

ORATIONS

Grand York Rite of California

May 2014

Orations

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Golden State Research Chapter

Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of California

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PREFACE

It is important that we remember we are Speculative Masons. This is the tie that binds us in fraternity. It is intended, through our ritual and lectures, in whatever degree or rite, we gain material that will assist us as we each search for our unique path to improving our lives. It is intended that we are continually rebuilding our spiritual temples, to the greater glory of God. This is the Masonic way.

But our ritual and lectures need not be the only sources of material to inspire our speculations and efforts at life enhancement. The orations and other presentations in these annual publications of our California Research Chapter also provide material for serious consideration and as inspiration for our speculations on life and its meaning.

I am pleased to recommend this latest volume to all my Companions of the York Rite, as a valuable source of information from which inspired speculation may originate.

Jon D. Humphreys
Grand High Priest, 2014-15
Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of California

PROLOGUE

It is with great pride that the Golden State Research Chapter (GSRC) publishes this fifth compilation of orations and talks given during Grand Sessions.

Agreeable to Daniel Webster, “If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work on brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust. But if we work on men’s immortal minds, if we impress on them high principles, the just fear of God, and love for their fellowmen, we engrave on those tablets something which no time can efface, and which will brighten and brighten to all eternity.”

And although the opinions expressed herein are those of the authors, yet they shed new light in our quest for Truth and hopefully will incite you to join us at the next Grand Sessions so we dwell together in unity and reaffirm our pledge to build the world “Royal Arch” which will shelter all of the people, all of the religions and all of the races as One family under One Fatherhood.

The GSRC is hopeful that this little booklet will extend the scope of brothers and companions who may be benefitted by these wonderful messages.

If you are a Christian Mason, you should join York Rite and should you wish to consider affiliating with the GSRC, please see the website located on the back cover.

Joseph Dongo
High Priest, GSRC
September, 2014

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INTRODUCTION

GRAND ORATIONS, 2014

The papers in this compilation were delivered at the California York Rite Grand Sessions in May, 2014. In addition to the Grand Orations for the Grand Chapter and Grand Council, we have included the Grand Commandery Vesper remarks delivered by SK Raymond Davies; a research paper presented at the Golden State Chapter of Research annual convocation and another at the mid-year meeting at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge.

Casey Latham

Casey was raised in Victorville Lodge No. 634 and is now a member of Fox-Coates Daylight Lodge No. 842, for which he serves as Senior Warden. For the 2014 year, he is High Priest for HIGH DESERT CHAPTER No. 127, Deputy Master for H. Edward Barr's Oasis Council No. 64 and is a Past Commander of High Desert Commandery No. 79. He is a Knight of York in Southern California College No. 127 YRSCNA and is a member of various Masonic Invitational bodies and Masonic Literary Societies.

Casey graduated from Dana Hills High School, Dana Point, CA and within a month joined the United States Navy. After his enlistment was up he attended and graduated from the Computer Education Institute, Lake Forest, CA and is currently enrolled as a History Major.

Anthony (Tony) Yuson

Anthony served as the Grand Orator for the Grand Chapter of Royal Masons of California in 2013/2014 and is the Grand Royal Arch Captain of Grand Chapter of California. He was raised a Master Mason in 2004 at Pittsburg Lodge 429 serving as Master in 2009. He is a Past High Priest of Ancient Chapter #31 serving as High Priest in 2009, 2010 and 2011, a member of Oakland Council #12 and King Solomon's Council in Vallejo where he is currently serving as Principal Conductor of the Work, and is a Past Commander of Oakland Commandery # 11. Tony is a member of Bay Cities Council Allied Masonic Degrees, St Philips Conclave Red Cross of Constantine and served as Associate Patron with the Black Diamond Court Order of the Amaranth.

Geoff Holbrook

Geoff served the Grand Council of the State of California as Grand Orator for the 2013-2014 year. In addition he served as Grand Orator for the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the State of California for the 2011-2012 year.

Raymond Davies

Sir Knight Raymond Davies serves as the Grand Prelate of the Grand Commandery of the State of California Knights Templar.

Gregg Hall

Sir Knight Gregg Hall serves as the Grand Senior Warden of the Grand Commandery of the State of California Knights Templar.

I

Important Discoveries to be Made: Researching Royal Arch Masonry By: Casey Latham

The first printed reference to the term 'Royal Arch' is forthcoming in the year 1743. It is in a newspaper, Faulkner's Dublin Journal, for January 10 -14, 1743 - 44, and occurs in an account of a Masonic procession at Youghall, County Cork, Ireland, on St John's Day in Winter (December 27), when the Master of Lodge No. 21 was preceded by "The Royall Arch carried by two Excellent Masons."

On December 22, 1753, the first recorded Royal Arch Degree conferral in North America was recorded in the minutes of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 of Virginia.

The author's above referenced extracts begins cursory research into the historical inquiry of Royal Arch Masonry. The study and research of Royal Arch Masonry is an integral part of the larger whole of Masonic scholarly research, as the Royal Arch Degree has been considered the completion of the Master Mason Degree for well over 200 years and Masons working in England considered the Royal Arch Degree important enough to identify its inclusion, as a necessity, to identify what Degrees were to be considered Ancient Craft Masonry, into Articles of Union bringing two rival Grand Lodges together where they previously had been working under their own perceived sovereign authority.

The historiography of Royal Arch Masonry has produced well researched publications. However, a number of these publications present conclusions that are based upon scant evidence of a secret ritual, held within a society of men who take secrecy to be a basis of their obligations to the organization of Royal Arch Masonry itself. How does an historian begin to decipher what is speculation and what is fact?

Historical research is based upon a historian's interpretation of available and reliable references concerning the topic of which they are engaged. This entails empirical evidence that the subject of study and the events presented are in fact, true. A historian uses three different kinds of sources to evaluate their subject, viz. primary sources, secondary sources and tertiary sources. The discovery of fact versus speculation when identifying sources of reference can only be verified by referencing what are called primary sources.

A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time under study. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event. Some types of primary sources include:

- ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (excerpts or translations acceptable): Diaries, speeches, manuscripts, letters, interviews, news film footage, autobiographies, official records**
- CREATIVE WORKS: Poetry, drama, novels, music, art**

- **RELICS OR ARTIFACTS:** Pottery, furniture, clothing, buildings

In Royal Arch Masonry, a primary source can be considered by consulting a Lodge or Chapter book of minutes. The above reference concerning Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 of Virginia and its record of a Royal Arch Degree conferral can be taken as a fact. As this record is a well-known historical event backed by a recorded Lodge minute made by the Secretary of the Lodge, who was present at the Degree conferral.

Historians, in addition to primary sources, use secondary sources.

A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them. Some types of secondary sources include:

- **PUBLICATIONS:** Textbooks, magazine articles, histories, criticisms, commentaries, encyclopedias

Examples of secondary sources include:

- A journal/magazine article which interprets or reviews previous findings
- A history textbook
- A book about the effects of WWI

In Royal Arch research a secondary source can be considered by consulting the above reference from the Faulkner's Dublin Journal. Though written in the middle of the 18th Century, the

reference to the Royal Arch cannot be considered a fact of any number of Masons receiving the Royal Arch Degree by communication or conferral. The reference to the Royal Arch is most likely considered in the light of the Masonic Degrees being mentioned in many publications as “Royal”.

The third method of research concerning sources, are tertiary resources.

Tertiary sources are sources that identify and locate primary and secondary sources. These can include bibliographies, indexes, abstracts, encyclopedias, and other reference resources; available in multiple formats, i.e. some are online, others only in print.

In Royal Arch research a tertiary source can be publications such as Coils Masonic Encyclopedia and the many other Masonic dictionaries or encyclopedias. While a tertiary resource can be useful for the researcher to gain a wide overview of the subject, it is perhaps best to not treat a tertiary resource as a scholarly resource. As this author’s University Professors always seem to state, “do not use Wikipedia as a scholarly resource.”

A solid foundation of the methods of historical research will provide the historian of Royal Arch Masonry with the toolset that is needed to contribute to the scholarly research being completed by Masonic Scholars worldwide. As the study of Freemasonry has been increasingly contributed to by academic scholars, as

evidenced by academic courses at the University of California, Los Angeles and the publication of a scholarly Journal, Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism published as “an interdisciplinary academic journal that seeks to appeal to a broad-based scholarly audience in the domains of arts, humanities and social sciences.”, the participant Masonic Scholar must adhere to scholarly standards and academic integrity.

The purpose of this short paper, is not to disseminate conclusions of the truth behind the history, symbolism and moral teachings of Royal Arch Masonry, but is written with the desire of the author, that this paper provide information relevant to fellow researchers of Freemasonry, with a concentration on Royal Arch Masonry. Great and important discoveries await, when proper methods of historical research are performed and the results contribute to the betterment of the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons and Royal Arch Masons in particular.

II

Let There Be Light **By: Anthony "Tony" Yuson**

Companions, Sir Knight, Honored Ladies and Honored Guests,

This year, our Grand High Priest proclaimed the theme of "Let there be light", where he directed all of us to enlighten our brother masons of the beauty contained within the Royal Arch. He speaks to promoting our craft and, for us to teach our brothers in the Blue Lodge of the values contained within our Chapters. He asked us to be prepared to talk about the strength of our degrees, that these degrees are not only beautiful, but that, these degrees continue the lessons our brothers were taught as they climbed the ladder to becoming a Master Mason. He asks us to be able to speak to our brethren of the value of new relationships that are formed when joining our Chapters, meeting these distinguished companions, and learning more about masonry through the eyes of a Royal Arch Mason. To be able explain the value of the life lessons they can learn when, as a young mason, he is asked to fall in the line and eventually lead our chapters. All of this is consistent with masonry's quiet change of being more transparent, sharing our knowledge and dispelling the myth of a secret society.

Many believe that this quiet change is needed for our fraternity to grow, to attract new members,

to enable us to plan for the future, and to make our craft relevant in the new society. Our Grand High Priest's vision sees that the society around us is changing and in order for the Royal Arch to succeed, to be relevant for generations to come, we too must change. His theme, "Let there be Light", embodies the importance of this change, and he, throughout the year, continually reminded us that rather than being afraid of this change, to embrace it and to realize that if we are transparent, and that if we promote our craft, it will entice others to join, encourage participation and will, at end, make our chapters grow stronger and healthier.

The phrase "man is a social animal" might sound like a cliché but it is nonetheless true. There is a universal need for people to establish a sense of belonging, to feel rooted in a community. We all know this and we have all probably experienced the sense of personal doubt when close social bonds are disrupted.

One of the principal reasons for a new member to join masonry or for a mason to join other masonic bodies like the York Rite, is that people are attracted by the potential for widening their network of friends and that strong sense of social bonding. In Masonry, the potential for strong affiliation and lasting friendships is one of the principal attractions that we as masons identify with. We captured this in the concept of brotherly love. These special relationships are built on a foundation of shared experiences and values. To meet up with our special friends, our brothers, even after we have not seen them for

some time, can give us a sense of warmth similar to a feeling of coming home or coming to our grand sessions.

Many times, we as mason sit and wonder about future of masonry, whether we have the things that interest a young man to become masons. The new generation, this millennial generation, is different than the generation that you and I grew up in. One difference is when we were growing up, information was harder to come by. We had to go to libraries, read books, and spend time with friends who had an Encyclopedia Britannica. Now, these young men have access to so much information and can get this information so much faster than we could ever have in the past, all in the palm of their hands. This generation loves to multitask. They'll be on the computer working or doing their homework, on Facebook or Instagram or twitter, while emailing their friends and chatting or texting on their phone, all at the same time. My head spins just thinking about.

And don't be surprised if a young man who enters our craft and is receiving their first degree, has done research on the internet and thinks he knows what's involved in our degrees. But reading about our degree on the internet is not the same as experience they can have when we deliver that degree and after, we take the time to explain the meaning of the lessons we had just taught them.

Interestingly enough, one of the things that these younger masons consistently emphasize is their

interest in ritual. Maybe it's because they are looking for that formality associated with the ritual, the opportunity to meet in a group, dress up and act out the moral tales contained in our ritual. Our ritual is what distinguishes our organization from most others in our society and the degrees we teach in our Chapters, make the Royal Arch very attractive to many of these younger masons. These young masons are hungry for more and our degrees contain that light and when we combine the lessons we teach in our degrees with the opportunity to share their thought with the companions in our chapters, these young mason will want to be one of us.

When I started my journey in masonry, my friend Charlie who sponsored me, was my first line signer and vouched that I was a good man was there for me. He took me under his wing, helped me understand the degrees, introduced me to the members and explained the fraternity. When I started attending Chapter, I had a similar experience. Though the companions who were there were older than me, some were veterans of the Korean or Vietnam Wars and some were even veterans of WWII, but even though there was that this gap in our ages, these companions let me in. These men welcomed me, and quickly made me feel as a part of their Royal Arch family.

Today, throughout our craft, our leaders are encouraging our experienced members to work with the newer members, to be their friend and become their mentor. In the Blue Lodge, a

mentoring program has been in place for years and soon you will see it in the York Rite. And I have to say, from my own experience, that mentoring works. When I look back at what my friend and companions did for me when they accepted me and mentored me, they gave me a safe environment, one where I could ask those silly questions, coached me on things I needed to know, shared their wisdom and knowledge and ultimately became my friend. It made me feel special that these men were willing to share their knowledge and because they did, I became more active mason.

This year's theme, "Let there be Light" reminds us that the Royal Arch contains the light that our brothers in the Blue Lodge is looking for and that if we reach out, if we are transparent and if we share the knowledge we have learned, these younger masons will want to be part of our Chapters. And when they finally come and join our chapters, if we then take the time, welcome them in, become their mentor and become their friend, they will be more active and support our Chapters. And remember Companions, with the distinguishing characteristics of a Royal Arch Mason, that unflagging enthusiasm, loyalty to an allegiance, and the feeling of fondness, applied to this campaign, we will eventually see resurgence in our chapters in the years to come.

When I reflected on this year's theme, I realized that the light our Royal Arch has to offer, is all of you...

Thank you all for listening.

**Most Excellent Grand High Priest, thank you for
allowing me to serve you this year and this
concludes my report.**

III

Costly Masonry By: Geoff Holbrook

Good Morning.

Most Illustrious Sir, Past and Present Grand Officers, Illustrious Companions all, ladies and friends:

It has been a great privilege to serve this Grand Council for this cryptic year. I want to thank you, Most Illustrious Williamson, for appointing me as your Grand Orator and I would also like to thank each of you for the opportunity to address you today in that capacity.

Today's oration is entitled "Costly Masonry" and its subject matter involves the actions we as Masons take, and how we take them, both within and without our lodges. While for many, these thoughts will hopefully be considered common-sense, they bear repeating as even the best of us can become complacent within our lodges and councils.

As Masons, we are about action: about working, building, and creating. Masonry is a progressive science and in our rite the progression is demonstrated by the passage through certain arches. These arches correspond to lessons in our degrees and bring us to the highlight of the degrees- the ninth arch and all of its glory. The glory of the ninth arch however, should not allow

us to forget the steps it takes to arrive there. Every degree provides us with valuable tools to enhance our lives. In our journeys, we have learned the value of thoughtful reflection, education, integrity, and justice, to name a few. Through our degrees we have been taught how to govern ourselves and the nature of our actions. Taken together, our journey through all the arches, and through life, is one of action on behalf of ourselves and on behalf of humanity.

Today, I will focus on three facets of action: first there must be careful reflection, that our actions are appropriate, well thought-out, and not rash, and that the action is consistent with all of our values. Secondly, once we have begun the process of reflection and deliberation, we must decide to act, and not to become bogged down by over-analysis or fear of hard choices. Lastly, we must accept that there is a cost to our actions, and that it is costly to live by our values. We can call these Introspection, Action, and Sacrifice.

Introspection

Through introspection we contemplate what needs to be done, and our rite gives us guidance in how we are to prepare ourselves for this process. We learn that it is through prayer and silence that we achieve thoughtful reflection for any action.

One of the first lessons we are taught when we begin our Masonic journey is the importance of prayer and to seek divine guidance from above. We learn that before attempting any endeavor,

we should first pray. Thus, we begin our journey with thoughtful reflection.

As Cryptic Masons, we are taught that the cardinal values of a Select Master are Silence and Secrecy, both of which connote a silent reflection and bear on how we are to deliberate. Silence and Secrecy require us to be voluntarily dumb and blind so that our natural instincts do not interfere with our nobler purposes.

Silence is defined as the “forbearance from speech” and is part of thoughtful prayer. It is in silence that we pray our deepest fears, thoughts that we would otherwise not wish to speak out loud. Silence also provides for an atmosphere for our companions to achieve the same. Secrecy is defined as “the quality or state of being of being hidden or concealed”. Secrecy, like silence, provides for a proper atmosphere of privacy; the type of environment that religious leaders use to contemplate the sacred.

We are also reminded by our name, as Cryptic Masons, that an area was set aside for that which is sacred and that the area within our lodges and councils, with our brothers and companions, is a sacred space- a space where we can be honest with each other and to meditate so that our individual and collective choices may be properly made.

Thus, by setting ourselves apart from the world through silence and secrecy we are enabled to reflect on the important work we wish to undertake.

Action

But once we have had time to reflect and discuss our proposed course of action, we must act on our beliefs. This does not always happen and many plans go awry at this point for a number of reasons. At times, we are not able to end the discussion. Other times there is a clear majority in favor of action, but no action is taken to spare a dissenter's feelings. Or the action, although morally right, may be socially unpopular or controversial. However, such concerns should not stop us from taking action, and lessons from our degees and holy writings teach us that action is valued above inaction, and inaction can even be considered worse than attempted action that turns out to be misguided.

In the Christian tradition, particular emphasis is placed on acting once a need is known. There are two parables from the New Testament wherein inaction is judged more harshly than negative action. The parables of the Judgment of Nations and the Good Samaritan demonstrate that inaction in the face of need is worse than action that goes wrong.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus of Nazareth explains that the nations of the world will be divided into two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep and goats. The "sheep" will be placed at the preferred right hand of God, because they acted when there was a need- they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, gave shelter to the homeless, and clothed the naked. By acting

and helping the needy, they helped God. The “goats” on the other hand are placed at the left side of God and condemned. Their sin was not that they actively hurt anyone, but that they failed to act when they saw a need.

In the book of Luke we find the parable of the Good Samaritan. A traveler has been beaten, robbed, and left for dead on the side of a road. Two individuals, a priest and a Levite, cross the road to avoid him and pass him by. By their titles, one would think that either of these two individuals would have attempted to help the traveler, but they do not. A third person, a Samaritan who one expects would not help the traveler, comes to the place in the road where the traveler is lying and helps the injured man. The Samaritan binds up the traveler’s wounds, takes him to an inn, and pays for his care. In this story, Jesus of Nazareth is not focused on the robbers and the man left for dead, he focuses rather on the priest and the Levite who took no action and the Samaritan who took action. The lesson is that it is those who choose not to help, who do not act, who are the ones that are shunned.

In our own tradition in the Cryptic Rite, we see this distinction clearly in the story of Zabud and Ahishar. As we have learned, Zabud actively sought more knowledge. He actively sought to better himself and to be of service. His fervency and zeal to be of assistance lead him to make an unwise choice. In contrast to Zabud, Ahishar, would have already obtained what Zabud sought, had become complacent. He no

longer was active in his role as a Select Master. As such, Ahishar is deemed to no longer be “worthy of the confidence” of King Solomon. Ultimately, Zabud is rewarded for his acts in seeking further light, although he may have had mishaps along his road. Ahishar, who is idle and inactive, receives a different end.

These lessons, from our Cryptic Rite and from Holy Writings, demonstrate the value of action over no-action, even if the action ultimately is misguided. Once we determine a need, whether it is for the betterment of ourselves, our councils, our Grand Council, or for mankind, we must take concrete steps to manifest a positive outcome. There is a reward for those who try, but fail. The key is the attempt, the action. Even a failure can produce positive results.

Costly Masonry

Once we have prayed about our actions and have taken the steps to act, we must acknowledge that our actions will require a sacrifice. When we choose to act, it must be in accordance with our principles and as our principles and values are high, it should be of no surprise that our actions will be costly. Whether the action relates to what we are doing in the world, on behalf of our Grand Council, or within our own councils, we should expect that our actions come at a cost, both in terms of time and sacrificing other opportunities.

In his acclaimed “Cost of Discipleship,” the Christian theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer offered

a distinction between what he termed “cheap grace” and “costly grace.” Bonhoeffer noted that cheap grace

“is that “grace sold on the market like cheapjacks’ wares”, where one is forgiven of his sins with nothing more than an “intellectual assent to that idea”. In this scenario, the “world goes on in the same old way, and we are still sinners ‘even in the best life’ ... Well, then, let the Christian live like the rest of the world, let him model himself on the world’s standards in every sphere of his life, and not presumptuously aspire to live a different life under grace from his old life under sin.”

Is this not the same for our principles? Doesn’t Bonhoeffer’s view of grace, which is his overarching principle of Christianity, equate to our view of our own principles? When each of us became a Mason, was it simply an intellectual assent to the idea of Masonry, an acceptance without any real intention to change? Or, did we want and expect a real change in our lives? Did we expect the cost that such a change would bring?

Bonhoeffer’s idea is that when something is given away, or does not come at much of a price, it does not inspire a desire to do better or to value what one has. Bonhoeffer said, “the word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of work”. Likewise, can it not be said for us, that “the idea of low expectations has been the ruin of more Masons than any of our requirements”?

The life of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff demonstrates through his efforts and sacrifices that our expectations are high, and that we should expect our actions to be costly. As Cryptic Masons we are reminded by our broken triangle that to live by our standards requires sacrifices that are costly.

The cost of our values is often measured in time. To properly receive the benefit of rite our one must dedicate time- time to understanding our ritual, time to learning our ritual, time for fellowship, and time to assist our charities. Most of us present today understand this cost and have received the outstanding benefits of our rite. But we must also provide our fellow companions the benefit of high expectations and the opportunity to understand the impact of a "Costly Masonry." By lessening our standards we deny our fellow companions the full benefit of our rite.

In conclusion, the benefits of Cryptic Masonry are immeasurable. As we pass through the arches our involvement in Masonry grows, and our priorities become more focused. We learn the values of introspection, action, and sacrifice. We realize that the time and treasure we give is spent on bettering ourselves, becoming better ritualists, better leaders, and better brothers and companions.

As Bonhoffer said, "[f]or those who find and give thanks to God in their earthly fortune, God will give them times in which to remember that all

things on earth are only temporary." We likewise know that our costly actions in this world will be our memorials, which will follow us through the boundless realms of eternity.

May God keep you and bless you.

IV

VESPERS Service By: Raymond Davies

Call to Vespers

It is time to pause and address our Responsibility to our Creator and to His creations, our Companions.

From Psalm 141 we read:

Lord, I cry unto Thee:

make haste unto me;

give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto Thee.

Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense;

and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

In “Softly The Evening Vespers” author Clara McAlister Brookes wrote:

Softly the evening vespers Hallow the closing day;

Sweetly the Savior whispers, “Come to the throne and pray.”

Come, ere the shadows lengthen, Bring Him thy burdened heart;

Come where His Grace may strengthen, Come from thy cares apart.

Smiles of His love await thee, Lighting His lovely face;

Just to behold His beauty, Dwell in the secret place.

Boldly we may approach Him, Mercy and grace to own;

Tempted like us, He bid us “Come to the Father’s throne.”

Softly I hear Him calling, Calling at close of day;

Sweetly His tones are falling, “Come to the throne and pray.

Invocation

Holy and Merciful GOD, our Heavenly Father; as we again come before Your throne with our Hymns at Vespers, and our prayers of thanks for Your gifts of the Spirit, we ask Your help to offer the goodness of heart and actions that are acceptable offerings in Your sight. In the quiet reverence of this time, may the whispers of Your word breathe inspiration in our ears so that Your divine presence will influence and dedicate our souls to You. Inspire us with thoughts and feelings that are worthy of Your most Holy Presence. We claim to be followers and laborers for Jesus Christ, Your Son, and with heartfelt gratitude to our Savior, we want to draw closer to You, fully aware of how far away from You we would be without him, and how close to You He will bring us if we faithfully study and follow his guidance. For these reasons Lord, we seek Your divine blessing, asking You for that divine guidance that will help us to worship You in the beauty of Holiness, through Your gift of Grace, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Father, it has been the theme of the assembled Knights for this year to stand up for Your gift of Grace, our Lord and Savior Jesus; to be witnesses among Your people spreading the Word of Your joyous promises. We thank You for the wonders of life that You have given to us. The grass beneath our feet, the songbirds whose sound pleases our ears, the blossoms of the bushes and trees that please our sight. May we see in all these things the wonderful touch of Your hands. May we begin each and every day with prayers of thanksgiving and praise to Your Goodness.

Gracious and merciful Father, during this quiet time of reverence we thank You for gathering us safely under Your protection and caring. Our own weaknesses and failures are well known to us, so we approach closer to Your Presence with the trust that Your Grace will reach out to us, strengthen us, and free us from our burdens.

Lord of us all, Your words remind us often that there is more to living than being concerned with ourselves. Help us to reach others with the message of Your grace. Help us to pray for those whose burdens may be even heavier than our own. Help us to care about them and bring to them a glimpse of the touch of Your Glory that it may relieve their lives. May we serve You with acts of service and caring to all Your children. It is by those actions that we can know we are followers of Christ, and it is in His name and from His teaching that we now pray together:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but, deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen

Old Testament Scripture

Ecclesiastes 12

(New Life Translation Bible Version)

Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and no longer enjoy living. It will be a late time then to remember him, when the light of the sun and moon and stars is dim to your old eyes, and there is no silver lining left among the clouds. Your limbs will tremble with age, and your strong legs will grow weak. Your teeth will be too few to do their work, and you will be blind, too. And when your teeth are gone, keep your lips tightly closed when you eat! Even the chirping of birds will wake you up. But you yourself will be deaf and tuneless, with a quavering voice. You will be afraid of heights and of falling, white-haired and withered, dragging along without any sexual desire. You will be standing at death's door.

And as you near your everlasting home, the mourners will walk along the streets.

Yes, remember your Creator now while you are young, before the silver cord of life snaps and the golden bowl is broken. Don't wait until the water

**jar is smashed at the spring and the pulley is broken at the well. For then the dust of our mortal remains will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it
In Memoriam – Necrology**

**Harry Warren Cutting
Grand Master of the First Veil
Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons of California
Born August 12, 1924 in the State of Indiana
Departed August 28, 2013 at Riverside, California
Past Master, Past High Priest, Past Illustrious Master, Past Commander**

**Donald P Jackson
Grand Master of the Second Veil
Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons of California
Born March 3, 1955 in France
Departed November 20, 2013 at Woodland, California
Past Master, Past High Priest**

**Father Charles Ernest Maier Jr
Grand Prelate Emeritus
Grand Commandery, Knights Templar of California
Born January 12, 1931 in the Sate of California
Departed December 3, 2013 at Laguna Beach, California
Former Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of California**

O God, at the beginning of a division of time which men call years, we rejoice to worship a God to Whom time does not apply. Thou art the same, yesterday, today, and forever, without beginning of days or end of years. Thou knowest the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet done.

Because Thou art not only timeless in Thy being, but art merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, we would we would slip our hands into Thine and set forth fearlessly, joyously upon the unknown and untrodden path of this the beginning of the York Rite Year.

So Mote It Be - Amen

New Testament Scripture

Psalm 116: 12-19

What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.

O LORD, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds.

I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people,

**In the courts of the LORD'S house,
in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.**

Praise ye the LORD.

The Kind Messenger

From the time we become aware of who we are, and begin thinking about our presence here on this earth, until the day we pass the final veil, our perspective of that passing undergoes a series of changes.

When we are young, we don't give our ultimate passing a thought. We act like we are indestructible. We take chances, disregard danger, and brush off injuries that heal almost overnight. The friends that are around us live the same pattern; and yet, for the most part, remain around us. Yes we see one or two who experience a different level of danger with undesirable outcomes, but we think that won't happen to us, we don't live that way.

Ah, but some who have the foresight to observe the mature members of society realize that, with God's blessing, they will in time attain advanced years. They decide to live more prudent lives. At a young age they do their best to establish and maintain a close relationship with our Lord and our God. Sadly, many of us start down that path but veer off for a while.

We go through our adolescence and become adults, pair up and begin families of our own, and the weight of responsibility begins to direct our thinking. We understand that our families depend on our being present. We see some around us develop deteriorating health and pass away at what we consider too early an age. Really, it is not too early, it is just that it is an age that is too close to ours, and we begin to fear

death. We join health clubs, watch our diet, and give up bad habits.

But again, some have greater foresight. They draw closer to God, and work harder in His service. They begin to sense the Truth. That mortal death is part of living. It is the natural culmination of being on this earth. It is only to be feared if we have not yet established and maintained a close relationship with our Lord and our God.

But our Lord is patient. He knows that with time most of us will see the Truth. He knows that as we reflect on life, we will come to the realization that there is an existence beyond this earthly one. We observe the lives of our friends who already know the Truth, and at some point we begin to understand the scripture of John Chapter 3 Verse 16: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And we hear Mathew Chapter 11 Verse 28: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

And that sounds good, and we want to know how to do this; so we look deeper and find John Chapter 14 Verse 6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” And it dawns on the more astute among us to make that choice, and commit to Him.

Then we get older. And as we age, some of us come close to passing, some more than once. None of us seeks our passing. We have a natural aversion to it. We want to live, to experience our families, to contribute to society, to be a living example displaying our Lord's saving Grace.

And more and more we observe the lives of Companions and Sir Knights we admire and we see that they are at peace with their eventual passing. Even if they are experiencing adverse circumstances, they are still at peace. That is when the lessons that have been brought to our attention by these Companions and Sir Knights along our pathway in this fraternal family and in this Rite become clear, and the examples of those Companions and Sir Knights we observed makes sense. They believed and understood the message that our Lord spoke to Martha when He said as recorded in John Chapter 11 Verses 25 and 26: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

We are taught at one point in our ceremonies to prepare for our final days in this existance by first establishing a relationship with our Lord. We are advised to do this as soon as possible not just so that we can live dedicated lives and "pay our vows unto the LORD in the presence of all His people"; but also so that we might understand what we will be subjected to as our time of passing draws near, and not be discouraged by what we experience.

Part of those lessons include to not consider our passing “as a grim tyrant, but as a kind messenger sent to translate us from this imperfect, to that all perfect glorious and celestial lodge above where the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe forever presides.”

Our Lord promised us in the scripture of John Chapter 15 Verse 26: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” He is sending us a Comforter, Jesus is sending a Kind Messenger to help us.

Those Companions and Sir Knights we have gathered to remember this day all understood this concept, and they lived lives trusting in the Truth of our Lord. They listened to the promises and the instructions, and lived as examples of Faith in those Promises.

This is our focus today. These Companions and Sir Knights who are examples of lives devoted to trusting in the Lord and looking forward to His promises. They are the examples of how we need to pattern our lives. It has been said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and that a soul remembered is never fully gone. So, for all their labors we can pay no greater honor to these we remember than to recognize and emulate their examples.

We have the promise that if we trust in our Lord, we too will pass into a joyous existence in the presence of the Father. So again, while we

mourn the loss of the presence of these Companions and Sir Knights, we must also rejoice in the sincere knowledge that the Kind Messenger promised by our Lord, has taken them through that last veil, beyond the sable curtains, and into the waiting arms of the presence of our Lord.

Benediction

Gracious Heavenly Father, as we conclude this time of remembrance of Your Saints and prepare to continue the tasks of this week that You have set before us, we thank You for guiding those we have honored here to be examples of lives reflecting Your order and beauty, and know that as we draw closer to You, we may be privileged to be the examples for those yet to come. Thank you for guiding and protecting us. Help us to seek to be seen as the recipients of Your loving Grace. We ask this in the name of our Lord. Amen.

**Why do we Balance by 3X3
By: Gregg Hall**

I was asked to discuss why we balance by 3x3 and what does it mean. While I don't claim that this is the only explanation, here is what I have found.

There are a lot of meanings to the word Balance, but here are the ones that would be relative to our discussion.

- **A Means of Judging our Deciding**
- **A counterbalancing influence**
- **Equipose between contrasting, opposing, or interacting elements**
- **Equality between two sides of an account**
- **An aesthetically pleasing integration of Elements**
- **Physical Equilibrium**
- **Mental or Emotional Steadiness**
- **With the fate or outcome about to be determined as an adjective**
- **To arrange so that one set of elements exactly equals another**

So by the action of balancing, we are bringing our actions into a state of equilibrium, where we are all meeting on the level, one side is no stronger than the other. We are integrated as a single unit, in a pleasing way, thereby creating harmony among the Companions. We have achieved an emotional steadiness again thereby creating harmony among the Companions. And as we are about to conduct the business of the chapter at the opening, the fate of the Chapter is

about to be determined, at least in some small manner.

The physical act of balancing is a symbol of the Companions moving together in Unity, everyone is working towards a common goal. This unified movement creates a sense of companionship with everyone holding hands and moving at the same time. It was suggested to me that this physical act, something not done in Blue Lodge, shows that the nature of Companionship is deeper than the bonds of Brotherhood, demonstrated in the Lodge, and as the Chapter degrees are to build on that which was learned in the lodge, this act is a more profound relationship than that which we experience in Lodge. This is a consequence of the ritual of our 4 degrees -- especially

- The teachings in the Lecture of the Mark Master against Envy, Ambition, and Anger, and for good dispositions;
- The use of 3 candidates in the Royal Arch who have to work together in difficult circumstances to find that which ultimately reveals the Lost Word.

Now, why do we do the balancing by 3x3? You should all be well versed in the number 3 as it relates to Blue lodge Masonry. It also appears often in Royal Arch Masonry

- 3 overseers in the Mark
- The path that the candidate travels in the Mark is a triangle with 3 sides
- The Grip of a Past Master is called a 3 fold cord which is not easily broken
- The 3 processions in the Most Excellent Master Degree

- **The Equilateral Triangle**
- **The Triple Tau**
- **3 Principle officers**
- **3 Masters of the Veils**
- **3 candidates in the Royal Arch**

The number 3 is a symbol of deity; the 3 parts of god are Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Omnipotence. So by using 3, we are inviting god to be with us during our meeting, and at closing to watch over us when we are apart.

The sum of 3×3 is 9, which is also an important number in Royal Arch Masonry.

- **There are 9 officers**
- **Nine Arches in the Secret Vault**
- **Constitutional number to open a Chapter**

And finally here are a couple of other items to be considered. When asked how one may be known to be a Royal Arch Mason, the answer is by 3×3 and under a living arch. So by using 3×3 we are showing ourselves to be Royal Arch Masons.

Also, similarly to the Battery used in the opening, there are 3 sets of 3 knocks which is completed twice, this is to represent the 3 degrees of Craft Masonry together with the first 3 degrees of Capitulary Masonry, and then in the Case of the Battery, the single knock represents the Capstone or Crowning Achievement of Masonry, discovering the true name of God.