

**The Grand Commandery of Texas
Office of the Grand Commander
Pearland, Texas**

December 1, 2016

To the Commanders, Officers and Sir Knights of Texas: Greetings

General Order No.4, Series 2016-2017

Christmas Message

THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE FACT THAT CHRISTMAS IS NEAR – EVEN THOUGH THE STORES HAVE BEEN DECORATED FOR CHRISTMAS – SOME OF THEM BEFORE OCTOBER – THERE IS JUST SOMETHING MAGICAL THAT HAPPENS AROUND THE FIRST OF DECEMBER – SOMETHING IN THE AIR THAT TELLS YOU “IT’S CHRISTMAS” – YOU CAN’T SEE IT, YOU CAN’T TOUCH IT – SOMETIMES YOU CAN’T EVEN TELL THE EXACT MOMENT IT HAPPENS – BUT SOMEHOW YOU JUST KNOW. FOR SOME IT MAY BE WHEN THE TREE IS DECORATED, OR WHEN THE GIFTS ARE BOUGHT AND WRAPPED, IT MAY BE WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE STRUNG OUTSIDE & THE LAWN DECORATIONS OUT, FOR ME, IT IS WHEN VI BAKES THE FIRST BATCH OF CHRISTMAS COOKIES AND THE CHRISTMAS CACTUS IS BLOOMING – DOUBLE PROOF THAT IT IS HERE. I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT CHRISTMAS –THE GIVING AND THE GETTING, THE DECORATING, THE BAKING, THE PARTIES AND THE FAMILY BEING TOGETHER - BUT CHRISTMAS IS SO MUCH MORE THAN ALL THIS - WHILE WE MAY OBSERVE CHRISTMAS, WHICH IS A GOOD THING, THERE IS SOMETHING BETTER AND THAT IS **KEEPING** CHRISTMAS. WE ALL KNOW HOW TO OBSERVE CHRISTMAS AND IF YOU DON’T I AM CERTAIN THAT MARTHA STEWART HAS WRITTEN SOME SORT OF BOOK TO HELP YOU OUT. BUT HOW DO WE GO ABOUT

KEEPING CHRISTMAS? HENRY VAN DAYKE SAID IT BEST,

“IT IS A GOOD THING TO OBSERVE CHRISTMAS DAY. THE MERE MARKING OF TIMES AND SEASON, WHEN MEN AGREE TO STOP WORK AND MAKE MERRY TOGETHER, IS A WISE AND WHOLESOME CUSTOM. IT REMINDS A MAN TO SET HIS OWN LITTLE WATCH, NOW AND THEN, BY THE GREAT CLOCK OF HUMANITY WHICH RUNS ON SUN TIME.”

ARE YOU WILLING TO FORGET WHAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR OTHER PEOPLE, AND TO REMEMBER WHAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE DONE FOR YOU. TO IGNORE WHAT THE WORLD OWES YOU, AND TO THINK WHAT YOU OWE THE WORLD; TO PUT YOUR RIGHTS IN THE BACKGROUND, AND YOUR DUTIES IN THE MIDDLE AND DISTANT YOUR CHANCES TO DO A LITTLE MORE THAN YOUR DUTY IN THE FOREGROUND, TO SEE THAT YOUR FELLOWMEN ARE JUST AS REAL AS YOU ARE, AND TRY TO LOOK BEHIND THEIR FACES TO THEIR HEARTS, HUNGRY FOR JOY; TO KNOW THAT PROBABLY THE ONLY GOOD REASON FOR YOUR EXISTENCE IS NOT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO GET OUT OF LIFE, BUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE TO LIFE. TO CLOSE YOUR BOOK OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSE, AND LOOK AROUND YOU FOR A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SOW A FEW SEEDS OF HAPPINESS.....THEN YOU CAN KEEP CHRISTMAS!

ARE YOU WILLING TO STOOP DOWN AND CONSIDER THE NEEDS AND THE DESIRES OF LITTLE CHILDREN, TO REMEMBER THE WEAKNESS AND LONELINESS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE GROWING OLD; TO STOP ASKING HOW MUCH YOUR FRIENDS LOVE YOU, AND ASK YOURSELF IF YOU LOVE THEM ENOUGH, TO BEAR IN MIND THE THINGS THAT OTHERS HAVE TO BEAR IN THEIR HEARTS, TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND

WHAT THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH YOU REALLY WANT – WITHOUT WAITING FOR THEM TO TELL YOU; TO TRIM YOUR LAMP SO THAT IT WILL GIVE A LITTLE MORE LIGHT AND A LITTLE LESS SMOKE AND TO CARRY IT IN FRONT SO THAT YOUR SHADOW WILL FALL BEHIND YOU TO MAKE A GRAVE FOR YOUR UGLY THOUGHTS AND A GARDEN FOR YOUR KINDLY FEELINGS—WITH THE GATE WIDE OPEN..... THEN YOU CAN KEEP CHRISTMAS!

ARE YOU WILLING TO BELIEVE THAT LOVE IS THE STRONGEST THING IN THE WORLD, STRONGER THAN HATE, STRONGER THAN EVIL, STRONGER THAT DEATH, AND THAT THE BLESSED LIFE WHICH BEGAN IN THE MANGER IN BETHLEHEM OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO IS THE IMAGE AND BRIGHTNESS OF THE **ETERNAL LOVE** THEN YOU CAN KEEP CHRISTMAS!

AND IF YOU CAN KEEP CHRISTMAS FOR A DAY – WHY NOT ALWAYS. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!!!

This Christmas message prepared by E: Grand Prelate, Tommy Griffin at the request of R:E: John C. Elkinton, Grand Commander.

This General Order shall be read at the next stated conclave following its receipt and recorded in the minutes thereof.

Attest:

Jerry N. Kirby

Grand Recorder



John C. Elkinton

Grand Commander