

# Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida



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## GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Sir Knights: The Fourth of July is a day most of us celebrate with picnics, parades or just pursuing our favorite pastime without really contemplating the enormity of the day.

The United States celebrates its Independence Day on July 4, a day of patriotic celebration and family events throughout the country. In the words of Founding Father John Adams, the holiday is "the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, .... It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more." The holiday is a major civic occasion, with roots deep in the Anglo-American tradition of political freedom.

On July 4, 1788, Founding Father James Wilson addressed a Philadelphia gathering that was, at that time, possibly the largest July 4 celebration in the young nation's history. He exhorted his fellow citizens to ratify the proposed Constitution. "What is the object exhibited to our contemplation?" he asked. "A WHOLE PEOPLE exercising its first and greatest power -- performing an act of SOVEREIGNTY, ORIGINAL and UNLIMITED ...."

Near the darkest moments of World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt reminded the nation that July 4 symbolized "the democratic freedom which our citizens claim as their birthright:"

For the "weary, hungry, unequipped Army of the American Revolution," he continued, "the Fourth of July was a tonic of hope and inspiration. So is it now .... The tough, grim men who fight for freedom in this dark hour take heart in its message -- the assurance of the right to liberty under God -- for all peoples and races and groups and nations, everywhere in the world."

Let us never forget those brave souls who sacrificed their wealth and even their lives by signing a Declaration of Independence from England.

(Incidentally many of these men were Freemasons.) An act that made them traitors in the eyes of the Crown, and subject to imprisonment or death. Freedom was not won by the pen alone; it had to be played out on the battle fields of the Revolutionary War at a great loss of life and limb.

The freedom of our nation is a privilege that came through the generous sacrifice of those who have gone before us. We are indebted to those who presently serve both here and far from their homeland. We owe our grateful appreciation for men and women presently serving in harm's way throughout the world. These who serve also preserve our freedom as a nation. In our community we should be thankful for the hundreds and even thousands who have served our country. Thanks to all who serve and have served through the years.

Our voice, vote and even debate, are healthy signs of a democracy. We are able to live the American Dream by our Declaration of Independence—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among those are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In America, we live with the privilege of freedom to pursue our dreams. We are truly blessed to live in a free nation.

Freedom is more than doing whatever we want to do or say. If we are to remain free, the truth must guide our choices. Freedom also does not come without personal responsibility. The life of freedom requires choices and accountability.

The Fourth of July is a time when elected officials and other public figures give speeches extolling American traditions and values. There is an old saying that "If you do not vote, do not complain of who gets elected." With this in mind, be sure to vote for the candidate of your choice this fall.

Every Christian Mason ought to be a Knight Templar.

Courteously and Fraternally,

Charles Perez  
*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.