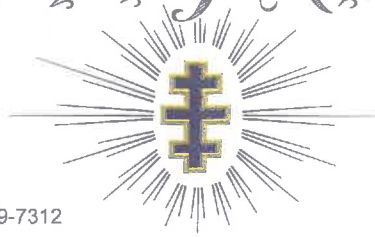


Grand Encampment of Knights Templar



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November 14, 2023

OFFICE OF

JAMES B. STEELE, KCT

RIGHT EMINENT DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

RE: Mid-Atlantic Department Commander's 2023 Christmas Message

Greetings Sir Knights:

As the most wonderful time of the year approaches, let's refocus our heart and thoughts, and remember why we are celebrating. Christmas is a time to share the gift that God has so graciously given us, his son Jesus Christ. God sent his only son one glorious night, to be born to a virgin, to live a perfect life and to die on the cross for our sins. Because he rose from the dead three days later, we are able to celebrate the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. We should all pray to be filled with the "wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child."

This will be my last year as your Department Commander. I have enjoyed serving the Mid-Atlantic Department, making lifelong new friends, and attending many memorable celebrations. This Christmas is very special to me. As most of you know, my wife, two grandchildren and I were involved in a horrific automobile accident on June 30th. My eyes were opened to how short life truly is on this earth. We were very blessed and are thankful to so many of you for your prayers, phone calls, cards and emails. Please, this Christmas take the time to celebrate with your family and friends, give back to your communities, fellowship over a meal, participate in holy communion and renew your commitment to carry out the work required of Knights of the Temple. Our earthly life is so fleeting. Lady Shirley and I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a most prosperous New Year.

In closing, I'd like to share with you a verse that closely correlates to John 3:16 and that is 1 John 3:16. *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."* Let's make a commitment to celebrate Jesus today and every day!

PRAYER.

Lord, we ask You to grant us peace. Peace in our homes, peace in our churches and peace in our hearts, especially when it feels like the world all around us spins out of control. Help us stay focused on You, this Christmas and always. Thank You for loving the whole world enough to send the greatest gift, Your Son, so we might truly have a very Merry Christmas, even in a not-so-merry kind of world. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Courteously,

James B. Steele, KCT
Mid-Atlantic Department Commander