Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

THE APARTMENTS OF THE GRAND PRELATE
and
THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Year of Our Lord 2026 to all valiant and magnanimous Knights of the Temple,
wheresoever dispersed throughout Christendom

~

Salutations and Knightly Greetings

A TOAST TO OUR MOST EMINENT GRAND MASTER
CHRISTMAS 2026

Most Eminent Grand Master Kussman, it has been such a pleasure serving with you these past nine years both prior to your being elected as Grand Master, and later, as you served in that office, one in which you are well suited. It has been such an honor for me to be a part of your team. We have had many wonderful conversations, especially the ones that take us into deeper discussions about God and our Savior. I will very much miss our service together when that time comes too. It will be exciting to see what God has instore for you in the future. I know that you are not one to sit back and be idle.

So, here is my toast for you. I pray that all Sir Knights, wherever they may be, join me in raising a glass to honor you, our Grand Master, Sir Knight David Kussman, that God would, like the prayer of Jabez as found in 1 Chronicles 4:10, expand your boarders, and broaden your horizons in whatever endeavors you seek.

Sir Knights raise your glasses and join with me, “to our Grand Master Kussman Blessings to you in all your endeavors.”



In Jesus’ Holy Name,

The Reverend Sir Knight Paul D. Erickson, KGC, Chairman
The Committee on Religious Activities
The Reverend Robert J.F. Elsner, KGC
The Reverend Terry L. Plemons, KGC

The foregoing toast to the Most Eminent Grand Master and his response thereto are transmitted to you with the request that you extend an invitation through the proper offices to all Sir Knights within your jurisdiction to join in the sentiments thus conveyed at some convenient hour, on or near the birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day, December twenty-fifth, in the Year of Grace 2026.

GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

CHRISTMAS 2026

To the Right Eminent Grand Prelates, the members of the Committee on Religious Activities, and to all Knights Templar wheresoever dispersed:

A profound appreciation from Lady Kim and me to the Right Eminent Grand Prelates and the members of the Religious Activities Committee for their most gracious toast this Christmas Season. Our world continues to be one of unrest and uncertainty. However, we do have a reason during this blessed season to celebrate.

Historical Knights Templar Christmas Meaning:

- **Vigilance and Protection:** In the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, Christmas was a high-risk time due to massive crowds of pilgrims traveling to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Templars viewed Christmas not just as passive celebration, but as an active duty of military and spiritual protection-guarding gates, escorting travelers, and keeping order so others could pray safely.
- **Askesis and Devotion:** Alongside the medieval traditions of the 12-day winter festival, the warrior-monks maintained monastic discipline, including periods of Advent fasting, prayer, and mandatory attendance at Christmas Mass.
- **Symbolic Watch:** Their meaning of Christmas was tied to guarding a promise-protecting the physical and spiritual cradle of the faith against tension and conflict.

As I conclude this, my final Christmas Message as your Grand Master; Lady Kim and I pray that you all have a blessed and rewarding Holiday Season.

Courteously,

David J. Kussman ǂ

David J. Kussman, GCT
Grand Master