



# Pennsylvania Crusader

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
pagrandcommandery.org

**S.K. Harry J. Smith, Grand Commander**  
[smithhjktpa@gmail.com](mailto:smithhjktpa@gmail.com)

Editor: SK Mark G. Mattern, PGC email: grandrecgcktpa@gmail.com



## June 2022

My Fellow Fraters:

I am humbled and honored to serve as your Grand Commander for this coming Templar year. I am looking forward to building upon the great works of my predecessor, Sir Knight Mark Granville Mattern, Past Grand Commander as we continue to rebuild our ranks through Knightings, Retention and Reinstatement.

My theme this Templar year is "Our Basic Tenets". Let our actions reflect on the Oath we took at the foot of the Altar to Feed the Hungry, Clothe the Naked & Bind Up the Wounds of the Afflicted. Let this not limit who and what we can assist in this fashion. The post-Pandemic era (as expected) is resulting in a significant number of pet surrenders and the result has shelters and rescues overwhelmed and under-fortified. These innocent animals only wanted to be loved and to give love unconditionally; now they are castaways and forgotten about. Please remember your local, private "no-kill" animal shelters, rescues and sanctuaries by conducting a pet/animal food drive, collecting towels, bedsheets, blankets, cat litter, dog & cat toys and cleaning supplies.

Sir Knights, we are at (if not already past) a crucial crossroads in Templary. Our ranks have been ravaged by Deaths, Demits and Suspensions. The world is looking for an Organization, a Symbol of all that is Good and Right, a Light in the Darkness of today's society. Our spiritual beliefs can be passed on to everyone by our acts of Kindness and Charity. We as Knights Templar MUST demonstrate that we are above the fray in our everyday actions of Tolerance and Brotherly Love. Let everyone SEE the Good Works we as Knights Templar do within our own towns and villages. Let us not hide within the walls of our Asylums, but rather be out in public, demonstrating what the modern-day Templars represent. Who knows; our actions and conduct may entice a good, upright man to become a Mason. More especially, a Mason may want to become a Knight Templar.

I enjoin it upon all the Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Pennsylvania; "Let Us Light Up the Darkness, and Fulfill Our Basic Tenets for All to See"!

Courteously,  
Sir Knight Harry Jude Smith, Right Eminent Grand Commander  
Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Pennsylvania

A Letter from the Grand Prelate:

A little boy came home after his very first Sunday School class; Mom asked who his teacher was. Little boy answered, "She was a real nice lady. I don't remember her name, but she must've been Jesus' grandma or something, because she didn't talk about anybody else all morning."

It's obvious this woman was a devoted teacher and a devoted Christian. The question this story and this passage asks us is: "Are we as devoted?" Do our actions and our conversation reflect our love for Jesus? Do our words and actions give away our relationship with the Savior?

I wish to thank the Right Eminent Gran Commander for 2022-2023 Sir Knight Harry Smith for appointing me as Grand Prelate for his term in office. His theme this year is "Our Basic Tenets" and I will try to remind us of God's call to us to do more than take an oath to be God's warriors and to remember our Faith is to be in action. As you read this we may already be in the Pentecost season or it may only be weeks away. Pentecost reminds us that the early church sprang into action and devoted themselves as the words of Acts 2: 42 remind us, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers"

Over the next months I hope to raise again to us those Tenets that we should be devoted to as Templars. This passage is a living snapshot of the life of the early church. It reveals their devotion and faith. It reveals what was central to their lives and the character of their discipleship. The passage says they were devoted. And to what!

First to:

Bible Study & Worship: First it says "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching." I've always interpreted that to mean they spent time in study and worship. Both are very important aspects of our faith. We learn about and are drawn closer to God and become better disciples through Bible study and worship.

According to a Research Group ours is a generation of Biblical illiteracy. In a recent survey they found that only 61% of Christians know that Jonah is a book in the Bible. And 30% didn't know where Jesus was born. 24% of Christians surveyed thought that the book of Isaiah was in the New Testament or didn't even guess where it could be found.

That shouldn't surprise us. After all 93% of Americans own at least one Bible but 70% of non-Christians and 23% of Christians said they never read the Bible at all.) How can we know anything about a book we never read. Contrast that to the early Church. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching." People are starving for answers to problems. Some are dying from spiritual starvation and yet they never open up God's guidebook to life. Or they never attend a worship service and just soak in the presence of God. The early church "devoted themselves" to this effort. As we begin our journey together may we start by dusting off our Bibles and being devoted to learn of what God would have us do again.

Yours in Christ;

Sir Knight and Reverend A. Preston Van Deursen  
Grand Prelate