

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida



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GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Sir Knights: Grace and peace to you.

The Florida Masonic Monitor tells us, "To begin well is the most likely means to end well." I began this series of articles by beginning with the events that led me to this office. They actually started when I first stood in the northeast corner of the Lodge and my outward appearance was described to me. Thank you for allowing me, in the first two of these articles, to symbolically return to that beginning point so I could offer an account of my ensuing "internal" development, which is the basis for my personal program.

It is now time to point out a few of the projects that have been put into motion this year, and to finish by introducing my program theme for the Grand Commandery.

Lady Judith Ann and I are sponsoring a 7-day Charity Cruise to the Eastern Caribbean, on the Norwegian Pearl, October 10th – 17th, 2009, to benefit the KTEF. We hope you can join us! The flyer is available on the Florida Grand York Rite website. We have been on two previous York Rite Cruises and they were both a time of fun and fellowship, with our brothers and sisters. We are getting a lot of positive response and space is limited. Please make your reservations soon.

In June, we are hosting the Grand Commander's Retreat at The Villages. Grand Officers, District Deputies, District Instructors and their Ladies have been invited. We plan to get better acquainted, while enjoying each other's company, in the bonds of friendship and brotherly love.

As of this writing, York University has been scheduled for July 31st to August 2nd at the Marriott at Lake Mary. Judith Ann and I have both attended York University and we found it to be an excellent program. In fact, everyone that I have ever spoken with regarding the experience enjoyed it, benefited from it, and recommended it. I personally believe that it is important for all Commandery members to receive the York University leadership training so they can be better equipped to effectively serve in positions of responsibility. In a future issue, I will tell you of steps we are taking to make the benefits of York University more available to all Sir Knights.

It was great that our Grand Commandery was able to send Ministers to the Holy Land during the last Chivalric year, and it has become our duty to replenish the fund so we can send more this year. With that goal in mind, I have asked the District Deputy Grand Commanders to promote Table Commanderies within their districts for the purpose of funding the Holy Land Pilgrimage. I will also be asking each Commandery to host a Table Commandery (or some other event), to raise funds for that purpose. If they would prefer, I would ask each Commandery to reinstitute the previous tradition of donating at least \$50.00 per year to the fund. I will also ask any Commandery that has

the resources, to fully fund the trip for a Minister. I am very supportive of this program and I will expand on my reasons.

My initial Templar experiences caused me to become greatly interested in the concept of visits to the Holy Land. Reading the Bible gave Judith Ann and me the desire to actually go and experience it for ourselves. Three years ago, we visited Israel on a 10-day tour. Our experiences left us with no doubt that a trip to the Holy Land would be the greatest traveling experience in any Minister's life. I'll mention a few examples of breathtaking adventures that can only be experienced in the Holy Land; we rode on a boat on the Sea of Galilee while our Minister read the related Scriptures. The day was beautiful and I looked around, knowing that I was seeing the same mountains and terrain that Jesus saw. It was exhilarating. Judith Ann and I renewed our marriage vows at Cana, where Jesus performed His first miracle by turning the water into wine at the wedding. We visited the Jordan River and, even though it was cold and windy on that day, we both were baptized in the way that Jesus was. On our last day, we visited the Garden Tomb. Near the tomb, fourteen of us participated in Holy Communion. We enjoyed the Holy Land so much that we went there again this March. This time it was part of a Bible Cruise that started in Egypt. We visited sites of Paul's journeys in Israel, Turkey, Greece, and Rome. Judith Ann and I recommend the Holy Land Pilgrimage, not only for Ministers, but also as a wonderful, life changing experience, for all Christians.

I have previously explained the personal perceptions that I received from my search for the advanced Light in Masonry that reaches beyond the basic tenets of morality that remain fixed in the three degrees. To my statements, I must add that I fully agree with the position that every Mason is charged to individually make his own search for light. No individual is entitled to state or imply that his personal opinion speaks for any other Mason or group of Masons. Each brother is directed to seek his own light. That light could be a reflection of knowledge, wisdom, brotherly love, personal talent, or manifested in a multitude of other ways. Whatever it is, it will come according to his own studies and be the result of his own conclusions and opinions. It is well known that, in the past, men would ask Masons how they could join Freemasonry. Masons were not allowed to ask non-members to join and membership still grew. Why did those men ask to become Masons? Because they saw something special in the Mason(s) they knew. It seems to me, whatever quality(s) impressed them can be referred to as the light they perceived. An appreciation for and a desire to emulate that light became the inspiration to join.

I believe that we should encourage every Sir Knight to seek his own light so he can grow into a shining beacon. If enough of us brightly shine our light, we will attract Christian Masons who will gladly want to become our fellow Sir Knights. The program theme for this year is to encourage Knights Templar to: *Let your light shine.*

Courteously and Fraternally,
Ideal Baldoni
Right Eminent Grand Commander

*The Grand High Priest's Homecoming was changed to February 6, 2010.
The Jacksonville District 7 meeting will now be held on Thursday, October 1, 2009.*

Grand Encampment has a new web site located at:
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.