

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida



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GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Sir Knights: Someone recently sent me the following examples of Templar education. It is very important to familiarize ourselves with all aspects of Templar symbolism. I hope you enjoy reading these as much as I did.

The Symbolism of the Templar Seal

Before looking at the seal that has become synonymous with the Templar order it is first important that we have an understanding of the purpose of such seals. In the Middle Ages, the most common way to show the authenticity of a document was to affix a seal to it. These seals were images carved into a block which, when pressed into warm wax, left behind an inverse image of the picture. It worked much like a modern photo negative does. It identified the author of the document and was meant to stop people from forging or tampering with official documents and correspondence. In an age when even illiterate people needed to conduct business transactions, seals allowed an individual to declare his agreement even if he couldn't sign his name.



There were seals of ecclesiastical bodies, monarchs, individuals, and even orders like the Templars. Although one image would, in modern times, become synonymous with the order, there were in fact many Templar Seals. However it is this traditional seal that has garnered the most attention and speculation. The traditional seal of the Knights Templar depicted two knights riding a single mount and was actually the seal of Grand Master Bertrand De Blanchfort, who developed the seal for his personal usage in 1168.

It was Bernard de Clairvaux and founder Hugues de Payens who devised the specific code of behavior for the Templar Order, known to modern historians as the Latin Rule. Its 72 clauses defined the ideal

behavior for the Knights, such as the types of robes they were to wear and how many horses they could have. Knights were to take their meals in silence, eat meat no more than three times per week, and have no physical contact of any kind with women, even members of their own family. A Master of the Order was assigned "4 horses, and one chaplain-brother and one clerk with three horses, and one sergeant brother with two horses, and one gentleman valet to carry his shield and lance, with one horse."

The image of the two knights astride a single mount was said to represent their vow of poverty. The original, founding members being so poor that each knight could not afford his own horse. While this is perhaps true of the original nine members, it certainly was not representative of the group as a whole latterly, as during De Blanchefort's reign the Templars had great wealth in both land and other assets. So great was this wealth, that they lent it to monarchs and in so doing, quite likely invented the banking system as we know it.

As the Order grew, more guidelines were added, and the original list of 72 clauses of the Latin Rule expanded to several hundred in its final form.

The Lamb of God

Symbolism with the image of Jesus as a lamb is one of the most common and striking examples of Christian symbolism. The reference to the lamb can be found in many of the books of the Bible. In Christian symbolism, the lamb represents Jesus, "the Lamb of God" (Agnus Dei). Standing with a banner, the lamb represents the risen Christ triumphant over death. Standing with a cross and a gash in its side, it symbolizes the passion of Christ. Seated on a throne or a book, the lamb represents the judgment of Christ. Because the lamb is humble, gentle, and innocent, lambs are often engraved on the tombstones of children.



The symbolism of the lamb and the cross is part of the rich panorama of Christian symbolism. Its use in Templary is both appropriate and instructive.

Courteously and Fraternally,

Leroy Fackler
Right Eminent Grand Commander

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.