THE KNIGHT TEMPLAR AND HIS SWORD

Preceptory is the only Masonic body where military evolutions or parade ground protocols are a regular feature of the ritual.

We are presently in the somewhat contradictory position of being a “military Order” almost entirely composed of civilians without prior military training or experience in their own lives.

An aversion to rehearsal of movements, lack of detailed attention to the Sword Manual and a weak sense of how military commands should be given too often result in sloppy movements and inability to achieve the crisp, “smart” appearance, which should exist.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the way fraters and even some officers handle their swords. The way the Crusader’s Sign is given, for example, often seems to resemble some kind of general “wig-wag, zig-zag” motion in the approximate region of the face, rather than the precise description in the manual and the ritual. I doubt, especially in officers, if this approximate use of signs would be acceptable in the Craft Lodge. Why set ourselves a lower standard?

Whenever possible, the knights forming the lines on opening and closing should always be a pre-designated “lines team” and rehearsal by all concerned as to the exact and correct method of proving oneself in the lines is strongly recommended.

When revision of published manuals or the ritual is under consideration, we should avoid describing our signs and ritual in terms of any other organization other than our own. For example, and to avoid confusion, the term “military salute” should be dropped and we should describe, exactly, the “Knight Templar salute.”

The ritual might benefit from simplification without loss of heritage or dignity. For example, if the Crusader’s sign was to be used only in proving in the lines, and not at any other time. Simplification of the “military salute” by eliminating any lowering of the blade towards the ground following the “present” and returning directly to the “carry” is also suggested. Rt. Em. Kt. John Pattison, Grand Marshal.

SHORT OR LONG FORM?

In our 2004 Ritual, we now have a Short Form opening for the Order of the Temple. Some may ask why this was done...to which the answer lies on pg 123 in the rubrics: "When because of smallness of numbers, it is not possible to form the lines, the following constitutes a proper short form of opening. No other "short form" is permissible."

We have all witnessed, I am sure, lines formed with too few members, or members without swords. Forming the lines is one of the most important aspects of the Regular Form opening, and, in fact, the Supreme Grand Master MUST be received between the lines.

However, if there are not adequate numbers and/or members without swords...this aspect of our ritual loses its significance. The lines remind us of our military aspect as Knights Templars, and seeing a well formed line...swords drawn, is visually a most impressive sight.

That, Sir Knights, is the issue that each Preceptory must answer for itself. Can the Preceptory present lines as they are intended...with several Knights on each side; as well as the Constable and Marshal or, are the lines solely consisting of the Constable and Marshal and maybe a Sir Knight or two? If the latter is the case then the short form opening is for you.
Remember Sir Knights the importance of dignity and solemnity in our openings, closings and in fact all our ritual work. The Short and Regular Forms of opening are there for all Preceptories to find the opening that allows them to best serve their needs and maintain the honor and reputation of the Order of the Temple. - Em. Sir Kt. Michael Millard

**Eminent**
The title given to the presiding officer of a Preceptory of Knights Templar. The word is from the Latin eminens, "standing above," and literally signifies "exalted in rank." Hence, it is a title given to the cardinals in the Roman Church.

**THE ALTAR**
An altar is a superstructure above the floor of a building, or as erected in ancient time, above the ground and appropriate to some service connected with worship. In ancient Israel, altars were used almost entirely for offering of oblation and sacrifices; today they are used for the offering of prayers or service of dedication.

The most important article of furniture in a Preceptory is the altar, on which rests a cross, and the Bible, open and recognized as the principal Light of Masonry.

Before this altar the candidate for the mysteries of Masonry, bows in prayer; symbolically, he offers up to God the incense of praise; lays on the altar the passions of his heart, and dedicates to God and to the service of Freemasonry his affections and faculties. The presence of the altar in the Preceptory serves as a constant reminder of the religious character and purpose of all Masonic rites and ceremonies.

**MEMBERSHIP TOOLBOXES**
Last year the Membership Committee distributed Membership Toolboxes to more than 50 preceptories through their District Grand Priors who attended the Annual Assembly in St. John’s. Since then four additional toolboxes have been distributed. These toolboxes contain **seventeen membership recruitment and retention activities** which Preceptories can try.

Preceptories are invited to share their success/failure with these kits with the membership committee with suggestions for improvement.

If your Preceptory has not received a toolbox please contact the Membership Chairman, Rt. Em. Kt. Larry Moss at lmoss@persona.ca or write him at 10 Brinex Ave., Springdale, NL, A0J 1T0

**KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM**
Knowledge is awareness of facts, data and information. Wisdom is the ability of our minds to properly apply the knowledge which we’ve accumulated when the situation or circumstance requires it.

We gain in knowledge through schooling, study and research of the information gathered. Wisdom comes to us through the interface of our minds with the knowledge obtained and a reflection on the variety of circumstances of how this knowledge was obtained and used in the past.

Knowledge teaches us that to be forthright is to proceed straight on, to go straight to the point without ambiguity or hesitation. Wisdom teaches us to be tactful and diplomatic. Many men possess great quantities of Masonic knowledge. The number is significantly lower of those who possess great wisdom in Masonry. - South Huron Newsletter Fall 2007