

ORATIONS

Grand York Rite of California May 2015, 2016 and 2017

Orations

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Golden State Research Chapter

Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of California

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**Dedicated to
Most Excellent Companion, Honorary**

KENNETH GEORGE HOPE



For his long and dedicated service to the Grand York Rite of California, the Grand Chapter and the Golden State Research Chapter, which he served as Treasurer for many years, since its constitution in 2003.

Ken is a member of Bellflower No. 320. He was Master in 1998 of Gardena Moneta Lodge No. 372, and was raised in July of 1974. He is presently Grand Secretary/Recorder for the Grand York Rite Bodies of California, in which position he has served for 25+ years.

He is a Knight of the York Cross of Honor; Past Governor York Rite College; Past Sovereign Master AMD; Past Sovereign Red Cross of Constantine; Past Prior HRAKTP; Honorary PGHP, MIPGM, PGC.

He has been married to Sonny Hope for 55 years and has a daughter, son and 6 grand-children.

As a tribute to his long and meritorious service, we are re-running his paper “ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE,” published in GRAND ORATIONS, 2013. Although the article extols the accomplishments and virtues of Bro. George Perkins, it is equally applicable to him, as well. For over 25 years, he has been a stabilizing force for the Grand York Rite bodies, and has devoted his life to their success.

PREFACE

The words contained in this booklet are thoughtfully crafted to inspire, motivate, enlighten, and unify. In York Rite Masonry, we come symbolically from a common place. We work toward the same goals and objectives, and share the same hopes.

The addresses captured here, though different from one another, all endorse my theme for the year, “Let your light shine”. We should all be the best we can be – let our personal light shine, and share the light of York Rite Masonry with everyone.

I commend to you this collection of addresses for the Capitular years 2015-2017

**Randy R. Downey
163rd Grand High Priest**

PROLOGUE

The Golden State Research Chapter exists to help Chapters and members enlighten those who are interested in finding more light in masonry through the York Rite. We make resources available to companions in order to spark that discussion with our brethren, and to enrich our brothers thoughts about the light that is contained within the Royal Arch so they may take that step to receive those solemn instructions which is the perfection of the 3rd degree.

The Golden State Research Chapter is very proud to publish this compilation of orations and talks given during the Capitular years of 2015 through 2017.

Anthony “Tony” Yuson, KYCH
High Priest, GSRC
August, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

GRAND ORATIONS, 2015-2017

The papers in this compilation were delivered at the California York Rite Grand Sessions in May, 2015, 2016 and 2017. In addition to the Grand Orations for the Grand Chapter and Grand Council, we have included the Grand Commandery Vesper remarks delivered by Rev. and SK Ray 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; and a paper prepared by the Grand Secretary, who was also Treasurer of this Research Chapter.

James Sunseri

**Grand Orator, Grand Chapter of Royal
Arch Masons, May 2015**

**Grand Orator, Grand Council of
Cryptic Masons, May 2016**

William Miklos

**Grand Orator, Grand Council of
Cryptic Masons, May 2015**

Raymond Davies

**Grand Prelate of the Grand
Commandeery of Knights Templar of
California, 2013 - 2017**

Jordan Yelinek

**Grand Orator, Grand Chapter of Royal
Arch Masons, May 2016**

**Grand Orator, Grand Council of Cryptic
Masons, May 2016**

David Rathgeber

**Grand Orator, Grand Chapter of Royal
Arch Masons, May 2017**

Phil Hardiman

**Treasurer, Golden State Research
Chapter of the Grand Chapter of Royal
Arch Masons, May 2017**

John L. Cooper, III

**Most Worshipful Past Grand Master,
Grand Lodge of California, F. & A. M.,
2013**

Kenneth G. Hope

**Grand Secretary, Grand Chapter of
Royal Arch Masons, 1991 - 2017**

I

THE GREATEST OF THESE

GRAND CHAPTER ORATION, MAY 2015

By James M. Sunseri

We have each come into this life with our own unique talents, abilities, educations, and experiences to contribute something and to grow in a special way on a very particular path. One of the biggest influences in our lives is our religion, or our view of God. Masonry addresses this issue head-on, often in a manner that we may not understand until we have been a mason for some time. Masonry accepts all of the religions and religious traditions that hold to the basic belief that there is but one Supreme Being, that we are all His children, that we each have an immortal part within us, and that we must lead a virtuous life. These religions basically teach the same thing: Love God with your entire being, and love your neighbor as yourself.

The Creator is not limited to expressing Himself through one religion alone. He manifests in individuals' lives because of their faith and because of their relationship to the Spiritual Source, not because of their religion. Religion is the form in which individuals attempt to understand the manifestation of this Spirit. God can, and does, work through every soul on earth. The religions that people follow made no difference to God in the past,

make no difference to Him now, and will not make any difference to Him in the future.

Masonry teaches us the same ideal. It tells us to study comparative religions; to see beyond surface differences, and, instead, to find the commonalities we share with one another; to co-ordinate the differing teachings and philosophies; to correlate where all religions meet; and to understand that there is but one God, and that we are only secondarily separated by religions or specific doctrines. God loves those that love Him, whether this sect or that ism or that cult. We are all spiritual beings manifesting in a material world, souls who happen to be expressing themselves on earth. Race, gender, color and religion are not a part of our true spiritual nature.

There is but one Creator, one Source, one Law. We must become aware of and manifest an awareness of the Living Spirit in the earth. Our goal is not to just wait for heaven to escape the earth, but rather to use our talents and energies for good purposes, and to bring the awareness of the Creator into our lives and into our surroundings wherever we may be -- Right Here! Right Now!

Perhaps the Creator made us in His image and likeness and said something like this: "Go out into the creation, and do what you will do, and become who you will be; and then come back and delight Me with the uniqueness of who you are." Freemasonry is now and always has been from the beginning a Search for God, a search that involves a gradual accomplishing of

the things of the Spirit day by day, line by line, precept by precept, here a little there a little, applying the things of the Spirit in our interactions with others. The fruits of the Spirit include love, gentleness, patience, and determination. But especially love.

One word frees us from all the weight and pain of life. That word IS love. There is only one truly significant work to do in life, and that is to love: to love people, to love nature, to love animals, to love creation itself, just because it is. To serve God's creation with a warm and loving generosity and compassion is the only meaningful existence. Love is the greatest gift. There is nothing holier in this life of ours than the consciousness of love. Love does not consist of looking into each other's eyes, but in looking outwards together in the same direction. Love can give in a moment what toil can scarcely give in a lifetime. The real tragedy of life is not that humans perish, but that they cease to love. Time flies, suns rise, and shadows fall. Let them go by. Love is forever.

We love our fellow human beings by being kind. Kindness makes beautiful every day that it touches. Kindness is one of the most difficult things to give away, because it is usually returned. Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together, the links of which each of us forges or breaks daily. Kindness is the soft voice at the hour of death, the gentle hand outstretched to the newly-orphaned, the bowl of soup carried to the frail widow, the coin given to the homeless beggar, and the

encouraging smile nodded to him about to ascend the gallows. Kindness can accomplish much. Just as the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate. Kindness is the one thing that you can never lose, because it is always returned. So, be kind, and be kind now! For in life you can never do a kindness too soon, because you never know when it will be too late.

We are children of the universe no less than the trees and the stars. Each of us has a right to be here. So, placidly through your life walk with God, however you conceive Him to be. And, dare to be great. Dream your dreams. Follow your hopes. Smile often. Laugh out loud. Cry when you must. Be glad you are here. Rejoice that the sun shines and the rain falls. Do the very best you can. Know that it is enough. And may your lives be filled with peace, joy, and love, especially love.

II

RITUAL

GRAND COUNCIL ORATION, MAY 2015

By William J. Miklos, III

Good Morning, Ladies, Brethren and Friends.

And thank you, for the opportunity for allowing me to share some of my thoughts with you today.

Who cares about Cryptic Masonry? Why do we spend so much time on learning ritual? What good does that do?

We often hear that our rituals use allegory and symbols to impart important truths. That is perhaps more true than many of us might believe especially in Cryptic Masonry!

Consider this: our ritual is riddled with queries that present us with paradoxes for the inquisitive mind to examine. These questions center on both the internal and external persons we believe ourselves to be.

We read in the Royal Master Degree:

“It is intended to serve as a reminder of the mysterious Triad, expressive of the essence and attributes of Deity and of those great Masonic virtues-Faith, Hope and Charity. You will

deposit it in the Holy of Hollies, with the other Sacred Furniture, and hereafter, in every Masonic Lodge, let there be displayed about the Altar of Obligation three burning tapers placed in a triangular position; and may the virtues which they symbolize be a light unto the feet of every true and faithful MASON, in all walks of life, until that perfect day when the glory of the Lord shall illumine our souls forever.” (Page 16 Ritual Cypher Grand Council Masons of California).

Did you consider the possibility that three lesser lights may potentially represent the three basic tenants of Masonry? Or perhaps that their meaning is universal in its interpretation allowing the contemplative mason to reach more deeply into himself and resultantly make the world a better place for all mankind? Did you notice the location of the lights? The altar of obligation, that center of our lodge, which appears in all the degrees of Masonry. That altar which also safely holds the holy writings of multiple beliefs which is illuminated by our three core believes, Faith, Hope and Charity. What a powerful statement!

By demonstration you can see, our ritual possesses multiple meaningful symbols which is why it sets us apart from all other fraternal organizations and groups. These discussions are not centered on life after death or are religious in scope but instead represent a fundamental believe in thinking man as mental phenomena which includes feelings which allowed the “thinker” to distinguish between material

objects and minds. This phenomenon truly got its start in our earliest Masonic lodges allowing for a continuous expansion of these symbols, paradoxes and allegories which lead to the creation of this particular degree which I just quoted from.

The degree has many more overlapping symbols which continue to astound the “Thinker.” The Cherubim is an integral part of this degree and yet many of us do not know the full implication of such a symbol.

- **According to I Kings 6:23 et seq, and II Chronicles 3:11 et seq, Solomon placed in the Holy of Holies two huge Cherubim of olive-wood overlaid with gold. "They stood on their feet and their faces were towards the house", which probably means they faced the Holy Place or the Entrance.**

This is the usual interpretation of the Cherubim, but consider this definition:

- **According to Exodus 26:31, cherubim were embroidered on the Vail of Cherubim, which means the Seat of God, and is interpreted: Fullness of Knowledge. Though we realize that cherubim are exalted heavenly powers and virtues, yet, if thou wilt, thou too shalt be one of the cherubim. For, if cherubim means Seat of God, remember what the Scripture says : The soul of the just is the Seat of Wisdom.**

If we utilize this later definition the presence of the Cherubim makes perfectly good sense, however, their meaning has multiple layers allowing each of us to interpret that meaning into our own lives -- thereby allowing us to enrich our understanding of the mysteries of life.

Contemplation of these mysteries leads us all to examine our ritual and resultantly we can not only enrich our own lives but those of the people we love, and work with. The ritual is a powerful tool that allows us to impart serious truths to one another. Therefore, one could contend that ritual spoken with conviction and heart leads us all toward a better understanding of its expansive meaning.



III

CALL TO VESPERS, 2015

By Raymond Davies

It is the time of our day to pause and reflect on our Responsibility to our Creator and to his creations; our Companions in this earthly existence.

From Psalm 100 we read:

1 (A Psalm of praise.) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

5 For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

In the Gospel of John, Chapter 4, Jesus advises the Samaritan woman at the well: "*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

We now take time in the busyness of our day to approach the throne of Grace for an uplifting of spirit. Come with us now and let your spirit reflect on the truth of the Salvation gained by the sacrifice of our Lord. We can feel the Father's call as He bids us come to His throne and pray.

Invocation

Holy and Merciful GOD, our Heavenly Father; as we again come before Your throne at Vespers, with our Hymns and our prayers of thanks for Your gifts of the Spirit, we ask Your guidance as we display the intentions of our heart and actions, that they may be acceptable offerings in Your sight. In the reverence of this time, may the quiet whispers of Your word breathe inspiration in our ears so that Your divine presence will influence all that we do and bring Glory to You. Inspire us with thoughts and feelings that are worthy of Your most Holy Presence. We claim your gift of salvation so that we may be followers and laborers for Jesus Christ, Your Son; and with heartfelt gratitude to our Savior, we are 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 inspiration 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 continue the announcement of Your gift of Grace, our Lord and Savior Jesus; to be active among Your people spreading the Word of Your joyous promises. We thank You for the blessing of this 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 and end every day with prayers of thanksgiving and praise to Your Goodness and thanks for the gift of our Savior.

Gracious and merciful Father, during this quiet time of reverence we thank You for bringing us together safely under Your caring protection. Our own frailties are well known to us, so we approach Your Presence with the sure 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 as we labor 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 serve them and bring to them a glimpse of the touch of Your Glory in our

lives that it may relieve their lives. May we serve You with acts of service and caring for all Your children that we contact. It is by those actions that we may know we are followers of Christ, and it is in His name and from His teaching that we now pray together:

Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in 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
Isaiah Chapter 9 Verses 1 through 7**

The gloom will be dispelled for those who were anxious. In earlier times was the humiliation of the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali; but now He brings honor to the way of the sea, the region beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the nations. The people walking in darkness see a bright light; light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness. You have enlarged the nation; You give them great joy. They rejoice in Your presence as harvesters rejoice; as warriors celebrate when they divide up the plunder. For their oppressive yoke and the club that strikes their shoulders, the cudgel the oppressor uses on them, You have shattered, as in the day of Midian's defeat.

Indeed every boot that marches and shakes the earth and every garment dragged through blood is used as fuel for the fire.

For a Child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called: Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His dominion will be vast and He will bring immeasurable prosperity. He will rule on David's throne and over David's kingdom, establishing it and strengthening it by promoting justice and fairness, from this time forward and forevermore. The Lord's intense devotion to His people will accomplish this.

In Memoriam

While this afternoon we pause to remember all Sir Knights who passed through the final veil this past year, we especially note several whose labors while here have left deep footprints for us to follow as we strive to serve our Savior:

Sir Knight Charles R. Newman GCT

**Most Eminent Honorary Past Grand Master of
the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
Past Right Eminent Grand Commander of
Illinois in 1976/1977**

**Right Eminent Assistant Grand Recorder in
1984**

**Right Eminent Grand Recorder 1985 through
2005**

**Entered the Supreme Asylum on Wednesday
August 13, 2014.**

Sir Knight Murray Ethelbert Cooke KYGCH

**Past General Grand High Priest of the General
Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons
International**

**Past High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal
Arch Masons of California**

**Entered the Supreme Asylum on Saturday
December 20, 2014**

Sir Knight Harry Thomas Hall KYGCH

**Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of
Royal Arch Masons of California.**

**Entered the Supreme Asylum on March 21,
2015**

Sir Knight Charles Ned Richter

**Past Right Eminent Grand Commander Grand
Commandery - Knights Templar of California**

**Entered the Supreme Asylum on March 24,
2015**

Sir Knight Blair Christy Mayford

**Most Eminent Past Grand Master of the Grand
Encampment of Knights Templar**

**Past Right Eminent Grand Commander of the
Grand Commandery – Knights Templar of
Missouri**

**Entered the Supreme Asylum on March 28,
2015**

**New Testament Scripture
Luke 2: Verses 8 - 14**

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

**“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

**Vespers Message
Sunday, May 17, 2015**

Men Of Goodwill

From the very beginning of creation, our Father has bestowed upon us the gift of free will -- albeit with consequences; but free will none-the-less. We are free to choose to follow His commandments or accept consequences. We are free to accept or not accept His Gift of Grace, the

gift of eternal life with the price of our sins paid for by our Savior Jesus Christ. As in everything our Father provides us, we have a choice.

We have choices about how we live throughout our lives. We can choose to be like much of the world, self centered and self serving; or we can be “Men of Goodwill”, accepting the gift of the saving grace of the sacrifice of our Lord, accepting the benefit it brings to our lives; and as a result, being a benefit to our communities; and from that, being of service to our Father, and our Lord. We can choose to be “Men of Goodwill”.

In the gospel of LUKE - Chapter 2 Verse 14 of the King James translation of Scripture, which is the Scripture we use in our Orders, the passage concerning the annunciation of the shepherds reads: “*Glory be to God in the highest and on earth Peace, good will toward men*”. This translation of “on earth Peace, good will toward men” is from a passage of the “official” Greek *Codex* version of scripture that reads: “*epi gēs eirēnē en anthrōpois eudokia*”. That Greek *Codex* Scripture compilation that was designated as “official” was assembled around 340 AD and was adopted as the official scripture text at the Nicene Council. It was then published as the “official” Scripture by order of the Christian Emperor Constantine. In some equally old monastery copies of that same Greek *Codex* Scripture, that last word has an “s” on the end. That is a trifling difference, that “s” on the end, but working with those equally old scriptures, it gives us a slightly different translation. It

changes that last word from a noun to an adjective; which changes the translation from “Peace, goodwill for men” to “Peace for goodwilled men”. If we consider this alternate translation, it might indicate that humankind is again responsible for a choice. It changes the translation from two gifts, with Peace as an outright gift; to Peace as a gift resulting from making the right choices for how we live our lives.

And that is what we gather here today to recognize. No, we are not looking for a different translation of scripture; but to recognize the goodwilled lives that produced the legacy left to us by the Companions, Sir Knights, and the marital Companions of those Companions and Sir Knights who have departed this past year for the celestial asylum. Those persons, who while among us were examples of the choice of living lives dedicated to serving our Lord and benefitting humankind. These who were “Men (and women) of Goodwill.” Or, if you wish, “Persons of Goodwill.”

Jesus Christ solidified this thought of living lives of goodwill when he taught in the 5th Chapter of Mathew, Verse 16: *“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.”* This is the assignment of good willed persons while here in this earthly existence. To live lives that are works of service that glorify our Father. This is not to suggest that deeds are the key to eternal life with the Father; but the lack of good works could be a sign that we do not have the Saving

Grace in our hearts. And, conversely, a life full of good works can be a sign to the world that Grace is living within us.

These Companions, Sir Knights, and marital Companions of the Companions and Sir Knights we seek to remember this day all understood their duty to God and to their communities; and they lived lives exemplifying those precepts. They displayed the presence of the Saviour in their heart. They lived as examples of Faith and love; lives of Goodwill. They served others, even at the expense of their own physical well being. Much of what we promote in this Fraternity and in this Order in particular is taught by displaying the esteem with which we hold our predecessors actions and how we recommend emulating the manner in which they lived their lives and were faithful to our precepts even to their very last moments.

Included with those we recognize today are many not listed in today's program; such as Sir Knight Kevin Conrigan KTCH, and Sir Knight Charles Lester Schlussler, the father of our Grand Junior Warden, Sir Knight Gary Schlussler; and yes, even our Ladies, the marital Companions who labored side by side with our Companion or Sir Knight in promoting and sustaining the ideals and messages of our Orders. Marital Companions such as Lady Jackie Norris, Lady Nancy Evans, Lady Marianne Hammack, and recently Lady Kimberly Kussman the lady of Sir Knight David Kussman; all of them Persons of Goodwill.

These are who we focus on this afternoon. These examples of lives devoted to trusting in the Lord and being of service. They are examples of how we should live our lives. With the remembrance of their actions in our minds, we can pay no greater honor to these we remember than to recognize and emulate their examples in our lives.

We have the promise that if we trust in our Lord, and care for those around us, we too shall become “Men of Goodwill” and receive the gift of His Peace. So again, while we mourn the loss of the presence of the recently departed Companions, Sir Knights, and Companions of the Temple, we must also rejoice in the sincere knowledge that they have received that Peace promised by our Father, and that they are now in the loving arms of the presence of our Lord. *“Glory be to God in the highest and on earth Peace, good will toward men”.*

Amen

Vesper Service for Grand Officers’ Wives

Opening – Pam Thomas

It is our honor to add to this Vespers Service, for what we believe to be the first time, a time to remember any lady, whose husband has served as a Grand Officer and has gone to her heavenly home this past year. We hope that this will become an annual event but each of us participating today feels that we have been called to participate in this event this year and we hope

that other ladies will feel this calling in the coming years.

During this past year, we lost ladies, who in a bittersweet moment found their wings as an angel and set off on their flight safe into the arms of God, to join those who have gone before them waiting their arrival as they made their way into heaven.

Bible Verse – Susan Ramsey

Genesis 2:18, 22-24

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” ... And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Poem – Susan Alderete

“From your Angel in Heaven” by Ruth Ann Mahaffey

I see tears fall down your face, when your thoughts have turned to me. Just know that I’m in heaven, with my Lord who set me free.

No pain or sadness do I feel, for God is by my side. The beauty here in Heaven is now where I reside.

I know it's hard for you to cope for you can't feel my touch. But every moment, I can see and love you very much.

When you are at your lowest and feel you can't go on, Look towards the heavens, the light will be turned on.

Talk to me, just like you did on Earth when I was there. You see, I'm not so far away, only as far as a prayer.

And when it's time for you to join me, up in Heaven above, It's then that you will realize, the Golden Place of love.

For here there is no sadness, just everlasting light. Someday we will be joined again, when it's time to take your flight.

Prayer – Susan Ramsey

Dear Lord, I pray for those husbands who have experienced such great loss in their lives, especially the loss of a wife. These women were their best friend and lover and their loss in unimaginable. May your Holy Spirit continue to comfort and fill their hearts. Reveal to them the purpose of their spouse's death or the good that can come from their loss. Help them to regain strength and confidence. Draw near to them in personal ways. May you help them cope with the pain from day to day as they experience healing and peace in Jesus' name. Flood their lives with encouragement and love in Jesus' name. Amen.

Bible Verse – Chris Hall

Proverbs 31:10-31 New International Version is an Epilogue and talks about the Wife of Noble Character

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and

he praises her: “Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all.”
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a
woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Honor her for all that her hands have done, and
let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

We believe that all of the woman that we honor
today, truly exemplify all of these virtues.

Poem – Chris Hall

Our lives have all been richly blessed by
knowing each of these women. We acknowledge
the great loss that each of these husbands and
families are feeling and close with this poem to
hopefully add a small amount of comfort to each
of them.

I’m Still Here

Please don’t mourn for me,
I’m still here, though you don’t see.
I’m right by your side each night and day,
And within your heart I long to stay.

My body is gone but I’m always near,
I’m everything you feel, see, or hear.
My spirit is free, but I’ll never depart,
As long as you keep me alive in your heart.

I’ll never wander out of your sight,
I’m the brightest star on a warm summer night.
I’ll never be beyond your reach,
I’m the warm moist sand when you’re at the
beach.

**I'm the colorful leaves when winter comes
round,
And the pure white snow that blankets the
ground.**

**I'm the beautiful flowers of which you're so
fond,
The clear cool water in a quiet pond.
I'm the first bright blossom you'll see in the
spring,
The first warm raindrop that April will bring.**

**I'm the first ray of light when the sun starts to
shine,
And you'll see that the face in the moon is mine.
When you start thinking there's no one to love
you,
Talk to me and I will listen.**

**I'll whisper my answer through the leaves on the
trees,
And you'll feel my presence in the soft summer
breeze.
I'm the hot salty tears that flow when you weep,
And the beautiful dreams that come while you
sleep.**

**I'm the smile you see on a stranger's face.
Just look for me...I'm everywhere.**

Conclusion – Pam Thomas

**We hope that this memorial for your amazing
wives has provided some comfort, especially to
know how much they were loved by so many.**

Each of them remains alive in our hearts and minds, and through us, they live on. We continue to offer our love and support for each of you and your families.

This has truly been our pleasure to honor these wonderful ladies.

Benediction

Gracious Heavenly Father, as we conclude this time of remembrance of Your Saints and prepare to continue the tasks of this coming year that You have set before us, we thank You for guiding those we have honored here today as 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 the gentleness of Your guiding hand 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

IV

CHANGE IN CAPITULAR MASONRY?

GRAND CHAPTER ORATION, MAY 2016

By Jordan Yelinek

In 2017, we will celebrate 300 years since the Premier Grand Lodge was formed in London. Since then, Freemasonry has spread throughout the world. It is a vibrant organization that has stood the test of time, and this longevity has produced a rich history – a history that can inform us as we move forward.

A peculiar phrase appears in the constitutions of the United Grand Lodge of England: "*...pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz. those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.*" A careful reader will note that though three degrees are referenced, four are named. This statement seems to imply that the Holy Royal Arch is an extension of Ancient Craft Masonry, even though it is practiced in another body. How this came to be is an interesting story.

Royal Arch Masonry was debated even before the Premier Grand Lodge, helping fuel the divide between the Ancients and Moderns. The Ancients regarded Royal Arch as an integral part of Freemasonry, and their grand secretary, Laurence Dermott, joined a Royal Arch chapter

in Dublin in 1746. This embrace of the Royal Arch was met with hostility by the Moderns, which considered it “part of Masonry ”with no connection with Grand Lodge.” The Ancients and Moderns had many differences besides Royal Arch; however, reconciling Royal Arch Masonry was difficult. The United Grand Lodge of England was only formed in 1813 once a compromise in the Act of Union included the unique contradictory statement I referenced earlier: “...*pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz. those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.*”

Changes in the structure and ritual of the Royal Arch have existed since the beginning of Capitular Masonry. Although the Dublin Royal Arch chapter to which Dermott belonged originally restricted membership to those who had passed the oriental chair, this requirement was removed in 1832, allowing more brothers to experience the “fourth degree.” In 1835, the Royal Arch ritual was majorly reformed for the first time, and it was revised again in the 20th and 21st centuries. These revisions of the ritual and its practices has allowed for Royal Arch Masonry’s enduring relevance – as does our commitment to providing a meaningful experience for all those who come through our doors.

Royal Arch Masonry is an extension of Ancient Craft Masonry, and in the lodge, our central focus is improving the individual. How

this improvement is performed can be traced through history. The “Regius Manuscript” of the 15th century is a poem of 794 lines on the “constitutions of Masonry.” The poem professes “that the Master take no ‘prentice, unless he has good assurance to dwell seven years with him, as I tell you, his craft to learn that it is profitable.” That is to say, a lodge should only take on a new Entered Apprentice if there is sufficient work for him to do, and if the lodge has the time, effort, and desire to educate him.

Rev. James Anderson expresses this same sentiment in his 1723 “Constitutions of Freemasonry,” professing “No Master should take an Apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for him.” Here, we surmise that Anderson is referring to spiritual employment, asserting that a lodge should only accept an applicant if both the applicant and lodge are invested in improving one another and themselves. A lodge has a higher purpose and obligation when bringing men into our craft than simply having and conferring degrees; in order to retain candidates, it must offer meaningful “work”—the deep personal connection to history, traditions, ritual, and each another that members crave when entering our ranks.

Allan Casalou, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of California, believes that part of DeMolay’s success results from its resolution to be relevant to each decade it serves. The same should follow for Royal Arch Masonry: We must explore how we will engage current and future members in order to ensure our chapters will

thrive. We must listen to others who have stood at this podium, like Ex. Comp. John Cooper III, Past Grand Master of Masons in California, who called, in his 1998 oration, for us to examine Royal Arch Masonry and re-envision what it means to offer a meaningful experience.

In Royal Arch Masonry, we seek to improve ourselves through the connections we have with one another; our ritual is the vehicle and language for this self-improvement. This ritual differs around the globe. In England it stands alone; in Virginia, the chapter and council are one body with a seven-degree system; and here in California we follow a four-degree system. Some of the lessons of this four-degree system are practiced in other bodies. The virtual past master is handled by the actual Past Master Association and the Most Excellent Master by the Allied Masonic Degree of Excellent Master. Is it necessary that a man has passed through these degrees in order to understand the mysteries of the Royal Arch? Likely not.

If our four-degree ritual system has become too ponderous for a single chapter to perform in today's society, perhaps we should follow in the footsteps of our ancient brethren and remodel. Ex. Comp. Cooper suggested abolishing the degrees of virtual Past Master and Most Excellent Master; separating out the Mark; and editing the ritual of the Royal Arch to remove the passing of the veils, as the Supreme Grand Chapter of England did.

Another option is to remove the need to pass through the Mark Master, Virtual Past Master, and Most Excellent Master degrees – conferring them in the manner similar to the Scottish Rite – and to focus the chapter on the conferral of the Royal Arch degree in an edited form, as Ex. Comp. Cooper suggests. These degrees need not be lost, but could become auxiliary, perhaps conferred as staged readings like some auxiliary degrees of the Allied Masonic Degrees.

Finally, I suggest that we practice degrees locally so that a friend in a chapter, rather than a stranger in a festival, can confer degrees upon a candidate. This will allow each man to have the benefit of experiencing his degrees with the friends and brothers with whom he is seeking to have a greater communion as a companion. These are striking changes, but ones whose time, I believe, have come. Adaptive change, after all, is a vibrant aspect the Masonic experience. And, this is just the beginning of our dialogue. There may still be other, better ways for us to encourage local participation and excellence in Masonry.

It is the subject of excellence in Masonry that I would like to conclude with. At the XIV World Conference of Regular Masonic Grand Lodges, David Cameron, past senior grand warden of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, presented his thoughts on the future of Freemasonry. Cameron predicted that the fraternity will likely have fewer members in coming years, but that this decline mirrors a cycle the fraternity has experienced throughout

its history. Freemasonry still has the capacity to experience resurgence in the coming years. But, Cameron suggested, in order to keep Freemasonry vibrant during this decline, and to ensure its future success, Masonic leaders must re-envision the roles of lodges; empower lodges to make decisions that reflect their local communities; encourage excellence in Masonry – which may look different to each brother; and embrace needed changes.

Let us learn from our history, and empower Royal Arch Masonry to be the unique and important part of Masonry summarized by James Anderson in his 1723 constitutions. Let us encourage excellence, chart courses to places we know not, and make darkness light before those who will follow in our footsteps.

V

A FEAR, A PRAYER, AND A FRIEND

GRAND COUNCIL ORATION, MAY 2016

By James Sunseri

Giuseppe Mazzini was a Mason who lived in Italy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He was the intellectual leader of Italian nationalism and Masonry, and a contemporary and friend of Thomas Jefferson. He wrote: “By the law of God, given by Him to humanity, all men are free, are brothers, and are equals.”

Joseph Fort Newton lived in the United States in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries, and was one of the most eloquent Masonic orators and writers of his time. He wrote: “Masonry is the realization of God by the practice of Brotherhood.”

Equality is a *physical* fact, because all humanity, all members and races thereof, are extremely similar in shape, size, appetites, drives, and so on. It is also an *intellectual* fact. Human nature is universal. We all have a common mind and a common system of Truth. The deepest conclusions of the wisest minds are substantially identical. It is, further, a *spiritual* fact. Down below all the religions and creeds that separate, and above all the dogmas that divide, there is an essential oneness of mankind that unites us spiritually. The fundamental faiths and hopes of

humanity are the same, although with the differences in interpretation and expression. The same great truths lead all men of all times and races; the same moral obligations command us to see, hear and obey.

William Penn said: “All devout men, all just men, are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the masks they will recognize one another.” Either God is the Father of all men or he is not. Hitler said “not” – and war, murder and genocide followed. If we accept the Fatherhood of God we must also accept the Brotherhood of Man. And is that not what Masonry teaches?

Newton believed that we should realize that the will of God is for the unity of mankind, and that God’s purpose is Brotherhood. To be a brother is to be an equal, to be always on the level. There are no distinctions in a Masonic Lodge. No one is referred to as “Doctor This,” or “Lawyer That,” or “General the Other.”

Our Brotherhood and our equality are not meant to force us to abandon our individual beliefs. Masonry was made not to divide men, but to unite them. It asks for FRATERNITY, leaving each man free to think his own thoughts and fashion his own system of ultimate Truth. Therefore, all through the ages, Freemasonry has been, and is today, a meeting place of differing minds and a prophecy of the final union of all reverent and devout souls.

All true religions acknowledge and cherish the belief and realization that every human being is an immortal soul, made in the image of the Creator. And in each and every soul God has imprinted the image of his Spirit, so that each soul may grow in grace, in knowledge, in peace, in harmony, in understanding. This pattern is waiting to be awakened by the will of the soul's oneness with God.

Interestingly, those same religions contain accounts of the ends of whole civilizations, the flooding or sinking of continents, the near total obliteration of plant, animal and human life due to the hatred, injustice, tyranny, violence, slavery, pride, and greed of man. And, today, it appears to many that the world has lapsed into a similar and global peril. Will our response to these be to use our Power? Power of money? Power of weapons? Power of this or that?

This has never been God's way. Rather, little by little; Life by Life; Precept by Precept; Here a little, there a little; each thinking of the other fellow. It is that that has kept and will keep the Earth intact!

We have the opportunity to express what justifies us in our relationships with one another, and in the eyes of God, by acting in Mercy, Love, Patience, Long-suffering, Generosity, Caring, Little Deeds of Kindness, the Reality of Hope. These are the fruits of the Spirit. Let us live them and trust in God!

Let us put away our fears and doubts and angers and hates, and join in the simple prayer and pleas to God made by a famous Masonic poet named "Anonymous." He wrote this little epitaph at the end of his weary life, bemoaning what he conceived to be the core of man's inhumanity to man and the prelude to Armageddon. It is a short sentiment:

**ANYTHING, GOD, BUT HATE;
I HAVE KNOWN IT IN MY DAY;
AND THE BEST THAT IT DOES
IS TO SCAR YOUR SOUL
AND EAT YOUR HEART WAY.**

**MAN MUST KNOW MORE THAN HATE
AS THE YEARS GO ROLLING ON,
FOR THE STARS SURVIVE
AND THE SPIRIT SURVIVES.
ONLY MAN DENIES THE DAWN.**

**GOD, IF I HAVE BUT ONE PRAYER
BEFORE THE CLOUD-WRAPPED END,
I'M SICK OF HATE
AND THE WASTE IT MAKES,
LET ME BY MY BROTHER'S FRIEND.**

Let us honor and practice the virtues praised by all the great religions. Let us cherish the goodness and holiness that your own religions have taught you, that led you to lead the noble lives you have each lived, and which encourage us to think well of mankind. All we really have to do is to follow a prayer written by Sam Walter Foss, entitled "A HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD"

**LET ME LIVE IN A HOUSE
BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD
WHERE THE RACE OF MEN GO BY.**

**THE MEN WHO ARE GOOD,
AND THE MEN WHO ARE BAD,
AS GOOD AND BAD AS I**

**I WOULD NOT SIT
IN THE SCORNER'S SEAT,
OR HURL THE CYNIC'S BAN.**

**LET ME LIVE IN A HOUSE
BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD
AND BE A FRIEND TO MAN.**

VI

CALL TO VESPERS, 2016

By Raymond Davies

It is the time of our day to pause and reflect on our Responsibility to our Creator and to His creations; and especially our Companions in this earthly existence.

From Philippians Chapter 2, Verses 5 through 11, we read:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

We now take time in the busyness of our day to approach the throne of Grace for an uplifting of spirit.

Join with us now and let your spirit reflect on the truth of the Salvation gained by the sacrifice of our Lord.

We can feel the Father's call as He bids us to come to His throne and pray.

Invocation

Holy and Merciful Father; we again come before Your throne at Vespers, with our songs of recognition of Your Grace, and prayers of thanksgiving for Your gifts of the Spirit. During this quiet time of reverence we thank You for bringing us together safely under Your caring protection. We come to You to seek Your guidance as we offer the use of our hearts and minds to express the glories of Your Light. May our actions be acceptable offerings in Your sight. Gracious and merciful Father, Our own frailties are well known to us, so we approach Your Presence with the sure 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 as we labor to reach others with the message of Your grace. Help us to pray for those whose burdens may be even heavier than our own. May we serve You with acts of service and caring for all Your children that we might contact. It is by those actions that we may know we are followers of Christ, and it is in His name and from His teaching that we now pray together:

Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in 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

Pastoral Prayer

Holy and Merciful Creator, in the reverent silence of this time, may the quiet whispers of Your word enter our ears so that the inspiration of Your divine presence will influence all that we do and bring Glory to You. May our thoughts and feelings be worthy of Your most Holy Presence. We claim your gift of salvation as followers of and laborers for Jesus Christ, Your Son; and with a knowing gratitude to our Savior, we are always aware of how far away from You we would be without him, and how close to You He has brought us as we faithfully study and follow His guidance. Lord of us all, Your words remind us often that we have a responsibility to reach others with the message of Your grace. We pray also for those whose burdens may be even greater than our own. Help us to bring to them a glimpse of the touch of Your Glory in our lives that it makes those burdens bearable. May we serve You with acts of caring for all Your children that we may contact. For these things Lord, we seek Your divine blessing, and ask for that divine inspiration that will help us to worship You in the beauty of Holiness, through

Your gift of Grace, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. *Amen.*

Old Testament Scripture

Isaiah Chapter 60 Verses 1 through 6

**Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.**

**²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.**

**³The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

**⁴“Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be nursed at your side.**

**⁵Then you shall see and become radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned
to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.**

**⁶The multitude of camels shall cover your land,
the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.**

In Memoriam

While this afternoon we pause to remember all Sir Knights who passed through the final veil this past year, we especially note those whose labors while here have left deep footprints for us to follow as we strive to serve our Savior:

Sir Knight Casey William Norris KYGCH

**Past Right Eminent Grand Commander - Grand Commandery - Knights Templar of California
Born June 12, 1937 in North Carolina
Entered the Supreme Asylum on October 27, 2015**

Sir Knight James McCrorry Willson Jr. GCT

**Right Eminent Grand Treasurer – Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
Most Eminent Honorary Past Grand Master - Grand Encampment of Knights Templar
Past Right Eminent Grand Commander - Grand Commandery - Knights Templar of Texas
Most Illustrious Past Grand Master – Grand Council of Royal and Select Master of Texas
Most Illustrious Past Grand High Priest – Grand Council of Royal Arch Masons of Texas
Most Worshipful Past Grand Master of Texas Masons
Born November 30, 1921 – Hale Center, Texas
Entered the Supreme Asylum on April 9, 2016**

Sir Knight Richard Paul Simpfer KYGCH

**Past Right Eminent Grand Commander - Grand
Commandery - Knights Templar of Nevada
Past Eminent Commander Golden West
Commandery No. 43 of California
Born October 29, 1922 in Ohio -- Entered the
Supreme Asylum on May 11, 2016**

**New Testament Scripture
Mathew 5: Verses 11 - 16**

¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Vespers Message
Sunday, May 22, 2016

Is Our Light Shining?

The responsibility given by the Lord to His disciples during His Sermon On The Mount is very clear. And by the term “disciples” I am not just referring to the group close to Him that day. These instructions are in place for all His disciples, including us.

And we here have a legacy bequeathed to us by those who have labored in this vineyard before us.

The Sermon On The Mount was given at a time when Jesus was reaching a point of wide recognition of His ministry. Crowds were beginning to follow Him from place to place to observe His wondrous healings and to hear the messages He put forth giving greater hope in their lives.

In the gospel of Mathew, at the closing of Chapter 4, Verse 24 it is recorded “And His fame went throughout all Syria.....,” and further in Verse 25 “And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.” Our Savior’s light was shining brightly everywhere He went.

Now, the great thing about the teachings of our Lord is not just the truth of His words; the greatness of those teachings is that when He

gives us an instruction of what to do, it always includes the “how” to do it, and the “why” to do it -- sometimes after the instruction, and even sometimes before.

He taught in the 5th Chapter of Mathew, Verse 16,: “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*” But in verses of the beginning of that Chapter he told us what our shining light should consist of and what we should display to those around us for them to see the light. In the present time, we recognize these instructions as the Beatitudes. And the message from them is extremely profound.

They begin with the phrase “Blessed are.....” followed by a human condition. “poor in spirit; they that mourn; the meek; seekers of righteousness; merciful; peacemakers; the persecuted”. These are conditions we all have or will experience in our lives. And the first thing to notice is that as we experience these conditions, we are already blest by the Father. We don’t have to ask for an increase in our allowance, the gift is built in if we bear our burdens in faith and perform our civil acts for those around us in that same Faith. And each of the Beatitudes all end with the “how” we are being Blessed. We are given the compensation before we even punch the time clock, and if we have paid attention, we already know what it is.

In our theme Verse 16, He says we are to let the world around us see our conditions, and how we are blessed by experiencing them, so that all

around us may understand the goodness of the Father.

The Companions, Sir Knights, and marital Companions of the Companions and Sir Knights we remember this day all lived their lives in full view of the world around them. They understood their duty to glorify our Father by displaying His blessings in their lives. They displayed the presence of the Savior in their heart. They lived as faithful examples of His promises. Much of what we honor in this Fraternity, and in this Order in particular, is the esteemed recognition of our predecessors' actions. They let their light shine everywhere they went.

How are we doing with that? Are we bright lights on a hill? Or is our light under a bushel with the edge slightly lifted to display some of the light? We need to examine that question in the context of our entire daily life. Not just in the context of our Chapter, Council, or Commandery.

Do the people we associate with daily know that we are members of this Order? Do they even know that we are Freemasons, Companions, and Knights Templar? Do the people we congregate with in our worship services know how fervent we are in the promotion of Christianity? Do they understand that beyond our verbal support, that we have pledged our ultimate physical support to Christianity? Do our Brethren in our lodges and the other concordant bodies see us as separate and apart, or are we among them enough to cause them to be motivated to join with us in our

labors as we have joined in theirs? As it says in the 14th verse of the 5th Chapter of Mathew: “A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” Our associates will only be as fervent with our Orders if we are fervent with them and they are able to see our light shine.

Our predecessors understood this. These who we focus on this afternoon. These examples of lives being lived among people of the world and according to the Lord’s teachings. They have been examples of how we should live our lives. Not hidden away to only be brought out one evening a week, but with the light switch turned on all the time.

In Chapter 7, Verse 24, our Lord said: “Therefore whosoever hear these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man” May we as Christian Knights emulate those who we honor today, and be veritable beacons for our Lord.

Amen

Vesper Service for Grand Officer’s Wives

Benediction

As we separate to prepare for our evening refreshment and fellowship, may the ideas presented in this service continue to influence our lives so that we may continue to be bright shining examples of the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Amen

Opening – Pam Thomas

It is once again our honor to add to this Vespers Service, a time to remember any lady, whose husband is a member of the York Rite, as well as a personal remembrance for any lady whose husband has served as a Grand Officer and has gone to her heavenly home this past year. In a bittersweet moment these ladies found their wings as angels and set off on their flight, safe into the arms of God to join those who have gone before them waiting their arrival as they made their way into heaven.

Bible Verse – Susan Ramsey
Genesis 2:18, 22-24

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” ... And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Poem – Chris Hall

“From your Angel in Heaven” by Ruth Ann Mahaffey

I see tears fall down your face, when your thoughts have turned to me. Just know that I’m in heaven, with my Lord who set me free.

No pain or sadness do I feel, for God is by my side. The beauty here in Heaven is now where I reside.

I know it's hard for you to cope for you can't feel my touch. But every moment, I can see and love you very much.

When you are at your lowest and feel you can't go on, Look towards the heavens, the light will be turned on.

Talk to me, just like you did on Earth when I was there. You see, I'm not so far away, only as far as a prayer.

And when it's time for you to join me, up in Heaven above, It's then that you will realize, the Golden Place of love.

For here there is no sadness, just everlasting light. Someday we will be joined again, when it's time to take your flight.

Prayer and Conclusion –Pam Thomas

Bless those who mourn, eternal God, with the comfort of your love that they may face each new day hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that has been given. May their memories become joyful, their days enriched with friendship, and their lives encircled by your love. Amen

To all of the men who have lost their wives this year, we hope that this small memorial for your wonderful wives has provided some comfort, especially to know how much they were loved by so many. Each of them remains alive in our hearts and minds, and through us, they live on. We continue to offer our love and support for each of you and your families. Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal. May the love of each of these women leave a memory in all of us forever.

Benediction

As we separate to prepare for our evening refreshment and fellowship, may the ideas presented in this service continue to influence our lives so that we continue to be bright shining examples of the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Amen

VII

FAMILY, VALUES, TRADITION

GRAND CHAPTER ORATION, MAY 2017

By David Rathgeber

Good Morning. Our Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Rick Baskin, made the centerpiece of his year the three virtues: Family, Values, and Tradition. I would like to take a moment to discuss these, and in particular to relate them to us as Royal Arch Masons. I hope in doing so I will give our Royal Arch Masons something to think about, and that I will help our friends and families know why we find Royal Arch rewarding and why I hope you will continue to support your Royal Arch Mason's participation in the Chapter. I will begin by discussing each of these virtues individually, and then move to discussing them as a group. Finally, I will attempt to demonstrate how we as Royal Arch Masons can, and perhaps should, use them moving forward.

FAMILY

Those who know me, will understand that I am a bit of an academic. So you will forgive me if I begin my remarks on each virtue with a definition or two. So, how do we define family? In my research I found some interesting definitions; not the least of which is "a unit of the Mafia or Cosa Nostra operating in one area

under a local leader.” (dictionary.com)
Admittedly, there are some who are not fans of the Fraternity who might see us in that light, but I do not think that definition is appropriate for our discussion. Two definitions that appear more germane for our consideration are: a group of individuals living under one roof usually under one head; and a group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation. (merriam-webster.com)

The first of our germane definitions defines what is known as the traditional family. It may consist of a set of parents raising children, a single parent with children, or a couple without children. We won't discuss who the head of the family is! Certainly in today's American society the make-up of the traditional family may be in flux, but the concept is not. This is an important concept in that we, as humans, have an instinctual reaction to protect, aid, support and prioritize the needs of our “family” above those of any others. The care and protection of our families is oftentimes the driving force behind our desires to better ourselves, and to force ourselves to behave in appropriate ways. Certainly, any concept taken to extremes can be harmful, but in the majority of instances the love and care we display and have for our family unit drives us to be better people than we might otherwise be.

An important note about this definition to Masons is the fact that we are taught that, as believers in a Supreme Being, we should consider the entire human species as one family –

with the same parent and inhabiting the same home or world. By this I do not believe the Fraternity is teaching that complete strangers should have the same priority to us as our traditional family, but rather that we should consider their needs and cares as important to us.

The second definition of Family, a group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation, is almost the very definition of a Fraternity. Even our language, by which we call each other “brother” harkens to the idea of Family. This is not by accident; for by considering our Fraternal brothers as family, we see brethren who are *not* necessarily friends providing aid and support to each other.

Thus you can see why the concept of “Family” is an important virtue to us as Royal Arch Masons.

VALUES

I am particularly fond of the definition of values found in Merriam-Webster; “something (as a principle or quality) found intrinsically desirable.” Of note is that “intrinsically” is defined as “the essential nature or constitution of a thing.” Said in other words -- values are those things that are part of the nature of something that we all find desirable. To us, that “something” is Royal Arch Masonry. This of course begs the question; what are the parts of the nature of Royal Arch Masonry that we all find – or at least should find - desirable?

To me, first and foremost, is the concept of man as a spiritual being; which we find taught in Blue Lodge Masonry, but certainly is reinforced and emphasized in the York Rite and Royal Arch. Of course we learn in the Blue Lodge that unless we believe in a Creator, we cannot ever truly be a Mason. As a Royal Arch Mason we are consistently taught the importance of building our own personal Temple to the Supreme Being. Further, we are taught that this is not always an easy task; that our efforts may be dangerous, that they may meet with resistance, that the journey may be long and tiresome. Yet, while always remembering that we must rely on God, we know He has given us the tools we need and we are ultimately responsible for our own building. We are clearly taught that we should maintain a dogged determination to see the effort through to the end of our journey.

Another value of Royal Arch Masonry is duty. We are taught that in the work of building our lives and our spiritual temples, that we should do so because it is the right thing to do and because it should be the foundation of our belief system. We should never expect to collect an earthly fee or some sort of reward for these labors. A Royal Arch Mason should do that which is right, help his brethren in their efforts, and remember that it is the will of God that we should do so. That in and of itself, is our reward.

A third value is the importance of doing our “best work” and not taking credit for the work of others. At the very beginning of our experience in Capitular Masonry (which for our

friends is another name for the Chapter Degrees, of which Royal Arch Masonry is the ultimate) we are taught the danger of trying to pass off someone else's work as our own. We learn that such chicanery will be found out, and that the consequences can have repercussions beyond only ourselves and can be felt far and wide. We learn that since we are working because it is our duty and is right to do so, that we should always present our best work for inspection; that is, we should never be satisfied with doing something to a degree below our capabilities.

The last value I wish to discuss is sharing and seeking knowledge; in Freemasonry, as in many groups and societies, this is referred to as seeking light. It is no secret that all of the Degrees of Freemasonry are concerned with increasing knowledge and enlightenment, as well as with sharing that knowledge with those Brethren who are less informed. In the Royal Arch Degrees, we are continually reminded of the increase of knowledge – particularly spiritual – with references to light and heat. We cannot succeed in our efforts to build our Spiritual Lives and live up to our duty if we stay stagnant in our knowledge of the Creator and his Creation – as well as our place in it. It is our duty to increase our knowledge and awareness.

TRADITION

Tradition is more than simply doing things in a certain manner “because we’ve always done it that way.” Tradition is defined as “the transmission of customs or beliefs from

generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way.” (Oxford Dictionaries) As this year we celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the founding of the First Grand Lodge of Masons, it is evident how much Masons pride themselves on our traditions. It is through our rituals and allegorical “working tools” by which we pass on our customs. Our history of caring for each other, watching out for each other’s families, how we greet each other, how we talk to each other, how we interact and even how we look at the world and our role in it, all have a profound effect on our lives and aid in helping us be better men. All of these are introduced, explained, codified, and reinforced through our ritual and our meetings. Our ritual and meeting traditions are how we learn who we are, and perhaps more importantly, who we should be.

THE THREE VIRTUES

Now that we have discussed each of the virtues individually, let us consider them as a group. If we were to attempt to prioritize them, does one take precedence over the other two? I propose that the most vital of the three is Tradition. On the face of it, that doesn’t make much sense. How can tradition be more important than family? Why would ritual and going to meetings, be more important than our values? Hear me out on this.

While we all have an instinctual attachment to our families, the values and lessons of Masonry in general, and the Royal Arch in particular, help us to be better men and reinforce, if not

improve, the manner in which we treat our families. Further, the values and lessons of Royal Arch reinforce our duty to support our extended family, the entire species of humankind. Our Royal Arch values of spiritual growth, duty, work and gaining and sharing knowledge are absolutely critical to our ability to grow as men and improve our lives and the lives of those around us.

How then can it be that our Traditions are the most vital of these virtues? It is by our Traditions that we learn our values, which in turn improve our familial relationships. Without our Traditions we would lose our customs, and thus our values, impacting our relationships with our immediate and extended families.

CONCLUSIONS

I'd like to leave you with a few final thoughts to consider.

If you are a Royal Arch Mason, you cannot be familiar with our Traditions and learn and internalize our values if you do not participate. Each of us should participate in our stated convocations and our Degree productions to the maximum extent possible; even if that means simply being a sideliner. If you are a leader of a Chapter, it is imperative that you ensure no meeting closes without there being a lesson given on our values.

If you are a family member of a Royal Arch Mason, I hope you can see the value of your

Royal Arch Mason participating in our assemblies – not only to him, but to you and your entire family. I know that in my own case my wife has said to me; “don’t you have a meeting tonight, I like you better after you go to a meeting.” I ask you to not only support your Royal Arch Mason’s participation, but to encourage it.

If many of our values are echoed in the first three degrees, why participate in Royal Arch Masonry in addition to Blue Lodge? Many of our Family members may not know that at one time the Royal Arch Degree was reserved only for Past Masters of Blue Lodges. This rule is so important, that we now include a Degree called the Past Master’s Degree simply to ensure the rule is followed. Here is why that is important. We refer to Sitting and to Past Masters as “Master” for a reason. It is not because we define Master as “someone who has people working for him, especially servants or slaves”; but rather because we expect him to be “a skilled practitioner of a particular art or activity, having or showing very great skill or proficiency.”

As Royal Arch Masons we do not have Entered Apprentice Masons or Fellowcraft Masons in our membership. In fact, not only do we restrict our membership to Master Masons, but we expect, or at least should expect, each of our members to show great skill and proficiency in our Traditions and Values. That is, we hold our members to the highest standards. We strive to practice our values and treat our families

accordingly. By participating in Royal Arch Masonry, we are learning more about our values and how to implement them, and we are around only those who are already skilled Masters of the craft and who will hold each other accountable to that level.

Finally, to my Royal Arch Companions, understand the value of our craft and our Chapters to you and your families; rededicate yourselves to participation and study – strive to always show you live our traditions and values, and as a consequence how much your immediate and extended family means to you. To our family members, encourage your Royal Arch Mason to participate, not just for his sake but for yours. Encourage him to demonstrate the values espoused by us as Royal Arch Masons. In so doing, you will be helping him be a better man, husband, father and citizen; and you will reap the benefits.

Thanks for listening, and may God grant His Blessing on each of us and on our Craft.

VIII

CONNECTING

GRAND COUNCIL ORATION, MAY 2017

By Jordan Yelinek

As Masons, we are taught that one of the purposes of our Craft is to connect those who might have otherwise remained at a perpetual distance.

A recent Department of Labor study indicated that by 2020, 40% of Americans will work from home. That, taken together with another study indicating that we, as a people, feel like we have less time to spend with our communities, families and friends than ever before, helps paint an interesting picture of the future of American society.

We are social creatures by design. The meaningful interactions we have with colleagues and friends help make us to be better rounded people.

Given the shift in the American workplace, what does that mean for us as a people in losing those regular interpersonal interactions? What does that mean for us as an organization, and other social and fraternal organizations?

Today we can have hundreds to

thousands of friends on social media, but the substance of the relationship revolves around photos of children, pets and food. Are those true friendships?

Today the average Mason in California is 60 years old and has been a member of our Craft for 25 years. In the last year, some 2,000 men expressed their interest in our Fraternity – and in the past five years we have seen a marked drift in the demographics of those men who are interested in being our Brothers. Their average age is 36 – and if we were to break the past five years of applicants into generations, some 4,500 millennials have joined the fraternity in California, nearly as many as the baby-boomers and Gen Xers combined.

Much is made of asking and positing what the Fraternity needs to change itself into the best to accommodate those men. It’s a valid question – but one with an interesting discovery. All five generations that are joining our fraternity today (Millennials, Baby boomers, Gen Xers, the Greatest generation and the Centennials (those born after 1996)) are all looking for the same thing from our fraternity at its core.

They are seeking three things:

- 1. To build true friendships;**
- 2. To learn and improve themselves;**
- and,**
- 3. To make an impact.**

Building true friendships that can reach

across the chasms, connecting us with those who might have otherwise remained at a perpetual distance. In this room, there are likely some of your closest friends – men you would have never known without the benefit of Freemasonry.

There are many organizations in the world that promise self-improvement -- Churches, civic organizations, and book clubs among them. What Masonry offers is an organization that reaches across all common denominators and finds men with like values and helps us to grow by giving us opportunities to challenge ourselves and surround ourselves with men who we look up to and aspire to emulate – all while giving us a common language, in the form of our rituals and customs to express those sentiments.

On the topic of making an Impact, there is the Big “I” Impact – the impact of being something greater than ourselves and helping to make the world a better place through our combined efforts. Efforts like the Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation, the Scottish Rite Language Clinics, Shrine Hospitals or our Masonic Homes in Covina and Union City. There is also the little “i” impact -- the impact that I make, locally. If Masonry promises us that we learn and improve ourselves through opportunities to grow and lead with like-minded individuals, I need to feel like my time, effort and energy make an impact. That if I am not there, I am missed, that together we are all achieving something greater than we could do individually – but that the individual is the important aspect.

When we know that these three things are what men are looking for, regardless of age or home town, all across the Masonic fraternity, are we preparing ourselves to hold ourselves to that standard?

An average man after joining the fraternity will decide if he is going to remain in his Lodge after just 2.3 meetings. That's a markedly small number, but it has nothing to do with the 2.3 meetings that helps determine if he is going to remain – it's the relationships he has built within and across the Lodge before then. What determines his success in the Lodge better than any other predictor is if he feels that he has built friendships within the organization before he becomes a member. This is true in our Lodges, and it's true in our Councils.

Member prospecting is at the core of our fraternity. Relationship building is at the core of our fraternity. We are a group of men who are dedicated to the personal relationship and to personal growth so that we can improve ourselves, and in doing so, improve our communities.

That said, it takes time to really get to know someone and develop a personal relationship. Think about your closest friends, and how long it took to truly develop that relationship. We should push ourselves to hold true to the maxim taught to us in the Entered Apprentice degree when we were asked how we gained admission into a Lodge, responding that

it was by a friend who later we discovered to be a Brother. A friend. Not an acquaintance. Someone that we felt a deep connection with and sought to deepen that connection.

These are not new thoughts. The “Regius Manuscript” of the 15th century is a poem of 794 lines on the “constitutions of Masonry.” The poem professes “that the Master take no ‘prentice, unless he has good assurance to dwell seven years with him, as I tell you, his craft to learn that it is profitable.” That is to say, a lodge should only take on a new Entered Apprentice if there is sufficient work for him to do, and if the lodge has the time, effort, and desire to educate him.

Rev. James Anderson expresses this same sentiment in his 1723 “Constitutions of Freemasonry,” professing “No Master should take an Apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for him.” Here, we surmise that Anderson is referring to spiritual employment, asserting that a lodge should only accept an applicant if both the applicant and lodge are invested in improving one another and themselves. A lodge has a higher purpose and obligation when bringing men into our craft than simply having and conferring degrees; in order to retain candidates, it must offer meaningful “work” – the deep personal connection to history, traditions, ritual, and each other that men crave when entering our ranks.

We have to apply ourselves to preparing the fraternity to make profound differences in

our communities by making profound differences in the lives of men who are coming to our door.

In California, there are some 55,000 Masons. This year the United Grand Lodge of England is celebrating its 300th anniversary and boasts some 225,000 Masons, both in England and around the globe in their Provincial Grand Lodges.

The City of London alone has 55,000 Masons, the same as the state of California. Strikingly though, in California we have some 335 Lodges, while the City of London there are 1,500 Lodges, so the average size of a Lodge in California is 170, the average size in London is 27.

In California there 35 Councils, how many members are in your Council?

The average size of a Council is 89 – but the better question is, how many show up?

For Lodges the average attendance in California, and anywhere in the world that I have spoken to Masons, is a range between 15-50 with an average of 30.

There is something that tells us that with so consistent a number – aligning with the size of a Lodge in London where they have some 80% attendance, to a Lodge in California with some 10-15% attendance – and the average size of a Lodge outside of North America of 34 – tells us

that there is some finite amount of meaningful “work” in a Lodge. A finite amount of ability for me to feel like I am making the little “i” impact – that me being there is going to materially change the culture of the Council – that me being there materially contributes to the whole. When I don’t feel like me being there contributes, it’s easy for me to miss a meeting, and then two, and then just not show up any more.

We have all conferred degrees on candidates that we have never seen again.

Were we giving them the things that they were looking for when they came to us? Did we help them in building real friendships, learn and improve themselves and make an impact?

Our Councils need to be large enough to be efficient and small enough to be personal.

With a daunting 140 Masons on average in each Lodge, and some 60 Companions in each Council that we do not regularly see, it can feel like a Sisyphean task to move a needle back towards those three desires that men come to us with when they join. That said, here are a few small things that we can do to help push the boulder back up hill, and get it to stay.

We should expect attendance and regrets at our meetings. If we were to plan on having lunch together today and I didn’t show up, you would likely be aggravated and then concerned about why I was not there. Though, if I had told you I was running late, or if I needed to miss our

lunch, that would be far preferable to standing you up. Why should our time together as Companions be any different? Even in our largest Councils, there is a core of men who attend. Start there. Have a list of them, and keep track of who is coming, who has given their regrets and who was absent. Add new candidates to the list. Create a new culture around accountability and reliability.

Call our Companions who were absent and didn't give their regrets. Sometimes it will be forgetfulness – but it's still nice to know that you were thought of. Other times, it could be that they were in a bind and didn't think that they should call and bother anyone else – when they really needed our help.

Find meaningful “work” for all Companions in your Council. Help them to see how they are making the little “i” impact and how we all are making the big “I” Impact.

Freemasonry is a unique organization. It brings us up to the line where the past and the present meet, and we can blur that line if we only take the moment to listen.

Let's listen, together, and help connect those who might have otherwise remained at a perpetual distance.

IX

CALL TO VESPERS, 2017

By Raymond Davies

By the Grace of our Creator, we have been given one more day to experience this world of His creation for all its wonders.

It is the evening of that day.

Let us pause and reflect on the love of our Creator for us and all His creation.

And let us especially pause to reflect on those who He gave to us to be our Companions and mentors while in this earthly existence.

From Psalm 141, we affirm our desire to offer our prayers of thanksgiving when 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.***

We now take time from the busyness of our day, and with a quietness of reverence, to approach the throne of Grace for an uplifting of our spirits, and for an honoring of those recently departed from our presence.

Join with us now as we allow our minds to reflect on the truth of the Love of our Father and the Salvation gained by the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior.

We can feel the Father's call for this vespers as He bids us to come to His throne and pray.

Invocation

Holy and Merciful Father; we now come before Your throne at Vespers, with praises and thanksgiving for Your Saving Grace. We pray for the sustaining gifts of Your Spirit. We thank You for bringing us together safely under Your caring protection. We seek Your guidance as we devote our hearts, minds, and voices to the expressing of our gratitude for the glories of Your Everlasting Light. May our actions be acceptable offerings unto You.

Gracious and caring Father, we are well aware of our own limitations; so we approach Your Presence with the sure faith that Your Grace will strengthen us to bear the burdens that we must face while in this world.

Father, Your sacred word reminds us that it is important to be concerned with the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Strengthen us as we labor to reach those in need with the message of Your Grace. May we always seek to serve the needs of those whose burdens are even heavier than our own. May we serve You with acts of service and caring for all Your children that we might contact. It is by those actions that we may know we are followers of Christ, and it is in His name and from His instruction for all His disciples that we now pray together:

Our Father, Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in 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

Pastoral Prayer

Holy and Merciful Creator, in the reverent atmosphere of this service, may the inspiring thoughts of Your divine scripture fill our minds so that the sensing of Your divine presence will influence all that we do and bring Glory to You. May our thoughts and feelings be worthy of Your Holy Presence. We claim your gift of Grace as followers and laborers for Your Son Jesus Christ; and with a knowing gratitude to our Savior, we are very much aware of how far away from You we would be without Him, and how close to You He has brought us. Father of us all, Your scriptures remind us that we have a responsibility to reach others with the message of Your gift of Grace. We pray for those whose burdens may be even greater than our own. May a glimpse of the benefit of the touch of Your Glory in our lives inspire them to make those burdens bearable. May we serve You with acts of caring for all Your children. For these things Lord, we seek Your divine blessing, and ask for that divine inspiration that will help us to worship You in the beauty of Holiness, through

Your gift of Grace, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

Old Testament Scripture

Proverbs Chapter 4 Verses 1 through 10

**Listen, children, to a father's instruction,
and pay attention so that you may gain
discernment.**

**Because I give you good instruction,
do not forsake my teaching.**

**When I was a son to my father,
a tender only child before my mother,
he taught me, and he said to me:**

**“Let your heart lay hold of my words;
keep my commands so that you will live.
Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding;
do not forget and do not turn aside from the
words I speak.**

**Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;
love her, and she will guard you.**

**Wisdom is supreme—so acquire wisdom,
and whatever you acquire, acquire
understanding!**

**Esteem her highly and she will exalt you;
she will honor you if you embrace her.
She will place a fair garland on your head;
she will bestow a beautiful crown on you.”**

**Listen, my child, and accept my words,
so that the years of your life will be many.**

In Memoriam

**While we pause this afternoon to remember all
Sir Knights who crossed through the final veil
this past year, we especially note those whose
labors while with us have left deep footprints for
us to follow as we strive to serve our Savior:**

**Most Eminent Sir Knight
Ned Eugene Dull KYGCH
Past Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand
Commandery of Knights Templar of the United
States of America
Past Grand Commander of the Grand
Commandery of Ohio
Born October 18, 1923 in Ohio City, Ohio
Entered the Supreme Asylum on January 11,
2017**

**Most Excellent Companion
Gordon Campbell Alexander KYGCH
Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California
Born December 10, 1941 in Missouri
Entered the Supreme Asylum on August 10,
2016**

**Most Illustrious Companion
Paul Eugene McCleary
Past Illustrious Grand Master of Cryptic Masons
in California
Born December 31, 1931 in Marshall, Illinois
Entered the Supreme Asylum on November 11,
2016**

Most Illustrious Companion
Jose Assa Fiss KYGCH
Past Illustrious Grand Master of Cryptic Masons
in California
Born June 16, 1936 in Banes, Cuba
Entered the Supreme Asylum on November 20,
2016

Most Excellent Companion
Xavier Angelo "Sam" Pitassi KYGCH
Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California
Born August 14, 1942 in Illinois
Entered the Supreme Asylum on February 12,
2017

Most Excellent Companion
Herbert Eugene Neely
Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California
Born November 18, 1923 in Oklahoma
Entered the Supreme Asylum on April 29, 2017

Excellent Companion
Randy Wayne Billingsley
2016-17 Grand Chaplain in the North
Royal Arch Masons in California
Born May 10, 1958 in Tennessee
Entered the Supreme Asylum on May 8, 2017

New Testament Scripture

Second Thessalonians, Chapter 2: Verses 13 - 17

But we are bound to give thanks every way to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.

Vespers Message
Sunday, May 21, 2017
Stand Fast and Hold the Traditions

The inspiring scripture guiding this most recent Commandery year has been the Fifteenth Verse of the Second Chapter of the Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

That is a two part instruction with some surprising content. It begins with an instruction that we are to be firm in what we believe. Not wavering. Not wishy-washy. Knowing who we are, knowing what we stand for, and standing fast for the instructions of our Savior as expressed by the ideals of our Orders.

The second part of the instruction continues by identifying and expanding on what the important traditions are. Those taught by direct instruction or by correspondence. Our Savior made a distinction about the difference of traditions given us by our Holy Father and those developed by mankind, when in the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 7, Verse 8, he stated to the scribes and Pharisees:

“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

As members of our Orders, and as members of an old-line fraternity we are facing a daunting period of time. But, since we expect to prevail in the long term, it is necessary for us to understand and emulate those who were here before us, to stand fast and maintain our beliefs; our commitments; and the appropriate actions that are befitting those beliefs and commitments. It is our task hold fast to the traditions of our Orders as we have been taught.

When faced with a difficult task, it is always a problem to maintain focus and dedication. But maintaining focus and dedication during difficult times is imperative if success is expected.

We must be as dedicated to our task as those whom we are honoring this afternoon, those who were our friends and mentors.

We know that the traditions of our Orders fulfill the instruction of the second part of Thessalonians 2:15, they are traditions we: *“have been taught, whether by word, or by our epistle.”* They are traditions of our Faith, they are the traditions of our Holy Father, the traditions of our Savior.

The Sir Knights we honor this afternoon lived lives standing fast and holding tradition. They are examples of how we should live our lives. Not hidden away to be brought out and applied only one evening a week, but with the switch turned on all the time.

What traditions are we talking about? What are these guideposts that those we are honoring today dedicated their lives to observing and promoting? Some are traditions we have been taught from the Given Word, which are the Scriptures, the very traditions received directly from our Creator; then there are traditions we have received in the Gospels from the living Word, our Saviour; and finally, there are the traditions that are explanations as relayed by the Apostles and expressed in the several epistles recorded in scripture. In the First General Epistle of the Apostle Peter, in the Fifth Chapter, Twelfth Verse, we find:

“With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you, and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.”

The Companions and Sir Knights we honor today stood fast and held the traditions of the Commandments. They honored our Holy Father and sought his guidance faithfully in their daily lives. They held dear their families and respected their parents. They were considerate of their fellow citizens and civically responsible in their communities.

This was not always an easy path, and it likely never will be. Much of the history of the past half century contains significant amounts of expression that there are no set rules. That everything is revisable based on the perception and rationalization of each individual; that all rules, laws, and regulations should be revised to

reflect these changing opinions; and that all accountability should be imposed in accordance with input of the errant individual's opinion. This translates to a situation where much of society is now acting as though there are no rules. That we no longer have any need of being civil or considerate of one another. That another person's safety is not our concern. That reaching out and helping the less fortunate is either a sign of weakness or is the responsibility of others in the community that the majority point to as being better able.

But in our ranks there were and are those who make the pathway of a worthwhile life clearer. Those we honor today paid heed to the words of our Savior that humbleness and humility be reflected in praying. They paid heed to the words of Jesus pointing to the responsibility of being persons that displayed the truth given to us from the beginning, that we love one another as He loves us.

They listened to the instructions in the epistles that believers be supportive and helpful of one another.

And they lived the traditions of our Orders. They provided funds for society's needs; they provided sustenance to those lacking nourishment; they saw to it that those bare to the elements were furnished covering and shelter; they gave service to those in medical facilities; they donated their time to their communities; and they conducted their lives and occupations

honestly and fairly. They stood fast and held the traditions they had been taught.

May we, as Companions and Christian Knights respectfully remember those who mentored us - and emulate them, standing fast and holding the traditions of our Orders, the commandments of our Creator, and the loving instructions of our Lord and Savior.

Amen

X

THE RITE CHOICE

RESEARCH CHAPTER, MAY 2017

By Phil Hardiman

Thanks for the chance to address you all on the general topic of the Rites. I'd like to chat with you a bit about how the Rites relate to Craft Masonry, and, in the end, help you make the Right Choice (pun intended). I'd like to try to describe if, and how, these Rites compare, and what the effect on you personally is depending on the path you choose to follow: the Craft/York path or the Craft/Scottish path.

But first, a survey: Raise your hands: How many are members of just the Scottish Rite? How many just the York Rite? And how many of you are members of both the Scottish Rite and York Rite? How many of you, who are members of both Rites, first joined the Scottish Rite?

Well I too, (as most of you, probably), joined the Scottish Rite first, back in November 1979. And it had a dramatic, life-changing effect on me, in a way, I suppose, that the Craft Degrees *should* have, but didn't. I really didn't comprehend the first three Degrees, except in their outward, or external, or exoteric sense – that is, their moral and ethical teachings. I didn't get the essential point of all Masonic ritual until the 14th Degree of the Scottish Rite, in the Chamber of

Reflection. It was then that I got the point of *Reverence* with which we are charged in the First Degree: “In it (the VSL) you will learn the important duties which you owe to God ... by never mentioning His name but with that awe and reverence which are due from the creature to his Creator...”.

It grieves me much, then, that the Scottish Rite, in its latest revisions, has removed the Chamber of Reflection from the 14th Degree! The Good News is that, in the Valley of Sacramento at least, it will be restored. Hence, future candidates will again be challenged NOT to profane the Name of Deity: “Let us ask you,” says the Venerable Master, “consider and let your conscience answer. Should a man, believing in God use His Sacred Name as a byword, or as a prefix to a curse? NEVER! ...Promise us that you will do your best, never to utter His Holy name, save with reverence and humility.”

The importance of *Reverence* as a key Masonic concept is also taught in the Royal Arch Degree of the York Rite, where the primary achievement of the candidates is the recovery of the ancient Master Mason’s Word, and whose motto is “Holiness to the Lord.” In the Royal Arch Lecture, the emblem of emblems of a Royal Arch Mason, the Triple Tau in a Triangle within a Circle, is described as “signifying, ..., the Sacred Name, the Author of eternal life;” and the candidate class is reminded of the teachings of the Second Degree: “that true education renders the mind capable of accepting, and holding in

reverence, the sacred name of Deity.” Essentially, the same Symbol is shown, depicted in a slightly different form, on the Tracing Board in the center of the Encampment of the 32nd Degree – a Cross within a Circle within an Equilateral Triangle.

So I offer this concept of *Reverence* as the major and primary commonality shared by Craft Masonry, the York Rite, and the Scottish Rite. There are others, of course, especially the overarching truth that they are all “... dedicated to the benefit of society through the improvement of the individual. By morality lessons and peer association, they promote behaviors which civilize the man and strengthen his society.” I’m quoting J. Howard Duncan, a red hat from Kansas! (J. Howard Duncan, 32, K.C.C.H., Kansas, 1997). The Rites are similar also in their theatricality, which most Blue Lodges do not use, though some do.

But there are differences. As Duncan points out, “Scottish Rite Masonry is the champion of individual freedoms and citizenship rights as well as responsibilities. York Rite Masonry in its concluding Degrees or Orders is the champion of Christianity.” This, of course, is not a black-and-white distinction; nor are the Chapter and Council of the York Rite exclusively Christian organizations. The York Rite is more colorful in its attire and uniforms, whereas “The Scottish Rite limits its non-ritual attire to a hat.”

An important difference between the Rites is in their organization and government: the Scottish

Rite is hierarchical (“oaths of loyalty are required to the Order’s national leaders”), whereas the York Rite is more democratic and locally autonomous.

There is an important distinction between the Rites if you compare the four “separate and autonomous” bodies of the York Rite to the four “coordinate bodies” of the Scottish Rite. There is a limited, though significant, correspondence between the Blue Lodge of the York Rite and the Lodge of Perfection; between the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the York Rite and the Chapter Rose Croix; and between the Commandery of Knights Templar and the Council of Kadosh. But there does not seem to be a correlate in the Scottish Rite with the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the York Rite. This may be because the Council Degrees of the York Rite were organized under Grand Council considerably later than the Scottish Rite was organized. Or it may be due to my relative ignorance. I am NOT an expert on these matters, just a dabbler. But it is clear to me that *all* Masons can benefit from the important lessons of the York Rite Cryptic Degrees – specifically, *awareness* and *attention*. And the Apron Lecture of the Select Master Degree is a most impressive summary, in my view, of what our Masonic endeavors are all about:

“So the purple of the Select Master indicates the power to rule, not over temporal kingdoms but over the kingdom of your own life. The lessons inculcated in these Degrees have enabled you to

advance further in your search for Masonic Light and have taught you how the better to rule and govern the empire of yourself.

Then let this apron ever be to you a symbol of a pure heart and the power to rule your life and your conduct through the blessings and guidance of the secrets of Divine Truth safely deposited in the hidden vault of your inner consciousness.”

Likewise, all Masons can benefit from the concepts of the Consistory Degrees, with the final focus on the law of universal equilibrium. I don't find a correlate in the York Rite Degrees and Orders, again, maybe because of my ignorance. But, as Clausen says in his Commentaries on Morals and Dogma of Pike:

“The Holy Doctrine – the Royal Secret – heretofore has been concealed, imperfectly revealed or disfigured, obscured under arrogant pretensions and enveloped in mysterious, impenetrable enigmas. But the veil now has been lifted for you. For the mystery of the balance will be found in the law of universal equilibrium. As a sublime Master of the Royal Secret, you are possessed of an inner strength of great value and now you may discover and apply this for yourself.

‘The Scottish Rite symbology and teachings and studies have made the

creative law of the universe susceptible of discovery.

“Nature’s secrets are those of the supernatural sciences. For example, in all the apparent emptiness of space there is no void. ... Man has an immortal soul, imprisoned for a time within a mortal body, which is capable of improvement and of spiritual development. It is released when death occurs, thus mingling the divine with the human.” (pp, 211-212)

Finally, let me close with reference to a difference between the two Rites which piqued my curiosity when I read it last week for the first time in a Masonic Rosicrucian magazine. The author is one David E. Stafford, PhD writing about “The Elements” in the annual compendium of essays of 2010:

Pike’s Craft Rituals are not widely known within the United States. He revised the Scottish Rite version of the Craft Degrees not to be worked within the halls of a lodge but instead as a perquisite reading for a York Rite Mason venturing through the Scottish Rite’s fourth through the thirty-second degrees. ... It was believed by Pike that the two rites contrasted so greatly in presentation that the York Rite Mason would not be able to fully understand the lessons within the Scottish Rite without some exposure to its Craft Degrees.

I intend to learn more about these Craft Degrees of Pike, and explore the possibility of conferring them within the Scottish Rite context.

But let me finish by answering the question I posed at the beginning: What is the Right Rite Choice? I hope I've made it clear that, in my opinion, the correct choice is BOTH!

XI

STATE CAPITOL CORNERSTONE REDEDICATION CEREMONY

June 21, 2014

Inasmuch as the Blue Lodge is part of York Rite Masonry, we are going to devote much of this issue to a significant Grand Lodge event on June 21st. On that Saturday, on the north steps of the State Capitol, Most Worshipful John L. Cooper, III, rededicated the cornerstone laid by Grand Lodge in May of 1861. Over 500 people, mostly Masons, family and friends, were in attendance to observe this auspicious occasion. We cannot too often be reminded of the importance our public buildings have as beacons of LIGHT and LIBERTY, and we owe our Grand Master a deep and profound debt of gratitude for putting on his “old history teacher’s hat” to give us an important lesson in civic pride and civic duty. Whether the general public comes to recognize this remains to be seen, but much is accomplished if we Masons alone remain firm in our devotion to our patriotic origins and duty. Our Grand Master began:

CORNERSTONE REDEDICATION

By M. W. John L. Cooper, III

“It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this commemoration of the 1861 Cornerstone Laying Ceremony for the California State

Capitol. The State of California was officially born on September 9, 1850 when it was admitted to the Union as the 31st State. Monterey had been the temporary capital when the American occupation of California began in 1846. The first session of the Legislature was held in 1850 in San Jose, and so San Jose may properly be termed the first “capitol” of the State of California. The 1851 session of the Legislature was also held in San Jose, but in 1852 the Legislature accepted the generous offer of General Vallejo to relocate to the City of Vallejo. In 1853 they accepted the offer of the City of Benicia to use their new city hall, and the capital was once more relocated.

“But only one session was held at Benicia. The City of Sacramento made the Legislature an offer that it could not refuse, and in 1854 it moved to Sacramento. Sacramento had offered the Legislature free use of the Sacramento County Courthouse, plus other amenities, and the offer was accepted. And so, on February 25, 1854, the Legislature moved once more – and for the last time – to Sacramento.

“The temporary quarters for our state government were unsatisfactory, and plans were soon made for a permanent home for our state government. The City of Sacramento gave to the State of California four city blocks between L and N Streets, and 10th and 12th Streets. We are standing today on that property, where the splendid Capitol behind us was erected. The Legislature appropriated

\$500,000 to build the Capitol, and construction was begun in 1860. The ground-breaking took place on September 24, 1860, and on May 15, 1861, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of California assembled at the northeast corner of the site to lay the cornerstone for California's new Capitol. Today we are celebrating the laying of that cornerstone by the Masonic Grand Lodge of California 153 years ago.

“Modern Freemasonry has its origins in stonemasons’ guilds of the Middle Ages in England and Scotland. The building of a stone building is quite different from building one of wood. Because the walls of a stone building are made up of individual blocks of stone, and because they are heavy, they must be laid upon a strong foundation, and set so that they are both plumb and level. In order to lay the stones properly, it is essential that the first stone of the building – called the “cornerstone,” first be laid in a correct manner. This is the origin of cornerstone laying ceremonies, and the ceremony you will witness today is such an example.

“Masonic Grand Lodges have inherited the function of laying the cornerstones for public buildings, and for this reason, President George Washington laid the cornerstone for the United States Capitol building on September 18, 1793. At the time, President Washington was the Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22, which held its charter from the Grand Lodge of

Virginia. The lodge was not far from Mt. Vernon, Washington's home. The ceremony that he performed on that date was very similar to the one used by the Masonic Grand Lodge of California on May 15, 1861, to lay the cornerstone for our own Capitol building, and to the one that you will see today.

“If you look to my right, and to your left, you will see the cornerstone for the California State Capitol. When it was laid on Wednesday, May 15, 1861, this was a construction site. Blocks of stone and piles of bricks were all over this area, and workmen were laying the foundations of what would become the magnificent building behind me. The Masonic Grand Lodge had been officially organized on April 19, 1850, just a few blocks west of here on the southeast corner of Fifth Street and “J” Street. It was from this same location that the procession began, leading here to the Capitol grounds for the laying of the cornerstone. The procession not only included Masons, but also the Governor and other state officials, military companies, and various civic societies of Sacramento. The Governor was John G. Downey, a Mason, and for whom the City of Downey in Southern California would someday be named. The Grand Master was Nathaniel Greene Curtis, the sixth Grand Master of Masons in California. Just to keep things in perspective, I am the 148th Grand Master.

“In a few minutes we will re-enact the ceremony as it was performed by Grand Lodge on May 15, 1861. The original cornerstone was

suspended on a tripod, and you will note to my right that we have a replica similarly suspended on its tripod. Proper cornerstones are seated on a footstone, and often within the cornerstone there is a cavity where a copper box can be placed. Nowadays we refer to this container as a “capsule,” and if you look to my left, you will see a capsule of the kind that we use these days. The original copper box would have had memorabilia of the time in which it was made – a “time capsule”, if you will, and thus the various articles contained in it would be preserved for the future. Since we are replicating the ceremony today, and not setting an actual cornerstone, the “time capsule” is only symbolic.

“When a cornerstone was properly set, it had to be “plumb” (meaning straight up and down) on both sides, and “level” on the top. That is because all the other measurements of the building had to be made from that stone. If the cornerstone was not properly set, then the rest of the building could not be properly built. By 1861 cornerstones had already become symbolic rather than functional. If you look closely at the cornerstone which you can just see from here, it is set into the wall rather than being placed at the foot of the wall. That indicates that it is a symbolic cornerstone rather than a functional cornerstone.

“On the face of the cornerstone are words indicating that the cornerstone was laid by Grand Lodge on May 15, 1861. But there two other dates on it: 1961, and 1978. When the

Capitol was reconstructed in the 1970's, Grand Lodge was invited to re-lay the cornerstone. We did so, and added the date 1961 when we had previously been asked to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the laying of the original cornerstone, and then 1978, when we were asked to put it back into the wall of the Capitol. After proving the stone by the Square, the Level and the Plumb, it was blessed with an offering of Corn, Wine and Oil.”

XII

ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Kenneth G. Hope, Grand Secretary



How many times have you heard the phrase “one man can make a difference?” I’m sure you have heard it many times, and here I am today saying it again . . . “One man can make a difference,” but this time I am going to give you an example of such a man who changed the course of history in America, and especially, California. Naturally he was a Mason, and as you all know so well, that is not unusual, because Masons have been

changing the course of history all over the world since the time they were founded. The year was 1880 and Bro. George Perkins was a Past Grand Master of Masons in California and now serving as the Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery. In his spare time, he was the Governor of California.

As the governor of California, he realized that the centers of power in America were on the East coast, and California was considered by them to be part of the Wild West . . . full of Indians and desperados . . . a place you read about but wouldn't want to visit. . . and certainly not a safe place for women and children. Furthermore, the only way to get to the west coast was by ship, train or horseback . . . a long trip by any means. Plus it was expensive . . . so who would want to go to California anyway. Without this movement of people to California, the state would not grow and prosper, business, real estate, commerce etc would not grow and everything would remain stagnant. Remember, California had just become a state in 1850.

Bro. George had a great idea. If he could only get those stuffy Easterners to come to California and see for themselves that San Francisco was a great city, as modern as any on the east coast, and that bullets and arrows weren't flying around, that it was safe for women and children, that it had all the modern conveniences of any city in the East, that it was a law abiding state, had some of the finest restaurants and hotels, modern paved streets, and above all, that the people were friendly if only he could get those

Easterners to see for themselves. Governor George decided that it was high time that California be put on the map, that for the first time in history, Americans were going to find out what a wonderful state this was, and what a grand city San Francisco was. Sir Knight George decided that the Knights Templar would lead the way as only they could. First he had to convince the Templars of California that they could achieve this formidable task . . . remember, that in 1880 there were only 1,000 knights in California! Convincing the knights was no easy matter . . . how could they afford this endeavor . . . how could only a few knights do so much in such a short period of time, this had never been done before and so on. All of you have heard these arguments many times. Leadership came naturally to this man, and he managed to convince his brothers that all was possible, and if anyone could do it, it was the Templars of California.

Sir Knight George and 145 Sir Knights and 88 of their ladies departed for Chicago for the 21st Triennial of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. They hired a military band, the 2nd Regimental band to go with them to Chicago. A Grand Standard for California was purchased specially to be taken with them and a special train exclusively for the Knights Templar and their families was arranged. If they were going to Chicago, they would go in style. They had to convince the world that Californians were not a bunch of uncivilized cowboys. Cowboy boots, hats and Bermuda shorts were not packed on this trip.

The correct Templar uniform was worn, swords were polished, and plumes were fluffed up they were going to change the Easterners concept of the Wild West.

At the 21st Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment, Sir Knight George offered to host the 22nd Triennial in San Francisco! His leadership qualities and persuasive personality overcame the fears and tribulations of the Eastern Templars promising them Templar hospitality and knightly courtesies for one and all. Safety for women and children was guaranteed, special trains and escorts would be provided, horses for the Sir Knights, carriages for their ladies, the finest food and lodgings and the best whiskey for the banquets would be theirs for the asking. After much deliberation and soul searching, a motion was made, seconded and carried to hold the 22nd Triennial in San Francisco in 1883. Sir Knight George and his fellow knights had accomplished the first phase of their plan to open the West. They came back to San Francisco feeling pretty proud of themselves, and rightly so. They also came back \$2,304 in debt. This sum was made up by subscriptions from the 1,000 Sir Knights. To help finance the 1883 Triennial, each Sir Knight was assessed 50 cents. The Grand Commander also admonished the membership to be vigilant and not lower their standards for admission in the Order that “stands pre-eminent above any other human organization.” At this time, it was Templar law that it would be unknighthly conduct if a Sir Knight solicited members for the Orders!!! It should be noted here that before

one could become a Knight Templar, that is to say, before he received the Order of the Temple, he had to purchase his own uniform and equipment. After receiving the Order of the Red Cross, if the candidate did not purchase his uniform, he would not be knighted. There was no Order of Malta in those days. Initiation fees in 1880 were \$100 . . . a very considerable sum of money, equivalent to \$15,000 in today's dollars!!! The uniform and equipment would cost another \$100 and a horse would be extra. One had to be serious about becoming a Knight Templar in those days. The Orders were conferred on one candidate at a time. Commanderies conferring the Orders on more than one candidate were severely reprimanded!

Now that Grand Encampment had agreed to come to San Francisco in 1883, Perkins and the Grand Commandery had to convince the people of San Francisco of what a wonderful thing the Knights Templar had done for them. They need the total commitment of the public; they needed their homes, their horses and carriages, their donations and their resolve to decorate the city and make the Easterners and their families feel welcome. The people of San Francisco responded, with their hearts and pocketbooks with great enthusiasm. This was going to be the first time in the history of California that any convention or any large group of people would come to the West Coast, and they were determined to give them the best of everything they could offer. If it worked, more would follow, business would pickup, people would come from the East and buy houses, and shops would open,

and schools would be built, and money would start flowing into the State, and more roads would be built, and more hospitals, more hotels, more stables, more carriages would be needed, new trains would be needed to accommodate the increased passenger load, and all this translated into more jobs and more money and so on. The average citizen soon realized what Sir Knight George and his Templars had done in Chicago. They had a golden opportunity to show off the Golden State and the beautiful city of San Francisco, and they were going to do everything in their power, in their own little way to show the Easterners that the West had grown up and was a match for anything the East had to offer, maybe more.

George and his committee left no stone unturned. They convinced the railroads to offer a 25% discount for any Templar and his family from the East. The railroad magnates also had an eye on the future and they could see what profits lay in the not too distant future for them. The citizens responded by providing carriages and horses for the visitors from the East, and decorated every building in the city with bunting and banners, the likes of which had never been seen before. After all, Governor and Sir Knight George had told them that this was the most important event in Templar history in California and also for the State. They were not going to let him down. George did one other thing to ensure success. It was not enough for the visitors to have a good time, he wanted everyone in America to know what a wonderful place and how safe it was, and how modern and what a good place it

was to raise a family. So he invited all the Eastern newspaper editors and writers to be the guests of the city, and they also responded and they came West with the Knights.

George covered all the bases, as he early on realized that it was not enough to just get the Templars involved, he had to have every man and woman in California involved too. Hence the whole community insisted on claiming a share of the honor, and spontaneously resolved to make the occasion a season of unrestricted hospitality, civic display, happiness and social cheer. Trainload after trainload of Templars, their families and newspapermen arrived in San Francisco, and were met at the railroad station by the various mounted patrols from the Commanderies and escorted to their hotels. Bands played and Sir Knights in full uniform presented swords for the visiting dignitaries. Finally, the Grand Parade took place, ten divisions strong with swords glistening in the sun, marching past the review stand, a pageant never before seen in California, and witnessed by the public from the sidewalks, balconies and windows all along the parade route.

The 22nd Triennial was everything Sir Knight George had promised, and the Grand Commander was justly proud in claiming that it was the most notable event in Templar Masonry in California. This feeling was shared by all who attended and California Templary won the esteem and affection of their brothers, as the newspapers on the East Coast attested. The West had won the hearts and minds of the Easterners,

and nothing would ever be the same again. Not one visitor had been shot by an arrow, no train was held up and robbed, and all went home safe and sound.



**Grand Encampment
1883 Triennial Conclave Medal
San Francisco, California**

The Grand Commandery did rather well financially, not one cent of its funds was used. Donations paid for everything and left a balance of \$7,000 a considerable sum of money in 1883. This money left over from the Triennial was invested as a permanent fund called "The California Grand Commandery Knight Templar Drill Fund." Tuesday, August 21, 1883 the Grand Encampment opened for business meetings and lasted until Friday. The Divine Service was a new feature at the Triennial and was "The greatest feature of the Conclave." Seventy banners of different Commanderies hung in the Grand Asylum. There was entertainment every evening in the pavilion, with a different program each night. The ladies provided a "Garden of Welcome" for the visitors, which was one of the most pleasing features of the Conclave. There were excursions around the bay by boat, and by rail to the vineyards and wineries of Napa Valley, to Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Monterey and other areas. The Grand Master was greeted by the Mayor of San Francisco and other officials. The Grand Lodge laid a cornerstone to the Garfield monument in Golden Gate Park, and the military took part in that too, including veterans and government officials. The Grand Banquet was held at the Palace Hotel and was "everything the heart could wish." 3,000 rooms were taken up by the Sir Knights. The San Francisco police cooperated fully with every wish and the grand parade had no interruptions, and the knights marched down the broadest and finest avenues in the city, which were cleaned the night before! San Francisco, California and the West Coast

have never been the same since the 22nd Triennial of the Grand Encampment. One man made a difference, and he was a Master Mason and Knight Templar.

The above narrative shows what a person with vision, determination and a positive attitude can do. Sure the odds were high, and sure the opposition was great. There was little or no money and very little time. The entire concept in the East was anti-West. But they can be and were overcome. We Masons today need to have a vision of tomorrow, a determination and positive attitude to make our fraternity significant to the next generation in a world that does not know how desperately our principles of brotherly love are needed if there is ever going to be peace in the world.