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Newsletter of the Priory of The Holy Isle



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Autumn 2022 Volume 5 Issue 2

Templars: Doers of the Word

by SSG Chev. Daniel G. Garrett, KTJ

In the book of James, we are given a very sensible command: “Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves” (James 1:22). James is urging people who listen to God’s Word to demonstrate a sincere devotion to the Lord by responding to what they hear with obedient action.

James emphasizes this command to be doers of the Word with two illustrations, one destructive and one encouraging. In both cases, he uses the idea of a mirror: “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like” (James 1:23-24)). Here, James compares an unconcerned listener of the Word to someone who looks carefully at themselves, but then walks away and forgets. They disregard what they saw, letting it drop from their mind. It’s listening without any real faith.

However, in the second example, he describes a listener who hears and absorbs God’s Word, taking it into their heart and allowing it to change their life: “But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25). This listener is one who hears with genuine faith. This listener is alert and eager to learn from God’s message. These are the individuals who want to receive from God and do what He says. This is what a Templar must do!

From the beginning of my Templar journey, I have many times been reminded that we (Templars) are doers; we are persons of action. As Templars, we are to seek God in our lives and promote love and respect for our community; increase the understanding between religions, help pilgrims visit holy places, and maintain a Christian presence in the Holy Land; support the poor, sick, and unjustly accused; stand against oppression, and protect freedom of speech. All these attributes can be found on the *About Us* tab of the SMOTJ.org website. Yet, none of these things would ever be possible, if not for the hard work and determination of the knights and dames of each Priory, together and individually.

Of the many organizations, The Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (SMOTJ) is by far one of the most unique in that it truly strives to live up to its mission statement. The primary mission of SMOTJ’s American Grand Priory (GPUSA) is to support Christians at risk, especially in the Holy Land. This, truly, is being a doer of the Word. As Matthew 7:16 states, “You will know them by their fruits.” This can always be most felt, when attending the Grand Convent and Investiture.

During this event, knights and dames converge from all over the country, and the world, to learn exactly how our efforts are affecting Christians and non-Christians alike across the globe. It is truly awe inspiring, but so worth the effort. If you have not attended, I encourage you to do so. In the meantime, continue being a doer in the name of the Lord. And, with His strength along with your Templar brothers and sisters, we can help to make a true difference in the world God has so blessed us with.

Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tua da gloriam.

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PRIOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Knights and Dames

Let me start off by saying that four of our members: Chev's Scott Simon, Curtis McIver, Davie Cottrell, and Daniel Garret attended the Grand Convent and Investiture in Long Beach, California from August 31st thru September 4th. I want to announce that CAPT Chev. Davie Cottrell, GOTJ was promoted to Grand Croix. A well-deserved and great achievement!

Highlights of the Grand C&I included the following. Chancellor Chev. Ralph Don Robinson, GCTJ being elected



by the Grand Council and will serve as the next Grand Prior. The new manual 4.4 is on-line. A new strategic planning initiative for Growth and Strength program was announced which includes an action plan for the Recruiting, Recovery, and Retention (R3) of members in SMOTJ. On October 25th OSMTH

will place a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier. Many dignitaries will be in attendance.

On November 3rd and 4th our Priory will hold a convent in Williamsburg. BG Baron Chev. John T. Digilio, GCTJ, GMTJ will be officiating. Members of our Priory should make every effort to attend a Convent and Investiture every year. Members of our Priory must be active and engaged in the work of the of the Priory, which includes charitable giving to local charities, the Jerusalem Mite, student sponsorship in the Holy Land, supporting local charities through work effort and man-hours. Above all else we must include prayers and dedicate our lives to Jesus Christ.

nnDnn,

Scott M Simon✠

SGM Chev. Scott M. Simon, GCTJ, Prior VII

CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

All members of the Priory of the Holy Isle should have received a survey from the Priory Executive Committee recently. Some may have asked why the survey was sent out and what was the Ex-Com attempting to do. The short answer is that the Ex-Com wanted to make sure that all members of the Priory could be involved in any decisions that would impact the Priory and its members. The last few

CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE (continued)

years have been rather weird with the Covid restrictions on meetings and gatherings, travel



problems, zoom and other internet meetings taking the place of face-to-face meetings and quarantine issues.

Now that restrictions have eased and groups are able to meet in person and the Priory has been able to hold Convents in person, the members of the Ex-Com looked at the

attendance at our Convents and Investitures for the last several years, including the pre-pandemic events and our social gatherings, to see if the Priory needed to make any changes in what we are doing and how we do it.

We tried to determine why our members were not able to attend a C&I in the past. If we can understand the reasons that our members were not able to attend Priory functions, then maybe we can address possible changes to enable more of our members to attend. After all, someone once said that the definition of insanity is continuing to do the same thing and expecting different results.

We wanted to find out if our members wanted to continue holding two Convents a year or go to one a year. That is a decision that the Ex-Com will not make without getting input from all members.

We wanted your input on the social gatherings that are held, whether we should hold them and when. We wanted your suggestions on the locations where the Priory will hold its Convents and Investitures. You are a part of the Priory, and you should have input in decisions that have an effect on the Priory. If you sent the survey back, thank you. If you haven't sent it back, please fill it out and send it to me. If you didn't receive one, let me know and I'll get one to you. The Ex-Com will review all the information we receive from the survey responses and let you know the results. **STAY TUNED!**

nnDnn

Curtis McIver, GOTJ, Chancellor

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Luke 12:32-40

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves."

"But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

I remember them vividly—those times in my life when someone surprised me with a generous gesture or gift. Perhaps because I was the only child of self-absorbed parents; perhaps because, I was sent to a strict boarding school at a young age; or perhaps because I spent my teens dealing with my mother's fragile mental state. But it turns out that through God's good pleasure, far from becoming a somber, anxious person, I actually discovered that I possessed the "joyful gene".

Regardless of the events of my life, I realize that I am living my adult life in full expectation that god had great things in store. And because this attitude prevails without conscious effort, I find I am attuned to opportunities to be surprised by joy, even in the face of setbacks and troubles.

Nevertheless, I never cease to be surprised by the kindness of others. The teachers who encouraged me; the bosses who promoted me; the friends who stuck with me; the priests who mentored me; my family who supported me; and the Seminary dean

FROM THE CHAPLAIN (continued)

who believed in me. Why were they so good to me, I wondered. “Just because”. And that “just because” is still one of God’s great mysteries. I’m sure I’m not alone in this...this joy at receiving kindness. Because each of these acts show us how God’s good pleasure is transmitted through God’s good people!

Maybe we treasure this generosity of spirit all the more because, in this age, it feels as though there is much unkindness and fear: terrorism, war, the economy, global warming, unemployment; a culture of materialism, in the face of homelessness and poverty; and the burden of a society which feels less and less free.



Into our fear across the centuries of human experience, Jesus’ teachings offer extraordinary words of comfort in a threatening world: “*do not be afraid little flock, for it is your father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*”. This is not a whistling in the dark sort of comfort, but rather the reassurance that what is seen and experienced is not all there is. A reminder that fears come from our earthly existence, but they need not have the last word in defining our lives, because we are God’s.

Jesus’ teaching weaves a tapestry of claims about God and the tenuous thread of human existence. God is “your father” Jesus says, “God’s ‘good pleasure’ is to give us the kingdom, a treasure in heaven that is imperishable.” These reminders of God’s sovereignty and gracious protection, along with the promise of the Son’s return, can serve as an antidote to the human problems of misplaced confidence, complacency, and fear of an uncertain future. The trick is, we must allow ourselves to be attentive to reminders of God’s grace all around us.

Remember that the first hearers of the gospel also had reason to fear. Thanks be to God, we are not under the heel of an occupying force of Roman soldiers quick to use their swords. When Jesus asks

his hearers, “are you afraid of being killed”? In first century Palestine and later in Rome, this was a literal question—and the answer was--you bet! So, it is not surprising that in this passage, the consistent message is not “be ready so that you will avoid punishment”. The message is actually “be ready so that you are positioned to receive God’s blessing”.

This gospel offers several surprising images of such a God. *The first is the image of God’s good pleasure* in giving away a treasure that does not fade or fail. The *second image* of God in this passage comes in the curious story of the master who returns to his household late at night. the master is not coming home to find fault with his servants. Jesus means to illustrate for the disciples the importance of being ready and waiting. So, we have the homey image of the Master/God donning an apron and serving up scrambled eggs to those he finds alert and waiting for him.

This story is not meant to stress us, or to cause us to be in a state of *heightened alert*. This story is meant to teach us to be *mindful* that our God is always coming to us in surprising ways, offering comfort and assurance to his “little flock”. The master’s (God’s) return is a *joyful* event, rather than a cause for panic. We can never tell when an actual or figurative knock on the door can bring the bearer of God’s good pleasure. Or what act of generosity or charity on our part will free us to peek through the door of heaven. The important thing to remember is, Jesus asks us to fine tune our spiritual antennae so that we can recognize such an event when it happens.

Jesus is telling us to be aware of possibilities...to always have in the periphery of our vision, a bright image of God coming toward us as one who serves, not as some celestial Inspector General, but desiring only to give us nourishment and pleasure. If we can stop our *doing* and just allow ourselves to *be*, we can experience that surprising God. And, once we experience that joy, it may well lessen our fear of this world. We will have our hearts and minds set on the other world that lasts—God’s eternal kingdom. *Amen*.

Rev. Eve Butler-Gee, SCTJ, Senior Chaplain

FROM THE INSPECTOR

Four members from the Priory attended the social event to tour the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, in downtown Hampton, VA on Saturday, August 13th. I was the only female with no military background and was awed at the huge aircraft hanging from the ceiling plus models in a showcase. New this year is the Space Explore Gallery with interactive displays for young children, which we didn't venture in. They have also updated the walls acknowledging the work of the African American women at NASA. The space capsules on display looked awfully cramped— no thank you. It was pretty cool when the guys would point out where they jumped from a helicopter or where their duty station was on a carrier or tidbits from their military life. I hate history, but having folks who made it alive for me, that I enjoyed. Local companies were recognized as contributing to the success of NASA.



And then there was the gift shop. Fascinating, educational toys, puzzles, clothing, even snacks. I bought Astronaut peaches, freeze-dried ready to eat space food. And I HAD to buy some science socks, plus a KidzLabs Crystal Science kit for my grandson.

We had lunch at *Park Lane Tavern* in Coliseum Shopping Center. Excellent Pub Grub, good conversation and fellowship. Missed you all. Hope to see you at the next C&I when we have an AUCTION.

nnDnn

Janet Lockwood, GOTJ, Inspector



IN MEMORIAM

Merrilu Paulin Ablowich, wife of CDR Chev. Dean Allen Ablowich, KCTJ, passed away peacefully on July 27, 2022 at the age of 85. She was the eldest daughter born on February 2, 1937, to Gladys Allen and Bellangee Dunbar Paulin III in Neptune, NJ. The family lived in New Jersey and Pennsylvania before settling into Norfolk at the age of ten. Merrilu was a graduate of Norview High School and worked her way through William and Mary for her B.S. and George Washington University for her Master's degree in Education. She spent her teaching career as a Reading Specialist and then as a grade-school teacher (1st-3rd), deeply rooted in the belief that education is critically important and worth the investment.

Merrilu was involved in numerous community organizations including the Princess Anne Republican Women's Club and the Friends of the Public Library. She was also on the Virginia Beach City Public Library Board for 16 years. She enjoyed the friendships and activities as a hunt supporter of the Princess Anne Hunt and James River Hunt clubs. Merrilu retained her professional education contacts through her membership in Delta Kappa Gamma.

She is survived by her husband Dean Allen Ablowich; her daughter Susan Ablowich Poe (Rusty); her three grandchildren Grace, Ryan, and Ian Poe; her sister Phyllis Paulin Streit; and her brothers Theodore and Allen Paulin.





Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani
Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem
Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America

Priory of The Holy Isle
(www.prioryoftheholysisle.org)

*His Excellency, The Prior, cordially invites all Knights, Dames, Companions, and Guests
to attend the Priory's*

Autumnal Convent & Honours

*Historic Bruton Parish Episcopal Church
Duke of Gloucester Street, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia
November 6, 2022 at 3:00 PM*

*The Hotel:
Hampton Inn & Suites
911 Capitol Landing Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
(757) 941-1777*

✠ Please make your own Reservations ✠

*Friday November 5
6:30 PM: Gathering of Members, Companions, and Guests at
Fat Tuna Grill, 1433 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
Dress: Business / Templar Casual*

*Saturday November 6
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM: Convent Setup & Rehearsal
3:00 - 5:00 PM: Ceremonies at Bruton Parish Church
6:00 - 7:00 PM: Prior's Reception at The Queen's Lake Club
7:00 - 9:00 PM: Priory Banquet at The Queen's Lake Club*

*Men: Black or White Tie, Highland Evening, or Military Mess Dress with decorations
Ladies: Highland Evening, Military Mess Dress with decorations, or Appropriate long or short
dress*

Convent and Banquet Registration fee: \$75 per person

Please RSVP no later than October 22, 2022 to

*H.E. CAPT Chev. Davie S. Cottrell, GCTJ
PO Box 189, Hudgins, Virginia 23076*

✠ Checks payable to "SMOTJ-PHI" ✠

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 4-5, 2022

Autumnal Convent & Investiture

Bruton Parish Episcopal Church
Williamsburg, VA @ 3PM

Suggested hotel Hampton Inn & Suites
Williamsburg, VA

December 4, 2022

Priory Christmas Gathering

Center Street Grille
Williamsburg, VA @ 1PM

May 12-13, 2023

Spring Convent & Investiture

St. Andrew's Chapel at St. Joseph's Villa
Glen Allen, VA @ 3PM

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