

The Grand Commanders Program 2015-2016

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“Faith”

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” (Hebrews 11: 1-3)

This has always been one of the many verses in the Bible that causes me to reflect on the past as well as giving me strength for the future. This one word is all encompassing; there is nothing that can't be accomplished with faith. This Fraternity we call Knights Templar was founded on Christian principles and ideals. This is *the* Masonic organization that freely expresses its Christian foundation. We cannot separate these principles from our daily lives. Rather we need to live our faith inside and outside of our Templar Asylums. Always remember, someone is watching you. You are what the general public thinks of as Masons and Christians.

We need to practice the basic principles that both Freemasonry and Templary teach us: namely, Brotherhood.

Each Knight Templar needs to reflect on this simple word. Are you practicing brotherhood? Do you really understand what is meant by the word? Do you have faith in the term Masonic Brotherhood? I believe this verse explains brotherhood as well as any.

“For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”
(Ecclesiastes 4:10-12)

Are we standing behind a Frater waiting to shove him when he stumbles? Or are we there to catch him? What would you have done when asked if you knew Christ? Would you have been like Peter?

“Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed.”
(Matthew 26:74)

Have “Faith” in the Brotherhood. Let's stand up not only for one another but for Christianity!

Membership: The goal for this Templar year is not a statewide goal of knightings. It will be constituent and Division specific. With that in mind, every Commandery will have a minimum expectation of obtaining an increase of 6% or more of their membership, using the numbers on the UAR May 31, 2015. The other membership incentives program (the patch, hat, jacket, and cord) is still in place. We also need to work on membership retention. We are losing far too many Sir Knights due to Masonic non-affiliation. If we make an effort to retain these members instead of just dropping them, our future will look much brighter.

Youth Organizations: It is our Templar duty to support our DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow in any way possible. Our youth are the future of this Fraternity, and we need to do all in our power to see that they succeed.

Knights Templar Eye Foundation: Ohio should be leading the way in this charitable cause. We as Knights Templar should be proud of what we have done to help in research.

Holy Land Pilgrimage: Once again we look forward to sending Ordained Ministers to “Walk Where Jesus Walked”. If your Commandery has never sent a minister to the Holy Land, consider raising funds for this worthwhile cause. I would ask that your Commandery donate just \$1.00 per member to this fund. This amount is much less than a cup of coffee, but look at the return we would gain off such a small investment! Last year's Right Eminent Grand Commander raised over \$4,000; it is my desire to surpass that amount.

Civic, Public, and Patriotic Activities: Every year we Post Colors, form an Honor Guard for our deceased Sir Knights, march in parades, attend church in uniform, and attend the Easter Sunrise Service in Washington, D.C. These highly visible activities contribute to the respect others have for our fraternity. I would encourage each of you to participate in as many of these activities as possible.

Drill Teams: Each year at our Grand Commandery Conclave, we lead the way for other states to follow with our enviable drill team competition. Many states have sent representatives to Ohio just to see what we do and how we maintain such a long-standing tradition. Each new Sir Knight might be willing to take part in your Commandery drill team if you just ask.

Ritual Competition: This year on Saturday during the drill competition, we will be trying something new. We will have specific areas of Ritual that will be judged and awards given out to those who stand out above the rest. This is an excellent way to showcase an outstanding ritualist from your Commandery that may not be interested in drill.

The Ohio Masonic Homes: This has been a blessing for many Ohio Masons over the years. As you know, there are three including the Springfield Campus, Browning near Toledo, and Western Reserve near Medina. With these fine facilities, we are able to assist our Brethren and Sir Knights, as well as the general public. If you have not been to one of our Masonic Homes, consider a visit to see for yourself what we do.

Observance of Holy Days: Every Commandery shall hold or attend a Divine Service for the observance of Christmas, Holy Week including Good Friday and Easter, and Ascension Day. This has been a long-standing tradition and is an excellent opportunity to involve non-Masons in our activities.

York Rite Festivals: I would encourage every Division in the State of Ohio to hold a York Rite Festival during the year. Festivals allow us to work those candidates that can't make regular initiatory work during the week.

Schools of Instruction: This is vital to every Commandery, as during these schools we can learn the proper way of doing the work. Many Sir Knights have been around for years and their experience is important, but things change and so we must learn the proper way to interpret the Ritual and Tactics. It should not matter what Division your Commandery is in or which Commandery you attend, the Ritual and Tactics should be uniform everywhere!

Mentors: This year, I challenge every Commandery to assign a mentor to new Sir Knights. These veterans will talk with the candidate during "free time" in the Orders, explaining what he is witnessing. He is also to call and invite the new Sir Knight to Commandery functions and sit with him during meetings and events. Commandery officers do not get a free pass on mentoring just because you occupy a station during a stated Conclave. In fact, your leadership skills make YOU an ideal mentor. Ask other venerable Sir Knights to sit with the new Knight when you assume your station.

Ritual and Tactics: Last, but certainly not least, is adherence to the Ritual and Tactics. The Commandery Orders are beautiful and impressive, and we have a fraternal duty to do our best to impress the candidate. In doing so, he will want to come back and take an active part in the ceremony of these Christian Orders. All I ask is for you to be prepared for the Orders and do your very best. You only get one chance to impress a candidate, so DO IT RIGHT!!!

In conclusion, we must all have faith that with the blessings of God we will move this Grand Commandery forward. If we have faith in God, we will prevail. If we have faith in the fraternity, we will prevail. If we have faith in each other, we will prevail. If we have faith in the true sense of brotherhood, we will prevail.

Have faith in the future!



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Right Eminent Grand Commander