

# Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida



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## GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Sir Knights: Grace and Peace to you. I trust this article finds you and your family doing well and in good health. I also hope that you have received similar blessings as those I have received since I became a Knight Templar.

Last month I introduced my plan and promised to tell you more about myself and the source of that plan which coincided with my decision to join the Lodge. I am offering this information to you because it is the basis and justification for everything that I will say and do this year.

At the time I considered joining the Lodge, my life had ebbed to a very low point. I was divorced and living alone. I was afraid to seriously consider entering into another marital relationship. My business had gone sour and I was limping my way into a new career. My major financial burden had been caused by the unplanned renting and managing some "low income housing" that I had built for an individual who ended up going to prison. I had attended various churches for more than fifty years and had no doubt that fact made me a Christian. I considered myself to be a good person and lived by my own moral code: Believe in God, Live by the Golden Rule and keep your word. (Long ago, I ignored a Chaplain who told me there was more to Christianity than this.)

When I considered my decision to join the Lodge, I had already heard some bad stories about Freemasonry. I had also met many fine men who inspired my interest to join the fraternity. My choice became clear when I learned that George Washington and many of America's founders had been Freemasons. I decided that I would join the Lodge with an open mind and have the pleasure of experiencing something that George Washington had done. In the recesses of my mind, I resolved to do whatever I had to do, if the bad rumors turned out to be true.

My purpose, in writing this article, is to witness the critical importance of receiving and acting on God's Word. If I am able to help, even one brother, to fill the sense of hollowness that I once felt, this entire year will have been worthwhile to me.

My awakening began at my first Festival. Soon after the Prelate's reading of the Scriptures, I visited the triangle and became intensely touched. I realized a burning desire to actually find God. While driving home, I became fixed on the hollowness that had always seemed to nag me when I was alone. I always believed there was a God, but where was God? How could I find Him? I had already looked in churches...a thought popped into my mind.

I remembered the Worshipful Master who had presented me with my King James Version "Masonic" Bible. He admonished me to make it the rule and guide to my faith and practice. He also instructed me to seek the Light in Masonry...I reasoned that I

should be able to get some ideas on how to find God in that Bible. Upon reaching home, I located the Bible that had the Square and Compasses on the cover and began my reading and studying. Because of an article describing the Christian Life and the Scriptures upon which it was based, I came to the shocking realization that I was not even a Christian.

I was instantly terrified and devastated by that awareness. From my innermost being, I prayed to the Lord to show me where and how to find Him. I now realized that I had failed in my personal efforts to find Him; I knew I could not find Him without His help. I prayed that He would forgive me of my sins, renew my spirit and come into my life as my Savior and my Lord...a sense of calmness enveloped me and I knew that I needed to attend Bible Study at a church.

After becoming lost on my way to the church of my choice, I wound up at the church of His choice. It also turned out to be the place where I had been led to meet and marry my Lady, Judith Ann, who was a widow at the time. That spiritual restoration began eleven years ago and marked the beginning of the total transformation of my life. I can now look backward in my life and see how following the Lord has changed me into a better man.

Judith Ann and I merged our lives into marriage and began to share our Christian walk as one. We offered ourselves as useful vessels of the Lord and this resulted in our lives being blessed in many ways. We bought an RV and made plans to spend our retirement traveling around the country. We had no plans to stay in Florida or to get into the Grand Line. As things changed in our lives, we moved to our new residence in The Villages, which was where we felt God had called us. We soon began to host Bible Studies in our home. We began to host a weekly Bible study that now has 250 persons in attendance. Two years ago, we traveled to Israel so that we could experience walking where Jesus had walked and doing things that Jesus had done. We rode in a "Jesus boat" on the Sea of Galilee and were re-baptized in the Jordan River. We even had our marriage vows re-affirmed at Cana, where Jesus changed the water to wine at the wedding.

I believe that all Sir Knights should take the lead in using the Holy Bible as the primary source for defining Freemasonry. Although we can not discuss the Spiritual aspects of the Scriptures in the Lodge, we can teach Basic Masonic Education, which is the intellectual use of the Bible as the primary source for seeking intellectual light. In that way our brothers can understand the true meaning of the morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

While studying my Bible, the Holy Spirit enabled me to understand the astounding spiritual lessons that are embedded in the Lodge Ritual. I now have no doubt as to why the Third Degree is the highest degree in Freemasonry.

My fellow Sir Knights, may the Lord bestow His blessings upon of all you and your families. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Courteously and Fraternally,  
Ideal Baldoni  
*Right Eminent Grand Commander*

Grand Encampment has a new web site located at:  
**[www.knightstemplar.org](http://www.knightstemplar.org)**  
The next time you are online, check out the site and let us know  
you visited us by signing our guest book.