

# TEMPLAR NEWS - OMSDT

• DECEMBER 2023 • VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 9 • FRONT PAGE •



## OMSDT Calendar

**DECEMBER 02**

**ORDER CONCLAVE via ZOOM**

**DECEMBER 07 ROUND TABLE**

**DECEMBER 21 ROUND TABLE**

**DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS**

ALL ROUND TABLES ARE HELD AT

| 6 PM PACIFIC | 7 PM MOUNTAIN |

| 8 PM CENTRAL | 9 PM EASTERN |

ZOOM LINKS WILL BE POSTED ON BELIEFBOOK

# Merry Christmas

## TEMPLAR ACADEMIE

"CHRIST-FOCUSED IN ALL THAT WE DO"

### CONGRATULATIONS!

TO THESE MEMBERS FOR COMPLETING  
ACADÉMIE CLASSWORK IN THE  
MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2023

MAC CISSELL (CAA Classes)  
BEN WEEKS (CAA Classes)  
MITCHELL PETERS (SAA Classes)  
YOUSSEF YAKOUB (CAA Classes)  
SEAN DILLINGHAM (CAA Classes)  
NICHOLAS PETERS (CAA Classes)  
(actually finished in September)

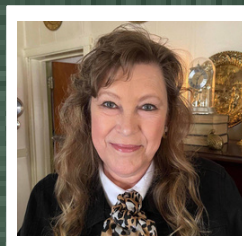


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## FROM THE DESK OF OUR GSY

*Grand Secretary Reneé Nordio*



**A**s a believer in the miraculous and Holy Birth of Jesus Christ, I am usually amused by the statements of non-believers who like to challenge the celebration of Christmas. Beaming with self-knowledge, they proudly put forth questions that really are statements, "Ya know . . . Christmas is really a pagan holiday?" Or, "Ya know . . . they just picked December 25th as the date?" These statements are usually delivered with a tone of dismissal; with the intent to contradict or discredit the Blessed Event.

Christians are well aware of the true origin of Christmas. We acknowledge that the actual birth date of Christ is not known. However, this does not negate our belief. We also know that Christmas is not a pagan holiday. There have been seasons; Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, since God first created the heavens and the earth. There were many seasons that came to pass before the birth of Christ. Seasonal pagan traditions were indeed abundant in the days prior to His birth. And, they continue to this day. These observances serve the purpose to worship their own (false) gods, planets, and the passing of seasons.

Some examples are early pagan tree and wreath symbolisms. Also, Christmas celebrations end the 12th day of Christmas (January 6th - Epiphany), the same amount of days that the return of the sun was celebrated by ancient and Roman pagans. However, early Christians under persecution for their faith, took a page from today and made "lemonade from lemons"! They took many of those pagan traditions foisted upon them, and gave them a holy symbolism or seasonal date for their belief in Christ's birth.

As believers, we can respond to those statements posed by non-believers, that Christmas is not a pagan holiday and that the truth is that some  
*(continued to page 3)*

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR GSY

*Grand Secretary René Nordio*



*(continued from page 2)*

pagan traditions continue to be reflected in the Christian celebration. But, early Christians under persecution for their faith, took a page from today and made 'lemonade from lemons'! They took many of those pagan traditions foisted upon them, and gave them a holy symbolism or seasonal date for their belief in Christ's birth. (See column on Christmas Greenery.)

Many believe Christ's birth was in the month of September, but since no one truly knows the exact date of His birth, the Roman Catholic Church felt free to choose the 25th of December. The church wished to replace prior pagan festivals on this date with a Christian holy day. The psychology was that it would be easier to take away an unholy (but traditional) festival from the population, when you can replace it with a good one. Otherwise, the church would have left a void where there was a long-standing tradition, and risked producing a discontented population and a rapid return to the old ways.

As believers, we are not as concerned with every grain of detail, as we are the actual event. We celebrate the Blessed Birth that took place, not the exact day or moment in time. Among Christians, His birth is celebrated every day. We call on His name in daily prayer and worship. When He abides in our hearts, remembrance of His blessed First Coming can be done on any day of the calendar and at any movement of the clock.

This Christmas, may we all take the time to re-read the story of Christ's birth in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to always remember and joyfully celebrate the Birth of our King!

*"If you trust me, you really are trusting God who sent me. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the darkness." ~ John 12:44,46*



## Congratulations!

## Sir Bruce Kincaid



OMSDT is proud to announce that on Saturday, November 4, 2023, Sir Bruce Kincaid, from North Carolina, a member of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, received his Accolade of Knighthood.

It was a momentous occasion for the Order, as Sir Bruce has the honor of being the second member knighted since the inception of the Order, the first being Sir Mike Glenn from Pennsylvania, a member of the Priory of St. Michael the Archangel.

Grand Prior Derek Nordio presided over the ceremony, with 1SGT Kelmy Rodriguez and GSY Renee' Nordio also participating in ceremonial duties. GML Marc Blaydoe, the Master Commander of the Priory of the Holy Trinity had the pleasure and honor of performing the actual knighting.



The ceremony was shown via Zoom with other Order members in attendance.

Congratulations and may God continue to bless you, Sir Bruce Kincaid!



**DRESS CODE.** All Knights: Formal, White Mantle, Neck Cross. Member Attendees: Dressy Casual, No Costumes.

**CONDUCT.** This is a solemn event and we'd ask that you arrive as you would for church. Please set your Zoom account with a static background to avoid video distortion or movement. Please arrive with your microphone muted, leaving it muted for the duration of the ceremony.

Out of respect for the ceremony and the participants, please remain attentive to the ceremony, without distraction. No food or drink. This is an official ceremony and there will be no group discussion. Once the announcement that the ceremony has concluded, please close out your Zoom app.





## *Christmas Greenery*

*The traditional colors of Christmas are green and red. Green represents the continuance of life through the winter and the Christian belief in eternal life*

*through Christ. Red symbolizes the blood that Jesus shed at His Crucifixion. Christmas decorations that feature these colors include the Christmas wreath, the Christmas tree, holly, and mistletoe.*

**The Tree** Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we know it today. Decorating evergreen trees had always been a part of the German winter solstice tradition. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

The first "Christmas trees" explicitly decorated and named after the Christian holiday, appeared in Strasbourg, in Alsace in the beginning of the 17th century. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. After 1750, Christmas trees began showing up in other parts of Germany, and even more so after 1771, when Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visited Strasbourg and promptly included a Christmas tree in his novel, *The Suffering of Young Werther*.

Most 19th-century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity and considered the tree a pagan symbol, referring back to ancient Egyptian and early Roman practices of decorating with evergreen boughs. Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness. *(continued to page 7)*

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## *Christmas Greenery*

*(continued from page 6)* The first record of a Christmas tree being on display was in the 1830s by the German settlers of Pennsylvania, although trees had been a tradition in many German homes much earlier. In 1846, the popular royals, Queen Victoria and her German Prince, Albert, revitalized the tree tradition, and what was done at court immediately became fashionable—not only in Britain, but with fashion-conscious East Coast American Society. In 1848, the first American newspaper carried a picture of a Christmas tree and the custom spread to nearly every home in just a few years. By the 1890s Christmas ornaments were arriving from Germany and Christmas tree popularity was on the rise around the U.S.

**Holly** Holly is an evergreen tree with sharply pointed, glossy leaves, a white blossom, and red berries. The use of holly as a symbolic winter decoration goes back in history to the Celtic peoples of Northern Europe, who decorated their homes with it during the time of the winter solstice, or Yule.

The early Christian Church retained many of the Celtic, as well as Roman traditions to help celebrate the birth of Christ. The needle-like points of the leaves were thought to resemble the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when He was crucified. The white blossom represented His purity, and the red berries symbolized the drops of blood He shed.

**Mistletoe** Mistletoe is an evergreen plant with dark leaves and shiny white berries. Ancient Celtic priests considered the plant sacred and gave people sprigs of it to use as charms. It was said to have the ability to heal wounds and increase fertility. Celts hung mistletoe in their homes in order to bring themselves good luck and ward off evil spirits.

The custom of decorating homes with mistletoe probably came from its use as a ceremonial plant by early Europeans. During holidays in the Victorian  
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## *Christmas Greenery*

(continued from page 7) era, the English would hang sprigs of mistletoe from ceilings and in doorways. If someone was found standing under the mistletoe, they would be kissed by someone else in the room, behavior not usually demonstrated in Victorian society.

Some traditions state that a man should pluck a berry from the mistletoe when ever he kisses a woman under it's branches. When the berries are gone - no more kisses! In some places, they even burn the Christmas mistletoe on the twelfth day of Christmas; otherwise they believe that all who kissed under it will never marry!

**Poinsettia** In 1828, the American minister to Mexico, Joel R. Poinsett, brought a red and green plant from Mexico to America. As its coloring seemed perfect for the new holiday, the plants, which were called poinsettias after Poinsett, began appearing in greenhouses as early as 1830. In 1870, New York stores began to sell them at Christmas. By 1900, they were a universal symbol of the holiday.

**Wreaths** In ancient Greece a laurel wreath was awarded to victors in sporting events. The Romans adopted this custom, hanging the wreaths outside their homes to brag of their victory. Wreaths were also used in Rome much as we use house numbers. Everyone would have their own distinctive wreath hanging on the door or outside the house to identify their family.

*Much symbolism may be attached to the Christmas wreath. Evergreens are used to represent immortality and it is usually in the shape of a circle which represents the eternal nature of God's love.*

*(Christmas Greenery compilation from various sources by GSY Renee' Nordio)*

