

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

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Forrest C. Peck, Jr., REGC  
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## *Easter Message*

*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*

I remember as a child getting up early on Easter in the darkness of a pre-dawn Spring morning, often times when the cold winds of winter were still blowing, and putting on our Sunday best clothes (when that sort of thing still existed) and heading off into the dark, to join others from our congregation, on a hillside that faced to the east to prepare for the Easter Sunrise Service. It was a much smaller group than our usual Sunday morning congregation and there were no pews or chairs to sit on, but only a sheet of paper with a song or two printed on it and perhaps a prayer or scripture to read. We stood in the cold dark morning huddled together to stay warm and anxiously awaited the Easter morning sunrise.

As a child you don't often realize the significance of such a powerful moment in time, but it was those moments and the memories of others that helped to shape the person that I became as an adult.

Much like Mary in the story of John 20, we set off in the darkness of an early morning but were changed forever by what God had in store for us.

For Mary it started with confusion and panic. John 20:1, Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 20:2, So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Then for Mary it turned to weeping and sorrow. John 20:15, Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

This was followed with a sense of relief, and finally filled with great delight and joy, as she set off to tell others of her Easter morning story, by proclaiming "I have seen the Lord! John 20:16, Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). 20:17, Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

20:18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

For us as Christians, the resurrection story will have many different meanings for all of us. As a child, going to sunrise services and watching as the darkness became light, the meaning of Easter is often not as epiphanic as Mary's early morning story. However, the message of Easter should be, and is, just as powerful.

As we move from the cold of Winter into the newness of Spring and from the season of Lent into the season of the Resurrection and Easter, we must remember that Lent is a time to prepare for the Resurrection. It is a time to abstain from those things we have chosen to give up. But we must remember that it is not the usual vices that we as Christians choose to forgo during the six weeks of Lent that are important. I highly doubt that God really cares if we choose to give up chocolates, soda or coffee as a sacrifice. No, what God truly wants, is for us to give up the things in our lives that stand between us and Him and prevent us from building a closer personal relationship with Christ.

As we prepare our hearts for the Easter season, we must remember that Easter isn't a time that comes once a year and we celebrate it and then it ends, Easter is a time for Christians, that starts once when we accept Christ as our Lord and Saviour and it continues until we no longer have enough breath in our bodies to proclaim the good news. The Resurrection of Jesus is not the ending of the story, but the beginning of many hope-filled risings to come.

Our resurrection and the resurrection of others does not depend on us. It does not depend on our good deeds or on any merit in us at all. It depends wholly on our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning. He promised if we would trust in Him, someday we would rise with Him. The story of our resurrected hearts and our new life begins early in the morning, just before dawn and persist through fear and darkness. Like those early morning Easter sunrise services, we gathered in darkness, but we left in the light of a new day, filled with resurrected hearts and the promise of a new life.

On this day we have one job and one job only, to proclaim the Resurrection. We need to tell the Easter story like lives depend upon on it, because they do. Tell the story of Easter today and every day throughout the year. Proclaim the good news!

But if you're looking for Jesus on Easter Sunday, don't look in the graveyard. He isn't there. (Luke 24:5). "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Halleluiah, the living God, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, is Risen! Celebrate this "Glorious Good News" every day of every year and may the Grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ be with you now and forever.

Happy Easter and Amen.

Respectfully Submitted,

*David L. Brewer*

David L. Brewer  
Grand Prelate

Chivalric Regards,

*Forrest C. Peck, Jr.*

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



Attested:

*Rusty L. Hill*

Rusty L. Hill, REPGC  
Grand Recorder