

**Gary Freedman**

**R: E: Grand Commander**

8611 Tule Dr.

Amarillo, TX 79108

Cell: (806) 584-1418

Email:

gary.freedman@hotmail.com



**Jeff S. Bennett**

**Texas Page Editor**

3208 Hyde Park CT

Arlington, TX 76015

Cell: (817) 372-3399

Email:

jeffbtturbine@yahoo.com

## 2020-2021 TEXAS SUPPLEMENT

**Greetings, Sir Knights, and Happy New Year!** It appears that we are in for another unpredictable year due to the continuing coronavirus pandemic, but I do not want this to prevent us from continuing on with our mission. With the major holiday season at an end, and viable vaccines potentially on the way in the near future, we should theoretically see another, and hopefully final, downward trend in the COVID curve.

In order to help facilitate this trend, we must all choose to accept responsibility and hold ourselves accountable for our actions, and continue the practices of social distancing, mask wearing, and enhanced hygiene in order to protect our fellow man, and to prevent another spike in cases before we finally get a handle on it.

**Texas General Order #7, available on the Grand Commandery website, lays out the plan to re-open Templary in Texas this year. This phased approach will allow commanderies in lower risk regions of the State to hold varying degrees of in-person and hybrid meetings, according to the dictates of the plan, and to maintain maximum safeguards on those commanderies deemed to be in higher risk areas. The process of placing commanderies in a particular re-opening Phase will take several mitigating factors into consideration, including current case and mortality trends, and regional hospitalization rates.** These are not easy decisions.

The past year has been particularly difficult for all of us, as we continue to beseech Christ to watch over the health and safety of our brethren, and the souls of those we have lost to this illness. We have all greatly missed the fraternization and “pressing of the flesh”, so to speak, that we have enjoyed for so long in our organizations, and we will return to those days in due time, but for now we must remain vigilant.

I ask that everyone have patience while we are on the road to recovery, and **to take advantage of the tools available to you.** For those **commanderies who have made use of the various web conferencing applications to facilitate holding their meetings, I commend you on utilizing these invaluable tools.** I have heard of much success around Texas with online meetings, and I pray that more commanderies will follow your lead until we can return to some semblance of normal.

**While all Texas commanderies were on Phase 0 through the end of 2020, the prevailing pandemic conditions will be re-evaluated every 2 weeks, at least until our next Grand Conclave in April, and the Phase Schedule presented in Addendum-General Order #7 will be updated.**

I fully understand that this is not an ideal situation, nor is it possible to please everyone while at the same time protecting everyone's health and safety. Consider this our contribution to what I pray to God will result in the subduing of this pandemic, hopefully sooner than later. I sincerely thank all of the Sir Knights for their cooperation and support.

In this new year, let us renew our efforts to maintain our membership by aggressively pursuing those Sir Knights who have strayed from this great organization. There are many reasons one of us may have dropped out of the commandery, but there are as many reasons, if not more, to come back. Your Membership Committees should be hard at work compiling a list of NPD's and Demits, which should then be distributed to those willing to call our brethren to let them know we are still here, and that we miss them.

This should not be a hard sell, nor should we disparage these wayward Sir Knights in any way. It is doubtful that very many of these masons left the commandery with animosity or thinking they would never come back, and likely just need a call to remind them we are still here for them, whether they do come back or not. The true Sir Knights needs us just as much as we need them – we are much stronger together than separate.

As we embark on this new year with our hopes and prayers for recovery and a return to normality, may God grant us the patience to see it through to fruition. May God guide our members and our leadership as we navigate the turbulent waters ahead, until at last, we reach the calmer shore. Let us leave our own self-interests behind and consider the well-being of our brothers and sisters instead.

We are warriors at heart and sir knights to the end. We can either make ourselves miserable or we can make ourselves strong. Self-importance is one of our greatest enemies and has been the downfall of many once-great men, but if we shed our self-importance, we become invulnerable. It is not easy to change human nature, but as Christian masons, we can only do our best to fix the flaws that lie within ourselves, and hopefully lead the way so that others may follow our example.

*I pray to Jesus Christ, that every one of us follows His example, and that we face this year with patience and courage, and that we see fit to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Amen.*

*In His Service,*

**Gary H. Freedman, Grand Commander 2020-2021**