

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:

jeffbturbine@yahoo.com

2020-2021 TEXAS SUPPLEMENT

Greetings, Sir Knights! A light at the end of the tunnel finally appears! As the United States and the rest of the world finally appear to be making progress towards not just flattening the COVID-19 curve, but possibly even cresting what I pray is the final peak and riding the decent back to some semblance of normality, we can hopefully begin our recovery in earnest this year.

We are not, however, out of the woods just yet. The continued spread of the virus in Texas has been proliferated not just by the lack of a viable vaccine, which we fortunately now have, but largely by the apathy and neglect of our fellow human beings. We, as Christian Masons, hold ourselves to a higher standard than the average person. In order that we may finally beat this virus into submission and for there to be a successful and timely recovery, we must all remain vigilant in our respect for our fellow human beings.

Forecasts tend to imply that vaccinations will continue throughout the year, and if we maintain our common sense habits of protecting each other through personal hygiene, social distancing and mask wearing, I believe that we can magnify the impact of vaccinations and maintain the downward trend of COVID-related infections and deaths in Texas, and in our fraternity. We know for a fact that ignoring the health and safety guidelines outlined by local, state, and national authorities has had a significant impact on our ability to overcome the infection rate, in masonic and non-masonic circles alike.

If we are to be truly considered as leaders of our fraternity and communities, we must show others that we can lead by example. Social media has not been our friend in this aspect, as many have pointed out that our members still gather together in groups, ignore safety guidelines, and post this behavior for all to see. In many cases, these gatherings have led to the infections of many members and their families, which is unacceptable in my opinion. Our purpose as Templars is not to ensure that we are able to meet face to face, but in fact it is to encourage us to be better masons and better Christians. We should all consider the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, especially with Easter just on the horizon, who died for our sins so that we might live. This is an important statement to ponder.

I believe that our actions speak very loudly to what we believe and what we take seriously. Christ sacrificed his life for all mankind, which begs the question: Are we sincere enough in our beliefs that we, ourselves, are capable of making some relatively insignificant sacrifices, and to show enough respect to our fellow Templars, as well as the profane, what we are willing and able to do in order to save the lives of those around us? Surely this is a good question to provoke some introspection into our own individual code of ethics and sense of morality, and to ask ourselves if this is a standard we can live up to.

Some things are hard to give up, even if it is only temporary, but sometimes it is simply necessary for the greater good. Self-interest and hypocrisy are, unfortunately, part of human nature, but these characteristics are not absolute, and we have the ability to control them if we want to. While Templary, Masonry, and many other organizations have been suffering from declining membership over the past decades, we have done amazingly well considering the staggering level of competition for attention existing today. We will assuredly take a larger hit than usual due to the pandemic we have endured over the past year, but together we are strong, and we will come out better for the effort.

I have faith in my fellow Templars and brother masons. We are not masons by virtue of our ability to go to a lodge or commandery meeting, although we are fully aware that this is an important aspect of fraternity and socialization. It is not our location that makes us masons, or how many people we can pack into a room - we are masons because of who we are in our hearts.

Masons exist in all walks of life, from different countries and cultures, politics and religions. Let us again follow the example of our Savior and love one another regardless of our origins or personal beliefs, and show the world how to respect each other despite our differences. This is basic Masonic, Templar, and Christian teaching, and is foreign to, literally, none of us. I believe my faith in my brethren is well-founded, and that our example will be a light by which others may be guided.

Our Grand Conclave is coming up next month, although we are again forced into an alternate format due to the pandemic. Field Drill competition, one of the great events supported by many jurisdictions, and especially Texas, has been cancelled on both the State and National level this year. This is very disappointing to many of us, but it is necessary, and we will get over it. I am very proud of all of you who are leading the fight by example and showing the world that we care about them.

God bless you all.

In His Service,

Gary H. Freedman, Grand Commander