



HISTORICAL LECTURE

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SEVENTH EDITION

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This short informative talk about the organization's namesake could appropriately be given in public, before Masonic groups, or to candidates for the degrees. It should be given by an Active DeMolay.

Required Parts: The Speaker: Spk.; it is most effectively given by an Active DeMolay with a pleasing and mature voice and style of delivery. With permission of the Executive Officer, Chapters may divide this ceremony among multiple speakers.

Spk. During the 12th century, the powerful Order of the Temple, also known as the Knights Templar, started in Europe. This Order had been founded to protect the Christians on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and fought valiantly in all of the Christian military campaigns known as the Crusades.

Over time, its mission as the protector of the Church made it an important factor in Europe. The Templars also pioneered modern banking, and gained the trust of the public through their charitable outreach. Consequently, by the early part of the 14th century, the Order had become very influential and wealthy. It was then that Philip the Fair, King of France, began to fear that it would dominate the financial status of his nation.

Philip was an ambitious King, at all times eager for war. To fund his battles, he extracted every possible tribute from his people. Still in dire need of money, he took on loans, and found himself deeply in debt to the Templars. In desperate circumstances, he began to plot the destruction of the Order of the Temple so he could confiscate their wealth for his own use.

At this time, the Grand Master of the Templars was Jacques DeMolay. False rumors were circulated, and supposed confessions were published by Philip, in order to brand the organization as vile and corrupt. Such an increasing campaign eventually weakened the Templars in the minds of the people. Philip then thought it was the opportune time to strike. He ordered every known Templar in the land to be seized at the same time, and when he struck at dawn on Friday, October 13, 1307, Templars everywhere in France were taken entirely by surprise and cast into dungeons.

Through the process of torture, some of the Templars were made to confess to false statements. But DeMolay, the Grand Master, would not concede a single point to his accusers, and for almost seven years, withstood all torture and punishment, fighting as best he could to save his Order. Confined to unbearable prisons and vile dungeons, he remained true to his comrades, to God, and to his Order, until he made the supreme sacrifice. He was burned at the stake on March 18, 1314, a martyr to the cause of charity, fidelity, comradeship, courtesy and reverence. This splendid example of true knighthood is the namesake of the Order of DeMolay, and we as DeMolays honor his memory by practicing those same virtues in our daily lives.