



Pennsylvania Crusader

Since 1948

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
pagrandcommandery.org

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My Fellow Fraters,

My how the time has flown by! By the time you read this we will be into the first week of Lent, a time of atonement, reflection and preparation for the Death and Resurrection of our Savior and Grand Commander of our Faith, Jesus Christ. As our Associate Grand Prelate writes in his Address, this is a solemn time of year for those of the Christian faith. Fasting, prayer, introspection of our faith and how we practice the teachings of Christ should be the focal point during this time. As Knights Templar, the season of Lent should serve as a time of rededication to our Templar vows, asking oneself the following:

“Am I practicing what I preach?”

“Am I representing myself as a follower of the Christian Faith?”

“At the end of the day, can I sign off and say I did my best as a Knight Templar?”

We have so many opportunities to exemplify ourselves as followers of Christs' teachings; all we have to do is act upon them! Assist your local church in preparation of Fish Frys, Pierogi Dinners and church services during the Lenten season. Work with your church or local food banks, soup kitchens and assist in stocking the shelves, handing out food, serving meals and just being there for some lost soul to talk to. Contact your local animal shelters and find out what supplies they need, collect the gently worn blankets, bed sheets, towels, and wash cloths. The animal shelters are getting especially hard hit lately with an increase in surrenders and pets being set loose to fend for themselves because their owners either cannot care for them anymore or the don't want them—those Christmas “puppies” given as gifts are now larger and no longer wanted.

Many of our Fraters were Boy Scouts. Many of you still support and are active within your Troops. I still remember the Vespers we sang at the end of each Troop meeting:

Softly falls the light of day,
As our campfire fades away.
Silently each Scout should ask,
Have I done my daily task?
Have I kept my honor bright?
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?
Oh, have I done and have I dared,
Everything to Be Prepared?

Have YOU?

Think about those questions during this Lenten season and make the difference in someone's life. Make a difference for that forgotten soul or that pet that is no longer loved and given up on. Do these things and you too have "done and dared everything to be prepared!"

May God Bless You and your Families This Holy Season!

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

Associate Grand Prelate's Message:

Read Galatians 6:1-10

"So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." Gal. 6:10 NRSV

Grace and Peace to you, my fellow Sir Knights, and your families. As I write this we are preparing for the beginning of the season of Lent, the 40 days of preparation before the celebration of Easter.

In many traditions of the Christian faith, Lent is a solemn season beginning with Ash Wednesday which came this year on February 22. Traditionally it is a time of fasting, prayer, and greater intentionality and focus on our faith with dedicated reading of the scriptures, extra worship services, especially during Holy Week, the week between Palm/Passion Sunday, the Sunday before Easter and Easter Day.

The earliest records we have of Lent come from a time when there was much persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. During Lent, those who had recanted their faith to escape martyrdom were given the opportunity to rededicate themselves to the faith by an extended period of penance, much as we ask our Pilgrims to spend a year of pilgrimage as a trial of their penance and piety. At the end of Lent, those who endured the trial of a strict Lent were readmitted to the community of believers upon their profession of faith.

I pray that we will use this time not only to prepare our hearts to rededicate ourselves to our Savior Jesus Christ at Easter by reading the scriptures, sharing in worship, and performing acts of service to others, but that we may also use this month as an opportunity to reach out to those who have slipped away from our Commanderies. Let us rekindle in their hearts a love for Templary by displaying our sincere concern and solicitude for their wellbeing, both physical and spiritual. If we only reach out to our lapsing members to try to get their dues, we send the clear message we only want their money. If instead we reach out in fraternal love and concern, perhaps they will return and assist us in raising our Beauceant and Standards high in testament to our faith and constancy!

May the blessings of our Christ be with you all as we rededicate ourselves to our faith in Him who came to seek and save all who are lost.

Your Frater in Christ,
Reverend and Sir Knight David A. Eichelberger PDC, KCT, IKT
Associate Grand Prelate