

**Rite Notes**  
**Membership and Recruiting**  
**Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida**  
15 December 2008

No Mason can fully appreciate the depth of the work of Masonry until he has participated in the work of the Orders of Knighthood! No seeker of truth will ever be able to experience anything more impressive and inspiring than the Orders of the temple. Every Christian Mason owes it to himself to put the “Cap Stone” over his York Rite Masonry.

**Ten Reasons Why You Should Be A Knight Templar**

1. The Commandery offers you a grand opportunity to improve in every walk of life through the study and work in the progressively expanding of light of pure Freemasonry.
2. It is the mightiest non-theological Christian organization in the world. It stands for the noblest principles in individual life and the highest standards of good government.
3. It is founded and draws its inspiration from the Christian Religion and the faithful practice of Christian Virtues.
4. As a vigorous Christian command, we wage war unceasingly in the defense of innocent maidens, destitute widows, helpless orphans and the Christian Religion.
5. It teaches and assists you to “let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven”.
6. Its work presents an advance and liberal education to all mankind designed to bring forth their finest character and works to be shared without limit with one another.
7. It gives you the richest of fraternal fellowship, peaceful freedom of mind and a deep understanding of character enabling you to live in harmony with God and with benefit of your Country.
8. It bases all its teachings upon the fundamental truth, thereby adding greatly to your understanding of the symbolic significance of the first three degrees of Freemasonry.
9. In mastering the exalted lessons of Knights Templar you learn by taking a full active part in the beautiful work of each Order of Knighthood. Templary has no special class for the portrayal of its truths.

10. Templary extends to you the privilege of sharing its priceless heritage from the past as Defenders of the Faith and ennobles your life through participation with the Sir Knights in the work of Freemasonry's greatest Order.

## **A Brief History of the Knights Templar**

The fraternity of Free and Accepted is the largest, oldest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. Thousands of books have been written about it. Yet, to most people of the world, the Masonic Fraternity remains a mystery.

The term "Knights Templar" describes the members of the Commandery, which exists as the final stage in the York Rite of Freemasonry. The first three degrees of Freemasonry are a basic requirement for joining York Rite.

Modern day Knights Templar trace their origins to the medieval time of 1118 AD, when they were called "Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon." These ancient Templars were a military and religious order founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades. The founders were Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de saint-Omer, knights who established a religious community to protect pilgrims in the Holy land. Baldwin II, Latin King of Jerusalem, gave them a dwelling on the ancient site of King Solomon's Temple. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux drew up the Order's rules, which included the notion of fighting the enemies of God under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Templars, segregated into knights, chaplains, sergeants, and craftsmen, were organized under a grand master and general council and were responsible only to the pope and not to secular rulers. Wearing a white cloak with a Red Cross, they attracted many nobles and soon became an expert military force and a powerful and wealthy order. In Europe their churches were often round, and their Commanderies served as banks. After 1291, when the crusading forces were driven from Palestine, the Templars' main activity became banking – the lending of money (even to kings) – and their enormous landholdings and financial strength aroused great hostility among rulers and clergy alike.

Philip IV of France, sorely in need of money, charged the Templars with heresy and immorality in 1307. The Templars were arrested and put on trial, and confessions were extracted only by torture. Similar attacks were mounted against the order in Spain and England by papal bull at the Council of Vienne in 1312. When Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and other leaders of the Templars retracted their forced confessions and declared their innocence and the innocence of the order, Philip had them burned at the stake in Paris on March 18, 1314.

The Templars' holdings were dispersed, some going to the Knights Hospitalers and some to secular rulers, although Philip received none. The guilt of the Templars was hotly debated down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most modern scholars, however, believe that the charges against them were fabricated.

In modern times, the warlike spirit of the Order has passed away; replaced by a spirit of refined moral chivalry, which prompts all of its members to be ever ready to defend the weak,

the innocent, the helpless and the oppressed. In a brother's cause we are to do all that may be demanded by manhood and fraternity. These convictions become a reality by the charitable deeds resulting from the Knights Templar Eye and Educational Foundations and the Holy Land Pilgrimage

**Note: If any York Rite Bodies plan weekend festivals, please let me know, with the date, time, location and contact person, and I will put it in the next newsletter, and on the website. Remember, Membership and Retention is everyone's business.**

March 6-7(Outdoor)

Box Ranch, Stuart

Paul Friend, 772-266-6404

HENRY A. ADAMS  
Eminent Grand Junior Warden  
Chairman, Membership Committee

\*\*some excerpts from the book, Making Members, with permission, by Rev. Jan L. Baderstadt, OPC, KYGCH, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States and Grand Commandery of Florida.

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