



THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
VIRTUAL OBSERVANCE

OF

EASTERTIDE

Submitted to the
Grand Commandery of the Philippines

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

April 2022



VIRTUAL EASTER OBSERVANCE ON EASTER DAY OR EASTER SUNRISE FOR THE COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

INSTRUCTIONS

The following virtual ceremony for the Knights Templar Easter Observance is based on the 2021 Easter Service program of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, USA, and adapted for Philippine-based Commanderies using online meeting platforms. It should be performed in compliance with the Edicts, Circulars, and Regulations of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines and of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the Philippines. Since it is a virtual public ceremony, Commandery officers, members, and guests may participate sitting down. The ceremony may appropriately be held anytime during or after Easter Day (April 17, 2022). A member of clergy may even optionally be invited as guest speaker, if confirmed to have no objections to Masonry or Masonic Templary.

START OF VIRTUAL CEREMONY

(Optional Music: Play or sing *"Jesus Christ is Risen Today"* or something similar before starting.)

Commander: * Welcome, Sir Knights and guests, to the virtual commemoration of the Knights Templar Observance of Eastertide, hosted by _____ Commandery No.____, Grand Commandery of the Philippines. I am your host, _____, and I am the current Eminent Commander of the said Commandery.

This observance is one of the three required services and fundamental traditions of Masonic Templary, the other two being Ascensiontide and Christmastide. However, because of the current Coronavirus Pandemic and the resultant social distancing measures set by our government, our Grand Lodge, and our Grand Commandery, we temporarily gather in this manner online, that we may still commemorate, as Knights Templar, the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Why is the commemoration of Easter important to us Masonic Knights Templar? Since we allegorically derive our principal identification to the original Knights Templar of Crusader and Medieval times, we likewise take into heart their Christian ideals and traditions – one, of course, was their passionate celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ – the very foundation of the Christian faith itself.

Medieval Easter was also important to early Christian Europe, as it was the season that coincided with the Vernal Equinox and the rebirth of the countryside. In feudal rural societies, that were never far from starvation, the first sign of crops and vegetation returning after the winter was a good cause for celebration.

Today, Easter is still the most important holiday for Christians of whatever religious sect or denomination. We Masonic Knights Templar also consider it the same way, which is why our traditional observance of Easter somehow resembles those of the Churches. We would like to reiterate that though there may be similarities with the way we celebrate Easter, ours was never meant to be a substitute for the religious observances conducted by our respective denominations. Sometimes we invite members of clergy to deliver Talks before our Masonic gatherings, that we may all together partake in the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord. Still, please be reminded that when it comes to the prescribed commemoration of Easter by our respective denominations, our place, even as Christian Knights, is in the fellowship of our home congregations and Churches, and not at Masonic gatherings which are but supplementary observances and not substitutes. In doing this, we also help to educate our non-Masonic friends that Freemasons, and Knights Templar especially, are not working against the Church and her teachings, but actually support her with heart, mind, and soul.

That having said, we now begin our Masonic Templar observance of Eastertide.

(Optional, if the Grand Commander is present) :

Commander: Before we commence this morning's ceremony, let us first listen to the Easter message of our Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the Philippines, Sir Knight Rodel Riezel S. Reyes. (When GC is done, the Commander thanks the GC and proceeds.) Sir Knights, you have just heard the Easter message of our Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the Philippines.

Commander: Let us now proceed with our commemoration. Excellent Prelate, please lead us in our opening prayer.

INVOCATION

Prelate: Thank you, Eminent Commander. Good morning and Happy Easter to all Sir Knights present. The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Prelate: Let us bow our heads in prayer before our Father in Heaven.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and show us the light of Your countenance, as we virtually gather here to commemorate the Resurrection of Your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Be merciful

unto us, especially during these dark hours of the Coronavirus Pandemic. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

All: Amen.

READINGS AND LESSONS

Prelate: First Lesson – A reading from Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43:

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Prelate: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Prelate: Responsorial Psalm (Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-24). Let your response be: *"Alleluia. Alleluia."* Please repeat.

All: Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prelate: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever." Response.

All: Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prelate: The right hand of the Lord has struck with power; the right hand of the Lord is exalted. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. Response.

All: Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prelate: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. Response.

All: Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prelate: This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Response.

All: Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prelate: Second Lesson – A reading from 1 Corinthians 15:19-26:

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Prelate: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Commander: The Gospel for Easter Sunday (Mark 16:1-8):

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Commander: The Gospel of our Lord!

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

(Optional, if a guest speaker or a Sir Knight so assigned would deliver a Talk.) :

Commander: Sir Knights and guests, may we introduce to you our speaker for today, _____, to inspire and enlighten us today on this most joyous occasion in all Christendom. (When Talk is done, the Commander gives his thanks to the speaker.)

Commander: Let us proceed to offer the Prayers of the People. Excellent Prelate, please proceed.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prelate: Let us pray to our victorious Savior on behalf of this Commandery, the world, and all the people everywhere. (Brief silence.) Let your response be: *"Lord, hear our prayer."* Please repeat.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Commander: Oh Lord Jesus, risen gloriously from the dead, you have snatched us from the snares of the evil one: Alleluia! In you, righteousness and peace kiss one another: Alleluia! In you, all God's promises have their answers: Alleluia! In you, we shall not die but live, and declare the glory of the Lord: Alleluia! Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Generalissimo: Fill this Commandery with the splendor of your life, light, and love. May its words and deeds proclaim: *"Alleluia, Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!"* Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Captain General: Impart your deathless love to all Christian Knights Templar who suffer persecution and sickness even on this holy day. Grant them the joy of your saving help. Purge the leaven of evil from the hearts of their tormentors and their disease. Hasten the day when together they kneel before you in adoration. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Senior Warden: Crown this Order of the Temple and all who gather here with us with unfading joy, unfailing kindness, undaunted hope, and unceasing praise. Let everyone we meet see your goodness revealed in our words and deeds – we, your faithful soldiers and servants. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Junior Warden: Graciously bless the guests and visitors among us here. Kindle the hearts of those who do not yet believe that you have indeed conquered sin and death. Grant them faith to know that you live to bestow health and life upon them forever. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Treasurer: Grant peace among all nations. Impart wisdom, integrity, and holy fear to our leaders. Bestow joy, hope, and healing upon all people, especially those afflicted by human malice, natural catastrophe, and deadly epidemics. Bring us into right relationship with you and each other forever. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Recorder: Be the strong and righteous arm of all who stand in harm's way on behalf of others. Make them brave, wise and good. Shield them from the forces of evil. Heal them when they fall. Fill their loved ones with confidence in your triumph over every foe. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Standard Bearer: We plead on behalf of all who are sick, wounded, abused, imprisoned, despairing, grieving or dying, and for all who crave your mercy, including those whom we name now aloud or in our hearts and minds. Impart your life and love to them, so they may sing the Psalmist's words, *"I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord!"* Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Sword Bearer: Most holy and gracious Savior, thank you for redeeming all who have fallen asleep in your arms. In your mercy, wipe away the tears of all whose grief runs deep. Feed us all with a foretaste of your Kingdom feast. Take away the shroud of sin, suffering and sorrow that troubles this broken world. Give us faith to serve one another in humble gratitude for your goodness. Bring us to stand with all the redeemed and sing, *"Blessing, honor, glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever! Amen! This is the feast of victory for our God! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!"* Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Response.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Warder: Grant to us all that is in accordance with your will, Lord Jesus, and accomplish your salvation among us; for you are risen from the dead and dwell in majesty with your Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

All: Amen.

(Optional Music: Play or sing “*Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds*” or something similar. Done.)

CLOSING

(Commander delivers his parting message. Other high-ranking officers are given the chance to address the attendees.)

Commander: As we conclude our Eastertide Observance in this virtual Asylum, let us receive the benediction of our Excellent Prelate.

Prelate: Alleluia! Alleluia! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. May the blessings of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you and keep you. Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

All: Amen.

Commander: Sir Knights and guests, our Eastertide Observance is concluded. Happy Easter to everyone. *

(Optional Music: Play or sing “*Hallelujah Chorus from Handel’s Messiah*” or something similar.)

- End of virtual ceremony. Fellowship and Harmony ensues. -