keeping the right hand near the body, drop the sword blade forward and to the left so that the point is about six inches from the floor and pointing to a line which is a prolongation of the left foot. Move the sword hand to the left, then raise the hand, drawing the sword-blade between the first two fingers of the left hand. Insert the point of the blade in the mouth of the scabbard, edge to the front, assisted by the thumb and fingers of the left hand, eyes to the front, thrust the blade into the scabbard until the right forearm is horizontal (first motion of draw). (Par. 91.) *SWORDS*, return the blade smartly and drop the hands to the sides.

NOTE-In inserting the point avoid turning the scabbard to meet the sword.



**Return Swords
First Motion**

122. Command: On GUARD.

Turn the left foot square to the left, turning on the left heel, and plant the right foot firmly about eighteen inches to the front, feet at right angles, the weight resting principally on the right foot, the shoulders oblique to the front, head and eyes square to the front. At the same time raise the sword band on a line with lower part of the belt and about two inches from it, the guard three or four inches to the right of the belt clasp. Drop the sword diagonally to the left, the blade about 18 inches in front of the left shoulder, edge to the front, thumb on back of gripe, the sword held without constraint.

123. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

Resume the position of *Attention* at *Carry Swords*.



**Attention from
Parade Rest**



On Guard

Cuts or Parries

124. In giving the parries, first take the position *On Guard*, keep the feet at right angles and look into the eyes of the Knight opposite. The flats of the blades should be crossed about ten inches from the points, the sword arm straight; parries should be given with spirit but the swords touching lightly.

Parry. ONE. Raise and extend the arm, back of the hand to the left and up, without changing the grasp, wrist as high as the head, the edge of the sword up, the blade in prolongation of the forearm, and engage the sword of the Knight opposite.

Parry, TWO. Disengage the sword and describe a circular movement toward the rear and right, back of the hand down, edge of the sword down, the hand on a line with the head, and engage the



Parry THREE



Parry ONE—Cross Swords

opposite sword on the right side, crossing the blades as before.

Parry, THREE. Disengage the sword and describe a circular movement toward the left and downward, engage the opposite sword on the left side, the point of the sword near the ground, the edge upward, the back of the hand to the left, and cross blades.

Parry, FOUR. Come directly to the position of *Parry One*.

125. The parries may be taught by numbers, but when a commandery is well instructed, they may be given, one division to another, by calling the number of the parry required, as in the following command sequence:

Command: First Division ___ to the Second Division ___. On, GUARD.
Parry Four. 1, 2, 3, 4. On, GUARD.

126. Command: Carry, SWORDS.

After each word is communicated, the position of *On Guard* and *Carry Swords* will be resumed as follows: at the first command, come to the position of *On Guard* and at the command *SWORDS*, bring the right foot back to the original line and resume the carry.

133. Command: Un, COVER.

At the command **COVER**, take the chapeau by the front piece with the left hand. (TWO) Raise the chapeau from the head and place it on the right shoulder, slightly to the front, holding it in that position with the left hand.

134. Command: Re, COVER.

Replace the chapeau on the head. Drop the hand to the side.

NOTE: **Un-Cover** is never executed unless the swords are sheathed, at an order, or (with the right hand) when at a secure



Un-COVER



Kneel

135. Command: Sir Knights, KNEEL

(Swords Sheathed) Carry the left foot about twenty-four inches to the rear. (TWO) Kneel on the left knee, the body and left thigh erect, the right leg below the knee nearly vertical, the right hand hanging at the side.

The triangle guard kneel, from order swords, same as above, except as to the right hand, which rests on the top of the sword hilt.

To communicate, both lines are moved forward one pace before kneeling.

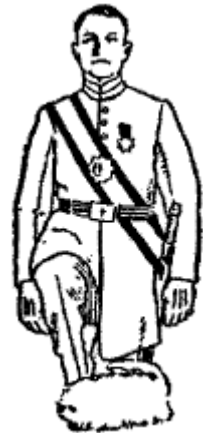
136 Command: Deposit, CHAPEAUX

At the second command **Chapeaux**, place the chapeau on the ground to the left of the right foot, feathers to the left, peak pointing toward the body. The cap is placed with the crown down. (TWO) Resume position of kneel.

137. (After communication) Command: Secure, Chapeaux, Re-COVER, Sir Knights, RISE.

At the second command **Chapeaux**, grasp the visor of the chapeau with the left hand, place it on the right shoulder. **Re-COVER**, replace the chapeau on the head and drop the hand. **RISE**, all rise bring left feet forward into line.

Both lines are now moved backward one place. NOTE-The **Un-Cover** should be made after kneeling and **Re-Cover** before rising.



Deposit Chapeaux

138. (After devotion) Command: Re-COVER, Sir Knights, RISE.

Re-COVER, replace the chapeau on the head and drop the hand to the side. **RISE**, all rise bringing left feet forward into line.

The Commandery Orders



Illustrious Order of the Red Cross—The first order conferred in the chivalric system is the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and the story contained within predates the era of the Crusades. The candidate represents Zerubbabel who is well familiar to the Royal Arch Mason (a requirement for admission) at the time of King Darius. Zerubbabel visits the king in order to convince him of his commitment to the Jewish people and in the process is asked to take part in a debate over which has greatest sway in the kingdom - wine, women or the king. The end result of the debate being the candidate offering a fourth option and an excellent argument is made on the power of Truth.



Order of Malta—This is the first of the Christian Orders contained in the Chivalric system and relates the story of St. Paul's arrival on the island of Melita which we know today as Malta. In the next portion of the Order the history of the Knights of St. John (Knights of Malta) is explained and the periods of the Order's history are paralleled with the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. While Freemasonry often comes under attack by fundamentalists who view it as unchristian, the candidate for admission into this Christian order can offer clear argument to the contrary.



Order of the Temple—The Order of the Temple is the most beautiful in the series. During the ceremonies the candidate represents a knight of the era that succeeded the Crusades and vowed to visit the Holy Sepulcher. As a trial of his worthiness he is assigned seven years of preparation. At the end of this preparation he is made a Knight and a member of the Order.

The ritual teaches beautiful lessons on the death and ascension of our Savior and the candidate is at last received into full fellowship in the most solemn manner.

Unlike most branches of Freemasonry, wherein the Candidate need not follow a particular faith, the Chivalric Orders of Masonry require a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. That is to say he must profess a faith in Christianity.

Knights Templar Philanthropies



As a Knight Templar, one has many opportunities to help others that are less fortunate. One way is through the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. The Eye Foundation is a great humanitarian charity whose purpose is to provide research, surgical treatment and hospitalization to those who suffer from diseases or injury to the eyes. Cross-eye, which occurs in children under 16, is one affliction that can lead to blindness if not treated properly.

Questions or comments regarding the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. can send e-mail to: ktef@knightstemplar.org.



The Knights Templar Educational Foundation provides financial assistance to students who meet the required qualifications, which may vary from state to state.

The foundation considers all applications for scholarships, without regard to age, race, religion, National origin, gender, of Masonic ties or affiliations. These scholarships are not "grants in aid", but are open to all students regardless of their financial circumstances.



In addition to the many religious observances throughout the year, The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar sponsors an annual "Holy Land Pilgrimage." The purpose of the pilgrimage is to send a Christian Ministers to the Holy Land to enhance their ministries. Each jurisdiction raises funds to send these ministers, expenses paid, on these trips. Masonic membership is not required and male and female ministers are eligible.



Knight Templar Magazine

As a new Sir Knight you will soon receive a subscription to the *Knight Templar* magazine. *Knight Templar* was first published in 1955 on a bi-monthly subscription basis. This official organ of the Grand Encampment became a monthly publication in 1961, and in July 1969, the Grand Encampment began all-member mailings. Also beginning in 1969, a state supplement was added to allow items of local interest to be added to the magazine.

The current and past issues of the magazine as well as selected articles, are available on the Grand Encampment's website at:

<http://www.knightstemplar.org/KnightTemplar/pdfarchive.html>

Social Order of the Beauceant



Today's Beauceant is an order with a long history of support to the Commandery, one that has proven to be a source of pleasure and benefit both to them and to the Sir Knights. They make it their mission to fulfill requests to assist with entertainment and hospitality at any level of their organization.

Eligibility for Membership – wives, widows, mothers, sisters, daughters and granddaughters of Knights Templar of United States of America, or mothers, sisters, daughters, and granddaughters of a Beauceant member who are, or were at time of their passing, in good standing in a Commandery or an Assembly are eligible for membership. A petitioner must be at least 18 years of age.

The following articles are excerpted from *Templar Keynotes Nos. 1—6*, prepared by the Committee on Ritualistic Matters of the Grand Commandery of PA under the authority of SK Errol V Hawskey, REGC.

A Brief History of the Knights Templar

Every Knight Templar is a Mason but not every Mason is a Knight Templar.

The fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is the largest, oldest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. Thousands of books have been written about it. Yet, to most of the people of the world, the Masonic Fraternity remains a mystery.

The term "Knights Templar" describes the members of the Commandery, which exists as the final stage in the York Rite of Freemasonry. The first three degrees of Freemasonry are a basic requirement for joining the York Rite.

Modern day Knights Templar trace their origins to the medieval time of AD 1118, when they were called "Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon." These ancient Templars were a military and religious order founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades. The founders were Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de Saint-Omer, knights who established a religious community to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land. Baldwin II, Latin King of Jerusalem, gave them a dwelling on the ancient site of King Solomon's Temple. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux drew up the Order's rules, which included the notion of fighting the enemies of God under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Templars, segregated into knights, chaplains, sergeants, and craftsman, were organized under a Grand Master and general council and were responsible only to the Pope and not to secular rulers. Wearing a white cloak with a Red Cross, they attracted many nobles and soon became an expert military force and a powerful and wealthy order. In Europe their churches were often round, and their Commanderies served as banks. After 1291, when the crusading forces were driven from Palestine, the Templars' main activity became banking—the lending of money (even to kings)—and their enormous landholdings and financial strength aroused great hostility among rulers and clergy alike.

Philip IV of France, sorely in need of money, charged the Templars with heresy and immorality in 1307. The Templars were arrested and put on trial, and confessions were extracted only by torture. Similar attacks were mounted against the order in Spain and England, and Pope Clement V, after initially opposing the trials, suppressed the Knights Templar by papal bull at the Council of Vienne in 1312. When Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and other leaders of the Templars retracted their forced confessions and declared their innocence and the innocence of the order, Philip had them burned at the stake in Paris on March 18, 1314.

The Templars' holdings were dispersed, some going to the Knights Hospitalers and some to secular rulers, although Philip received none. The guilt of the Templars was hotly debated down to the 20th century. Most modern scholars, however, believe that the charges against them were fabricated.

In modern times, the warlike spirit of the Order has passed away; replaced by a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which prompts all of its members to be ever ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed. In a brother's cause we are to do all that may be demanded by manhood and fraternity. These convictions become a reality by the charitable deeds resulting from the Knights Templar Eye and Educational Foundations and the Holy Land Pilgrimage.



Explanatory Lecture

Order of the Temple

Sir Knight, in the ceremonies through which you have passed you represented a knight of the period that succeeded the Crusades - a civil Knight who had made a vow to visit the Sepulcher of our Ascended Master. As if you were such a Knight, allow me to address you.

Attracted by the chivalrous deeds of the Templars, for their deeds of charity and pure beneficence had spread their fame both far and wide, you sought admission to their ranks, the better to fulfill that vow. The Commander of the Commandery of Knights Templar, to which you applied for admission, being satisfied with the report made to him of the uprightness of your character, was moved to grant your petition; but as a trial of your worthiness to be enrolled among the members of the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple, he enjoined upon you Seven Years of Preparation. Those years began with an unarmed pilgrimage in the direction of the Holy Shrine, and an escort was given you to guide and protect you. Without a sword or buckler, and forbidden to do acts unbecoming a mere Pilgrim, your journey began; and to a man of warlike spirit, such a pilgrimage was indeed a trial of patience and perseverance.

Three years passed as you trod your weary way, mostly in a friendly country, in which you received from pious anchorites bread and water, as well as lessons of comfort and consolation. But day after day, during those years, your manhood asserted itself with accumulating vigor - when you beheld indignities offered not only to yourself but to other helpless Pilgrims, many of them delicate women, and you yearned to cast off the garb of a Pilgrim, and, laying aside the staff, to grasp the sword and perform deeds of exalted usefulness. Thus yearning, and pleading with your devoted escort, you reached another Commandery of the Templars. Three years of required preparation had passed, and you begged your escort to crave permission from the Commander to permit you to devote the four remaining years to deeds of more exalted usefulness.

At the second house of the Templars your escort made known your burning desires, vouched for your integrity, and that you had faithfully performed the duties of three years of preparation. The avouchment of your escort secured the favorable consideration of the Commander, who, after putting you under Vows, granted you permission to take up the sword and buckler, and to go forth under escort of a Templar warrior, manfully wielding your sword in the defense of innocent

maidens, destitute widows, helpless orphans, and the Christian Religion. And such warfare was indeed a trial of your courage.

As a Pilgrim Warrior you pressed forward with fortitude undaunted, giving ample proof to your warrior escort that you were worthy to bear your sword in the cause to which you had consecrated it. And the constant opportunities to display your valor and chivalry created in you an ardent desire to be admitted where honors and rewards await valorous deeds. Three years passed while you thus manfully fought your way toward the shrine of your Vow. At the close of the third year you reached another house of the Templars, and there you besought your escort to implore remission of the remaining year of preparation.

Your Templar escort presented your petition to the Commander of that Commandery, and avouched for your valor, courage and constancy, even recommending the remission asked for, if it were possible; and though the Commander was moved by the recital of your deeds of courage and constancy, the number of years of preparation could not be shortened. Moreover, he feared that the memories of those valorous deeds had filled your heart with pride, and that self-confidence had supplanted an humble reliance upon the strong arm of the Master. He therefore commanded you to devote the remaining year of your preparation to penance, as a trial of your faith and humility. The penitential year accomplished in and about that Commander—during which you received lessons of piety, before the representations of the Sepulcher and the Ascension of our Savior—you were permitted to return to the Asylum and to participate in the Fifth Libation, thereby sealing your Faith, after illustrating both it and your humility. You were then enlisted under the banner of the Templars and of Emmanuel.

Such, Sir Knight, is the brief epitome of the solemn ceremonies through which you have passed. The ancient Order of the Temple was suppressed and its members dispersed, and the warlike spirit of that Order has passed away; but in this modern Order of the Temple there remains a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which should prompt all of its members to be ever-ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed, and in a brother's cause to do all that may be demanded by manhood and the fraternity.

And now we hail you Knight as well as Brother. Sacredly we observe the Vows you have taken. These Vows bind you to the Order, and to each of us as comrades in arms. May we all be at last "Be greeted as Brethren, and received into the widely extended arms of the Blessed Emanuel."



Rough Habit, Coarse Diet and Severe Duty

In the 1890's there were a number of publications devoted to giving the Sir Knight an understanding of Templar Masonry. *The Templar Keepsake* and *Shibboleth* are two small texts. Previously, in 1873, C. G. Addison published *The Knights Templars* to afford a "Complete History of Masonic Knighthood."

This is the first of a series of short keynotes relative to the underlying principles of Templary, which are contained in our ritual and ceremony with the purpose of providing some cultural information to the Sir Knights of the Commandery.

While there are many phrases in our ritual that catch our attention, "rough habit, course diet and severe duty" may be one of the first which stands out. This phrase a candidate hears as a Pilgrim Penitent in the Order of the Temple prior to taking that libation which "seals his faith."

Historically, the Templars of the 12th Century were warrior monks who took vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. In 1139, Pope Innocent II issued the epoch-making bull *Omne Datum Optimum* ("Every Best Gift) in which he freed the Templars from ecclesiastical authority save that of the Pope. He announced to them that, "every best gift and every perfect gift is from above ... through the inspiration of grace, you have become receptive to the message of the Gospel and, having left behind worldly pomp and your own possessions ... you have humbly chosen the hard road that leadeth to life; and to prove it you have sworn on your breast the sign of the living cross because you are especially reckoned to be members of the Knighthood of God."

We as modern Templars also wear the cross as our symbol and no less should this emblem remind us of our special place in the Masonic fraternity as followers of Christ's teaching and love. The medieval Templar wore very plain armor and a white linen or wool surcoat, a reminder of turning away from the dark life. The surcoat was worn until it was no longer fit for use. These Knights of Christ were permitted to wear white habits and mantles, the only outer coat was of lamb or goatskin.

These Templars were governed by Rules which enjoined severe devotional exercise, self mortification, fasting, and prayer and constant attendance at vespers and all the services of the church, "that being satisfied with heavenly food ... none might be afraid of the Fight, but he be prepared for the Crown." These rules demanded submission, silence, chastity, and forbade private wealth, arrogance and speaking about the irregularities of others. The Knight was cautioned to afford to all an example of wisdom and perseverance in all good works.

Templars who broke their vows were severely punished. In the round Templar church in London, built in 1185, a penitential cell was built into the wall overlooking the chapel. Here, by a narrow winding stairs, disobedient Knights were taken and imprisoned. Through a slit in the wall, they could hear the service in the church below while, in some instances, they were allowed to starve to death.

The rough habit of the Templar was his white habit and mantle. His coarse diet was bare necessities, which he ate in silence. His severe duty was uncompromising adherence to the orders of the master and the behavior demanded by the Rules.

What parallel can we find between these ancient companions and today's events? A Past Commander offered a modern version relating his life experience from World War II in Italy. "I can give you a first-hand account of the topic," he wrote. "In 1942-1943, I walked in the footsteps of the Pilgrims coming from Europe to Jerusalem. As an infantryman, I walked about 1,500 miles from French Morocco to southern Tunisia ... over mountains, through mountain passes, with a two week's detour to the Sahara Desert. We - (the men of) the 60th Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division - had one O.D. uniform, one pair of socks and shoes, leggings and one

blanket. We had an overcoat to wear in the bitter cold of the night. Water was too precious to waste, 'C' Rations our diet. Combat was constant when we got into Tunisia. I got my first Purple Heart, but we were so far in the mountains the medic patched me up ... I imagine the Pilgrims had the same problems"

As we approach the end of the 20th century, we find we live in a society where the church has diminished influence. Organized social and fraternal groups no longer hold an interest in a society of advanced technology, prosperity-, and glamorous entertainment. We are lost in an ever increasingly impersonal world where everyone expects entitlement for something. Some would say our society is a wasteland.

As Templars we are unique; we are set apart. We are not only set apart from the profane world as Masons, but we are further set apart as Christians. We represent a contrast community in an estranged world. The precepts we are taught in Templary unite us in this community but the precepts must first be learned. Ours is a special obligation.

While we vow secrecy, obedience and support of basic tenets in the Symbolic degrees, honest work and charity in the Capitular and silence in the Cryptic, the Orders of Knighthood demand strict discipline. To accept rough habit, coarse diet and severe duty is a solemn obligation to self. We must take time from the mechanics of life to reflect on the meaning of life. We should be proud to be Templars but we have no reason to be proud of ourselves, for our work is the work of God. It is above and beyond the call of duty. As Templars, *we* are expected to, "go the extra mile for others, a sacrifice in Christ's name without complaint."

Beginning with the first step we took when we passed through the preparing room door into our Symbolic Lodge, ours has always been a symbolic journey.

Rough habit, coarse diet and severe duty were the conditions you accepted when you became a member of this order. They ask both for a literal devotion to Templary and an allegorical quest for the self.

History shows that the quality of life today is hollow. While we live in a period of great prosperity, we lack for real values and complain about spending an hour in fellowship or with family because of the pressing demands of our culture. Algernon Charles Swinburne's Arthurian poem *The Tale of Balen* (1896) has the King confront the frailty of his men and laments their inability to place the ideal above their own individual desires, "God gives them not the grace." In this tradition, we are reminded of our earthly goal as found in II Timothy, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course." In the Arthurian legends, the story of Parsifal's quest for the Grail is a story of letting go of the ego, which keeps us lost in a wasteland.

While the Arthurian impact of the Victorian era has waned, the myth is still found in popular media such as Star Wars and Indiana Jones. The image of the Knight Templar is kept alive in popular fiction by such writers as Katherine Kurtz and Umberto Eco. Of all known centuries, the present has been the most extreme manifestation of the wasteland. We must each realize we carry the deadly self-replicating virus which creates it. The Grail legend indicates a way of breaking away. The heroic act today, of giving up our lives for something bigger than ourselves is the only way back to the spirit. That heroic act is simply to allow the greater part of what has

been severed within us to fill the vacuum left when the false self, or ego, is left behind. Parsifal's true quest to find something bigger than himself left him humble and therefore worthy to receive that which he sought.

He was able to accept life as a natural whole. When we fail to let go of the ego, we fail to see ourselves reflected in the wasteland. We too must look at the emptiness within to find the source of wholeness that is the Grail.

We are all like Parsifal on a quest for truth. We too find we must set aright our foolish errors of the past. Our year of penitence has ended but our need for penance has not, nor can it end. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (I Corinthians 15:53)

The severe duty of the Knights Templar finds companionship in the quests of the Arthurian Knights for the Holy Grail. That cup, which has both pagan and Christian symbolism, is the object of a quest for spirituality and a search for absolutes. We have vowed to travel "even barefoot and on frozen ground" to aid another Sir Knight. The modern Knight Templar has passed through ceremonies, which should deeply impress him with the true value of life and enable him to wage war against the vanities and deceits of the world.

"Rough habit, coarse diet and severe duty" is an invitation to accept the continuation of that quest begun in the Symbolic Degrees. When we are offered these conditions, we are requested symbolically to take off the clothing of arrogance, pride and avarice and clothe ourselves instead in humility, faith and love. Our severe duty is a life of service and a quest for self. It is a quest within the depth of our souls, that wellspring of natural truth, whose goal is to make each of us that "omne datum optimum."



Templar and Christian Practices

Can each of you remember, in the Order of the Temple, when you were ushered into the Asylum as you sought admission to become a Sir Knight? After you commemorated our three Grand Masters of Ancient Craft Masonry, you were informed that you were seeking admission into an Order founded upon the Christian religion and the practice of the Christian virtues.

In this 'Keynote', we will examine those practices, which traditionally represent a foundation stone for our valiant and magnanimous order. The purpose of these Keynotes is to present a better understanding of our order by provoking thought and discussion on various aspects that are related to our ritual.

As a Christian Masonic body, we might expect there to be some parallel between church or ecclesial practices and those of Knights Templar. Two cautions are made at this point. First, we are neither a church nor a religion. We are, however, an organization of Masons who, as a prerequisite, must be believers in Christ. Our ritual is also deeply entrenched in scripture relating

to Christ and the lessons and precepts taught by the Nazarene. Second, while we are not a religion nor a specific denomination, we nevertheless encourage each Sir Knight to be a better Christian, nor can we too often remind each other of practices which are in that keeping. "Put them in remembrance of those things which tend to their everlasting peace."

We will examine those principles that should characterize us as a Commandery of Knights Templar and as individual Sir Knights. In a recent notice to his Commandery, Sir Knight William S. Behrends, Commander of Melita-Coeur de Leon Commandery No. 17, Scranton, PA, reminds us, "We are living in a rapidly changing world ... the tempo of our lives has changed along with our industry, economy, morals and perspective. The convictions of men and their daily routine have changed. The changes of the future are beyond perception and are uncertain. Some things do not change. In this there is consolation and hope. Our beloved fraternity does not change. Its principles are universal in daily application and are constant in character. Our fraternity's principles are founded within the Volume of the Sacred Law."

More specifically, the Volume of Sacred Law for us, as Templars, is the New Testament. The questions you answered in the Chamber of Reflection reaffirm the Christian character of our order. In Luke 6: 35-42, we are instructed to love our enemies, do good, be merciful, judge not and condemn not, and to cast the beam out of our own eye so we may see clearly. Are these not characteristics that we as Knights Templar should exemplify?

These thoughts, characteristics and practices are not intended for a Commandery to represent itself as a church. They are intended for us to look at those elements that give strength to our Templar background, lacking which, we become other than what we profess. When we examine our present circumstance we might find, along with declining membership, an eroding understanding of our principles, precepts and practices. Let us look for some insights to give us some guidance. Craig Dykstra, in his book *Growing in the Life of Christian Faith*, identifies thirteen "ecclesial practices." For our present purpose, we can group these into four categories which relate to our Templar activity:

Worshiping God, telling Christ's story, interpreting scripture and praying together. These are also activities that we do together as a Commandery. The opportunity to worship at the Grand Encampment Easter Sunrise Service, a divisional Ascension Service, Communion Breakfast at the Annual Conclave or a Commandery Worship Service at a local church all afford a spiritual togetherness for the members. In the Order of Malta, we hear the readings from the Book of Acts and the Gospel of Matthew and John. The Order of the Temple centers around the story of the passion. Likewise, our Christmas Observances are reminders of Christian love in our lives. While we do not interpret scripture as a group, yet we all reflect on scripture in the Chamber of Reflection. Matthew 5 reminds us, "Ye are the salt of the earth ... " and each candidate has an opportunity to reflect on his worthiness and consider life's meaning. Finally, there are many occasions on which we pray together as a Commandery; we do so in the opening and closing as well as at fellowship. The practice of praying allows us to understand others and to share their pain as well as their joys. This is the cement of fellowship.

Confessing, tolerating failure and encouraging one another, suffering with and for each other, and listening and talking attentively about life. The Orders of Malta and the Temple contain

several references to our practicing humility. When we admit our shortcomings and acknowledge our conflict with others, we have the opportunity to forgive and create a wholesome fellowship for individual growth. This is the declaration we made when we were first admitted into the asylum. When the Commander is installed, he is charged with important duties and responsibilities: "(T)o correct the vices, purify the morals, and promote the happiness" of his fellow Templars. Likewise, every Sir Knight being a necessary part of the Commandery should reflect on his individual behavior. While we should remind each other of our failures, most especially, we should encourage each other to correct our mistakes.

Struggling together to be conscious of the context in which we live and criticizing and resisting destroying powers. Mainstream Christian churches today find themselves in a changed environment with diminished influence. An understanding of the situation allows them to develop strategies for change. We too live in a social setting of diminished influence. Our awareness of this context can be brought about through programs of community concern, by insights provided to the membership by active members of our communities, and through the communication of our *Knight Templar* magazine. As Knights Templar, there are many public issues on which opinions are formulated. These can be presented in our civic and patriotic programs. A more direct action by the Commandery could be a service program to show that Templars care for a neglected aspect of the community.

Working together to maintain social institutions that accord with God's will, carrying out specific faithful acts of service and providing hospitality and care. As Knights Templar, we have three excellent charities to demonstrate this Christian practice: The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the Knights Templar Educational Foundation and the Holy Land Pilgrimage as well as the sponsorship and support of our youth organizations. Additionally many Comraderies have charity committees that give to local programs that exemplify our basic charitable belief in binding up the wounds of the afflicted; clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, etc.

We can not deny that many of our Templar practices are found to be similar to those which Dykstra relates. Perhaps you may wonder why we should be so concerned with ecclesial practices? Remember, we are not addressing church doctrine here, but church practices, i.e. these activities which when done together build unity.

The Templar community, your Commandery,, needs more than ever to have as many members as possible a part of the communal process.

Think back to when you experienced that portion of the Order of the Temple where each candidate partakes alone and in a similar manner to seal his faith. At that instant you were connected to every Sir Knight in Templary and, more especially, in your Commandery. You have sealed your faith, the Christian faith. The practice of your faith should be in all your actions, in all your walks in life. It may be thought of as a baptism into a new humanity and you should reflect upon it often. It is like breaking bread together which we may share with others through our gratitude and generosity in the way we live as individual Sir Knights. Each of us was welcomed into an order whose characteristics are unsullied honor, unwearied zeal and universal benevolence.

This paper has presented those ecclesial practices to which we can identify Templar practices. All of our ritual: our opening, our orders, our installation of officers and all the ceremonies which surround us, connects with these Christian practices. It should be a special unity. We may demonstrate this Templar unity most directly in our decision-making as Commandery, whether for planning an activity or voting on an issue. There should be a shared concern for each other to be guided by those principles of which we are constantly reminded in our ritual.

While our Constitution may set limits on discussion, there is a need for a process of Communication which is inclusive so that everyone has an opportunity to be a part of the communal decision. This communal unity in decision making takes time and concern. It is not for one leader to manipulate but for all members to discern. In a recent issue of *The Philatethes*, a list of eight guidelines is presented as "This is what Masonry is All About": 1; Masonry is love for God, 2; Masonry is love for one another, 3; Masonry is fairness and honesty, 4; Masonry is character and courtesy, 5; Masonry is love of freedom, love of country, 6; Masonry is kindness, sharing, caring and helping, 7; Masonry seeks only to make good men better, 8; Masonry is a way of life. These eight guidelines can be found in much of our ritual. As you continue your Templar experience, look further at the ritual and see what underlying themes of Templar practices you can apply as you go about your everyday life.

One final word, we can find many references in the ritual to Christian and Templar practices, precepts and virtues but perhaps we can sum them up simply with these words from the second verse of the hymn, *Onward, Christian Soldiers*; "*Brothers, we are treading where the Saints have trod; we are not divided, all one body we, one in hope and doctrine, one in charity.*"



Tried and True

The Installation Service of Officers of a Commandery includes the following passage toward the beginning of the ceremony:

"Sir Knights, you behold before you those who have been chosen as officers of this Commandery. We believe them to be tried and true, worthy and well qualified, zealous in the service of Templary, and true exemplars of the great tenets of the Order."

Section 139 of the Constitution and Statutes of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America (1987) states: "Any member in good standing is eligible to election to any office in the Commandery." As this qualification for office, and we emphasize any office, is "good standing", every Sir Knight should strive to exemplify those qualities which were quoted in the Installation above and should be ready should they be called to fill an office on the floor of their Commandery.

Tried and True

In the latter part of the 19th century, Horatio Alger wrote "rags to riches" books in which the hero, by pure pluck, changed the circumstance of his life. One such novel was *Try and Trust*. In Alger's story, our hero, Herbert, becomes an orphan at 14, is rejected by his uncle, and told to earn his own living. He gives him \$10.00 to start his life. He accepts the \$10.00 as a loan and is befriended by Doctor Kent.

Herbert receives a few dollars every once in a while from Doctor Kent and it seems everybody wants to take the money away from him. Dr. Kent had admonished him, "Let your aims be noble, try to do right at all hazards, and may God Bless your efforts and make you a good and true man." He suffers all sorts of adversity. By hard work, study, good fortune, but above all, doing what was right, Herbert, at the end of his career, left behind the reputation of a noble and honorable merchant and a life filled with good deeds.

Despite the trials, our hero remained true to his trust and, overcoming adversity, had a bright and shining career. Of course, Horatio Alger's were simpler times, but are we not all like Herbert? We are knighted into a Commandery as poor and humble pilgrims. It is through hard work and study that we understand what our daily lives are all about. Like Herbert, we are all charged to be trustworthy and true to ourselves. True to our knightly honor. Sure, it seems "corny" to make the analogy but what does our ritual teach us if we look at the deeper meaning? Doesn't it charge us to live by rules that are the exemplification of Christian teaching? If we do this, like Herbert, we will be true to the trust reposed in us and truly respected in our Masonic, as well as our private, careers.

Worthy and Well Qualified

Saint John, in his *The Revelation*, ascribes "Worthy is the Lamb." Jesus was worthy to receive honor and praise because of his sacrifice, "Paying the debt of the Law," to win for us our salvation, Jesus is the great Captain of Our Salvation precisely because he is "worthy and well-qualified." He was chosen of God for his great work, and completed it. As he said from the cross. "It Is Finished." "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

The Eminent Commander is worthy and well qualified by his sacrificial devotion to the tenets of Templary and willingness to lead others to a closer relation to their great Captain of Salvation. He is to teach the judgments of God. He is to purpose in his heart to be steadfast in his allegiance to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus. To be worthy and well qualified is to be filled with the fear of God, to be steadfast in God's service, firm in mind, animated in spirit, and strong in endeavors to do the right.

For us as Sir Knights, to be worthy and well qualified is to do no less. First and foremost, we cast ourselves upon the providence of Almighty God, for all good things come of God. We, too, purpose in our hearts to be steadfast in our allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are joyfully to follow God's will in our lives. We are to be gentle, prudent, loving, kind, benevolent, and do all we do to the honor and glory of God.

Following these admonitions and directions, we too shall hear, at the great gathering of the faithful, when our summons comes, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of our Master."

Zealous in his Service to Templary

The dictionary describes "zealous" as an adjective meaning full of, or characterized by, or due to zeal: ardently active, devoted, or diligent. Our zeal in the service of Templary is a zeal, not only for our Order, but also for our citizenship, our religion, and our Masonic endeavors. We have implied responsibilities in these areas.

We have a responsibility to ourselves. It is a zeal to seek knowledge and self improvement. It is a quest for better understanding of the esoteric meaning of Masonry and Templary. We have a responsibility to others, especially our associates in Templary. As the Generalissimo is charged at his installation to office, we should all, "Be faithful to the Sir Knights with whom we are associated, putting them often in remembrance to those things which tend to their everlasting peace." We have a responsibility to community. In all our Masonic bodies, we have been charged to practice those things outside the Lodge Hall, Asylum, etc. that we have been taught within. As Templars, we should be zealous as active citizens. We should not only obey the law, but support and participate in making our communities a better place. We have a responsibility to Masonry and especially Templary. We should be zealous in these endeavors and strive to actively participate in some form each year in our Masonic organizations. We have a responsibility to church. As Templars, we need to be zealous in our Christian practice. As Christian Masons, we are looked upon as a special group.

True Exemplar of the Great Tenets of the Order

Above all we must assure that, "precept and performance go hand in hand." As exemplars of our great tenets, we must seek and uphold truth, which "beareth away the victory." We must be true to self and prepared to acknowledge our own error in light of Truth.

As Templars we have been informed that Charity and Hospitality characterize our Order. When you were knighted, you were welcomed into the bosom of an Order characterized by uncompromising Honor, untiring Zeal and universal Benevolence.

The emblem of our Order and the motto "In Hoc Signo Vinces" should always remind you of your faith in the Great Captain of our salvation. The lessons of the Orders have taught you humility and to assist "the wayward traveler from the thorny paths of life." As Templars, we should "succor, defend and protect the innocent, distressed and helpless."

We are also reminded to practice virtue. Amid all the temptations which surround you, never be drawn away from your duty. Remember, after your knighting, you were instructed in the characteristics of your sword. It is symbolic sword, to wield in life and represent Justice, Fortitude and Mercy.

Finally, you should always keep the image of "Memento Mori" engraved in your earthly joys, that having burst the bonds of mortality, we may be greeted as brethren into the arms of the Blessed Emmanuel.

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is the first of our American Templar Orders. It was finally adopted in the 19th century and was not always accepted. In 1867, Alfred Creigh, the historiographer of Pennsylvania Templary, objected to the Order of the Red Cross as being "foreign to the Orders of Christian Knighthood." In Scotland, Ireland and Canada, he wrote, the Red Cross is regarded ~" a continuation of the Royal Arch Degree. It was manufactured by Thomas Smith Webb and his associates from the Knight of the East or Sword degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. He further informs us that the old Pennsylvania Grand Encampment of 1797 and the present English Templars from which our ritual originated discarded the Knight of the Red Cross degree.

The origin of the order is found in the Old Testament Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, and the apocryphal books of Esdras of the Jewish tradition. In one form or another, the story of Darius and Zerubbabel is found in the major Masonic rites. The objection to the order being a non-Christian degree and having no connection to knighthood was overcome by 1892, when the Grand Encampment unanimously adopted the "revised Ritual." "The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is not a pagan rite, nor is it a mere social observance. It is an Order founded upon Truth, recognizing *the* God of Truth as the only one true and living God. As such, it is a proper preparation for the solemnities of the Order of the Temple."

Truth is the cornerstone of the order. We find an allegorical illustration in the engraving by Bartolozzi in the 1784 *Book of Constitution* which shows Truth holding a mirror and illuminating the interior of Freemasons Hall. It suggests that Truth and her accompanying theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, are to be found throughout the study of Freemasonry. These three virtues are explained in the presentation of the sword.

The Illustrious Order of Red Cross is known by various other names in several parts of Europe and in the Scottish Rite. As the Red Cross of Babylon or the Knight of Babylon, it is connected with the Royal Arch. It is also known as the Knight of the Eagle and as Knight of the Sword. The ceremony takes place in two or three sections: the Jewish or Royal Arch Council and the Grand Council of Darius. In 1852, Jeremy Cross includes a prayer in his monitor, a prayer which begins in Old Testament form but then introduces, "Thine own exceeding rich mercies in Jesus Christ our Lord" and concludes with the Lord's Prayer. The monitor also outlines the passages of scripture: Ezra 3:8-11, Ezra 4, Nehemiah 4:7-20, Ezra 5 and Ezra 6:1-15.

There is "indisputable evidence that the degrees of Knight of the Red Cross and Knight Templar were conferred in Charleston, South Carolina, in a regularly organized body (Encampment No. 1) as far back as 1783." The evidence is a sealed parchment diploma of a cross and brazen serpent erected on a bridge and the motto *Jesu Salvator Hominum*. The diploma also bears the symbol of the Lodge of Perfection, indicating a connection at the time between Templarism and the Ancient Accepted Rite.

The Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite presents the story which unfolds in the Jewish Council, in the 15th, degree which is known as the Knight of the East or Knight of the Sword or

of the Eagle. The principal lessons are fidelity to trust, honor and duty. The exemplar in the degree represents perseverance and constancy. The Knight of the Sword alludes to the Masons building the second temple where they worked with trowel in one hand and sword in the other. The symbolic meaning of the eagle is liberty. The bridge which separates the Jewish and Persian apartments contains the letters LDP. The oldest meaning is from the French ritual "Liberte', de Passer" or Liberty of Passage. It is was interpreted by Albert Pike to be liberty of thought speech and action and the freedom which knowledge gives us.

The 16th Degree is the Prince of Jerusalem and teaches us to "Build the temple of the Living God m our hearts by following the Masonic Truths of justice, equality, morality, wisdom, labor, fidelity, brotherhood, to achieve immortality." Most of these virtues are also found in our Order of Red Cross. The degree also contains the familiar debate of the strength of wine, the king, women, and where Zerubbabel adds truth.

When we study both the York Rite Order and the Scottish Rite Degrees, we gain a deeper meaning for the episode played out in the Order of Red Cross. In 1889, we find reference in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction's 15th and 16th degrees, to the question for debate, "Which holds the most powerful sway over mortals?" The choices are King Darius, Beauty, and Truth. The Supreme Council 33rd degree for England and Wales, in 1893, waived authority over the *Red Cross of Babylon*, which was conferred by the Allied Masonic Degrees, who also disclaimed any right over the 15th., 16th and 17th degrees, called respectively Knights of the Sword or East, Princes of Jerusalem, and Knights of the East and West, being the Red Cross of Babylon.

It is in Ezra 5:3-17 that we come across Tat'tenai and She'thar-boz'enai. The basic story for our Order of Red Cross is also found in *The Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus in Book XI, Chapter III. Here Zerubbabel is one of the three guards who are to participate in the oration as to which is strongest: wine, kings or women "... or whether truth is not the strongest of all?" "... that which is unrighteous is of no force against it ... truth is a thing that is immortal and eternal" In the 3rd book of Esdras, Chapter III and IV, the speeches are similar but are formulated from the King's guards themselves, and not from King Darius.

Albert Pike reminds us in his comments on the degree Prince of Jerusalem that we can no longer expect to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple. "To us the whole world is God's temple, as is every upright heart."

The Allied Masonic Degrees of England included the Red Cross of Babylon. When the Sovereign College of Allied Masonic and Christian Degrees for America was established in 1892, receiving authority from this English counterpart, they also assumed control of the Red Cross of Babylon or the Babylonian Pass of Daniel. This was one of six degrees under the Lodge of St. Lawrence the Martyr. In 1932, the Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America was organized under the authority of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch chapter of Scotland and included the degree of Red Cross Knights or Babylonian Pass, including Knight of the Sword, Knight of the East, and Knight of the East and West.

The degrees of this Grand Council were to be conferred on Royal Arch Masons. Soon after the organization of the Grand Council, a union of the two Allied Masonic Degrees came about and

today the Grand Council Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America does not include the degrees of Red Cross of Babylon.

It is interesting that the Order of Red Cross was undoubtedly borrowed from the 15th and 16th degrees of the Scottish Rite and introduced into the American Templar system in the late 1790's. It is supposed to have been carried into England under the title Red Cross of Babylon. Mackey notes that it has also been connected with Cryptic Masonry but its only true connection is with the Royal Arch degree.

The Order of Red Cross is found in all major rites involving the construction of the second temple. It is also the 6th degree in the French Rite, the 6th degree of the Old System of the Royal York Lodge of Berlin, the 15th degree of Chapters of the Emperors of the East and West, the 52nd degree of the Collection of the Metropolitan Chapter of France, the 41st degree of the Rite of Mizraim, the 6th degree of the Rite of Philalethes, and the 11th degree of the Adonhiramite Rite. It is also conferred in the Council of Knight Masons of the United States of America, which came from the Knight Masons of Ireland.

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is our Templar connection to Ancient Craft Masonry. It bridges the operative degrees and the spiritual quest of Templary. It is a bridge of faith as we are guided by truth. In the Order of Red Cross, Zerubbabel, Prince of the House of Judah, is told to cross the bridge over the border of his homeland to the Persian empire. It is a treacherous crossing. He is captured and is apprehensive and fearful for his own life and the successful accomplishment of his mission. But God was with him, in the crossing and in the mission. The end of the journey led to the restoration of Zion's fortunes, with Zerubbabel achieving high honor and distinction.

In the days of the riding circuit judges in Illinois, it was the custom of practicing lawyers to follow the judges on the circuit for any work that they might pick up when court was in session. One evening, a number of these lawyers, including a young Abe Lincoln, were gathered at table in a local inn, discussing the hazards of crossing the Fox River. The discussion was animated and punctuated with tales of horror in trying to cross the Fox River, especially during the spring floods. As the evening wore on, the famed Methodist circuit rider Rev. Peter Cartwright joined the group. They quickly turned to him, for he had crossed the river many times in his travels, and they eagerly sought his advice in how best to cross the river, what to anticipate in fording this dangerous stream. Rev. Mr. Cartwright replied: "Gentlemen, I never cross the Fox River until I come to it."

As Knights Templar, we too, in our pilgrimage through life, must bridge many rivers of uncertainty. Sometimes those bridges lead us to fair lands and pleasing companions. Sometimes they lead us over troubled waters, fraught with danger and disaster. But our God is with us. He knows the way and the future. We are safe in His keeping and assured with His guidance. We can with confidence face the future if we are faithful to our mission and follow God's leading.

Grandfather's Sword

There are many things which may attract our attention and make Templary a unique and worthy goal. These things may take many forms: an item, a symbol, a word, a principle, or even someone's action. Do you remember when you were first called to Templary?

As we look at the following story told by one Sir Knight, put yourself in the place of the teller. View the story through his eyes and, as the adventure unfolds, in your own mind's eye, make these images your own. Let the experience also be your experience ...

“If I were to take a retrospective view of Freemasonry, I would have to journey back in the memory of time to those recesses of childhood many, many years ago and catch hold of my earliest images of that thing called Templary. The journey would take me up flights of stairs to a place which was forbidden to a child of four or five years. It would take me to a dark corner of an unlit and locked closet in the attic of my home, where grandfather kept some of his special things. Each Sunday, Grandfather would visit and officiate at dinner. He would occasionally visit his closet. Perhaps because it was forbidden, it was all the more interesting to know about. The aura of mystery made examining the contents of that closet all the more necessary. So began the venture ...

“The first opportunity provided just a glimpse, when one afternoon, the closet was open and I was able to peek past Grandpa to begin unraveling the mystery. Beyond the row of winter coats, back in the corner, leaning against the wall, was a package wrapped in newspaper and bound up by string. Having finished his business, the closet was locked and the secret was once more obscured.

“I had to know the contents of whatever was wrapped in that newspaper. Perhaps this was to be a preview of future lessons, for are we not taught to ask, to seek the truth, that truth shall carry the victory? In my childish curiosity, I inquired what was kept in the closet. All I was told was it was 'Masonic.' That forbidden closet and its secret were locked away. As time went by, the key to the closet, which hung from a string at the top of the door frame, came within reach—with the help of a chair. One day, I can remember carefully making my way up to the attic, taking down the key, and anxiously opening the closet. I had entered the 'holy of holies' and that *sanctum sanctorum* was about to yield up the very secrets of Masonry. Carefully, I untied the string and opened the paper wrapping and, finding a leather case, unlatched it and drew from within a shining sword. The handle was a knight's head and upon the blade was a scene of charging knights on horseback. There were tents and a skull and crossed bones and fancy engraving in the center of which was my grandfather's name. Just as carefully as I had opened it, I returned the sword to its case, wrapped it again in the newspaper and left everything as I had found it. The sword was, for me, a source of mystery and romantic adventure and, one day, I knew I would be a Knight Templar.”

No doubt, we can each tell a tale of our personal adventure, a quest to unravel the mystery which Masonry presents. Some, perhaps, look at Masonry as a way of solving the mystery of life, as though it could be deciphered. They would then have a code that they could put over their eyes

like a pair of 3-D glasses, to reveal that which was not seen. But what is not seen is the Spirit of Templary, which is within the breast of each Knight Templar. It is not to be deciphered, it is to be acted out so it may be seen by others.

In the Orders of Knighthood, the sword is a symbol which provides a lesson. In the Order of Red Cross, it is Faith, Hope and Charity. It is also an instrument which dramatically portrays the penalty given with the words.

In the Order of Malta, you deposited the sword upon the altar and, upon taking it up again, were admonished to wipe it spotless as a reminder of your future life, to wield it virtuously without fear, to maintain justice and protect the helpless. The sword was also pointed to the center of the cross to remind us of the passion of Christ.

In the Order of the Temple, your hands were placed on the sword in taking your obligation. You were challenged by the sword and, upon giving the cuts, communicated the password under an arch of steel. It was with the sword raised overhead that you gave the declaration to defend the helpless and the religion of Christ. When you sealed your faith, alone at the altar, you were given mystic assurance under a shining arch of swords. It was also under an arch of steel by which you were knighted by the Commander's sword. The sword represents Justice, Fortitude and Mercy and you were reminded to let your honor remain as pure as the glittering blade. You are also reminded of the words found in Isaiah 2:4, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares"

To us as Knights Templar, the sword has a utilitarian value. It is presented as a salute to our country's flag, it is at carry when giving instruction, it is at order during prayer, it is inverted during the Apostle's Creed, it is the instrument which sings the proclamation in the Installation of Officers, it is crossed in an arch of steel when receiving the Grand Commander, and it is the voice of authority when declaring the Conclave open.

The sword, furthermore, is a two-edged sword which symbolically teaches us to fight for truth while at the same time cutting out our own imperfections. We are reminded in Ephesians 6:17 to take, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...." And in Romans 13:4, "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In both the Old and the New Testament, we find references to the sword as symbolizing the word of truth; to slay the enemy and to cut through falsehood. Christ also is referred to~ the Word of God, like a two-edged sword, symbolically cutting through to show us the way, the truth and the life.

As Knights Templar, the sword we carry reminds us of our authority as Christians, our quest for truth and the spiritual word above all words. It also demands from us an accountability to stand up for, to take from a popular comic book character, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way".

As the Arthurian legend of the 'Sword in the Stone' provides colorful imagery, so should the Eminent Commander be a shining example of what is expected of every Knight Templar. Each Knight Templar can likewise draw his sword from the mystical stone of Templary and symbolically wield it as he goes forth in everyday life.

While we each may find different images that encouraged our becoming Knights Templar, they are also part of our collective unity that allows us to understanding the meaning of TempJary. Psalm 133 notes "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Our shared experiences should strengthen each of us that we may attract others. Just as grandfather's sword was one Sir Knight's stimulus, so should the unity and fellowship of the Commandery be as shining as an upheld sword, a beacon to welcome others.



Heroes of Past Ages

In the installation ceremony, the installing officer inducts the Commander into the chair of his Commandery and congratulates him. He proceeds to instruct him in his duties and then adds, " ... and finally, my frater, may the illustrious lives of the *heroes of past ages*, whose matchless valor has shed undying luster over the name Knights Templar, encourage and animate you to the faithful performance of every duty."

A hero is one of distinguished courage or ability. He may be admired for his brave deeds or noble qualities. He may be regarded for such as a model or ideal. He might possess strength, courage, ability or valor. As such, he would show a boldness or determination in facing great danger or monumental tasks. His spirit would be fearless and dauntless. Above all, he would not be timid in the performance of his required duty.

Who were these heroes of past ages? Certainly, we can pick out historical figures. In our study of the Crusades, we can find many examples of bravery, courage and exceptional qualities. In 1265, when Bendocdar conquered Safed, the captive Templars were ordered to choose between the Koran or death. When none would renounce his faith, the heads of 1,500 knightly warriors "speedily rolled at the feet of Bendocdar." The Preceptor of Safed along with priests of the Order were "beaten with clubs, flayed alive, and then beheaded."

Certainly the courage of Jacques DeMolay is another medieval example of abiding faith and noble action in renouncing the charges against the Templars, when faced with being slowly roasted and chained to a stake amidst a charcoal pyre,

In our own American history, we can cite the determination of Paul Revere, whose story in giving the alarm at the outset of the American Revolution we all know. During the American Civil War, many Templars distinguished themselves, including John P. S. Gobin, who was brevetted a brigadier general for gallant conduct at the Battle of Pocotalico in South Carolina. Sir Knight Gobin exhibited those qualities of knighthood that gained him the office of Right Eminent Grand Commander of Pennsylvania in 1879 and Grand Master of Grand Encampment in 1889.

Pennsylvania Past Grand Commanders Clyde P. Love and James H. Chickering give us Templar examples of having distinguished ability in organizing the first Gettysburg Ascension Service in

May 1931. Their efforts hosted 1,600 uniformed Sir Knights and an additional 2,000 non-uniformed Templars and their families. With swords raised overhead, during the Apostle's Creed, Chickering noted, "In this day when so much emphasis is placed on material rather than spiritual life ... we not only acknowledge the existence of a supreme being but are defenders of the teachings and religion given by his Son'

Charles B. Wolfertz, who served as Grand Commander in 1947, may be hailed for his undaunted determination and distinguished ability in creating and editing for a period of 20 years a monthly newsletter known as *The Crusader*. This mimeographed magazine served as the inspiration for the Knight Templar Magazine under Grand Master Paul Miller Moore.

There are many other historical figures from the annals of Knights Templary who have performed outstanding service to their country and to their fraternity. They exemplified Christian Knighthood, and strengthened the name Knights Templar. Certainly we can look in our local history and also find *the heroes of past ages*, those men, who served above and beyond the call of duty and have made an indelible mark in the history of our Commanderies.

What made them exceptional Templars to be remembered? Perhaps we remember them in the not too distant past as those who were always there, an exemplar to emulate, a sage counselor who could be called upon for advice, and the solid citizen who demonstrated that Templary extended beyond the Asylum into everyday life. They showed a tireless devotion to Templary. If each of us reflect on the valor of these 'Spirits of Templary' and faithfully perform our duty, we may in future years earn that same cherished position and stand remembered.

We are reminded of the speech by King Henry V before the Battle of Agincourt as described by Shakespeare in *Henry V*, Act 4, Scene 3. "This day is called - the feast of Crispian ... will yearly on the vigil feast his friends ... then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars and say, *These wounds I had on Crispian's day* ... what feats he did that day. Then shall our names, familiar in their mouths as household words - ... be in their flowing cups freshly remembered: This story shall the good man teach his son; And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by from this day to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remembered: we few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for he, today, that sheds his blood with me, shall be my brother ... And gentlemen in England, now abed, shall think themselves accursed, they were not here: and hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks, That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day." Can not we too stand for the moment, and make our sacrifice of time and talent to defend our principles to build Templary and be remembered?

In our Commanderies today, the Eminent Commander may choose the heroic path to lead his Commandery to overcome the 'monumental tasks' which are necessary for the preservation and growth of his Commandery, or he may choose, rather than the intrepid way, that of being timid and forgotten on the future annals of Templary.

As Knights Templar we may receive a similar admonition that, if we faithfully discharge our duty, we too will be remembered in the same heroic light. The faithful discharge of our duty, which may be recorded in the book of heroic knights, is not simply a blind following of the past.

It is a faithful performance with a distinct goal in mind. When we put on the mantle of Templary, we accept membership in the bosom of an Order that holds certain precepts and expectations. We are called upon to defend the helpless, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted. As TempJars we are challenged to seek truth, defend the Christian religion, and uphold justice.

The challenge for our future registry in the annals of heroism is to have a well conceived vision, a goal for the continuance of Templary and to strive along that path with conviction and without deviation.



Prayer for a New Sir Knight

O God, our Father, whose command is over all and whose love never faileth, let us be aware of Thy Holy Presence and obedient to Thy Will.

Encourage us in our endeavors to live above the common level of life.

Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won.

Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy, that scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when Truth and Right are in jeopardy.

Empower these Sir Knights with the revitalized desire to go forth and grow our organization.

Open all our minds to creative new ways of recruitment and retention to better fill the ranks of Templary in our time.

Help us accept these responsibilities with strong hearts and cheerful minds. And let our uniforms remind each of us of our dedication to duty and of service to the Great Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, USA

<http://www.knightstemplar.org>