



Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

2011 SERVICE CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE



11/23/2011

FOREWORD

Sir Knights

The Constituent Commanderies, since its foundation, have celebrated Christmas as it is the birth of our Lord and Savior and due to uniqueness of our fraternal organization. I have seen throughout this and other jurisdictions different ways the Christmas Observance has been celebrated. There are two ways that stand out.

- 1) Triangle
All the Ladies and guests are assembled in the Asylum. The Sir Knights marched in with the appropriate processional music. Twelve Sir Knights gather around the triangle to give the mandatory toasts. Ladies and guests join in the prayers and toasts from the sidelines.
- 2) Table
All Sir Knights, Ladies and guests gather at a table which is in the form of a cross and located inside the Asylum. All present give the mandatory toasts. This style gave a sense of community and inclusiveness to the Observance.

As this is a public event, each Commandery may select any of the above ways to celebrate your Christmas Observance. This will be a decision of the Constituent Commandery or, if time does not permit, the Eminent Commander. The most important point of this event is to make everyone that attends feel they are a part of our celebration and community. Make the Ladies and guests active participants in the celebration, prayers and mandatory toasts. We accomplish this by having everyone in the Asylum sing along, pray, and have the toasts with us.

We highly encourage and recommend the Commandery publish a small booklet with the songs and prayers be printed for the Sir Knights and Guests. Also, many Sir Knights, Ladies and guests do not drink wine, please have some sparkling grape juice, grape juice or other substitute available.

“O COME, O COME EMMANUEL IS ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR PROCESSIONALS.

If the Commandery is using the triangle, it is a very effective procedure to place the triangle with candles, goblets and other items in the center and have the twelve Sir Knights who would normally be in those positions remain so while the other Sir Knights seat themselves among the guests.

Glasses or goblets should be provided for all Sir Knights. Paper cups or cups can be provided to all visitors present so that they also might participate in the Toasts.

If the Commandery so wishes to have a more effective family or community format, they may use tables in the form of the Cross (please see diagram in the Appendix) and have all Sir Knights and Guests sit at the table to join in the festivities. This can be used in the Asylum. Please make sure guests are at the table prior to the Sir Knights entering the Asylum.

The Eminent Commander may allow the Sir Knights not to kneel depending on their age or condition. If one Sir Knight cannot kneel, it will look better that all remain standing.

If the Commandery is having a Christmas dinner, this should be done prior to the Observance in the dining hall.

IF USING THE TRIANGLE FORMAT - PROCESSIONAL: (GUESTS ARISE, REMAIN STANDING FOR PROCESSIONAL) PARTICIPATING SIR KNIGHTS ENTER THE ROOM TO THE SOUNDS OF BACKGROUND MUSIC AS DESIRED. NO SINGING. PROCEED IN SILENTLY.

- All remain standing and sing opening Christmas carols: “Oh Come, all the Faithful” and “The first Noel”.

IF USING THE TABLE FORMAT – NO PROCESSIONAL, EMINENT COMMANDER WILL ASK ALL TO RISE.

EMINENT COMMANDER – Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, please rise and join me in singing “O Come All Ye Faithful” and “The First Noel”.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of Angels,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ
The Lord.

THE FIRST NOEL

The first noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay
Keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night
That was so deep; Noel,
Noel, Noel, Noel Born is
the King of Israel.

(All are seated after singing the opening Christmas Carols)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, be seated.

WELCOME: (by **EMINENT COMMANDER**)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, rise. Sir Knights, uncover.
Excellent Prelate, lead us in prayer.

INVOCATION (OPENING PRAYER): (by **PRELATE**)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, recover. **S.K.** _____ leads us in
the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: **S/K** _____

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, be seated.

EMINENT COMMANDER: Excellent Prelate, please read the old story.

PRELATE: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, once I finish each reading, please repeat the words
GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST after me.

ISAIAH 11: 1-5

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Audience Response: GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

LUKE 2:1-14 And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria.) and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David.) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord. ***And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Audience Response: GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guest, please rise. Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing “Silent Night.”.

(all stand and sing two verses of “Silent Night” as given in the program.)

SILENT NIGHT

Silent Night, Holy Night
All is calm, All is bright
Round Yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Verse 2: Silent Night, Holy Night
Wondrous star, lend thy light!
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King:
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born.

EMINENT COMMANDER – Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, be seated.

STATEMENT - EMINENT COMMANDER:

Sir Knights and guests, on this glorious occasion we commemorate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Emmanuel, “God with us”, is the foundational truth of the season. Scholars debate the actual date of his birth; local residents of the area of Bethlehem have a traditional site affixed; but, our primary focus; indeed, our only focus, is the reality that Jesus was, in fact, born in the flesh, sent by God the Father to become as the Son of God a Man for our salvation. The Great Captain under whose banner we have all enlisted and in whose name we battle.

The reality is that over two thousand years ago, a child was born in Bethlehem of Judea. One with divine attributes but who assumed mortal flesh; one whose glory, worth and grace no language can express and no word can quantify; one who was born that our lives might be purified, and who died and shed his blood so that we might be free of the penalty, power and the future presence of sin. Let us, as true Soldiers of the Cross, strive to profit by the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of that Divine Master, and remain his faithful soldiers unto death. Seeking strength to continue that struggle, let us now accompany our Excellent Prelate to the throne of heavenly grace. Excellent Prelate, lead our devotions.

Sir Knights, ATTENTION. **Kneel (the Commander may have the Sir Knights remain standing, if many can't kneel).**

Ladies and Guests please rise and join us in our devotions.

*(Sir Knights uncover on orders, Kneel on left knee (**Commander may have everyone remain standing**) and bow their heads.)*

PRAYERS

(AFTER EACH PRAYER, SIR KNIGHTS AND GUESTS WILL REPLY "AMEN")

PRELATE: Almighty and most merciful Father, remember us with grace, we beseech Thee, and blot out the multitude of our transgressions for Thy beloved Son's sake. And may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: Father in heaven, command thy blessings to rest upon all true Knights of the Temple wherever dispersed; bestow upon them a spirit of Truth, Justice, Courage, Constancy, Faith and Humility, and make of them valiant defenders of Thy holy religion. Teach them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and bind up the wounds of the afflicted for Jesus' sake.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: O Lord, command Thy benediction to rest upon our Grand Master. Help him to rule over us in love, and with an eye single to Thy glory. Save him from error, prejudice, and pride and while giving him firmness of purpose to do right, help him to know the right for Christ's sake.

RESPONSE: Amen!

PRELATE: Our Father, let thy choicest blessings be with the President of the United States, our Governor and all that are in positions of authority. Endue them with wisdom on high, and may it be their highest joy to labor for Thy glory and in Thy power alone, and for the good of the people for whom they legislate, and over whom they rule. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

RESPONSE: Amen!

EMINENT COMMANDER - *Sir Knights, arise (if kneeling). ** Sir Knights, recover. Sir Knights, Ladies and Guest, be seated.***

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(Use if using the Triangle format)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let the chosen twelve gather around the triangle.

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let the libations be poured** into the goblets on the Triangle and The Pedestal. (DONE)

Let every Knight and Guest be furnished with a prepared goblet.
(DONE)

(Let the Senior and Junior Wardens or the recent knighted Sir Knights to serve the wine)

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(Use if using a Table format)

Eminent Commander: Let the libations be poured** into the goblets (or glasses) on the table. (DONE)

Let every Knight and Guest be furnished with a prepared goblet.
(DONE)

(Let the Senior and Junior Wardens or the recent knighted Sir Knights to serve the wine)

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EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guest, please rise! Sir Knight _____, read the toast to our Grand Master of Knights Templar.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Reads the toast as supplied to Commanderies)*



A TOAST TO OUR MOST EMINENT GRAND MASTER

To all Valiant and Magnanimous Knights of the Temple, wheresoever dispersed throughout Christendom - Salutations and Knightly Greetings:

An award-winning song which captured my imagination as a youth, as it did for many others when it was written in 1920, was "Follow the Gleam". The authors, Sallie Hume Douglas and Helen Hill had been fascinated by tales of the Holy Grail, and used this legend to inspire others.

"To knights in the days of old, Keeping watch on the mountain height,
Came a vision of Holy Grail and a voice through the waiting night...
And we who would serve the King, And loyally Him obey,
In the consecrate silence know, that the challenge stilt holds today:
'Follow, follow, follow the Gleam, Banners unfurled o'er all the world; ...
Follow, follow, follow the Gleam Of the Light that shall bring the dawn'."

Yes, as the Wise Men so long ago followed that Gleam, that new star in the constellation of the heavens, to behold and fall down to worship the baby, born in a stable and laid in a manger, who would become King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then, now and forevermore - so must we follow that "Gleam of the Light that shall bring the dawn" of a new day, a new era of peace for all who live on this earth. Catch the vision of a new world bathed in the Light of Christ and sheltered by the Love of God and goodness.

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord this Christmas season, Grand Master, we toast you and Lady Elizabeth for your untiring dedication and leadership of our great Order, amidst all these troubling times of discontent, and wish you a Blessed Christmas and the best of health and happiness for this coming year of 2012.

In His name,
The Committee on Religious Activities
Rev. Dickie W. Johnson, Chairman

(This toast was prepared by Reverend and Sir Knight William D. Hartman, R.E. Grand Prelate)

EMINENT COMMANDER: To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

SIR KNIGHTS: To our Most Eminent Grand Master!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guest, be seated.
Sir Knight _____, Read the Grand
Master's response.

S/K _____: *(Sir Knight stands and reads the response)*



GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

To the Grand Prelate, the Committee on Religious Activities and to all Sir Knights, wheresoever dispersed: Greetings!

My thanks to the Right Eminent Grand Prelate and Committee on Religious Activities for a most humbling toast.

The toast just given by our Grand Prelate touches on a thought provoking concept. Consider the trust those Wise Men demonstrated in following the new star with the hopes of beholding their new born savior. Think of their surprise to find him in a simple stable laying there in a manger. Their faith was strong. Imagine what that moment must have been for them. The experience of having been in the presence of Jesus the Christ would have been with them for the rest of their lives.

During this Christmas Season, it is appropriate we demonstrate our belief in Jesus Christ. Chivalry, Christianity, Templary - A Way of Life should be paramount in our minds during this Season. Let us emulate the faith of those wise men as they sought their Savior. May we too, be as dedicated to find an ever abiding faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The officers and membership of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America join me and Lady Elizabeth in expressing our best wishes to you and your family this Christmas Season.

In His Service,

William H. Koon, II, GCT
Grand Master

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guest, rise!
Sir Knight _____, read the Grand Prelate’s Toast to the Right Eminent Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Florida.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Reads the Toast)*

GRAND PRELATE’S TOAST TO THE RIGHT EMINENT GRAND COMMANDER

To all Valiant Knights Templar of the Grand Commandery of Florida and their families, wheresoever dispersed:

Love, Grace and Peace to you and your families as we all join together, in Christian fellowship, to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ, our Lord and Savior.

He came to earth through the Holy Spirit, to a young woman, a virgin, named Mary. She was betrothed to a young man named Joseph.

In the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

“It is written in Isaiah, the prophet:
I will send a messenger ahead of you
Who will prepare your way –
A voice of one calling in the desert,
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
Make straight paths for him.’”

That messenger, of course, was John, who became John the Baptist.

“Mary and Joseph had gone up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and lineage of David. Joseph went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to marry him and was expecting a child.”

“While they were there, the time came for the child to be born, and [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

In manhood, he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. He then called twelve men to be his disciples and went out among the people preaching and teaching the Word as it came from his Father [God].

On the night that he was betrayed, he had sat with his disciples for an evening meal. When they were finished, Jesus walked down a hill in Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane – to pray – knowing he was to be betrayed by one of his own.

After his betrayal and arrest, he was tortured and sentenced to be crucified to death on a cross. He said to those who wished his death:

“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”

Jesus is now, through the Holy Spirit, the one man/God who continues to be in us, through us and among us, guiding our thoughts and actions each day, if we will let him.

As we celebrate the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior, we look forward to his coming again in the clouds of the air.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
For the first heaven and the first earth had
Passed away. I saw the Holy City, the
New Jerusalem coming down from heaven
From God.”

“Now the dwelling of God is with men,
And He will live with them. They will be His
People, and God, himself will be with them.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes...
For the old order of things has passed away.”

THE TOAST

Sir Knights, Lift your cups on high in a toast to Sir Knight David A. Aponte, Right Eminent Grand Commander of Knights Templar in Florida.

We wish the Right Eminent Grand Commander’s well for the P.R.I.D.E. he has shown us and the leadership skills which he has shared with us. He has – and will continue to be an excellent example of a true Knight Templar.

We salute our Grand Commander and his Lady Lucy. May they continue to share a blessed life together, especially this Christmas season, in which we all celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ.

To the Grand Commander!

Your servant, in Christ,
S. K. James H. Hughey
Eminent Grand Prelate

EMINENT COMMANDER: To our Right Eminent Grand Commander!

SIR KNIGHTS: (REPEAT) To our Right Eminent Grand Commander!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests, be seated.
Sir Knight _____, read the Right Eminent Grand Commander's response to the Toast of the Eminent Grand Prelate.

SIR KNIGHT _____: *(Sir Knight stands and reads the response)*

THE GRAND COMMANDER'S RESPONSE

To the Eminent Grand Prelate and to all Sir Knights and their families, wheresoever dispersed, within the Grand Jurisdiction of Florida:

My thanks to the Eminent Grand Prelate for a most inspiring and humble toast.

It still amazes me how one man has made a profound difference in the history of mankind. That man was Jesus. His teachings brought a message of hope, joy, faith, charity, fellowship, and brotherhood to many generations of believers. Today, His message continues to speak to us of service towards all mankind. This is paramount in our chivalric heritage and P.R.I.D.E. as Knights Templar. His example and teachings are our guide and inspiration to lead lives of compassion, mercy, and justice. Let us rededicate ourselves as Knights Templar every day to the principles of Christianity and Chivalry. Let us renew our commitment to faith, hope, charity, fellowship, service, and brotherhood. Let us make the difference in the lives of others as He made it in ours. Let us practice His teachings within the framework of our families, communities, and country.

As we gather with our family and friends to celebrate Christmas, let us demonstrate our faith and belief in Jesus. Let us remember the true reason for celebrating this season.

Remember during the holidays our men and women in the Armed Forces and their families. May God bring them the aspirations of our prayers and return to their love ones safely. To those that made the supreme sacrifice, may Jesus bring them into the Light of His Father with the honors they deserve. For those who bear the wounds for freedom's sake, may God bring them and their families, comfort, hope, faith, and strength.

The Officers and members of the Grand Commandery of Florida join Lady Lucy and me in expressing our prayer of blessings and best wishes to you and your loved ones this Christmas season and the ensuing New Year.

In His Name and To His Glory,



S.K. David A. Aponte
Right Eminent Grand Commander

TOAST No. 3

EMINENT COMMANDER: To all Knights Templar, wheresoever dispersed!

SIR KNIGHTS (*Repeat after Commander*): To all Knights Templar wheresoever dispersed!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake!

TOAST No. 4

EMINENT COMMANDER: To all Knights Templar who have shed their blood in defense of Liberty and Christianity. (Commander doesn't lift his goblets as there is no drinking with this toast).

SIR KNIGHTS (*Repeat after Commander*): To all Knights Templar who have shed their blood in defense of Liberty and Christianity. (***All then bow their heads in silence, NO drinking.***)

TOAST No. 5

SIR KNIGHT _____: To the Grand Master of Masons of Florida!

SIR KNIGHTS (repeat): To the Grand Master of Masons of Florida!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Partake!

TOAST No. 6

EMINENT COMMANDER: Let us recall the hallowed memories of the Fraters of our own jurisdiction who have joined the silent majority. Sir Knight Recorder, please read the names of those that this year have joined the Celestial Conclave above. (If no one passed away this year, omit the request to the Recorder.)

(The Twelve Knights will place their goblets on the triangle or table)

EMINENT COMMANDER: In memory of the dead of this jurisdiction during this Year of our Lord. (***Triangle - The twelve knights will kneel (Commander's may omit kneeling) on the left knee. All other Knights will bow their heads while, in soft tones, all assembled will sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee"***)

(Table – All Sir Knights will stand and bow their heads while, in soft tones, all assembled will sing "Nearer My God, to Thee")

EMINENT COMMANDER: Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing "Nearer My God to Thee".

NEARER, MY GOD TO THEE

Nearer, My God, to Thee
Nearer to Thee!
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, My God, to Thee,

Even Though it be a CROSS that raiseth me;
Nearer, My God, to Thee; Nearer to Thee!

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, Ladies, and Guests arise; we have been refreshed by these hallowed memories. Now let us receive the benediction of our excellent Prelate.

PRELATE: May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; May the Lord cause his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

EMINENT COMMANDER: *(Thank the Sir Knights for participating; thank the Organist or Musician, and thank all guests for coming, wish them Merry Christmas, invite everyone to the fellowship hall for refreshments IF APPLICABLE.*

The Sir Knights and guest can have a dinner, if preparations were made, prior to the Christmas Observance in the dining hall.)

EMINENT COMMANDER:

Excellent Prelate, please lead us in singing our closing Christmas Carol.

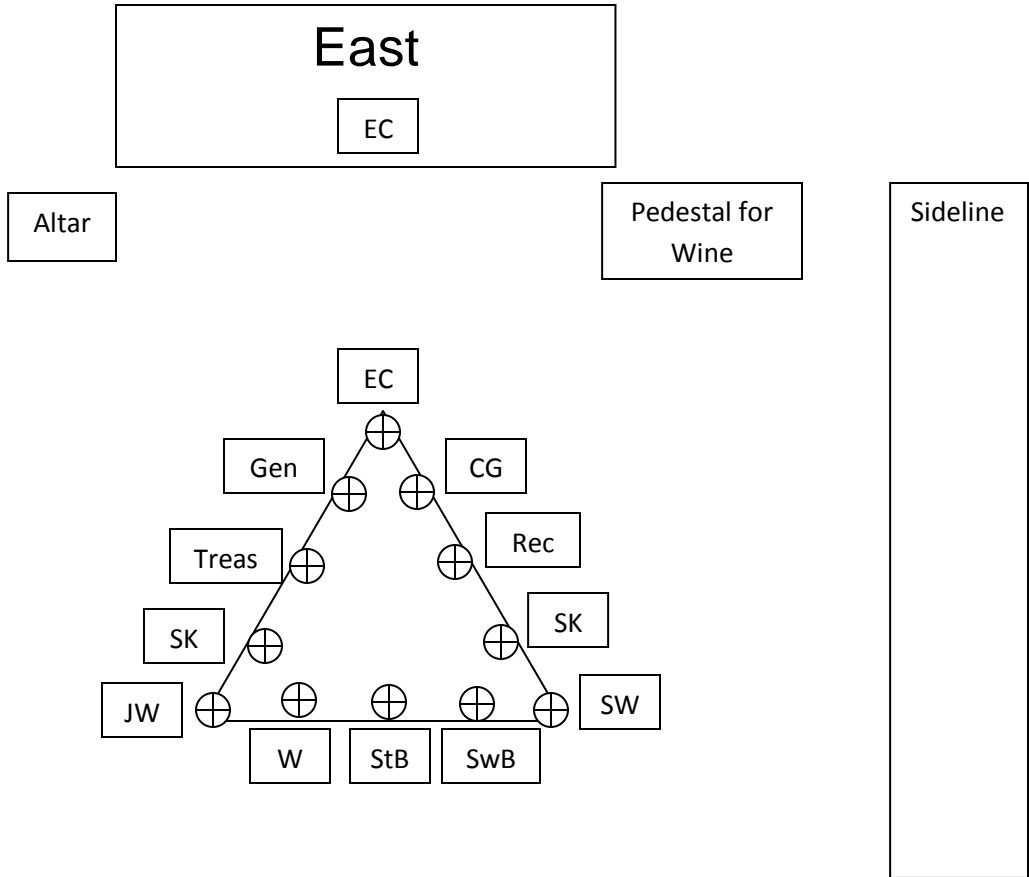
HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The Herald Angels sing, "Glory to the new born King"
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and Sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark the Herald Angels sing, "Glory to the new Born King"

(As Sir Knights mingle and depart, musician plays "JOY TO THE WORLD")

Diagrams to set up the asylum

Triangle

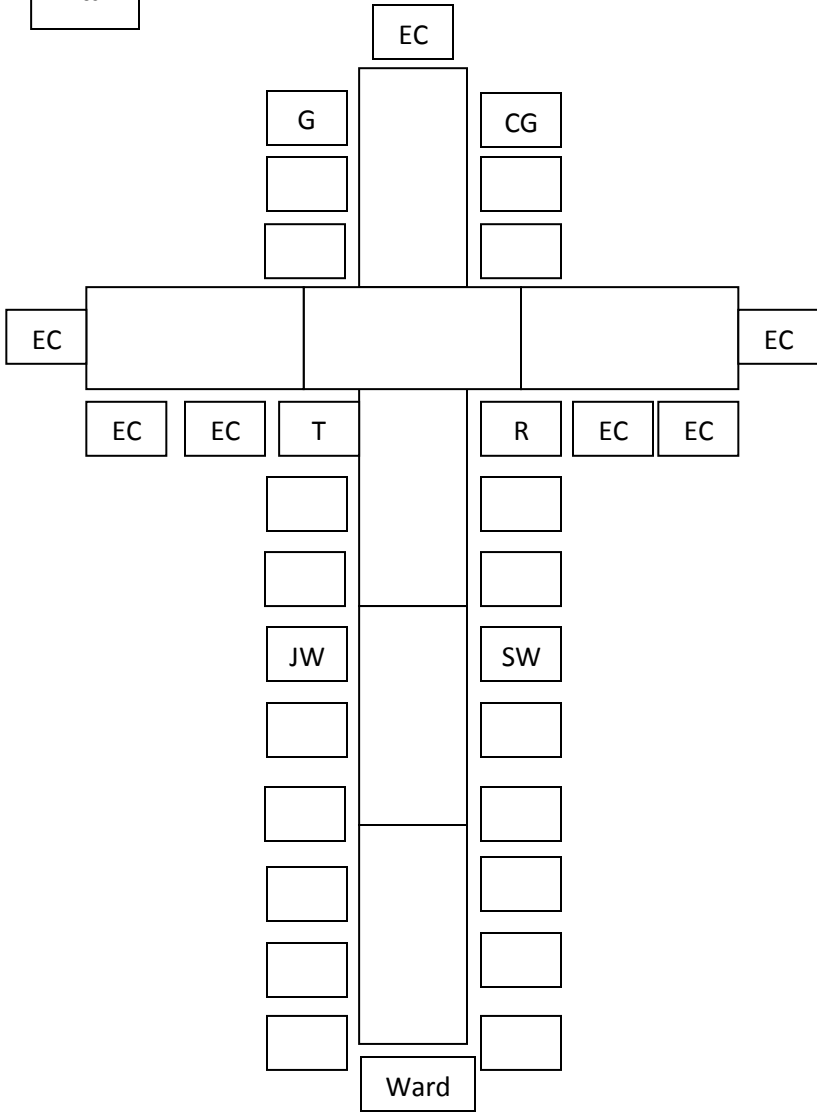


All Officers and Sir Knights march in. At the command of the Eminent Commander, each Officer walks to his station. All other Sir Knights will sit in the Sidelines with the Ladies and Guests. The Eminent Commander may, at his discretion, move the Pedestal to any other location in the Asylum.

Table

East

Altar



Pedestal for Wine

All Sir Knights, Ladies and Guests will have a seat at the table. No processional. Please assign seats to the Officers prior to having the Christmas Observance. The final seating for appointed Officers will be at the discretion of the Eminent Commander. The above is a suggested seating for the appointed officers. No one should have their backs to the EAST except the Eminent Commander. The Eminent Commander may, at his discretion, move the Pedestal to any other location in the Asylum.