

VIRGINIA KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
Service for
CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE

28 Oct 2014 Edition

This content in this document is based on the ceremony in the Manual of Public Ceremonies published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. It has been made to facilitate the use, include additional guidance and instructions for Virginia, and make it easier to adapt for local use.

(The Knights Templar Christmas Observance lends itself to many variations. If the observance is held in the Asylum it might be suggested that guests assemble in the Asylum prior to the service. Background music may be used if desired. Begin the ceremony with the Sir Knights marching in to appropriate music, typically “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”. Consider having all sing along as desired. 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 there while the other Knights seat themselves with the guests. Glasses or Goblets should be provided for all Sir Knights. Suitable cups may be provided to all visitors so that they might participate in the Toasts. It is suggested that all be provided with the words to songs to facilitate singing.)

PROCESSIONAL (All present rise and sing. Other appropriate music may be used.)

“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 angelic hosts proclaim. “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King.”

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time, behold Him come, Off-spring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King.”

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing. “Glory to the new-born King.”

(All be seated.)

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It is suggested that the Christmas Message of the Most Eminent Grand Master, Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America, be read after all have assembled in the Asylum. It is typically found in the December issue of the Knight Templar magazine.

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

PRELATE:

Isaiah 11:1-5 (King James Version)

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.

Luke 2:1-14 (King James Version)

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 Judaea, 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 firstborn 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 Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

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(COMMANDER raps gavel *** and asks all to rise before Prelate continues.)

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.

(All present asked to sing)

“Silent Night! Holy 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.

Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar. Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night! Holy Night! Son of God, Love's pure light.
Radiant beams from thy holy face. With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

COMMANDER: Sir Knights and guests, on glorious Christmas Day we commemorate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Emmanuel, author of our salvation, and the Great Captain under whose Banner we have all enlisted. Just a little more than two thousand years ago, there was born in Bethlehem of Judaea one who laid aside the God-head, and assumed mortal flesh; one whose glory, worth and grace no language can express; one who was born that our lives might be purified, and who died that our souls might be redeemed from the penalty 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 Un-Cover.

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, though Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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SIR KNIGHTS: 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.

SIR KNIGHTS: 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.

SIR KNIGHTS: Amen!

PRELATE: Father, let thy choicest blessings be with the President of the United States, and upon all in authority over us. Endue them with wisdom from on high, and may it be their chiefest joy to labor for Thy glory, and the good of the people for whom they legislate, and over whom they rule. Which we ask in the name of Jesus, Emmanuel.

SIR KNIGHTS: Amen!

COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Re-Cover. Let the chosen Twelve form around the Triangle.

(Twelve Sir Knights form around the Triangle.)

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

Let every Sir Knight and guest be furnished with a prepared goblet. (Done.)

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TOAST TO THE GRAND MASTER

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

(The designated Sir Knight reads the sentiment from the Right Eminent Grand Prelate. This is typically found in the December issue of the Knight Templar magazine.)

COMMANDER: To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

SIR KNIGHTS: (Repeat) To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

COMMANDER: Partake!

COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, read the Most Eminent Grand Master's response.

(The designated Sir Knight reads the response from the Most Eminent Grand Master. This is also typically found in the December issue of the Knight Templar magazine.)

TOAST TO THE GRAND COMMANDER

COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, read the sentiment of the Eminent Grand Prelate, Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Virginia.

(The designated Sir Knight reads the sentiment from the Eminent Grand Prelate. This is typically sent to the Commanderies by December and posted on the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia web site.)

COMMANDER: To our Right Eminent Grand Commander!

SIR KNIGHTS: (Repeat) To our Right Eminent Grand Commander!

COMMANDER: Partake!

COMMANDER: Sir Knight _____, read the Right Eminent Grand Commander's response.

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(The designated Sir Knight reads the response from the Right Eminent Grand Commander. This is typically sent to the Commanderies by December and posted on the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia web site.)

TOAST TO ALL KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

COMMANDER: To all Knights Templar, wherever dispersed!

SIR KNIGHTS: To all Knights Templar, wherever dispersed!

COMMANDER: Partake!

(The goblets are set down to prepare for the next sentiment.)

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

SIR KNIGHTS: To all Knights Templar who have shed their blood in defense of Liberty and Christianity. (After speaking all without command uncover and bow their heads for a moment of silence, no drinking.)

COMMANDER: (Recovers) Sir Knights, Re-Cover.

(The goblets are retrieved to prepare for the last toast.)

COMMANDER: To the Grand Master of Masons of Virginia!

SIR KNIGHTS: To the Grand Master of Masons of Virginia!

COMMANDER: Partake! (Partake finishing the contents in the goblet.)

COMMANDER: Let us recall the hallowed memories of the Fratres of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia who have joined the silent majority.

(Twelve Knights will move to and place their empty goblets on the Triangle.)

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

(All Knights will uncover and bow their heads, while, in soft tones, all assembled will sing.)

Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be, Nearer, My God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!

COMMANDER: (Recovers) Sir Knights, Re-Cover. 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 make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; may the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

(All present mingle and sing)

“Joy to the World”

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing. And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, and wonders of his love.