

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

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GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greeting Sir Knights:

What are you thankful for? The first American Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621, to commemorate the harvest reaped by a harsh winter. In that year Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving. The colonists celebrated and invited the local Wampanoag Indians. During the Civil War President Abraham Lincoln was looking for a way to unite the nation. In 1863 he gave his Thanksgiving Proclamation, declaring the last Thursday in November a day of thanksgiving. Congress passed a joint resolution in 1941 decreeing that Thanksgiving should fall on the fourth Thursday of November, where it remains. So what are you thankful for? What about your family? What about your job? What about the pension that you earned? How about your health? How about just being American? Having all the great resources, we should be thanking our God for all the Blessings he has bestowed. Which brings me to Veterans Day. First Known as "Armistice Day" (11th hour 11th day and the 11th month) November 11, 1918, the ending of World War I and later changed to honor all veterans. The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama in 1947 by Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized "National Veterans Day" to honor all veterans. In 1954, Congress passed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day and President Dwight Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. When is the last time you thanked a veteran for giving us the protection and freedoms?

I am thankful for all the hard work and planning that has gone into our District Meetings/Festival this year and it shows with all the new Sir Knights we are Knighting. The 10th District (Crestview, Fort Walton,

and Pensacola York Rite Bodies) was held on Sept. 5th and 6th. We had another great turnout of the members of that District and we knighted eight new members. I would like to thank Sir Knight Ronald Parks, Grand Junior Warden on a well organized Festival. Then on the following weekend of Sept. 12th and 13th the members of 5th District (Orlando Sanford, Daytona, and Leesburg York Rite Bodies) held their Festival and Knighted twenty new members. I would like to thank the Sir Knights in 5th District for all your hard work. Also at the Festival I had the privilege of presenting Sir Knight John B. Fletcher, Jr., Right Eminent Past Grand Commander with his fifty year membership certificate. Sir Knight Fletcher has served Olivet Commandery No. 4 thirty years as Recorder. Congratulations! We have Knighted year to date, 149 new members. We have surpassed last year (2013) Knighting by 21 new members. Since May, we have Knighted 87 new members into our Order and remember our Goal in this Grand Commandery calendar year (May 2014-May 2015) is to have Knighted 250 new members by May 2015

Please mark your calendars as we hold our last District Meeting/Festival in the 2nd District (Bradenton, Sarasota, Ft. Meyers, Naples York Rite Bodies) Venice Lodge No. 301 118 E. Venice Ave. Venice, Fl. on Friday Night Nov. 7th and Saturday Nov. 8th.

The Drill Master General Sir Knight Ronald J. Bertie, Right Eminent Past Grand Commander has informed me that he is working with several Commanderies to participate in Drill Competition at next year's Grand Conclave. Sir Knights, this promises to be one of those programs that will increase the pride we have in our individual Commanderies as we get together, practice, and create more fellowship with one another until we bond together even stronger than we are today. Then, when you compete at Panama City in May you can show what your individual Commandery means to you. This program could be fun to participate in and watch. Let's see what we can do with it. If your Commandery is interested in competing, please contact him.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and those you Love.

Yours in Christ,

S.K. Paul W. Friend, KTCH
Right Eminent Grand Commander