

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)*

THE APARTMENT OF THE GRAND PRELATE AND THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
Year of our Lord 2009

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

In the Gospel of Matthew we read that an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and informed him that Mary would give birth to a son adding "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew adds that this was done so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel."

With these words we can see that the very essence of Christmas is HOPE. The coming of Christ announces a new beginning for the world. God is with humanity, there will be redemption and a new way of doing things. There will be no need to look to the past for there is now a bright new day for all mankind.

This bright new day of hope is especially present in all of Christendom including Knights Templary. Grand Master, your visionary outlook has been evidence of this hope as you have sought to renew Templary here in the United States and by the expansion of the Grand Encampment to other areas of the world including Romania, Togo and elsewhere. It is also seen in your inspirational encouragement concerning the future of Templary.

And so as we celebrate Christmas this year we affectionately offer this toast to you and Lady Elizabeth. May your radiant hope permeate not only Templary but your life and that of your family as well, and may the blessings of Christmas be with you and yours now and throughout the coming year.

In Christ's name,

The Committee on Religious Activities
Rev. William Hartman, 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 and humbling toast.

In the Toast just given, our Grand Prelate and the Committee reference the importance of "Hope" particularly during the Christmas season, and rightfully so. Without hope, life is indeed meaningless. Hope surrounds us at every point in our daily walk, and its companion 'opportunity' is always nearby. Hope is around every corner if we but see it, and when we do, may we utilize the opportunities given us each day.

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

As we celebrate this holiday season, let us remember, "Hope is ours if we seize it, every day".

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, 2009

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. Introduced to the world by a supernatural choir, enmeshed in the most amazing of lights, Christ is the light come into a world of darkness.

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.

The psalmist teaches us that "the light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Light is sent to the righteous to be used as our righteousness, but it is also meant to further the righteousness of others.

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, lift your cups on high in a toast to our Right Eminent Grand Commander, Ideal Baldoni.

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. May he continue to walk without hesitation in the light of our most blessed Savior, and may he reflect that light to others.

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 blessings:

From the commencement of the world, we may trace the foundation of Masonry. Ever since symmetry began, and harmony displayed her charms, our Order has had a being. Jehovah is that Being who brought light to the world and created mankind. Due to the wiles of the evil one, Adam sinned and caused mankind to become separated from God and lost without God's Light. At that time, God told Satan that he would be destroyed by a man who would be born of Eve's seed.

We are now celebrating what I believe to be the most important day for mankind since our Creation. On that day, Mary, who was Eve's seed, gave birth to the man that God predicted to Satan. He is the Father's only begotten Son, whom He named Jesus, which means Savior.

The Bible informs us that the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Having been born of the Father, Jesus is Emanuel. He is God with us. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. That is the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

My brothers and sisters, may our Holy Father bless all of you and your families in this Christmas Season and in the New Year. May He bless America and bless our troops, wherever they may be ... In Jesus' Name, I pray ... Amen

Fraternal love in Christ,

Ideal Baldoni
Right Eminent Grand Commander

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”)