

SWORDS INTENDED FOR VISUAL DISPLAY

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All of us as Knights Templar know the special feeling of seeing a gleaming sword used when a new member is Knighted. A Masonic Sword has a real purpose and its holder has a designated duty.

A Tyler's sword in a regular Blue Lodge should have a wavy blade and not sheathed...this is to symbolize that a Tyler is "always on duty" to ward off cowans, eavesdroppers, and intrusions. When not holding it in his hands, the Tyler should post it at the outer door. It is not intended to be mishandled or used in aggression. It is merely a symbolic reminder to those who pass the door that you should "halt, unless permitted inside." It reminds me of the toll-gate on the turnpike...once you pay the toll (your dues) the gate lifts (the sword lifts in a salute) and you are permitted to pass.

In our Commandery orders, the sword blade is long. We are urged not to draw it unless done to help an honorable and worthy cause. We are to exhibit mercy and to be magnanimous in forgiving the faults of others. We are constantly (to) keep in mind that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. We are to preserve, protect and defend the Christian religion. I repeat one vital word: DEFEND. We are indeed Soldiers of the Cross. A down-turned Templar Sword forms the "T" of a Cross. That symbol should always remind us that this implement is to be a protector of "innocence," and the man holding the sword should always be mindful that his actions are circumscribed by the Compasses and his good actions measured by the Square.

In Ancient times, the Christian Crusaders were often on the defensive. Muslims aggressively pushed so hard and so far that (they) completely occupied Austria and parts of Spain and France. Had they not met defensive Christian Knights holding their defensive swords, those forces doubtless would have conquered all mainland Europe and England, as well. The world of the past few centuries would have been very, very different from what we know it now.

I am very pleased to see Masonic Swords used in ceremonies and meetings. When understood properly, they have a very rich and vital history to convey. One of my pet peeves is to hear about many swords being locked away in a storage cabinet or locker. I have seen a few Commandery Armories...(only a few)... which allow a visitor to walk in and see swords behind a glass display case. I like that...because it accomplishes both needs: it allows members and especially non-members, to visually appreciate the beauty and vitality of a Masonic sword, yet keep it protected from theft. When possible, I'd like to see Commanderies have a mannequin with full regalia and sword on display at all times in a lobby, along with other historical items. We need little boys to dream like I did: **"I want to grow up and become a Knight Templar Mason."** A sword on visual display can make it happen.

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