

The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Iowa

Series 2018 – 2019
General Order No. 3



Forrest C. Peck, Jr., REGC
November 13, 2018

Christmas Message & Toasts

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

Greetings to all,

Well once again the north winds have begun to blow and soon, we will all be bundled in our winter apparel and dashing off to the nearest stores to begin our preparation for the holidays. This time of year always seems to be a little extra busy with all of the planning, shopping, baking, wrapping and getting that room ready, for the family member from out of town. It can be very tiring, overwhelming and stressful. In all of our busyness we sometimes lose sight of what all of this fuss is about. It isn't about gifts and trees and decorations. It isn't even about families and parties and fun. It certainly isn't about Santa Claus, snowmen, elves and reindeer. It is all about Jesus and all about Him alone!

Every year as Christmas time approaches, I am reminded about a song by Becky Kelley. It's about a little boy at the mall at Christmas time, seeing everyone waiting in line to see Santa and he asks the lady standing next to him a question, which also happens to be the name of the song, "Where's the Line to See Jesus"? If you've never heard the song before, I suggest listening to it, I have included a link at the bottom of the page to make it easy. I rarely can make it all the way through without having to swallow a lump in my throat. The little boy continues his question with "is He here at the store, if Christmas time is His birthday, why don't we see Him more"?

So why don't we see him more? Why has there been a shift in society to become politically correct and say, "Happy Holidays", rather than being able to recognize what the holiday is truly about and say "Merry Christmas"? I have never been able to figure out why that greeting would be offensive to anyone. As a Christian if someone were to come up to me and say, "Happy Hanukkah" I wouldn't be offended, I would just politely say something like, "oh the same to you" or "Happy Hanukkah to you". Everyone should respect each other's beliefs even if we don't necessarily agree or participate in the festivities of their celebration. I don't mean to get too "preachy" about this but if Christmas is a celebration of the birth of "Christ" I feel we should be able to say, "Merry Christmas".

The only reason, that we need to celebrate at Christmas, is the birth of Jesus. In the book of Luke we read, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" ([Luke 2:10-11](#)). "Good news of a great joy", "for all the people", "born for you a Saviour". Doesn't this sound like a reason for celebration. And when the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, he learned that his fiancée Mary was "with child through the Holy Spirit" and would give birth to a son named "Immanuel" ([Matthew 1:18](#) [Matthew 1:23](#)). "Immanuel" is a Hebrew word meaning "God with us" and

expresses the wonder of the incarnation, that God "became flesh and made his dwelling among us". Immanuel, God is with us. How can this not be a reason to celebrate?

No one ever said being a Christian would be easy though, and it wasn't easy for Christ either. He suffered many trials and tribulations along the way, just as we must do. Even his birth was met with many complications. As you all know Mary and Joseph were turned away at the inn and Jesus' birth had to take place in a manger. The Saviour of the world was turned away and they had no room for Him. Sometimes I feel like we have no room for Him in the world today. We pull Him out at Christmas and Easter and display Him like some kind of an ornament, only to pack Him up and put Him away until the next holiday. Christmas should be a time for us to remember that we as Christians have an obligation to leave the comforts of our everyday life to help those in need, just as Jesus did for all of us. But when it comes to yielding to Him as LORD Jesus, well, He is just not wanted - there just is no room for that kind of a Saviour today.

People have so little time these days, busy with school, work, meetings, family, we just don't seem to have enough time for the important things. Don't let that be true in your life after today! As Christmas day comes and goes this year will we simply return to life as normal, perhaps praising God briefly for the chance to celebrate Christmas, but really, none different than we were before? Or will we have our lives radically changed by Christmas, like those who experienced it on that night in Bethlehem, leaving as a new person with a sense of excitement ready to tell the whole world the news of their new Lord and Saviour? Are we like the shepherds, and the Wise men, who came to see Jesus, and were never the same? Are we like Mary and Joseph, for whom, Christmas was only the beginning of a radical new way of life and thought!

I know the days and weeks leading up to Christmas can be a busy time. And we become tired, stressed, in debt, and full of turkey. But if you think the time leading up to Christmas can be demanding, just see how demanding our life of service will be after embracing the true meaning of Christmas.

I leave you with this passage from Matthew 1:21-23 – And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

In closing I would like to wish each and every one of you "Happy Holidays". But don't put Jesus on a shelf for display, only to pack Him up and put Him away like some kind of ornament. Remember the reason for the season and may you and your loved ones have a truly Blessed and "Merry Christmas".

Sincerely yours,
Dave Brewer
Grand Prelate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OExXItDyWEY>

Chivalric Regards,

Forrest C. Peck, Jr.

Forrest C. Peck, Jr.
R.E. Grand Commander



Attested:

Rusty L. Hill

Rusty L. Hill, REPGC
Grand Recorder