

Grand Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

May 2023 News



SK Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander
www.mayorkrite.org/grand-commandery

Spring Greetings, Sir Knights;

The ascension of Jesus Christ is one of the most significant events recorded in the New Testament and is an important date in our Templar calendar. In the Christian tradition, Ascension Day marks the 40th day of Easter, and commemorates Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven following his death and resurrection, as recorded in the passages found in Acts 1:8-11: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Fr. William Graham writes "Jesus was lifted up in His ascension and our hearts follow and are drawn to Him in the throne He occupies, at the right hand of His Father, in the heaven. He opened for us, and wherein He is always living to make intercession for us. As the fruits of our thoughts on the twin mystery of the Resurrection and the Ascension we may glean a twofold lesson suggested in the words of St. Paul." In Colossians 3:1-4, we read "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

Jesus' ascension should point our entire being towards Heaven and guide our every thought and deed. We should have Heaven as our goal and seek it, using whatever means is most fruitful. Above all, it is a shift in mindset, no longer focusing on our own selfish desires, but looking towards Heaven and conducting ourselves as citizens of that blessed place. Once we do that, we will experience a profound change in our lives that will affect everything we say and do.

As Christian Masons, we are continually reminded that we are called to fulfill this mission. As Knights Templar, we must seriously endeavor to conduct ourselves as inhabitants of that heavenly kingdom by ensuring that our ritual is more than just words. We are commissioned to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted through acts of charity and pure beneficence. Throughout history, Templars have understood that we are on a daily quest to affirm our Christian faith while respecting the world around us and that as we get to know ourselves better, we may improve ourselves. As long as we remain faithful to our vows of Christian Knighthood and live, work and worship as such, we will be the example of good in our society and for a world which desperately needs it.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday, May 10th at 10am for our Ascension Day Service to be held at the First Baptist Church of Westwood under the direction of our Grand Prelate. In my travels throughout our two-state jurisdiction, I continue to be impressed with the excellent work being performed for our candidates and I continue to enjoy the camaraderie that I have experienced everywhere I go. May God bless our great Order.

In His Knightly Service,

Eugene B. Nichols
Grand Commander

From the Apartment of the Grand Prelate

Pentecost

by

Sir Knight & Rev. Michael Bickford, Associate Grand Prelate

May 28 marks the Christian holiday of Pentecost. It comes from the Greek word for 50th day for it is (almost) 50 days after Easter. After Easter, Jesus appeared to the Disciples and others for a period of 40 days. On Ascension Thursday, he ascended to Heaven and the Disciples returned to Jerusalem to discern what to do next. 10 days later, the Holy Spirit burst into the Upper Room and rested upon the head of each of them like a flame of fire, as it is recorded in Acts 2.

And then, everything changed. The Disciples, who had been full of fear, doubt, and confusion throughout the entire ministry of Jesus changed. They went to the Temple Mount and Peter gave such a compelling talk that 3,000 people were converted to the faith that day!

From Jerusalem, the Church quickly spread throughout the Eastern Roman Empire and then to Rome itself. Despite heavy persecutions, there were 5,000,000 Christians in the Empire by AD 200 (10% of the population).

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, but it is the part of God that many Christians are intimidated by. We fear that if we get too close to the Spirit that we will lose our free will, we will be called to something in life we do not wish to do, and we fear rejection by others. But, the Holy Spirit permeates the Church and empowers us to do the work of building God's Kingdom.

The real challenge, I believe, is that by involving the Holy Spirit in your life, you greatly increase the chance that you will be called to change. Adults tend to dislike change! We may be comfortable with our lives, but there is always that voice calling us to more ... to serve others, to give up feuds, to reconcile with family, and to spend time in devotional prayer daily. The calling of the Spirit can be quite daunting, but it is the only path to true growth.

My prayer for you this Pentecost is that you let go of the past mistakes like the Disciples did, and live your Christian life with zeal and openness. Let the Spirit guide you on an adventure that will not culminate until you stand before the Throne of Grace in Heaven. After all, this has been the call of Knights Templar for over 800 years!



Wreath Laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Arlington National Cemetery on April 8, 2023



Reception of the South Division Commander



Reception of the Southwest Division Commander



Worcester County Commandery No. 5 and Springfield Commandery No. 6

Joint Inspection Order of Malta