

Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia



<https://vatemplars.org>

January 2024

Sir Knight Dennis M. Haas, KCT
Right Eminent Grand Commander
gc@vatemplars.org

Sir Knight Christopher R. Faraldi
Editor: Virginia Supplement
editor@vatemplars.com

Knightly Greetings Sir Knights!

This month I will provide you with a brief history and the importance of the annual Religious Freedom Day parade and its meaning to us as Sir Knights.

The Religious Freedom Day parade will hit the streets of downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia on Sunday, January 14th, 2024, to commemorate the 247th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's drafting the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.

On Religious Freedom Day, we reflect on our right to practice, pray, and preach our faiths peacefully and openly. Across the country, we practice many different religions. We celebrate many different traditions. And we honor our faiths in many different ways and places — from churches, to mosques, to synagogues, to temples. This religious freedom — this freedom to practice religion fully and freely or to practice no religion at all — is enshrined in our Constitution. And together we must continue to preserve and protect it.

The bill caused much debate and took nine years before passing the Virginia General Assembly January 16, 1786. The bill was the basis for the religion clause in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Jefferson felt strongly about religion, and his notes were clear that the principle of religious freedom was meant to include every faith and denomination.

Sir Knights from around the Commonwealth of Virginia and other states will join with the Knights of Columbus and many others to commemorate this bill and Jefferson's role in preserving religious

freedom in a ceremony for all faiths at the Monument for Religious Freedom on Washington Avenue.

NEVER TAKE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR GRANTED!!!

Please visit our website, vatemplars.org, to stay informed with the latest information about this, and other, events and plan to join with us as we celebrate this most coveted freedom.

Courteously,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Haas". The signature is stylized and cursive.

S. K. Dennis M. Haas, KCT Grand
Commander, 2023-2024