

# The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Iowa

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Kyle J. Peterson, REGC  
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## *Christmas Message - 2017*

*To: All Past Grand Commanders, current Grand Officers, Committee Members, Officers and Sir Knights of all Constituent Commanderies within the Jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Iowa*

Attached you will find the Christmas Toast prepared by the Religious Activities Committee and the response to the Christmas message, from Sir Knight Duane L. Vaught, R.E. Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States of America. This Christmas message and response should be read at your next stated meeting.

Below is the Christmas message from SK John M. Klaus, Eminent Grand Prelate of the Grand Commandery of Iowa.

In the Second Degree, we learn that there are “two kinds of Masonry: Operative and Speculative.”

Sometimes those two descriptive words are delivered with a proper down-east twang, “oper-**AY**-tive” and “specu-**LAY**-tive,” giving away the nineteenth-century Vermont source of Iowa’s Ritual.

Specific tools of Operative Masonry are associated with each of the three Craft degrees, and an explanation of them is given toward the end of the work of the degree.

Operative Masons, we learn, are those who labor in the real mountains and quarries, and lay up stone, brick, and block structures, using specific tools. Speculative Masons, on the other hand, use the tools of operative masonry, but use them symbolically rather than literally “for the more noble and glorious purpose” of building temples of good character as homes for our immortal souls. Such, indeed, is the real purpose of Freemasonry, its greatest gift to humankind, and its greatest goal.

But I belabor the obvious. What can this possibly have to do with the Grand Prelate’s Christmas Message to the Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Iowa?

I think it has everything to do with a Christian Knight’s approach to this most wonderful time of the Christian calendar.

Just as there are two kinds of Masonry, I suggest that there are also two kinds of Christianity: Operative and Speculative. Operative Christians accept the tools of their faith as they receive them from their families, or their confirmation classes, or attending Sunday school and church. They take the tools as they receive them, and use them, by and large, to good purposes—though a few of these people are easily led into intolerance, bigotry, self-righteousness, and sometimes even hatred of others.

When the beauty of Christianity is perverted into hatred of others solely based others’ religion, their politics, their skin color, their ethnicity, or their lifestyle, Christianity is no longer Christian, but rather something base and

ugly. Yet we see our faith perversely used to these ends almost daily. Such evil gets full coverage on the front pages of newspapers, and leads television news broadcasts.

But then there is Speculative Christianity. We, as Christian and Masonic Knights, should understand this kind of Christianity with almost no effort at all, and should be able to apply it in our daily lives effortlessly. It is who we are as men, as Masons, and as Christian Knights. Among all men, it is we who understand the importance of symbol and allegory. It is we who understand that legends, even when they are historically inaccurate, can teach profound lessons.

If we have given even cursory thought to our faith and our fraternity at that point where they intersect, the perverse evils wrought by those few who claim our faith, yet fail to understand or practice it, become an abomination.

As Christian, Masonic Knights we have sworn an oath to take up our swords in defense of Christianity. The swords we wield, however, are not always those metal things we wear so proudly with our Templar uniforms. Sometimes the swords of truth, or insight, or intellect, or persuasion, or rhetoric are far sharper and far more useful in battle than any physical sword could ever be. We must use every sword within our control to fight perversion of our religion. We must combat fearlessly the hatred, bigotry, intolerance, detrimental prejudice, abject mendacity, and inequality of this earth—and, more especially, when these evils are practiced in the name of Christianity.

“Very nice, Reverend Prelate,” you say, “but what does this possibly have to do with Christmas?”

Everything, my Brother. Everything.

The date and time of year of the birth of our Lord and Savior is irrelevant. We understand the truth of legend, and legend leads us to celebrate Christ’s birth in the middle of the winter. What’s far more important is the MEANING of that birth.

Christ was born to bring peace and love to all humankind. He taught us the equality of all. He taught us that even the most despised outcast in our midst is our sister or brother, and as deserving of our attention and love as our closest companions. He taught us that religion, politics, skin color, ethnicity, and lifestyle have absolutely nothing to do with the worth of a human being. If that’s not the meaning of “Peace on earth, good will to men,” I don’t know what is.

And so, my Brother and Sir Knight, I wish you the merriest of Christmases, from my heart to yours. May you find peace and good will in full measure. May you be surrounded by love, fond memories, fond company, and full blessings.

May the New Year see you resolve to take up whatever sword you have in your control to combat the enemies of our faith.

And should you be alone at Christmas, separated from those you love by distance, or circumstances, or that inevitable curtain of death, know that your Masonic family cherishes you and holds you close in our fond brotherly embrace.

Merry Christmas, my Brother! Merry Christmas!

Chivalric Regards,

*Kyle J. Peterson*

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R.E. Grand Commander



*Pages 1 & 2 are covered by this seal.*

*Attested:*

*Rusty L. Hill*

Rusty L. Hill, REPGC  
Grand Recorder