

New Member Packet

Presented to:

Sir Knight: _____



This ____ day of _____, _____ A.D.

A Message from the Grand Master

You are here today as one of the newest members of the Order of Knights Templar, the greatest order of Christian Knighthood the world has ever known.

When in 1314, after an existence of 200 years, the Ancient Order of the Temple, which order we cherish and revere, was brought to a close by the burning at the stake of the last Grand Master of the order, Jacques de Molay, there were those who believed our noble order had been suppressed for all time, but "*The old order changeth, yielding place to new and God fulfills himself in many ways.*" And 500 years later, in a new country and in a new time, our own beloved order was born. Today, after nearly two centuries, it is still going forward, and stands "*A glorious company, the flower of mien, to serve as a model for a mighty world.*"

The Order of Knights Templar does not usurp the prerogatives of the Christian Church; it does not take the place of the church. The membership of the order is made up of those who believe in the Great Captain of their Salvation, as do those who profess allegiance to His church.

The Order of the Temple teaches that truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. It teaches not a medieval chivalry, splendid as that may have been, with swords drawn in the defense of His cause, but it teaches the duty of fighting oppression in every form, the protection of the widow and orphan, of civic righteousness, and the upholding of the Christian Religion—a splendid program and one that challenges the highest and best in every man. The cross and the flag are the two greatest symbols of human blessing that have ever been raised among the sons of men.

The Order of Knights Templar, with two banners at its head, is steadily marching forward to do battle for the right and truth.

*"In this sign we conquer, tis the symbol of our faith,
Made holy by the might of love, triumph over death;
He finds his life who loseth it, forever more it saith:
For truth and right are marching on."*

As the active head of this great order, it is my great pleasure to bid you welcome to this magnanimous Christian organization. May your membership be a happy and profitable one. May your future be bright and prosperous. May you catch the inspiration of the mighty hosts here assembled, and having caught that inspiration and the spirit of the Master upon whose life our order is founded, press forward with fortitude undaunted in His cause.

Courteously and fraternally yours,

Kenneth Bernard Fischer
Grand Master

A Brief History of the Knights Templar

Knights Templar are Masons but not all Masons are Knights Templar.

The fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is the largest, oldest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. Thousands of books have been written about it. Yet, to most of the people of the world, the Masonic Fraternity remains a mystery.

The term “Knights Templar” describes the members of the Commandery, which exists as the final stage in the York Rite of Freemasonry. The first three degrees of Freemasonry are a basic requirement for joining the York Rite.

Modern day Knights Templar trace their origins to the medieval time of 1118 AD, when they were called “Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon.” These ancient Templars were a military and religious order founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades. The founders were Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de Saint-Omer, knights who established a religious community to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land. Baldwin II, Latin King of Jerusalem, gave them a dwelling on the ancient site of King Solomon’s Temple. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux drew up the Order’s rules, which included the notion of fighting the enemies of God under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Templars, segregated into knights, chaplains, sergeants, and craftsman, were organized under a grand master and general council and were responsible only to the pope and not to secular rulers. Wearing a white cloak with a Red Cross, they attracted many nobles and soon became an expert military force and a powerful and wealthy order. In Europe their churches were often round, and their Commanderies served as banks. After 1291, when the crusading forces were driven from Palestine, the Templars’ main activity became banking—the lending of money (even to kings)—and their enormous landholdings and financial strength aroused great hostility among rulers and clergy alike.

Philip IV of France, sorely in need of money, charged the Templars with heresy and immorality in 1307. The Templars were arrested and put on trial, and confessions were extracted only by torture. Similar attacks were mounted against the order in Spain and England, and Pope Clement V, after initially opposing the trials, suppressed the Knights Templar by papal bull at the Council of Vienne in 1312. When Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and other leaders of the Templars retracted their forced confessions and declared their innocence and the innocence of the order, Philip had them burned at the stake in Paris on March 18, 1314.

The Templars’ holdings were dispersed, some going to the Knights Hospitalers and some to secular rulers, although Philip received none. The guilt of the Templars was hotly debated down to the 20th century. Most modern scholars, however, believe that the charges against them were fabricated.

In modern times, the warlike spirit of the Order has passed away; replaced by a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which prompts all of its members to be ever ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed. In a brother’s cause we are to do all that may be demanded by manhood and fraternity. These convictions become a reality by the charitable deeds resulting from the Knights Templar Eye and Educational Foundations and the Holy Land Pilgrimage.

EXPLANATORY LECTURE

Order of the Temple

Sir Knight, in the ceremonies through which you have passed you represented a knight of the period that succeeded the Crusades – a civil Knight who had made a vow to visit the Sepulcher of our Ascended Master. As if you were such a Knight, allow me to address you.

Attracted by the chivalrous deeds of the Templars, for their deeds of charity and pure beneficence had spread their fame both far and wide, you sought admission to their ranks, the better to fulfill that vow.

The Commander of the Commandery of Knights Templar, to which you applied for admission, being satisfied with the report made to him of the uprightness of your character, was moved to grant your petition; but as a trial of your worthiness to be enrolled among the members of the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple, he enjoined upon you Seven Years of Preparation. Those years began with an unarmed pilgrimage in the direction of the Holy Shrine, and an escort was given you to guide and protect you. Without a sword or buckler, and forbidden to do acts unbecoming a mere Pilgrim, your journey began; and to a man of warlike spirit, such a pilgrimage was indeed a trial of patience and perseverance.

Three years passed as you trod your weary way, mostly in a friendly country, in which you received from pious anchorites, bread and water, as well as lessons of comfort and consolation. But day after day, during those years, your manhood asserted itself with accumulating vigor—when you beheld indignities offered not only to yourself but to other helpless Pilgrims, many of them delicate women, and you yearned to cast off the garb of a Pilgrim, and, laying aside the staff, to grasp the sword and perform deeds of exalted usefulness. Thus yearning, and pleading with your devoted escort, you reached another Commandery of the Templars. Three years of required preparation had passed, and you begged your escort to crave permission from the Commander to permit you to devote the four remaining years to deeds of more exalted usefulness.

At the second house of the Templars your escort made known your burning desires, vouched for your integrity, and that you had faithfully performed the duties of three years of preparation. The avouchment of your escort secured the favorable consideration of the Commander, who, after putting you under Vows, granted you permission to take up the sword and buckler, and go to forth under escort of a Templar warrior, manfully wielding your sword in the defense of innocent maidens, destitute widows, helpless orphans, and the Christian Religion. And such warfare was indeed a trial of your courage.

As a Pilgrim Warrior you pressed forward with fortitude undaunted, giving ample proof to your warrior escort that you were worthy to bear your sword in the cause to which you had consecrated it. And the constant opportunities to display your valor and chivalry created in you an ardent desire to be admitted where honors and rewards await valorous deeds. Three years passed while you thus manfully fought your way toward the shrine of your Vow. At the close of the third year you reached another house of the Templars, and there you besought your escort to implore remission of the remaining year of preparation.

Your Templar escort presented your petition to the Commander of that Commandery, and avouched for your valor, courage and constancy, even recommending the remission asked for, if it were possible; and though the Commander was moved by the recital of your deeds of courage and constancy, the number of years of preparation could not be shortened. Moreover, he feared that the memories of those valorous deeds had filled your heart with pride, and that self-confidence had supplanted a humble reliance upon the strong arm of the Master. He therefore commanded you to devote the remaining year of your preparation to penance, as a trial of your faith and humility. The penitential year accomplished in and about that Commandery – during which you received lessons of piety, before the representations of the Sepulcher and the Ascension of our Savior – you were permitted to return to the Asylum and to participate in the Fifth Libation, thereby sealing your Faith, after illustrating both it and your humility. You were then enlisted under the banner of the Templars and of Emmanuel.

Such, Sir Knight, is the brief epitome of the solemn ceremonies through which you have passed. The Ancient Order of the Temple was suppressed and its members dispersed, and the warlike spirit of that Order has passed away; but in this modern Order of the Temple there remains a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which should prompt all of its members to be ever-ready to defend the weak, the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed, and in a brother's cause to do all that may be demanded by manhood and the fraternity.

And now we hail you Knight as well as Brother. Sacredly we observe the Vows you have taken. These Vows bind you to the Order, and to each of us as comrades in arms. May we all be at last "Be greeted as Brethren, and received into the widely extended arms of the Blessed Emanuel".

A Guide for the Newly Created Knight

1. **CONCLAVES:** Commanderies have **conclaves**, not meetings; and the room in which these conclaves are held is referred to as an “**Asylum**”, not a lodge room. Stated Conclaves are held once each month according to the by-laws of the local (constituent) Commandery. The Annual Conclave is held once each year for the election of officers for the ensuing year. Special Conclaves are held as scheduled to confer the Orders (Red Cross, Malta and Order of the Temple). A Grand Commandery is the governing body of the state jurisdiction and meets annually. The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America is the primary governing body of the Order and meets on a triennial basis.
2. **OFFICERS:** The officers within a Commandery consist of a: Commander, Generalissimo, Captain General, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Prelate, Treasurer, Recorder, Standard Bearer, Warder, Sword Bearer and Sentinel.
3. **UNIFORMS:** The dress uniform for a Sir Knight is a black C.P.O. style coat, worn with plain black trousers, tie, shoes and socks. Headgear is a black chapeau with white or black/white plume. Officers and members wear silver trimmed emblems. Current dais officers wear shoulder boards of green; past commanders wear shoulder boards of red. Past Grand Commanders and Grand Encampment Officers wear purple. The complete uniform is normally worn at Order conferrals, special observances, parades and Grand Conclaves. The consumption of alcoholic beverages while in uniform is not permissible. Shoulder cordons come in a variety of colors and are awarded to members who bring new candidates into the Order. Please refer to the rules and regulations of your jurisdiction governing the proper wearing of the uniform and accouterments. It is recommended that the chapeau be stored covered, dry and hanging upside down in order to extend the life and appearance of the plume.
4. **PRACTICES:** The work of the Commandery consists of both ritual and tactics. The regular exercising of each will improve the execution of the work. Ritualistic work consists of the drama portions of the three Orders. Tactical work consists of both asylum tactics, such as the ‘full-form’ opening and field drills, either exhibition or competition. Participation in all aspects of the work can be exciting and fun.
5. **PROTOCOL:**
 - A Commandery confers Orders, not degrees.
 - The presiding officer refers to himself as “Commander” and uses this title below his signature of documents; however, is properly addressed and referred to by the honorary title of “Eminent Commander”.
 - A Commandery always opens in the “short form” or ‘full form’; the later is never referred to as the long form.
 - When speaking of one Sir Knight, use the singular “Knight Templar”, and when speaking of two or more Sir Knights, use the plural “Knights Templar. The word is always “Templar” for both singular and plural, never “Templars”.

Knights Templar Philanthropies



The Knights Templar Eye Foundation

As a Knight Templar, one has many opportunities to help others that are less fortunate. One way is through the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. The Eye Foundation is a great humanitarian charity whose purpose is to provide research, surgical treatment and hospitalization to those who suffer from diseases or injury to the eyes. Cross-eye, which occurs in children under 16, is one affliction that can lead to blindness if not treated properly.

Questions or comments regarding the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. can send e-mail to: ktef@knightstemplar.org.



The Knights Templar Educational Foundation

The Knights Templar Educational Foundation, the first of its kind, was organized in 1922. Since then, more than \$32 million dollars has been loaned to students to complete their last two years of college. This financial assistance is given without regard to race, color, creed, age or Masonic affiliation.

In recent years, some Grand Commanderies have also been offering scholarship grants to students who are members of Masonic-related youth groups.



The Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage

In addition to the many religious observances throughout the year, The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar sponsors an annual "Holy Land Pilgrimage". The purpose of the pilgrimage is to send a Christian Minister to the Holy Land to enhance his ministry. Each jurisdiction raises funds to send these ministers, expenses paid, on these trips. Masonic membership is not required and the Minister can be male or female.

Reference Information, Materials & Reading

- **KNIGHTS TEMPLAR:**

1. A Capsule Chronicle of Templary
2. Highlights of Templar History – by William Mosley Brown
3. The York Rite of Freemasonry – by Frederick G. Speidel
4. Drill Regulations or School of the Knight and Squad (Excerpts)
5. Manual of Public Ceremonies
6. A Pilgrim's Path – by John J. Robinson
7. Born in Blood – by John J. Robinson
8. Dungeon, Fire and Sword – by John J. Robinson

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA

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5097 North Elston Avenue, Suite 101

Chicago, Illinois 60630-2460

Ph. 773-777-3300

Fax: 773-777-8836

- **FREEMASONRY:**

1. Leadership Materials:

Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

Lake Falls Professional Building

6115 Falls Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21209

Ph. 800-336-6529

Fax: 410-377-0591

2. Membership:

The Masonic Service Association of the USA

8120 Fenton Street, Suite 203

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4785

Ph. 301-588-4010

Fax: 301-608-3457

- **WEBSITES:**

- Enter “Knights Templar” into any search engine

- Examples of Websites:

- www.templarbooks.com
- www.amazon.com
- <http://members.aol.com/YorkRiteFM/HomePage./html>
- www.knightstemplar.org/about.html



A Prayer for the New Member

O God, our Father, whose command is over all and whose love never Faileth, Let us be aware of Thy Holy Presence and obedient to Thy Will. Encourage us in our endeavors to live above the common level of life. Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won. Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy, that scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when Truth and Right are in jeopardy.

Empower these Sir Knights with the revitalized desire to go forth and grow our organization. Open all our minds to creative new ways of recruitment and retention to better fill the ranks of Templary in the 21st Century. Help us accept these responsibilities with strong hearts and cheerful minds. And let our uniforms remind each of us of our dedication to duty and of service to the Great Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Insert
Commandery
Roster &/or
Directory

Here

Insert
Commandery
Calendar &/or
Newsletter

Here