



Pennsylvania Crusader

Since 1948

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
pagrandcommandery.org

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Sir Knights,

I am deeply humbled and honored by your confidence in electing me to be your Grand Commander for this Templar year. I will be forever grateful for this honor that you have extended to me, and I will work hard to do everything I can to be worthy of that trust. Together we will endeavor to continue our efforts to advance the legacy of this great Grand Commandery of Sir Knights of Pennsylvania. I encourage all Sir Knights to get involved in your Commandery, develop programs for your conclaves, become proficient with the ritual, and build our membership. As Christian Knights we set the example not just in our Commandery's but in our families and communities.

My theme this year is To SERVE; "Living through God to Serve Mankind" (Per Viventem Deus, Servit Hominibus). As Knights Templar's we are called to SERVE; feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted. As Christian Knights we need to begin with prayer and follow the example our Lord gave us in John 13: 14-15. In these passages (vs. 14) "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. (vs. 15) For I have given you an example, which ye should do as I have done to you." Sir Knight's, we need to SERVE this great Commandery of Knights Templar, our families, our communities, and each other. Let us enlighten the world with our Christian and Templar principles. Let us not forget to be charitable and share the blessings we have with others!

I have selected Tunnel to Towers as my designated charity for this Templar. This is a terrific organization that devotes 95% of every dollar donated to go for their programs which include: In The Line Of Duty, Smart Home Programs, Fallen First Responders', Gold Star Family Home Programs, Homeless Veterans, and the Never Forget Programs. More information is forthcoming.

The 171st Annual Conclave Committee is diligently planning a Testimonial Dinner to be held at the Steel Club in Hellertown. This event is scheduled for July 29, 2023. I hope you will join us for a fun time and will allow me to greet you personally.

There will be many activities and events this year and I encourage you to attend as many as possible. My plans include an extensive schedule for visiting as many Commandery's as possible individually and jointly, including the Section Reception banquets, and of course Grand Commandery's from other states.

My Itinerary will be posted on the Grand Commandery website. When in your area, I would be honored to have you join us, and show support for the local Commandery's.

Dates for Upcoming Events:

- June 1 Joint Conclave: Nativity, Damascus, Mizpah
- June 6 Joint Conclave: Packer, Shamokin, Prince of Peace
- June 7 Northern Commandery No 16
- June 8 Hermit Commandery No 24
- June 9-10 Grand Lodge Communication
- June 11-12 Vermont Annual Conclave
- June 12 Joint Conclave: Mary, St John, Kensington Kadosh
- June 15 Samuel S. Yohe Commandery No 81
- June 20 Melita-Coeur De Lion Commandery No 17
- June 22 Hugh De Payens Commandery No 19
- June 24-25 Southwest Joint Conclave & Section Reception
- June 25 Tuskegee Airman Memorial Wreath Laying

Templar Knights in history

Hugues de Payens - (1070-1136) was a Frankish knight from the Champagne Region and was a vassal of Hugues I, Count of Champagne. He was the first Grand Master of the Knights Templar serving from 1119 to 1136. He created the Latin Rule, the code of behavior for the Order along with Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine understanding."
Proverbs 3:5



In His Service,
S.K. Thomas C. Helm
Grand Commander



Grand Prelate's Message

Our Grand Commander's Theme for this year is "To Serve", and our Lord, Jesus Christ has set us the example on what it means to serve. In the passage from John 13:4, Jesus was trying to show the disciples that he came to serve. It is interesting that in Raymond Brown's commentary on John he says the Greek word for laid aside, or laid down, is the same Greek word used in chapter ten for laying down a life. When the text says: rose from supper, laid aside his garments, John was really trying to show that Jesus was a servant who was willing to lay down his life for the sake of humanity. On the cross of Calvary that servant hood was manifested where he opened his arms to sinners, and we obtained eternal life.

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. As Lord, he demonstrates that He is more than that - he is master - and yet was still willing to be humiliated before them. For us that is a hard concept to accept.

In society, both then and now, one of the ways human pride manifests itself is in refusing to take the lower role. But now that Jesus, their Lord, and Teacher, has washed their feet—an unthinkable act!—there is every reason why they also should wash one another's feet, and no conceivable reason for refusing to do so. There is no reason for us as well not to serve.

Jesus opened his arms on the cross as the servant for all. But did you do the same for someone else?

-She sat alone in an old folk's home, lonely and old and gray. She wished that someone, just anyone, would call on her that day. DID YOU?

-He lay for days on his hospital bed. The hours were long, and hard. He wished someone, just anyone, would write him a card. DID YOU?

-Her loved one had died, just a few months ago. All sad and lonely she sat. She wished that someone, just anyone, would drop in for a chat. DID YOU?

-He was far from home on foreign soil, feeling sick, lonely, and blue. He wished that someone, just anyone, would write him a line or two. DID YOU?

-She spent long hours, that teacher, giving the best she knew. She wished that someone, just anyone, would say a brief "THANK YOU". DID YOU?

That matter of Christian service. We are living it day by day, when we help someone, just anyone, as we walk along life's pathway. DID YOU?

Oh, that God would give us his heart for others. Just as Jesus understood his origin and destination - remember what is true from God about you - Remember where you stand with him - you are fully loved and eternally secure.

So, Sir Knights, we can't let position, pride, or preference get in the way of our service to God and others. Whether it's providing food for the food pantries, gathering clothing for the local shelters, serving meals at the soup kitchens, handing out sandwiches to the homeless, or visiting those who sick, there are so many ways that service can happen in our communities. Getting dirty might even mean spending time with your neighbor (even that one that you've had a conflict with for years) - or doing yard work for someone who simply can't. There are so many ways that we can serve. It's important to serve out of love and firmly founded in the confidence that we have through Jesus Christ. As Knights Templar let us Serve as our Savior Served us!

God's Blessings

SK. Rev. Robert A. Witmyer, Grand Prelate