

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE

(The Knights Templar Christmas Observance lends itself to many variations .If the observance is held in the Asylum, it is suggested that guests assemble in the Asylum prior to the service and then have the Sir Knights march in to appropriate music. **“O COME, O COME EMMANUEL IS ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR PROCESSIONALS.** A VERY EFFECTIVE PROCEDURE IS TO PLACE THE triangle with candles, goblets and other items in the center and have the twelve Sir Knights who would normally be in those positions remain so while the other Sir Knights seat themselves among the guests. Glasses or goblets should be provided for all Sir Knights. Paper cups can be provided to all visitors present so that they also might participate in the Toasts).

**PROCESSIONAL: (GUESTS ARISE, REMAIN STANDING FOR PROCESSIONAL)
PARTICIPATING SIR KNIGHTS ENTER THE ROOM TO THE SOUNDS OF BACKGROUND
MUSIC AS DESIRED. NO SINGING. PROCEED IN SILENTLY.**

All remain standing and sing opening Christmas carols: “Oh Come, all the Faithful” and “The first Noel”.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come , all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of Angels,
 O come let us adore Him,
 O come let us adore him,
 O come let us adore him,
 Christ The Lord.

THE FIRST NOEL

The first noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay
Keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night
That was so deep;
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel.

(all are seated)

WELCOME: *(by EMINENT COMMANDER)*

INVOCATION (OPENING PRAYER): *(by PRELATE)*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: S/K _____

EMINENT COMMANDER: Excellent Prelate, please read the old, old story.

PRELATE:

ISAIAH 11: 1-5

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Audience Response: GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

LUKE 2:1-14 And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria.) and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David.) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord. ***And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Audience Response: GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

EMINENT COMMANDER: “Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing “Silent Night.”
(*all stand and sing two verses of “Silent Night” as given in the program.*)

SILENT NIGHT

Silent Night, Holy Night
All is calm, All is bright
Round Yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Verse 2: Silent Night, Holy Night
Wondrous star, lend thy light!
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King:
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born.

STATEMENT - EMINENT COMMANDER:

Sir Knights and guests, on this glorious occasion we commemorate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Emmanuel, “God with us”, is the consummate and foundational truth of the season. Scholars debate the actual date of his birth; local residents of the area of Bethlehem have a traditional site affixed; but, our primary focus; indeed, our only focus, is the reality that Jesus was, in fact, born in the flesh, God became Man for us. The Great Captain under whose banner we have all enlisted and in whose name we battle.

The reality is that over two thousand years ago, there was born in Bethlehem of Judea one who laid aside the God-head, and assumed mortal flesh; one whose glory, worth and grace no language can express, no word can quantify; one who was born that our lives might be purified, and who died and shed his sin cleansing blood that we might be free of the penalty, power and the future presence of sin. Let us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, strive to profit by the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of that Divine Master, and remain his faithful soldiers unto death. Seeking strength to continue that struggle, let us now accompany our Excellent Prelate to the throne of heavenly grace. Excellent Prelate, lead our devotions.

(Sir knights uncover on orders, Kneel on left knee and bow their heads. SERVICE MAY BE VARIED IF HELD IN A CHURCH SANCTUARY.)

PRAYERS
(AFTER EACH PRAYER, SIR KNIGHTS AND GUESTS WILL REPLY "AMEN")

PRELATE: Almighty and most merciful Father, remember us with grace, we beseech Thee, and blot out the multitude of our transgressions for Thy beloved Son's sake. And may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: Father in heaven, command thy blessings to rest upon all true Knights of the Temple wherever dispersed; bestow upon them a spirit of Truth, Justice, Courage, Constancy, Faith and Humility, and make of them valiant defenders of Thy holy religion. Teach them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted for Jesus' sake.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: O Lord, command Thy benediction to rest upon our Grand Master. Help him to rule over us in love, and with an eye single to Thy glory. Save him from error, prejudice, and pride and while giving him firmness of purpose to do right, help him to know the right for Christ's sake.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: Our Father, let thy choicest blessings be with the President of the United States, our Governor and all that are in positions of authority. Endue them with wisdom on high, and may it be their highest joy to labor for Thy glory and in Thy power alone, and for the good of the people for whom they legislate, and over whom they rule. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

RESPONSE: Amen!

(Sir Knights arise, recover and are seated)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let the chosen twelve form around the triangle.

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let the libations be poured into the goblets on the Triangle and the Pedestal. (DONE)

Let every Knight be furnished with a prepared goblet. (DONE)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights arise! Sir Knight _____, read the sentiment.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Reads sentiment as supplied to Commanderies)*

GRAND ENCAMPMENT OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
THE APARTMENTS OF THE GRAND PRELATE AND THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Year of our Lord 2008

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

The Gospel according to St. Luke states that Mary “brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Here is the beginning of our salvation which ends with the events of Good Friday and Easter.

But beyond the theological significance of the birth of Jesus, Christmas is about family. St. Luke states that at the time of Jesus' birth a census was being taken so, “Joseph also went up from Galilee ... to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.” They went as a family. St. Matthew adds to the birth narrative the flight of the family. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to flee to Egypt. St. Matthew states, “When he (Joseph) arose he took the young child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.” Again, we see the significance of the family.

And so down through the ages the Christmas season has always emphasized the significance of the family. It is a time for families to come together, to worship together, to count their blessings and to give thanks to God for all that he has done for us in Christ Jesus and for our safe passage through the year.

This emphasis on the family is no less true for our Masonic family, especially that branch we know as Knights Templar. So as we come together this Christmas, we offer this toast to our Most Eminent Grand Master and his Lady Elizabeth who lead us in counting our blessings and giving thanks for all God has done. Most Eminent Grand Master and Lady Elizabeth, we offer you this toast and invoke God's blessings upon you, May the road ahead be straight and safe, and may you always reside on the sunny slopes of life.

In Christ's name,

The Committee on Religious Activities
Rev. William Hartmán, P.C.C., Chairman
Rev. Robert J. Cave, P.C.C., Grand Prelate

(This toast was prepared by Reverend and Sir Knight Robert J. Cave, R.E. Grand Prelate)

EMINENT COMMANDER: To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

SIR KNIGHTS: To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, Read the Grand Master's response.

S/K _____: *(Reads the response)*

GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

To the Grand Prelate, the Committee on Religious Activities and to all Sir Knights, wheresoever dispersed: Greetings!

My thanks to the Right Eminent Grand Prelate and Committee on Religious Activities for a most meaningful toast.

In the Toast just given, our Grand Prelate and the Committee touch on a very appropriate subject during this special season—Family. The importance of family is with us more right now, than at any other time. Each Christmas, we have an occasion to experience the excitement of the greatest story ever told, as we look into the hopeful eyes of our children and grandchildren. It is an opportunity to be grateful that we have them to enjoy. We all have much for which to be thankful, especially family we either have now, or have had in the past. For those of our family who are with us, let us seize the moment to say a prayer for them, and tell them how much they mean to us. And for those of our family who have passed on, it's an opportunity to remember with fondness the times we had with them, and be grateful for those moments.

The officers and membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America join me in expressing our best wishes to you and your family this Christmas Season.

As we celebrate this holiday season, let us remember, "Nothing is more important than our Family."

In His Service,
William H. Koon, II, GCT
Grand Master

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, read the Grand Prelate's Toast to the Right Eminent Grand Commander.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Reads the Toast)*

**TO ALL KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHERESOEVER DISPERSED,
WITHIN THE GRAND JURISDICTION OF THE
GRAND COMMANDERY OF FLORIDA**

Christmas, 2008

Grand Prelate's Toast to the Right Eminent Grand Commander

Hallelujah, the Messiah is born! He who the nations have desired has now come. Foretold through the ages, explained by scripture, announced by choirs of angels, Christ the King has come to earth, God in the flesh, all man and all God.

His name, Emmanuel, "God with us", is both a blessed promise and a challenge. God is our ever present strength, our fortress of protection. His promises are true, and because he has promised, we can believe. Why spend your life searching for something or someone already found?

Those in today's world who are fearful, apprehensive or scared of existing conditions are those who are ignorant of the promises of God to send his Son into a lost and dying world.

...Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted; but he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed....Isaiah 53: 4,5

Christmas is not just about joy today. It is also the promise of joys yet to come, and the surety of God's blessings in our lives.

THE TOAST

Sir Knights, life your cups on high in a toast to our Right Eminent Grand Commander, Charles Perez.

May he know in this season of Christmas that we are thinking of him and his family with gratitude for his unwavering, faithful leadership given to the Knights Templar of Florida.

We salute him, his family, and those he is remembering in this festive season with fondest wishes for a Merry, joyous, Christ Centered New Year and a Most Blessed, Happy New Year.

To the Grand Commander, Sir Knights!

In HIS Faithfulness,
The Rev. Daniel L. Williams
Excellent Grand Prelate

EMINENT COMMANDER: To the Right Eminent Grand Commander, Knights Templar of Florida.

SIR KNIGHTS: (REPEAT) To the Right Eminent Grand Commander, Knights Templar of Florida.

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, read the Right Eminent Grand Commander's response to the Toast of the Eminent Grand Prelate.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Reads the Sentiment, Toast from the Grand Prelate)*

**TO ALL KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHERESOEVER DISBURSED,
WITHIN THE GRAND JURISDICTION OF FLORIDA:**

THE GRAND COMMANDER'S RESPONSE

Christmas Greetings:

Just over 2000 years ago, with the world in basic ignorance, a child was born in a drafty manger. The only thing that really marked this birth was a Star shining in the East. And yet, Jesus Christ continues to be the most influential person in the world today.

Jesus was a man, a flesh and blood human being, born to impoverished, humble parents. But there's something that makes him stand apart from all others born into our world. Christ gives sight to the blind, He calms fierce storms with a mere word, He feeds 5,000 people with a handful of food, He raises a man from the dead and above all He raises himself from being dead.

The extraordinary life of Christ depicts that he is both human as well as God. He has himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair and death. Jesus is a great religious teacher and a compassionate lover of sinners, a man who strives for peace and one who's tough on injustice, someone who understands human beings better than anyone; the greatest man who ever lived, God the Father who came to us.

Jesus Christ's message is revolutionizing; his words are simple, yet profound. He gives us the message of love, mercy and compassion to the entire mankind. No other great leader has inspired so many positive changes in the lives of his followers. Those who encounter the risen Christ are totally transformed. To uphold our Christian faith, the best among us do not hesitate to face hardship, persecution, and even death. Many consecrate their lives to serving others, disregarding their own needs and desires.

Let us remember to celebrate this Christmas for what it truly is, the day of birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Let us make this celebration, a celebration by Man, for God. The finest Christmas gift is not the one that costs the most money, but the one that carries the most love.

As your Grand Commander, I fervently pray that our Heavenly Father's blessings flow to each of you and to all of those dear to you. May each of you have a joyous Christmas Holiday, and a peaceful, happy, and prosperous New Year!

Faithfully Yours,
Charles Perez
Right Eminent Grand Commander of Florida

EMINENT COMMANDER: To all Knights Templar, wheresoever dispersed!

SIR KNIGHTS (*Repeat after Commander*): To all Knights Templar wheresoever dispersed!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake.

EMINENT COMMANDER: To all Knights Templar who have shed their blood in defense of Liberty and Christianity.

SIR KNIGHTS (*Repeat after Commander*): To all Knights Templar who have shed their blood in defense of Liberty and Christianity. (***All then bow their heads in silence, NO drinking.***)

SIR KNIGHT _____: To the Grand Master of Masons of Florida!

SIR KNIGHTS (repeat): To the Grand Master of Masons of Florida!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake.

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let us recall the hallowed memories of the Fraters of our own jurisdiction who have joined the silent majority.

(The Twelve Knights will place their goblets on the triangle)

EMINENT COMMANDER: In memory of the dead of this jurisdiction during this Year of our Lord.

(The twelve knights will kneel on the left knee. All other Knights will bow their heads while, in soft tones, all assembled will sing “Nearer, My God, to Thee”

EMINENT COMMANDER: Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing “Nearer My God to Thee”.

NEARER, MY GOD TO THEE

Nearer, My God, to Thee
Nearer to Thee!
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, My God, to Thee,

Even Though it be a CROSS that raiseth me;
Nearer, My God, to Thee; Nearer to Thee!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, arise, we have been refreshed by these hallowed memories. Now let us receive the benediction of our excellent Prelate.

PRELATE: May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; May the Lord cause his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

EMINENT COMMANDER: *(Thank the Sir Knights for participating; thank the Organist or Musician, and thank all guests for coming, invite everyone to the fellowship hall for refreshments IF APPLICABLE.)*

EMINENT COMMANDER:

Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing our closing Christmas Carol.

HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the new born King”
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and Sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim “Christ is born in Bethlehem”
Hark the Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the new Born King”

(As Sir Knights mingle and depart, musician plays “JOY TO THE WORLD”)