

# Grand Commandery of New York

## *February News*



S.K. Conrad Johnson  
Grand Commander

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Sir Knights:

Happy New Year! This past December I had the pleasure and privilege to visit several Commanderies—from Central City down to Couer de Lion, Columbian, Morton and Bay Ridge Commanderies in New York City, out to Patchogue in Suffolk and Empire DeWitt Clinton in Staten Island. Thank you to all of the Commanderies and Sir Knights that invited me to join in your celebrations. I was hoping to make a few more in the Syracuse and Albany area, but personal family circumstances tempered my enthusiasm a bit. Nevertheless, what I witnessed was a testament to the resilience and creativity of the Commanderies in New York State and I am deeply grateful to have been able to celebrate with you all.

As we now turn our attention to the New Year, I consider my message - ***Keep the Faith*** - and all that it could mean, as we commit ourselves anew to our Masonic and Templar duties and goals.

2 Timothy 2:7-8. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day".

First and foremost, we keep our faith in God and our Lord of Salvation, Jesus Christ. We trust that God will deliver to us what is needed and desired at the right time. We commit ourselves to God with faith and hope. That part is self-evident, but we must also Keep the Faith in ourselves, that we have what is necessary and are capable of carrying out God's will. I find that every day I need to reset myself with intention and reflect on successes I have had and the fights I have had to get here. This may be the most critical aspect—staying positive and committed and delivering on the mission. Sir Knights, what I have seen in our state is many good and valiant Sir Knights, working together to make Templary successful and meaningful. I have faith in you all—continue to have faith in yourselves.

Lastly, and sometimes the most overlooked aspect of Keeping the Faith, we should also Keep the Faith with our fellow Sir Knights. To me that means, trusting that they will show up and do their work to

the best of their ability. More than that, we must keep the faith with them. Do what you have said you will do, maintain and value your integrity. Let all Sir Knights know and trust that you will be there when you say you will and that you will do what you have said you would do to the best of your ability.

As we go forth and tackle new projects in Masonry, all the while continuing our ardent support of our Lodges, Chapters, and Commanderies in New York State (Councils, Valleys, etc.), reflect on what it means to Keep the Faith. I trust and believe that we will all do well and will continue to bring respect and approbation to Templary in New York.

Looking ahead, please also consider coming down to Arlington at the end of March to participate in the Grand Encampment's Easter Sunrise Service. It is a wonderful experience. I bring my family and we do a bit of sightseeing at the National Monuments and the Smithsonian. It is great to connect with Sir Knights from all over the jurisdiction. The weekend before that, Grand Chapter RAM is holding their Grand Convocation in Binghamton. I encourage all Sir Knights to attend if you can.

***Lady Kirsten and I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.***

Sincerely,  
S.K. Conrad Johnson, R.E.G.C.

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### **Grand Prelate's Corner**

The Bible teaches us about worshipping in spirit and truth. As Sir Knights, we are on a journey to put God at the forefront of our worship. "Worship is our response to what we value most." Sir Knights, we were planned for God's pleasure. But because we live in such a "me-centric" culture, it becomes too easy to let selfish attitudes and thinking drive our worship of God. It becomes all about me (us). We need to realize that worship is not about what makes me feel good, it's about glorifying the God of our creation.

We most likely need a heart adjustment or maybe at least some fine-tuning. We are to be selfless. A word that comes to my mind is humble. When we realize the sovereignty of the One we worship, then, we can find ourselves worshipping, despite our circumstances. Wherever you are on your personal faith journey, it's so important to remember that God isn't fooled by what we're doing on the outside. God sees straight to the core of our hearts. "God takes pleasure in those that honor Him; in those who trust in His constant love." (Psalm 147:11)

The Apostle Paul wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthian Church these words: "As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him (Jesus) and reflect his glory even more." The more we humble ourselves the more we become like Christ and the more we know how to Keep the Faith under all types of circumstances because we know where our strength comes from. The reward of living a life of worship is complete happiness in the deepest sense of the word. This I know to be true in my personal life. Know that God takes pleasure in our happiness. Keeping the Faith is remembering to bring true pleasure to God. And that's worship. Worship is not meant to be a part of our life. It is our life.

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### ***Candle light Templar Luminaries Celebrate Christmas in Utica***

Members and family of Utica Commandery #3 met on December 28, 2023 for their annual Christmas Observance. The observance included the reading of Christmas messages from Grand Commander Conrad Johnson and Sir Knight David Kussman, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment.

Biblical passages were read chronicling the birth of Christ, including the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin (read by Past Commander Tom Loughlin Jr.). Toasts were partaken after each reading.

The event was part of the Bicentennial Celebration of the founding of the organization on February 8, 1823 at the home of Richard Sanger—in what was then Whitestown (now New Hartford). The leader of that founding ceremony, and providing the authorizing signature for the new organization was DeWitt Clinton, who was the Grand Master of Knights Templar of New York.

Photo, from left to right: Past Grand Commander Dennis Davis; Deputy Grand Commander John W Scott; SK Frank Francher, Commander of Rome Commandery; SK Stuart Card, Commander of Utica Commandery; Grand Captain General Earl Wilkinson; SK Raymond Roche , Grand Commander of Masonic War Veterans; SK Louis Denato, Past Commander Utica #3, KTCH.

(Story and photo by Tom Loughlin, Jr.)



