

Grand Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island

June 2024 NEWS



S.K. James Ian Ogilvie (13)
Grand Commander

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Greetings Sir Knights,

Here we are entering into the warm and sometimes humid days of summer. A time of opportunities for our social outings and gatherings. A time for family and friends to gather to enjoy this ever quickly fleeting season.

We have an opportunity to enjoy the blessings which are unique to us here in our Grand Jurisdiction. With the beaches that so many of us gather at or the woods that we can retreat to and commune with our spiritual sides, or to travel to the mountains, where we can take in the grandeur of God's creation. These are opportunities that for many of us are not more than a couple of hours away.

Speaking on these, I go back to the Ocean. Jesus in his life was near the ocean on many occasions. He calmed the seas, provided bounteous catches of fish and walked upon the face of the sea. I am reminded of these miracles that he committed when I look out on the waters. The vast expanse and tranquility bring me such a deep calm and I cannot help but wonder how moved those who witnessed his miracles were. I doubt not that they felt the presence of God in those moments, and I find that I have a small share of that whenever I look upon the Ocean.

Why I say all this is that I hope for you all that if you go out in God's great creation during this summer, that you pause and feel the presence of God in your life. Knowing that the warm sun upon your face, wind through your hair, the spray of the salt water or sounds of nature are the reminders of God's presence in your life. Enjoy these summer months with family and friends and enjoy those cookouts or parades, but always try to find moments to just exist in God's creation and feel his presence .

Fraternally

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Sorting our stuff

Last winter, my wife and I purchased a new home in the small seaside community of Hull, Massachusetts. My wife grew up in town, so this is a little like going home for her. Shortly after the purchase, we began the arduous task of sorting and packing all our belongings in preparation for the sale of our old house. It is incredible how much stuff and memories, if you will, one can accumulate over the years.

Along with the sorting and packing came a fair bit of downsizing. I found this part of the task rather daunting because many of the items held memories for me. Some had good memories, and some, well, not so much. However, each item needed to be dealt with if I was going to be able to move forward.

So, I had to ask how one can throw memories away.

In the 19th Chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we read the story of the man who comes to Jesus to ask him what it will take for him to enter eternal life. Jesus tells the man to obey the commandments. Jesus recites the commandment, to which the man replies that he had obeyed them all and questions what he still lacks.

Jesus tells him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." v 21. The story continues, and the man walks away sad because, as scripture says, "he had great wealth." v 22.

Jesus was speaking to this man about what this man had to do to find eternal happiness. Jesus was not necessarily talking to the rest of us. However, there is an important lesson to learn.

During my downsizing experience, I was reminded of something my former spiritual director told me some years ago. To move forward in our spiritual life, we must deal with everything we hold on to and hide from others.

My spiritual director was not speaking of tangible items but the hurts, disappointments, grief, sorrow, and others. We push these things back into the recesses of our minds so that no one will see them and we do not have to deal with them.

I am not much of a hiker, but I understand that one wants to carry only a little gear when starting a journey. The more you have, the more it weighs you down, and the harder it becomes to continue.

The same is true of our spiritual life. The less we carry, in this case, all that stuff we have not dealt with, the better off we will be. We must deal with our stuff, hurts, griefs, etc. Working with a trusted spiritual guide or counselor, take the time to sort through them all and lighten your load.

Jesus told the young man to go and sell all that he had because Jesus knew it was his accumulated wealth that was keeping him from truly becoming a disciple. Jesus is saying to us that we need to rid ourselves of whatever is holding us back from truly becoming a disciple.

None of this will be easy; it is challenging. But the harder we work, the more we sort through our stuff, the easier it will become, and the closer we will walk with God and become a true disciple.

Blessings and Peace,

Rt. Rev. and S.K. Peter-Michael Preble