

*And thus let him say to others, if there be more than one.
Blessing of a cross for one on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.*

- V. The Lord be with you.
R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God of unconquered power, and boundless pity, the entire aid and consolation of pilgrims, who givest to thy servants most invincible armor: we pray thee that thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless (+) this cross, which is humbly dedicated to thee; that the banner of the venerated cross, the figure whereof hath been depicted upon it, may be a most invincible strength to thy servant against the wickedest temptation of the ancient enemy; that it may be a defense by the way, a guard in thy house, and a protection to us everywhere....

Here shall holy water be sprinkled upon the dress [that is, the clothing bearing the cross]. Then if any of those present be about to journey to Jerusalem, a vestment shall be given to him marked with the cross, the priest saying thus:

Receive this vestment, marked with the cross of our Lord and Savior, that through it there may accompany thee safety, blessing, and strength for a prosperous journey to the sepulcher of [Christ]....

And thus shall it be done to the rest, if there be more than one present.

(The branding of a cross upon the flesh of pilgrims going to Jerusalem has been forbidden by canon law under pain of the greater excommunication.)

This done, there shall be said a mass for travelers, after the manner of a simple feast of nine lessons.

Questions: Which aspects of the journey to the Holy Land are emphasized here? What messages is the church communicating to the pilgrims and crusaders? What effect was this ceremony intended to have? What effects was it likely to have on the individual being blessed and on observers?

49. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX: IN PRAISE OF THE NEW KNIGHTHOOD

Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian abbot who had preached the Second Crusade (see doc. 35), also actively promoted the new military order of the Knights Templar. Sometime before 1136, at the request of Hugues de Payens, founder of the Templars, he wrote a treatise extolling their way of life, which is excerpted below. In other parts of the treatise he paints a very negative picture of secular knights and their activities. Bernard's view of the Templars is highly idealized, even in comparison with the Templars' own rules and regulations.

Source: trans. C. Greenia, *In Praise of the New Knighthood* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 2000), pp. 38-41, 45-48.

Chapter 3. On the New Knighthood

But the knights of Christ may safely do battle in the battles of their Lord, fearing neither the sin of smiting the enemy nor danger of their own downfall, inasmuch as death for Christ, inflicted or endured, bears no taint of sin, but deserves abundant glory. In the first case one gains for Christ, and in the second one gains Christ himself, who freely accepts the death of the foe in vengeance, and yet more freely gives himself in consolation to his fallen knight.

The knight of Christ, I say, may strike with confidence and succumb more confidently. When he strikes, he does service to Christ, and to himself when he succumbs. Nor does he bear the sword in vain. He is God's minister in the punishment of evil doers and the praise of well doers. Surely, if he kills an evil doer, he is not a man-killer, but, if I may so put it, an evil-killer. Clearly he is reckoned the avenger of Christ against evildoers, and the defender of Christians. Should he be killed himself, we know he has not perished, but has come safely home. The death which he inflicts is Christ's gain, and that which he suffers, his own. At the death of the pagan, the Christian exults because Christ is exalted, in the death of the Christian the King's liberality is conspicuous when the knight is ushered home to be rewarded. In the one case a just person shall rejoice at regarding vindication; in the other man shall say, "Truly there is a reward for the just; truly it is God who judges the earth" [Ps. 57:12].

Yet this is not to say that the pagans are to be slaughtered when there is any other way of preventing them from harassing and persecuting the faithful; but only that it now seems better to destroy them than to allow the rod of sinners to continue to be raised over the lot of the righteous, lest perchance the righteous set their hand to iniquity.

What then? If it is never permissible for a Christian to strike with the

sword, why then did the Savior's precursor bid soldiers be content with their pay, and not rather ban military service to them? But if, as is the case, it is legitimate for all those ordained to it by the Almighty—provided they have not embraced a higher calling—then to whom, I ask, may it more rightly be allowed than to those into whose hands and hearts is committed on behalf of all of us Zion, the city of our strength? So that once the transgressors of divine law have been expelled, the righteous nation that preserves the truth may enter in security.

Surely then the nations who choose warfare should be scattered [Ps. 67:31], those that molest us should be cut away [Gal. 5:12], and all the workers of iniquity should be dispersed from the city of the Lord [Ps. 100:8]—those who busy themselves carrying off the incalculable riches placed in Jerusalem by Christian people, profaning holy things [Lev. 19:8] and possessing the sanctuary of God as their heritage [Ps. 82:13]. Let both swords [Luke 22:38] of the faithful fall upon the necks of the foe to the destruction of every lofty thing lifting itself up against the knowledge of God [2 Cor. 10:4-5], which is the Christian faith, lest the Gentiles [that is, non-Christians] should then say, "Where is their God?" [Ps. 113:2]... Do you not see how often these ancient witnesses authorize the new knighthood?...

Chapter 4. On the Lifestyle of the Knights of the Temple

And now as an exemplar, or at least an embarrassment, for those of our knights who are apparently fighting not for God, but for the devil, we will briefly set forth the life and virtues of these knights of Christ: how they conduct themselves at home as well as in battle, how they appear in public, and how the knighthood of God and of the world differ from one another.

First, discipline is in no way lacking, and obedience is never despised. As Scripture testifies, the undisciplined son shall perish, and rebellion is as much a sin as witchcraft; to refuse obedience is like the crime of idolatry. They come and they go at the bidding of their superior. They wear what he gives them and do not presume to wear or to eat anything from another source. Both in raiment and in rations they shun every excess and have regard only for what is necessary. They live in cheerful community and sober company, without wives and without children. So that their evangelical perfection will lack nothing, they dwell united in one family with no personal property whatever, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. You may say that the whole multitude has but one heart and one soul, to the point that no one follows his own will, but seeks instead to follow the commander.

They never sit in idleness or wander about aimlessly, but on the rare occasions when they are not on duty, they are always careful to earn their bread by

repairing their worn armor and torn clothing, or simply by setting things to order. For the rest, they are guided by the common needs and by the will of their master.

There is little distinction of persons among them, and deference is shown to ability, not to nobility. They rival one another in mutual consideration, and they carry one another's burdens, thus fulfilling the law of Christ. No arrogant word, no idle deed, no unrestrained laugh, not even the slightest whisper or murmur, is left uncorrected once it has been detected. They forswear dice and chess, they abhor the hunt; they take no delight, as is customary, in the ridiculous cruelty of falconry. Jesters, wizards, bards, bawdy minstrels and joustiers, they despise and reject as so many vanities and deceitful follies. They cut their hair short, cognizant that, according to the apostle, it is shameful for a man to cultivate flowing locks. They never dress, and seldom wash, their hair—content to let it appear tousled and dusty, darkened by chain mail and heat.

When a battle is at hand, they arm themselves [on the inside] with faith and [on the outside] with steel rather than with gold. Thus armed and not embellished, they strike fear rather than incite greed in the enemy. They seek out strong, swift horses, rather than those which are dappled and well-plumed. They set their minds on fighting to win rather than on parading for show. They take no thought for glory but seek to be formidable rather than flamboyant. Then too, they are not quarrelsome, reckless, or impulsively foolhardy, but they draw up their ranks deliberately, prudently, and providently, arraying themselves in the line of battle as we read about in the fathers [of the church]. Indeed, the true Israelites march into battle as men of peace.

Yet once in the thick of battle, they set aside this earlier gentleness, as if to say, "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and I not disgusted with your enemies?" [Ps. 138:21]. These men charge the enemy, regarding the foe as sheep, never—no matter how outnumbered they are—as ruthless barbarians or as awesome hordes. Nor do they presume on their own strength, but trust for victory in the Lord of Sabaoth. They are mindful of the words of the Maccabees, "It is simple enough for a multitude to be vanquished by a handful. It makes no difference in the God of heaven whether he grants deliverance by the hands of few or of many; for victory in war does not depend on a big army, but bravery is the gift from heaven." As they have on numerous occasions experienced, one man may pursue a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Thus in an astounding and unique manner they appear gentler than lambs, yet fiercer than lions. Consequently I do not know if it would be more appropriate to refer to them as monks or as soldiers, or whether it would perhaps be better to recognize them as being both, for they lack neither monastic meekness nor military might. What can we say about this, except that this is

the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. God has hand-picked such troops, and from among the most valiant men of Israel he has recruited from the ends of the earth servants to guard vigilantly and faithfully that sepulcher which is the bed of the true Solomon; all bearing sword in hand, and superbly trained to war.

Questions: How did Bernard reconcile the monastic and warrior ideals? How might similar themes have inspired lay knights going on crusade? Compare Bernard's picture of the Templars with those sketched by William of Tyre, John of Würzburg, and Usamah ibn Munqidh (docs. 23, 28, 30).

50. THE RULE OF THE TEMPLARS

The military order of the Knights Templar, praised by Bernard of Clairvaux in the previous selection, was founded around 1119 (see William of Tyre, doc. 23) and achieved papal recognition in 1128. The earliest version of its Primitive Rule (its first official regulations), in Latin, dates to about 1129; a French version, excerpted below, was written between 1135 and 1147. The Hierarchical Statutes of the order, also excerpted below, were composed around 1165.

*Source: trans. J.M. Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars: The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 21–22, 35–58–60.*

The Primitive Rule

9. You who renounce your own wills, and you others serving the sovereign king with horses and arms, for the salvation of your souls, for a fixed term, strive everywhere with pure desire to hear matins [that is, the morning service] and the entire service according to canonical law and the customs of the regular masters of the holy city of Jerusalem. O you venerable brothers, similarly God is with you, if you promise to despise the deceitful world in perpetual love of God, and scorn the temptations of your body; sustained by the food of God and watered and instructed in the commandments of our Lord, at the end of the divine office, none should fear to go into battle if he henceforth wears the tonsure.

10. But if any brother is sent through the work of the house and of Christianity in the East—something we believe will happen often—and cannot hear the divine office, he should say instead of matins thirteen paternosters; seven for each hour and nine for vespers. And together we all order him to do so. But those who are sent for such a reason and cannot come at the hours set

to hear the divine office, if possible the set hours should not be omitted, in order to render to God his due.

The Manner in Which Brothers Should be Received

11. If any secular knight, or any other man, wishes to leave the mass of perdition and abandon that secular life and choose your communal life, do not consent to receive him immediately, for thus said my lord St. Paul: "...Test the soul to see if it comes from God." Rather, if the company of the brothers is to be granted to him, let the Rule be read to him, and if he wishes to studiously obey the commandments of the Rule, and if it pleases the master and the brothers to receive him, let him reveal his wish and desire before all the brothers assembled in chapter and let him make his request with a pure heart.

On Excommunicated Knights

12. Where you know excommunicated knights to be gathered, there we command you to go; and if anyone there wishes to join the order of knighthood from regions overseas, you should not consider worldly gain so much as the eternal salvation of his soul. We order him to be received on condition that he come before the bishop of that province and make his intention known to him. And when the bishop has heard and absolved him, he should send him to the master and brothers of the Temple, and if his life is honest and worthy of their company, if he seems good to the master and brothers, let him be mercifully received....

On Secular Knights

65. Those who serve out of pity and remain with you for a fixed term are knights of the house of God and of the Temple of Solomon; therefore out of pity we pray and finally command that if during his stay the power of God takes any one of them, for love of God and out of brotherly mercy, one pauper be fed for seven days for the sake of his soul, and each brother in that house should say thirty paternosters....

66. We command all secular knights who desire with a pure heart to serve Jesus Christ and the house of the Temple of Solomon for a fixed term to faithfully buy a suitable horse and arms, and everything that will be necessary for such work....