



Grand Prelate's Monthly Message

JULY 2023

Hiroo Onoda was a lieutenant in the Japanese imperial army during World War II. In 1944 he was sent to the Philippines. When the war ended, Onoda did not receive word initially and thus continued his duties, for 29 years! Many people knew about the “crazy soldier” living in the jungle, but he successfully evaded capture, surviving on food he gathered from the jungle, or stole from local farmers. Finally, in 1974, Japan sent his former commanding officer to see him and to inform him that he was released from his military duties. When asked why he continued to do this for three decades, he answered, “I had to follow my orders as I was a soldier.”

While many can admire the loyalty and dedication that Onoda demonstrated for all those years, the sad truth is that it was the wrong kind of loyalty. Onoda was trapped in a mindset that resulted in the needless deaths of many people, and cost a half-million dollars over the years in attempts to track him down and convince him to surrender. So, as important as it is to finish the task you are responsible for, you need to know that you are serving the right cause.

We too have been given a charge. That charge is the Great Commission. One of our responsibilities as Sir Knights is to make disciples. Remember that disciple making doesn't end at baptism. Quite the contrary, while the church will handle that part, disciple making continues by teaching others how to serve Christ through serving others. We can begin by helping other Christian masons to see the value of joining Commandery, then teaching our new Sir Knight how to serve through our Order. And together, we will help to disciple others in our communities as we work together to make an impact in the world around us.

Jesus tells us that the greatest command is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. Every other command falls under these two things. Such service honors God and helps others. Through this we know that our cause is just and good.

And, like Onoda, who continued until his commanding officer came to call him home. We to should be willing to serve our cause until our Great and Glorious Commander—Jesus—comes to call us home to be with him.

Always and All Ways in Christ,

Rick Saunders
Grand Prelate