



## OSMTH

# MODERN CODE OF CHIVALRY



*The Modern Code of Chivalry for Members of the Order was approved by the OSMTH Grand Magistrat Council at its meeting in Tampere, Finland, on 27 September 2024, for use in the international ceremonies and services of OSMTH.*

**As a dutiful member of our Order and a loyal citizen of your country:**

- 1. Commit yourself to a life of Christian service, and set a good example to others by your honesty, fairness, and the high quality of your personal behaviour;**
- 2. Support the work and witness of the Christian Churches as they seek to do good in the world;**
- 3. Maintain your self-discipline and personal integrity, acknowledge your faults, and strive to make amends for your failings;**
- 4. Respect the legitimate authority of the officeholders of our Order, live in harmony with your fellow dames and knights, and settle any disputes amicably;**
- 5. Act courageously to protect the rights of the poor and the vulnerable, and be generous in your support for those in need; and**
- 6. Uphold, by your words and by your actions, the high reputation of our Order.**

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### Origins of the Concept of a Code of Chivalry

The concept of Chivalry developed in Europe during the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as a moral, religious, and social Code of knightly conduct, inspired in part by the examples of the military religious orders, such as the Knights Templar, the Knights Hospitaller of St John, and the Teutonic Knights.

Academic researchers have characterised the medieval Code of Chivalry in terms of the following duties:

1. Duty to fellow Christians and fellow citizens of your country, including: courage; fair treatment; mercy; protection of the poor and the weak; service to those in authority; and willingness to sacrifice self for others;
2. Duty to God, including: championing of good against evil; faithfulness to the Church; generosity to the needy; obedience to God's commandments; and protection of the innocent; and
3. Duty to women, including: acting graciously to all women; and protecting widows and orphans.  
*For the celibate members of the military religious orders, the 'courtly love' aspect of this last duty was replaced by religious devotion to Our Lady, the Virgin Mary.*

## **Background Information on the OSMTH Modern Code of Chivalry**

The OSMTH Modern Code of Chivalry is based on key precepts drawn from two sources that date from the original medieval Order of Knights Templar.

*Source 1 – Extracts from the book, ‘In Praise of the New Knighthood’, written to Hugh de Payens, first Grand Master of the medieval Order of Knights Templar, by the Abbot St Bernard of Clairvaux.*

*(Translation by Conrad Greenia, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA, 1977.)*

### **Chapter 4 – On the Lifestyle of the Knights of the Temple**

“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 . . .

They never sit in idleness . . . but . . . they are always careful to earn their bread . . . by setting things to order . . . They are guided by their common needs and the orders of their Master . . .

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. No inappropriate word . . . is left uncorrected once it has been detected . .

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 . . .

They do not presume in their own strength, but trust in the Lord . . . They are mindful of the words of Maccabees . . . ‘courage is the gift of heaven’.”

*Source 2 – Extracts from the Primitive Rule, as approved by the Council of Troyes, France, in 1129 A.D., and from the Hierarchical Statutes, dated to around 1165 A.D., of the medieval Order of Knights Templar.*

*(Translation by Dr Judith Upton-Ward, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, 1992.)*

- Always after every dinner and supper all the brothers should . . . give thanks to Jesus Christ who is the Lord Provider. Let the remains of the broken bread be given to the poor. **(Article 29)**
- The Commander of the City of Jerusalem should have ten knight brothers under his command to lead and guard the pilgrims who come to the River Jordan . . . and . . . he should carry a round tent and food, and lead pack animals, and bring back pilgrims on the animals if necessary. **(Article 121)**
- When the Master of the Temple dies, and God summons him, . . . one hundred poor people should be fed for the sake of his soul at dinner and at supper. Afterwards . . . his clothes . . . should go to

the Almoner and should be given entirely to those suffering leprosy, for the love of God . . . (**Article 199**)

- 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**)
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