

**GRAND COMMANDERY KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DECEMBER 2023 NEWS**
SK Annas Kamara, Grand Commander; SK Carter L. Diggs Jr. Editor

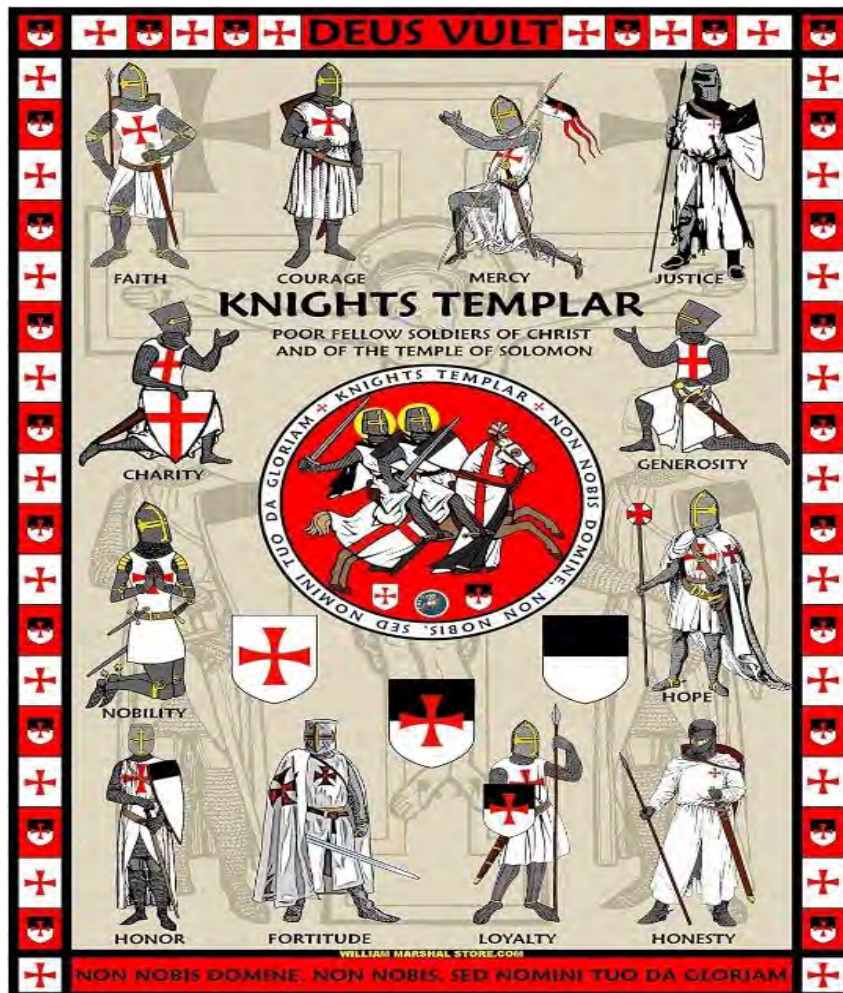
Sir Knights,

This month, out of whole cloth, I will be borrowing an article from <https://www.thetemplarknight.com/2016/07/25>

Were the Knights Templar secretly part of the Cathar heresy?

By [Tony McMahon](#)

The
were
the
spitting
church
own
properly
They
in the
same
had
of the



Knights Templar accused of rejecting divinity of Christ, on the crucifix, not believing the sacraments, and conducting their masses without a consecrated priest. emerged in France 12th century at the time that a dangerous heresy gripped the south country:

[Catharism.](#)

What
the

was
Cathar heresy ?

The Cathars were Christians who rejected the Pope's authority and that of his church of priests and bishops as well as holding "gnostic" views such as the existence of an evil deity in constant conflict with a good God. They found a great deal of support not only among ordinary people but even sections of the aristocracy, most notably Raymond VI, the Count of Toulouse. Unfortunately for Raymond, his tolerance of the Cathars led to a direct conflict with the most powerful pope in history, Innocent III.

Innocent sent a papal legate Pierre de Castelnau to try and turn Raymond away from the Cathars but not only did the count reject these overtures, Pierre was murdered on his way back to Rome. A furious pope ordered the French king to head a crusade against the Cathars and armies poured into the Languedoc region of France. The surrendering Cathars were either put to the sword or burnt to death.

But their ideas persisted. Many agreed with their view that the church should return to traditions of poverty and piety. Their questioning of the Catholic view that the bread in the mass literally becomes the body of Christ continued to be discussed in low whispers before erupting to the surface centuries later in the Protestant Reformation. Many of France's elite had family connections to the Cathars including Guillaume de Nogaret, the top adviser to King Philip of France and scourge of the Templars. His parents and grandparents were reportedly Cathars. It seemed that in spite of the success of Innocent's crusade, Catharism still lurked in dark corners of French society.

Did alleged Templar crimes mirror Cathar heresy?

Many of the charges levied against the Templars by King Philip of France and his adviser De Nogaret smack of Cathar beliefs. The charges certainly would have resonated with medieval public opinion, familiar with the scandalous views and practices of the southern French rebels.

There may have been genuine fears that as the Templars had operated at the same time as the rise of Catharism that they had imbibed some of their philosophy. Or that the Templars were influenced by ancient Christian beliefs in the east that were remarkably similar to those held by the French heretics. Worse, there may have been an underlying fear that Templar military might could be used to carve out a Cathar sympathetic state in southern France. As the crusades in the Holy Land crumbled, where might Templar energy and expertise be expended?

Possibly what King Philip of France saw in the order was an [unimaginable danger](#) that needed to be rapidly snuffed out.