

The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Iowa

Series 2019 – 2020
General Order No. 4



W. Charles Smithson, REGC
November 5, 2019

Christmas Message and 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*

Salutations and Knightly Greetings:

Year of our Lord 2019

In this Christmas season, I wish to share with you from the Gospel of St. Matthew the story of the Magi . . .

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. Matt 2:1-2, 9b-11

The English bishop and preacher, Lancelot Andrewes divides this passage in a five fold manner: 1. With their Lips, the Magi asked, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? 2. With their Eyes, they saw His Star in the East. 3. With their Feet, they came to Bethlehem. 4. On their Knees, they bowed and worshiped the infant King. 5. And finally, with their Hands, they presented gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

So should we as Christian Knights, unite our thoughts and actions with devotion. Like them, we need to look to the East to see His Star. We need to follow it, no matter where it takes us. When we are lost, we need not be afraid to ask where to seek Him. And when we find Him, we must with reverence kneel before Him, and present Him those gifts which we possess.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Courteously and fraternally,
Jason A. Wolcott
Grand Prelate

I wish you and your families a healthy and wonderful holiday season. This is truly, the best time of the year. During this time of enjoyment, please take some time to also recharge, regroup, and reflect. Take pride in what you have accomplished this past year in Masonry. Look forward to what things you will do in 2020 to continue building our great Fraternity. Reach out to nyour Brothers and send them a quick message of warm wishes. Share a toast. You are a modern-day Sir Knight so be proud of that fact.

We all have much to be thankful for, my Companions. I am certainly thankful for the memories, times, and friendships that being a York Rite Mason has afforded me.

Thank you all and God Bless.

Chivalric Regards,

W. Charles Smithson

W. Charles Smithson
R.E. Grand Commander



Attested:

Rusty L. Hill

Rusty L. Hill, REPGC
Grand Recorder

Enclosures: Grand Encampment Christmas Toasts
Grand Master's Response

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar



THE APARTMENTS OF THE GRAND PRELATE *and* THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Year of Our Lord 2019 to all valiant and magnanimous Knights of the Temple, wheresoever dispersed throughout Christendom ~ Salutations and Knightly Greetings:

A TOAST TO OUR MOST EMINENT GRAND MASTER CHRISTMAS 2019

We offer a toast to you, our Most Eminent Grand Master, at this Christmas season in the year of Our Lord 2019. On behalf of the Chivalric Masons of this Grand Encampment and of the Fraters in all countries where Knights Templars dwell and serve who bear allegiance to you, we raise our glasses in your honor in this your second year of leading the fraters of our noble order.

As we gather in our churches, cathedrals, chapels, and meeting houses throughout these weeks of Advent and Christmastide, we learn many lessons, and meet angels and magi, shepherds and soldiers, virgins and carpenters, innkeepers and cousins, and kings. At the end of the Christmas story, Jesus is brought for the first time into the temple whose name we humbly bear. There, Mary and Joseph offer the least sacrifice as he is presented in the temple at the appropriate time in fulfillment of the law and the prophets. There they encounter Simeon, an old man awaiting the coming of the Messiah, and Anna, a widow and a prophetess who had lived in the temple for eighty years and more. Both elders blessed and prophesied great things for the baby, welcoming the family into the holiness of the temple. After being welcomed, Mary and Joseph performed the necessary ceremonies and went home. (Luke 2: 22-40). May we all learn the lessons of Anna and Simeon, and in this season, proclaim the coming of our long-awaited Messiah to all who are ready to hear.

To you, Sir Knight Jeffrey N. Nelson, our Most Eminent Grand Master, we raise our voices in the most profound expressions of our fraternal love. We commend to you all fraters everywhere dispersed, more especially the "Simeons" among us, who are ready to be with our Lord. We know that you and your lady, Lisa, will bring our most joyous seasonal greetings to our wives, mothers, and daughters and especially to the "Annas" of the Beauceant, that our widows may not be neglected in this happy season. We invoke the blessing of our Heavenly Father upon your leadership of our Order's ministries, charities, and fraternal work that we may fulfill our calling as Christian Knights in service to our Lord and Savior.

We pledge to you and your lady, Lisa, our faithful support throughout the year ahead. May the light and peace of Christ perfect in your heart the eternal virtues of faith, hope, and love. May our Lord enable you to bring joy, healing, wisdom, and challenge wherever you journey. We toast you, Sir Knight Jeffrey N. Nelson, our Most Eminent Grand Master and wish for you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

A toast to you, Most Eminent Grand Master!

In His Name,

The Reverend Sir Knight Kenneth D. Fuller, P.G.C., Chairman

The Committee on Religious Activities

The Reverend Sir Knight Arthur F. Hebbeler, III, Grand Prelate

The Reverend Sir Knight Terry L. Hensley, P.G.C.

The Reverend Sir Knight Paul K. Reckamp, P.G.C.

The Reverend Sir Knight Paul D. Erickson, KCT

The Reverend Sir Knight Edward J. Craig, KCT



GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

Christmas 2019

To the Right Eminent Grand Prelate, the members of the Committee on Religious Activities, and to all knights wheresoever dispersed:

Knightly Greetings!

A most earnest thank you from Lady Lisa and me to the Right Eminent Grand Prelate and the members of the Committee on Religious Activities for their cordial and heartfelt toast this Christmas Season in the year of our Lord 2019.

The toast offered references the presentation of Jesus in the temple for under the Law of Moses every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord, the encounter with Simeon, and later, the prophetess Anna. Simeon praised God, saying "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.... And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him."

With the grace of God and the blessings of his Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the officers of the Grand Encampment will continue to manage the affairs of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in this, the temporal world, with an eye toward the spiritual or eternal world. We pray that as we gather during these weeks of Advent and Christmastide, each of you will find peace. Let us also remember those less fortunate than ourselves, not only during this Christmas season, but throughout the year.

The officers of the Grand Encampment and their ladies join with my Lady Lisa and me in wishing each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Courteously,

Jeffrey Norman Nelson, GCT

Grand Master



The foregoing toast to the Most Eminent Grand Master and his response thereto are transmitted to you with the request that you extend an invitation through the proper offices to all Sir Knights within your jurisdiction to join in the sentiments thus conveyed at some convenient hour, on or near the birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day, December twenty-fifth, in the Year of Grace 2019.