

Connecticut

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Grand Commander



Knightly News

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Sir Knights,

As you read this, we are quickly approaching the dog days of summer and I hope that you have enjoyed the long days and warm sun. While we still don't know the direction and shape that our ability to return to our Asylums will take, we do know that it will be different and that is okay. While we have not been able to meet together in our asylums since March, I can happily say that each and every Commandery has meet at least once virtually since our new Templar year began in April, thank you to all the Commanders and Recorders for making this happen. The Grand Commandery has also been able to host two statewide religious services, Ascension Day and St. John the Baptist. It is because of the hard work of the Grand Prelate team that we have been able to transition both of these traditional services into being conducted virtually. The Grand Prelate and all three Associate Grand Prelates have taken part in each of the services and bring unique perspective and understanding that we, as Sir Knights, are able to grow in our own understanding and faith.

With every virtual meeting, conclave, and service I am encouraged by the ability to reconnect with Sir Knights that are no longer able to attend in person for one reason or another. If this is the highlight of meeting virtually, I will happily take it. In that light I have met many Sir Knights from every Commandery that I would never had the opportunity otherwise. Yet, the best was being able to see a Sir Knight attend his Commandery for the first time in several years due to a severe health issue two years ago. The virtual meeting may not be perfect but there are positive stories and our Commanderies have made them meaningful and worth the time and effort.

The Power of One

Almost twenty years ago I witnessed a very important lesson, that each and every candidate is equally important and regardless of how many there are they deserve our best effort. This is the story of how that lesson was learned...

A struggling Commandery received several petitions one spring and being unable to confer the Orders due to a lack of active members they requested help from surrounding Commanderies from which no help was to be found. They then sent a request to the Grand Commandery. The Grand Commandery officers along with several other Sir Knights from eight Commanderies came together on Saturday in December with a plan to confer all three Orders for these several Companions. By time they gathered and were ready to start the day they were faced with the realization that only one candidate was able to show up. Over the course of the day they provided a deep and lasting impression upon that one, they showed a love of the work, the faith and the fellowship. At the end of the day the Grand Commander was giving his remarks and impressing upon not only the new Sir Knight but all, that one has the power to change the direction of a Commandery and provide that spark to move a struggling body to growth and renewal. In the best case it was his hope that this new Sir Knight would be that spark but at the least to become active and involved.

Whenever we may safely return to work in our Asylums it will take team work to provide the Orders for incoming Companions. It is up to all of us to give these candidates the best we have and show them that each one of them is important. Let us show them the love of the work, faith and fellowship that they all deserve. Anytime a Commandery looks for help with work every Sir Knight should be willing to answer that call, even if it just to offer support from the sidelines. It is because of this lesson that I have always will be willing to travel, even more than forty miles and over frozen ground, to give a helping hand for any degree or Order. As Christians we understand that one person can change the world; while I don't expect that out of any candidate, they could be the one to provide a positive change in their Commandery and help move it forward.

Until I see you down the road be safe and keep your Fraters in your prayers...

James S. McNeely, KCT, KTCH
Grand Commander