

Rule of the Temple

"Here begins the prologue to the Rule of the Temple: We speak first to all those who secretly despise their own will and desire with a pure heart to serve the Sovereign King as a knight and with studious care desire to wear, and wear permanently, the very noble armour of obedience."

(from the introduction to the Primitive Rule of St Bernard of Clairvaux for the Templars)

Regula Moderna

- On the Temple and its Service -

Remember that you are a Templar, an inheritor of the "Poor Fellow Soldiers of the Temple", so called because the first headquarters of our noble Order were in the precinct of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Think on the word "Temple" and its meaning continually. As divine scripture says: "One thing have I desired of the Lord which I will require; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit his Temple."

(Psalm 27; verse 4)

- On Love for the Church -

Consider with joy "that we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building being bonded together grows into a holy Temple to the Lord, and in whom we are built together as a dwelling of God through the Spirit."

(St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians; chapter 2; verses 19 to 22)

- On Discipline of the Body -

Read over again the original Rule given to us by St Bernard of Clairvaux and seek to put it into practice in modern life. With all thankfulness for God's good gifts, resist temptation and be master of your body.

- On Knightly Combat -

Be mindful that you are on the crusade of the King of Kings. "Unless you take up your cross and follow me, you have no part with me", said our Master. (St Matthew's Gospel: chapter 16; verse 24) Do not be afraid to confess the King who is like no other King.

May the white cloak remind you that we fight a holy war in all truthfulness; and may the red cross-pattée remind you that sacrifices must be made; for "we do not fight against flesh and blood, but against potentates and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in the cosmos." (St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians: chapter 6; verse 12)

- On Brotherhood -

Remember that you stand beside your brother at all times, as he fights under the same banner as you. Obey your superiors, honouring Christ in them. We have only one Master, Christ; but we are all brothers. Feel responsible for your brother, for God will also ask you one day: "Where is your brother?"

As a knight, stand up for the weak, above all for women and children, widows and orphans who need your help. Avail yourself of the worldwide community of the Order to correspond with your brothers and sisters and visit them whenever you have the opportunity.

“Now we have told you the things which you should do and what you should guard against . . . and we have not told you everything we need to tell you, but you will ask it. And may God let you say and do well.”

Code of Chivalry

And now as a model . . . we will briefly set forth the life and virtues of these knights of Christ. Let us see how they conduct themselves at home . . . how they appear in public, and in what way the knight of God differs from the knight of the world.

In the first place discipline is in no way lacking and obedience is never despised. . . They live as brothers in joyful and sober company . . . They dwell united in one family . . . careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

(from “de Laude Novae Militiae” by St Bernard of Clairvaux.)

The following extracts come from the **Primitive Rule of the Templars**:

- + *Each brother of the Temple should know that he is not committed to anything so much as to serve God, and each one should apply all his study and understanding to this. (Article 279)*
- + *Each brother is required to do all noble actions and to say all good words. (Article 325)*
- + *Each brother should strive to live honestly and to set a good example to secular people and to other orders in everything, in such a way that those who see him cannot notice anything bad in his behaviour . . . nor in any of his actions and works. (Article 340)*
- + *Each brother should ensure that the other brothers, especially his companions, behave well like worthy men . . . and that the others do not let themselves go nor elevate themselves and do things which are against the honesty and good customs of our house. (Article 367)*

“There is no distinction of persons among them, and deference is shown to merit rather than to noble blood. They rival one another in mutual consideration, and they carry one another’s burdens, thus fulfilling the law of Christ.

They think not of glory and seek to be formidable rather than flamboyant. At the same time, they are not quarrelsome, rash or unduly hasty, but soberly, prudently and providently drawn up into orderly ranks .

Thus in a wondrous and unique manner they appear gentler than lambs, yet fiercer than lions. I do not know if it would be more appropriate to refer to them as monks or soldiers, unless it would be better to recognize them as being both. Indeed they lack neither monastic meekness nor military might. What can we say of this, except that “this has been done by the Lord and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

Personal Commitment

- + *For Templars the Order is a way of life (“ordo vitae”) according to the Rule, freely chosen but nonetheless binding on their honour.*
- + *Prayers and participation in the life of the Church help Templars to lead the Christian life to which they are bound.*
- + *Moral obligations in personal, family, professional and public life follow from the claims which chivalry makes on Templars.*
- + *Templars are under an obligation to take part in the community life of the Order, particularly in events and meetings organised by the Order.*
- + *Templars contribute financially to furthering the work of the Order, as best as their personal means allow.*