



Pennsylvania Crusader

Since 1948

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
pagrandcommandery.org

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Greetings Sir Knights,

As is evidenced by the photos in this issue of the Pennsylvania Crusader, we've entered the season of conferring the orders! Divisions and individual commanderies are scheduling and conferring orders all over the Commonwealth. If your commandery doesn't confer the work on your own candidates, please find a way to support conferrals in your area – especially if you're sending candidates for courtesy work.

As of this writing, the Grand Commandery's Traveling Sword is still at York-Gethsemane Commandery No. 21 in York. I hope some of you are making plans to go claim it at their March conclave!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Grand Encampment's Easter Observance Weekend next month. We will be laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at 9:15am on Saturday, April 4th, followed by the Grand Encampment banquet that evening and the Easter Sunrise Service the following morning at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. Consider joining what will be a strong PA contingent in Virginia that weekend!

If you haven't already, mark your calendars and plan to attend our 173rd Annual Conclave of our Grand Commandery, to be held May 29-31 in King of Prussia, PA. The Call to Conclave will be out very soon so be on the lookout and get those registrations turned in!

Courteously,

SK Joshua J. Nay
Grand Commander

Mark Your Calendars

Mar 14, 2026 – Northwest Section Reception, Ambridge, PA

Apr 4-5, 2026 – Easter Sunrise Weekend, Arlington/Alexandria, VA

Apr 11, 2026 – Southwest Section Reception, Canonsburg, PA

May 29-31, 2026 – 173rd Annual Conclave, King of Prussia, PA

Commandery Anniversaries in January

Crusade No. 12 – March 5, 1856

Potter No. 69 – March 15, 1890

Warren No. 63 – March 16, 1885



Associate Grand Prelate's Message

A freshman in junior high won first prize at a science fair sometime back. His project was quite interesting. In it he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." In his petition he listed several reasons for its strict regulation. He noted dihydrogen monoxide can . . .

1. Cause excessive sweating and vomiting
2. It is a major component in acid rain
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you
5. It contributes to erosion
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients

He asked 50 people if they would support a ban of the chemical dihydrogen monoxide. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical dihydrogen monoxide is . . . WATER!!

The title of his prize-winning project was, "How Gullible Are We?" (1)

I dare say one chemical we do not want to eliminate from our environment is water. Water is essential to life.

Jeremiah tells us that the person who puts his trust in God is like a tree planted near a stream of water. In John 4 Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that he will give her water to drink which is so satisfying that she will never thirst again. We need to drink of that same living water. We need to be planted near that same flowing stream.

Without God our lives are like a desert. Jeremiah makes the comparison like this: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands . . . He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives."(17:5-6)

That's quite a desolate description. But life without God is desolate.

As someone has written: "One has only to look around to observe that man does not seek to maintain only his physical self. If that were his only concern, we would have no suicides, nor would anyone ever join the army, fly a plane, or climb a mountain. If maintenance of the physical self alone were the goal of human beings, we wouldn't eat too much, drink too much, or stay up late. We would even avoid such dangers to our body as shaking hands, appearing in public places, or kissing . . . girls. We would, indeed, live a sterile existence in more ways than one." (2)

Is it not clear that we were intended to be more than a tiny bush in a barren desert? So much of our life is spent tending to our physical needs. And yet every one of us would recognize and agree that our greatest needs are not physical.

The person without God is like a bush growing in a desert. But writes Jeremiah, the person who puts his trust in God is like a tree planted by water. He writes, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." (17:7-8)

The tree by the water has a resource that it can draw upon in adverse conditions, and it is not harmed by those adverse conditions; just as we are not harmed by adverse conditions when we give ourselves to God.

There are many people who go through life with a very thin margin of safety spiritually. They have no reserve resource to draw upon when the snow piles on the roof. Like the bush in the desert, they do not have extensive roots to reach down into the earth when the hot, dry weather comes.

The desert bush does not have great roots because there is nowhere for them to go. They have no source of nourishment from which they can draw to conquer and grow. The same with us if we have not planted our lives beside the stream of living water: we won't have the resources we need to fight life's most difficult battles.

My friends, some of us are weak on the inside. Our roots are shallow. Our spirituality is sadly deficient. We need to plant our lives by a stream of living water in order to make ourselves stronger.

Of course, that stream of living water is Christ himself. When we are in a proper relationship with Christ, our lives are radiant, and our fruit is bountiful. And when we are separated from him our lives are dry and barren.

The source of our life and strength is not the Earth, but Christ himself. When we are joined to him, we cannot be defeated. Without him, though, we are all too easily crushed.

Rev. S.K. Orville R. Jones, GPE

1. <http://www.mustsharejokes.com/page/Funny+True+Stories>

2. Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, *Individual Behavior* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1949).



Sir Knights of Division 6 conferred the Order of Red Cross in in Altoona on February 24th.
Well done, Sir Knights! Welcome to our new members!



Division 1 conferred the Order of Malta in Philadelphia on February 12th. Congratulations to the
new Knights of Malta and to the conferring team!



On February 24th, the Sir Knights of Bethel Commandery No. 98 in Hanover conferred the Order of Malta on four candidates from Division 11.



The Orders of Red Cross and Malta were conferred on six candidates by Mizpah Commandery No. 96 in Doylestown on February 19th. Welcome new Knights of Malta!



A lovely time was had by all at the Northeast Section Reception on Saturday, February 28th, in Ambridge, PA.



During the course of the Northeast Section Reception, Sir Knights Walter M. Bechtold, PDC, Curtis R. Beam, PC, and Allen S. Heydt, PC, were made Knight Commanders of the Temple, and Connie Bookwalter was made a Companion of the Temple.

Send photos of your commandery conclaves and events (along with a caption) to the REGC (josh.nay@gmail.com) for inclusion in future issues of the PA Crusader!