



A little Knight Templar news does you good

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Staying in touch

Dear Brother Knights

As we have been celebrating the arrival of sunshine and of midsummer in recent days it is good also to focus on another important aspect of this time of year—which is the Feast of St John.

He is often referred to as the patron saint of Freemasonry and in many parts of the world Craft Masonry is called St John's Masonry.

The Premier Grand Lodge was formed on his Feast Day in 1717 and the Annual Festival of UGLE is held every year as close as possible to that date.

For Knights Templar of course the name of St John forms a central part of the title of our United Orders.

A few days ago, as I was considering how best to refer to the Feast of St John the Baptist I received the perfect solution from our Provincial Prelate, RE Kt Revd Malcolm Lane, The Great Prelate.

He wrote as follows:

"I received the following from a friend of mine who is Provincial Prelate of The Province of Worcestershire, Revd Fr Justin Trelvelian, and he has given me permission to use it."

I hope - and feel quite sure - that you will enjoy reading his fascinating and informative account on the following pages.

And beyond that, there is an invitation for you to take part in Templar regalia at a family service in Wells Cathedral NEXT YEAR.

Yours in the Bonds of the Order
R.E.Kt. Paul Calderwood



This week's Templar Quiz was devised by me — but perhaps next week it will be from you. I hope so. Please step forward and send me your questions (and the answers too).
Meanwhile:

1. A Simon Question: where are Cyrene and Syracuse?
2. What three grades does a candidate pass through at his first Templar meeting?
3. Who is the second highest Officer in Great Priory ?

For the answers please see the bottom of the last page.

St John's Day

I write to you regarding one of the great feasts of the Christian year, which has a particular attraction for me, noting that my mother Preceptory No. 396 is dedicated to this great saint!

This saint was highly honoured throughout the whole Church from the beginning.

Proof of this is, among other things, the fact that fifteen churches were dedicated to him in the ancient imperial city of Constantinople.

Being the precursor of Our Lord, he was accorded the same honour as the first great saints of the Christian era, although he belonged to the Old Covenant.

It is certain that he was "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1 v15). Accordingly, the Church celebrates his natural birth by a festival of his "nativity", assigned six months before the nativity of Christ, since John was six months older than the Lord.

As soon as the Feast of Christmas was established on 25th December (in the fifth century) the date of the Baptist's birth was assigned to 24th June.

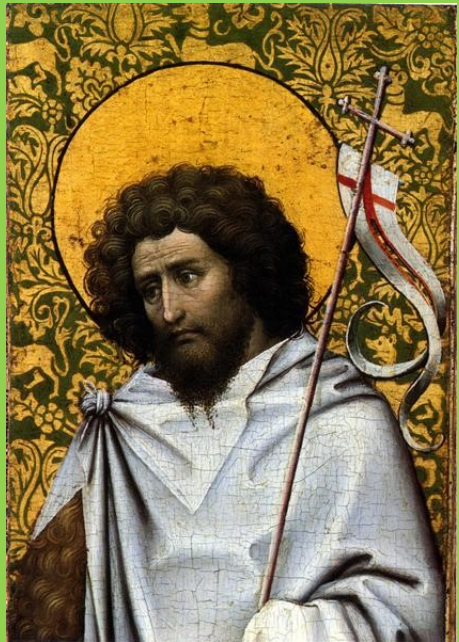
Like St John the Evangelist, the Baptist is one of the two great pillars of Christian Masonry, indeed the latter is our patron saint! This patronage over Masons is traced to his words:

"Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight all his paths. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways smooth." (Luke 3 vv4-6.)

All over Europe, from Scandinavia to Spain, and from Ireland to Russia, and in our isles too, Saint John's Day festivities are closely associated with the ancient nature lore of the great summer festival of pre-Christian times.

Fires were, and in some places still are, lighted on mountains and hilltops on the eve of his feast.

These "Saint John's fires" burn brightly and quietly along the fiords of Norway, on the peaks of the Alps, on the slopes of the Pyrenees, and on the mountains of Spain. They were an ancient symbol of the warmth and light of the sun which our forefathers greeted at the beginning of summer.



The tradition of keeping St. John's Eve with the lighting of Bonfires and Beacons is very ancient, almost certainly pre-Christian, but in my view it is very fitting that it has become part of a Christian festivity.

Christ keeps and fulfils all that was best in the old pagan foreshadowings of His coming and this Midsummer festival of light is no exception.

John was sent as a witness to the light that was coming into the world, and John wanted to point to that light, not stand in its way, hence his beautiful saying 'He must increase and I must diminish', a good watchword for all of those who are, as the prayer book calls us, the 'ministers and stewards of his mysteries'!

I found a rather good sonnet for St John's Eve by Malcolm Guite.

I hadn't read it before and liked it so share it with you too!



“Midsummer night, and bonfires on the hill
Burn for the man who makes way for the Light: ‘He must increase and I diminish still,
Until his sun illuminates my night.’
So John the Baptist pioneers our path,
Unfolds the essence of the life of prayer, Unlatches the last doorway into faith,
And makes one inner space an everywhere.
Least of the new and greatest of the old,
Orpheus on the threshold with his lyre,
He sets himself aside, and cries “Behold
The One who stands amongst you comes with fire! So keep his fires burning through this night,
Beacons and gateways for the child of light. “

Brother Knights, in these times of change and uncertainty, fear and division can spread.
Keep firm in your faith and share the wise precepts of our Order so that the brightness of your love
will shine forth dispelling the darkness!

Yours in the Bonds of the Order, Justin

A footnote for additional interest:

The copyright-free illustrations, gratefully used here, were created by Robert Campin (Renaissance style 1415), *Le Petit Parisien* Journal (Paris 1893) and Peder Kroyer (Denmark 1906).

Next Year's Outings

The Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master, Paul Raymond Clement, said at the close of his Address to Great Priory last month:



Many of you will be aware that we plan to hold a Family Service next year on September 11th 2021 at Wells Cathedral and I would ask you to note that date in your diaries.

This will be another opportunity for us to come together as Brother Knights and families, publicly witness our faith, and join in the singing of some wonderful Christian Hymns; none greater than our adopted Hymn, Bishop Walsham How's stirring, "For all the Saints" to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

In conclusion, I hope and pray that the Great Captain of our Salvation may keep you and your loved ones free from harm and that we will be spared to meet again as Brother Knights in the service of the Order.

May we use this time not only as a period of reflection, but as an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood within the Order, making each of our members feel that they are part of an International fraternity of Christian Masons, driven by faith and the sure hope that we will come through.



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Brother Knights of Monmouth and South Wales – for our province to be well represented at that celebration in Wells Cathedral would be most appropriate. Somerset is the Mother Province of our one. As you know, the older Preceptories within our Province were originally part of the earlier Province of Somerset, Monmouth and South Wales.

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Two days after the Cathedral Service which is on a Saturday, the Province of Somerset will also be holding its annual meeting at Axbridge, on Monday 13th September. It is an event to which we are also invited (Rule 3 applies) – and, if you are able to attend the Cathedral Service, you might want to consider staying locally and attending the Meeting as well – a sort of Mini-Break so well deserved by all the family (I hear them say).

Quiz Answers:

- 1 Cyrene is in Libya and Syracuse is in Sicily
- 2 Pilgrim/Novice/Knight
- 3 The Very High and Right Eminent Great Seneschal