

**GRAND COMMANDERY  
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR**



**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
HEADQUARTERS  
OF**

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Grand Commander**

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**CIRCULAR NO. 1 (McBride)  
GRAND COMMANDER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

Sir Knights,

as we have now finished our Thanksgiving traditions with our families, we now look towards the Christmas Season. Amid all the emphasis we place on the hustle and bustle of shopping for the best gift ideas, the decorating, the Christmas Parties, etc., let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas. The Life, Birth, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

As Knights Templar, I suspect that many of us often imagine what it will be like on the fateful day when we finally meet our Lord and find ourselves in his presence?

This thought reminds me of a classic Christmas song titled "*The Christmas Guest*". Written by Louis Marshall "Grandpa" Jones and Bill Walker, released in 1969 and later re-recorded by Johnny Cash, Andy Griffith and Reba McIntyre (who's version I personally find to be the most touching), tells the story of an old shop keeper, named Conrad, who's family had passed away many years earlier and left Conrad to spend many a lonely Christmas day. Early one Christmas morning, the Lord appeared to Conrad in a dream and told him that he would be coming to visit him that day as his "*Christmas Guest*".

With great joy, Conrad began preparing for the Lord's visit. He decorated his shop with branches of fern, holly and thousands of green bows. His table was spread and kettle shined in anxious anticipation of his Lord's appearance.

Soon he heard a noise and ran to the window expecting to see the Lord at his door, but it was only an old beggar with holes in his shoes and wearing tattered clothing. Rather than to ignore the beggar, Conrad took the man inside and gave him shoes and a new coat from his shop. With a grateful heart, the old beggar went on his way.

As the hours continued to pass, Conrad wondered how much longer he would have to wait for his Lord to appear. When he heard a knock and ran to his door, but to his disappointment, it was only a stranger once more. An old slumped-over lady with a bundle of kindling on her back was now standing at his door, asking only for a place to rest. So he invited her to sit at his table and shared with her his food and drink.

After the old lady had left, Conrad's heart began to fill with dismay, for the hours of Christmas continued to slip away and the Lord had not come as he said he would. Suddenly, out of the stillness he heard a

cry *"Please help me, and tell me where am I?"* So once again, he opened his door and was disappointed as twice before, for standing before was only a mere child who had wandered away and became lost from her family. Although filled with disappointment and with a heavy heart, Conrad knew he must do what was right and proceeded to wipe the tears from the little one's eyes and gave comfort and reassurance to the frightened child and lead her back home.

When Conrad returned to his own darkened door, his heart was filled with even greater dismay, for he realized the hours of Christmas had passed away. He knelt to pray and said *"Dear Lord, why did you delay? What kept you from coming to call on me? For I wanted so much your face to see"*. When out of the silence of the night, he heard a voice say *'Lift up your head for I kept my word. Three times my shadow crossed your floor and three times I came to your lonely door. I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet and I was the woman you gave something to eat. I was the child on the homeless street. Three times I knocked, and three times I came in and each time I found the warmth of a friend. Of all the gifts, love is the best and I was honored to be your Christmas Guest"*.

The lesson of *"The Christmas Guest"* reminds us that we should have faith in our Lord, even when our mortal interpretations lead us to believe that he has forsaken us. Like Conrad, let us be resolved as Christian Knights to wield our swords, and to *"Clothe the naked"* as he did the beggar with new shoes and coat, *"Feed the hungry"* as he did the old tired lady and to always aid in the *"Defense of helpless orphans"* as Conrad did the lost, frightened little girl separated from her family.

I wonder if Conrad was a Mason and a Knight Templar??? If not, he sure would have made a good one!

May the joy of the Christmas Season be with you and your family, friends and loved ones, and may the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ of Nazareth be with you and fill your hearts now and forevermore.

Fraternally,

*Sean P. McBride*

Grand Commander Illinois

