

ORATIONS

Grand York Rite of California

May 2018

Orations

Copyright © 2018

Golden State Research Chapter

Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of California

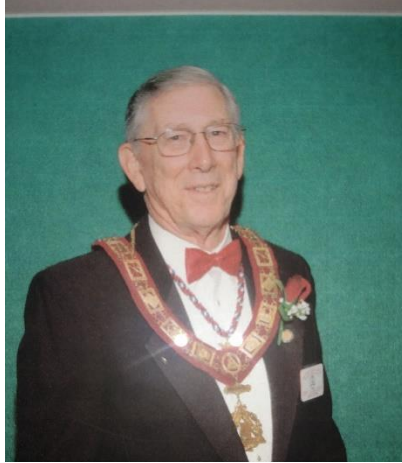
The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors only and are not authorized by any Masonic organization.

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise – without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

Dedicated to

**RIGHT EXCELLENT COMPANION
DON EDWIN LAMOUREUX**



This dedication is made to Right Excellent Lamoureux for his selfless contributions to the Grand Chapter, for which he served as Grand Lecturer from 2004 through 2009, inclusive. During that term he convened the Ritual Committee regularly for the purpose of revising and updating the Ritual Book, published finally in 2007.

During that time he also served as Most Excellent President of the Order of High Priesthood, 2004-2006. Since retiring, he has been active in the York Rite bodies in Auburn, where he served as Eminent Commander in 2003 and 2007, Illustrious Master in 2009 and 2018, Scribe in 2008 and King in 2014. Prior to his service to the Auburn York Rite bodies and the Grand York Rite, Don was Master of Frank S. Land Lodge No. 819, which is now Glendale Lodge No. 368, in 1971. Glendale Lodge granted him the Hiram Award in 1989.

He was High Priest of Unity Chapter in 1974 and Grand Chapter Inspector from 1974 to 1978. He transferred to Delta Chapter No. 27 and was Deputy Grand Lecturer from 1999 to 2004. He was awarded the Grand High Priest Distinguished Service Award in 2008 and the General Grand Chapter Distinguished Service Award in Bronze. He is a member of the Golden State Research Chapter since its inception in 2003; he is presently an officer in the Cross and Crown Priory of the Red Cross of Constantine.

He served as Illustrious Master of Unity Council in 1977. He was granted the Grand Master's Ish Sodi Award in 2010, and named Ritualist of the Year by the Grand Council in 2011.

He served as Commander of Glendale Commandery in 1980 and 1981, and again in Auburn in 2003 and 2007. In 2004 he was appointed Grand Sentinel for the Grand Commandery. In 2008 he received the Knight Templar Meritorious Service Medal and in 2014 became a Knight Commander of the Temple.

Don is a founding member of the Golden Redwood Priory of Knights of the York Cross of Honour, and a Past Prior in 2010.

His storied career began in DeMolay, where he served the Eagle Rock Chapter as Master Councilor in 1952; received the Chevalier in 1955; and received the Legion of Honor in 1981. He served Job's Daughters as the Associate Bethel Guardian from 1977 to 1984.

For 66 years of service, achievement and accomplishment in almost all things Masonic, we dedicate this edition of the Grand Orations to Right Excellent Don.

PREFACE

The Royal Arch contains information our blue lodge brethren search when they are looking for further light in masonry. The Golden State Research Chapter helps us by collecting and making available information which we can share with brethren in the lodge as well as with our companions at a convocation. You can help your chapters grow many ways. A few simple ideas are by promoting the Royal Arch to the lodges in your area, and to add royal arch education to your monthly agenda. The information shared by the Golden State Research chapter can help you prepare for both tasks. *You are the steps to our future* and the things that you do today can have lasting effect on the future of your Chapters tomorrow.

I commend to you this collection of addresses for the Capitular Year 2018

Anthony “Tony” Yuson, KYGCH
164th Grand High Priest

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
INTRODUCTION	6
I. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE	6
II. PARTICIPATION	17
III. CALL TO VESPERS 2018	23

INTRODUCTION

GRAND ORATIONS, 2018

The papers in this compilation were delivered at the California York Rite Grand Sessions in May, 2018. In addition to the Grand Orations for the Grand Chapter and Grand Council, we have included the Grand Commandery Vesper program and remarks delivered by Rev. and Sir Knight Ray Davies.

Daniel Doornbos

**Grand Orator, Grand Chapter of
Royal Arch Masons, May 2018**

Harold Kennedy

**Grand Orator, Grand Council of
Cryptic Masons, May 2018**

Raymond Davies

**Grand Prelate of the Grand
Commandery of Knights Templar of
California, 2013 - 2018**

I

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

GRAND CHAPTER ORATION

By Daniel Doornbos

This year, our Grand High Priest proclaimed the theme of “Let your light shine”. This passage comes from the Great Light in Masonry, the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 16. Quotes from the Bible are always inspiring, particularly ones from the Gospels. It sounds so meaningful.

But how does one shine their light? What does it illuminate? What result should you hope for? You can get light from many sources, such as the sun, stars, lightning, fire, a variety of lamps, and various kinds of natural luminescence. In the literal sense, light makes vision possible. Light can also refer to spiritual illumination, general knowledge, something that informs, or even a particularly outstanding person.

According to the Society of Friends (Quakers), when light is within a person, it represents a divine presence. Its purpose is not limited to mystical experience or providing guidance for the

individual alone, it also induces the individual to work for the good of others. The latter explanation describes how we might explain the action of letting our light shine.

As Masons, we work with Masonic light, that is, the understanding and inspiration that comes through our symbols, rituals, and fellowship. Freemasonry does contain some elements of a religion, for example, teachings of morality, charity, and obedience to the law of the land. However, Freemasonry turns away from the doctrines and dogmas that accumulate over time in every religious tradition.

The work of Masonry is to disseminate Masonic light. We have Lodges and similar organizations, degree rituals, unique language, meeting places, colorful trappings and paraphernalia, as well as something to eat before or after every activity. These items facilitate the communication of Masonic light. Yet it is the Mason himself who communicates Masonic light to another Mason, using the ancient mystical practice of teaching mouth-to-ear. That is why a man cannot make himself a Mason. That is why you cannot build Masons in a factory or develop them by means of conventional education.

As leaders in the York Rite of Freemasonry, it is our job to teach York Rite Masons. And if you happen to belong to a Ritual Committee, it is your job to teach the teachers. Ultimately, we are the

ones responsible for the dissemination of Masonic light. The phrase “Let your light shine” dates back to the First Century. How do we let our light shine today, in the Twenty First Century?

The 21st Century Chapter

It took a while but the Grand Lodge of California finally figured out that men join Masonry because they are looking to learn things, make true friends, and make a difference in the world. Knowing that, we don’t have to sit around wondering what to do. We already know: Make our Lodges a place where our Brothers can learn, make true friends, and be inspired to make a difference in the world.

According to the Grand Lodge of California, the “21st Century Lodge” has 25 to 40 members. The Officers may serve multiple years in each office. Discussions and learning supplement Lodge business, and degree conferrals. When I first heard about the 21st Century Lodge, at a Master and Wardens Retreat, I remembered that my Lodge, Friendship No. 210, was chartered way back in 1871. And we have 160 members. I thought, “That’s 120 members too many! Are we supposed to kick them out and tell them to form three new Lodges of their own?” Fortunately, existing Lodges will be allowed to continue, so long as they serve their purpose.

Incidentally, there really is a genuine 21st Century Royal Arch Chapter. Siminoff Daylight Chapter No. 163 was chartered on July 13, 2013 and meets at the Masonic Home in Union City, California. Most of the Companions of Siminoff Chapter came from other Royal Arch Chapters. They emphasize quality of experience, where learning, making true friends, and making a difference takes place. They practice a true 21st Century approach to Masonry.

The Experience

Let us remember that Freemasonry is both an individual experience and a group experience. The lessons of our Degrees inspire each man in his own individual way. But to confer a Degree requires a team of men, some speaking, some acting, some setting up and taking down. Like the old saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child.” For us, it takes a Lodge to raise a Mason. In the same way, it takes a Chapter to exalt a Mason, a Council to receive him, and a Commandery to knight him.

We are trying new strategies to improve delivery of our Degrees. For example, reading selected parts, such as a Charge, from a scroll. Doing so enables a new or less-skilled Companion to take an active part in the Degree. Unfortunately, many Companions cannot recite ritual any better when they read it than they can from memory. So they must still put in the effort to practice. In fact, high-quality reading is a vital step toward memorizing.

And the ability to memorize and recite enables the best ritual.

Not Just Words

A vital but frequently overlooked aspect of learning ritual is to learn the meaning of the words. For example, in the Mark Master Degree, we make mention of the Jewish Sabbath. So what is the Jewish Sabbath and why should we care?

In the Fellowcraft Degree, we learn that “In six days, God created the heaven and the earth and rested on the seventh day.” The direction to observe the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments, “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But on the seventh day is Sabbath (which means “rest” or “cessation”) to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work...”

Sabbath observance distinguished the Jewish people from their neighbors throughout thousands of years of history and it is also the first and most sacred institution of that faith. Whether your faith encourages attending Mosque on Friday or Church on Sunday, you are keeping the same sacred tradition. On the other hand, if you do not observe the Sabbath at all, perhaps you might want to review the story and make an adjustment in your personal spiritual practice.

Success or Failure

Your Chapter can approach ritual and leadership in one of two ways, what I refer to as a failure orientation or a success orientation. An example of failure orientation is when the Inspector says, “If you don’t pass your proficiency, you will not be installed.” An example of success orientation is when the Inspector says, “To qualify for the next office, you must learn the ritual and pass your proficiency.” Those are both statements of fact but which is more helpful? Which one presupposes the desired outcome? Would you prefer a warning of failure or the expectation of success?

Modern business practice has shown that when you set a *low* standard, people will live down to it. The *best* people eventually drop out to pursue better opportunities elsewhere. On the other hand, when you set a *high* standard, people will endeavor to live up to it. The *worst* people eventually drop out so they can find comfort where failure is tolerated.

Reaching a high standard quickly is not a success. It really means you did not set the standard high enough. In contrast, *not* reaching a high standard is *not* a failure. Rather it is a work-in-progress, an improvement on the prior situation before the standard was set. Maybe the performance was not very good. But it was better than last time and it will be better next time.

The Challenge

Few of our Royal Arch Chapters are able confer all four Chapter Degrees. Worse, there are Chapters that cannot confer even a single Degree. Perhaps only one member knew a critical part, but now he can't hear or can't stand. Or maybe he just moved to Arizona. Conversely, perhaps you can't get enough members to attend a practice session to learn the Degree. Wherever your Chapter is, that's the current reality. You are not satisfied with it, and you are motivated to change it. That means you have already taken the first steps. Now you have to ask: "How will I know whether my Chapter meets the needs of its members?" Unfortunately, if nobody shows up, the answer is, "no". Therefore, focus on the formula: Make your Chapter a place where your Companions can learn, make true friends, and be inspired to make a difference in the world.

A common response, when you ask a Mason why he does not attend his Lodge or a Companion his Chapter, is some variation of: "I don't have time." You know what? Everybody has the same amount of time! And you choose what you do with yours. When somebody tells you, "I don't have time", it typically means they judged that your offer or proposal is not worth spending their time on. Maybe a Brother or Companion has all he can handle with work and family responsibilities. There is nothing wrong with that, his priorities are

right. But maybe he actually does have a little discretionary time, and he guards it very carefully. Offer him something of real value and he might just take you up on it. Deliver on the experience and he might come back again.

Active Masons know that getting your Degrees is just the start. As you become involved, Masonry becomes a part of your life. Most new members will embrace continued involvement if they find it worthwhile. That happens when they find the learning, true friends, and ways to make a difference in the world. But if they're already doing that in the Blue Lodges, what more do our Chapters have to offer? To answer that question, pay attention at the next festival or pilgrimage. Or break out your ritual book and review the stories and teachings of the Chapter Degrees. There you will find what Chapter offers: More learning, more true friends, and more empowerment to make a bigger difference in the world.

It's Always Personal

Talk to your Masonic Brothers about York Rite. When one shows interest, invite him to receive the Mark Master Degree. Or go a step further and invite him to become a York Rite Mason. Whether a Mason joins the York Rite out of curiosity, to expand his Masonic experience, or by invitation, joining always involves the applicant and his Brother Mason. When you sign a Brother's

application to receive the Chapter Degrees, you are doing more than processing paperwork. You are pledging your friendship and support to the new Companion-to-be. You are documenting a personal connection with him.

As his friend, you must be present when he receives the Degrees. As he sits in the Chapter room, hearing and seeing strange new things, when he looks around, let him see your face among the sideliners or taking a part in the ritual. Let him know that you care enough to be there. And if you can't make it, introduce the Brother to somebody who can be there to accompany him on his adventure. Remember that you don't attend a Degree just because you have a part in the ritual. Rather it is because somebody is becoming a Royal Arch Mason, a fellow Companion, and you are there to welcome him, to help him understand the lessons, and to be glad he joined your Chapter.

Knowing Things

It is okay not to know something. Nobody was born knowing anything. Everything you know, you had to learn. You can learn by reading. But you learn better by doing. And you learn the best when somebody guides you and shares his experience. That's why successful people almost always have a mentor. That is where we, as York Rite leaders, play our part as teachers and mentors. That is where we let our light shine.

In your Chapter, when a young member asks you how to do something, don't tell him "You should already know that". The Companion *already* knows — that he *should* know — and he *wants* to know — but he does *not* know — therefore he is asking you, because he believes you *do* know. He is looking up to you as a mentor. That is a sign of respect and trust. So, validate his respect and trust by helping him to understand and perform his duty. If people come to you for guidance, it is because your light is shining. As you pass on your light, it soon kindles new lights in the Companions receiving it. We are regularly encouraged to "turn the lights off when you leave a room". Doing so saves energy and benefits the environment. But your personal light is something you want to leave on at all times. Because your light kindles light in others, it multiplies energy, and makes the world a better place. Thank you.

II

PARTICIPATION

GRAND COUNCIL ORATION, MAY 2018

By Harold Kennedy

I have been asked by Most Illustrious Lee Whelan to share some thoughts with you today about participation and its vital importance to the ongoing wellbeing of our fraternal work. Webster's Dictionary defines participation as: to join with others in something; to take part; to have or share in something.

Historically, Masons have joined several Masonic Bodies after receiving their Third Degree. Some of these appendant bodies are invitational and some are not. Either way, we freely give of our time to get involved. Joining is the first act of participation. It goes without saying that we reap benefits from joining. What comes to mind is the benefit of fraternal bonding generated by our fraternal service. As we have all experienced, the danger is that we can get over-committed. Sometimes, I think we don't know when to say no. Even so, what I am saying here is that all of the Companions present at the Sessions this week appear to have found something within the framework of this organization

that calls us to freely give of our time, to volunteer and participate. We all get something out of this fantastic order.

But what of those who do not? What is it that causes many who join Masonry to decide that further participation is not needed or even desired? Or, why is it that many of us see excited new members lose their interest only to drop out rather quickly? Is there something we missed when receiving new members? Are we not as welcoming to some but more welcoming to others? How can we expect this Fraternity to grow from Blue Lodge through York Rite if we don't know how to stir enthusiasm for participation?

Let's take a brief look at some activities that can be used to increase participation.

#1 Meetings

All bodies have monthly meetings. What makes a successful meeting? It depends on who you ask. Most meetings exist to conduct business: Pay the bills, discuss maintenance issues, financial matters, vote on new applicants, state upcoming events. Doing just these necessary elements alone, however, makes for a very dull meeting. We need something more.

One idea tried in Blue Lodges, York and Scottish Rites, is Masonic Education. Education involves

delivering a talk upon a topic of interest in Masonry. An artifact from the Craft may also be displayed followed by a discussion. Members enjoy learning something they may never have been aware of before. I have noticed when Masonic Education is delivered at meetings it gives a bump to the tenor of the meeting. It is not just business. I encourage this type of activity at our York Rite meetings. Who knows? The guys may want to have group discussions on weekends. We need to have meetings to keep our affairs in order. But we can also stimulate thought as well. This is one way to also encourage people to show up to the meetings and: *participate.*

#2 *Degrees*

Councils confer the Cryptic Degrees at Festivals. This ensures candidates for councils will receive the two mandatory degrees and become full members. However, perhaps a better way to forge a good starting relationship with new members is for councils to begin conferring degrees in their own councils at the lodges or meeting places where they meet.

A new candidate will be impressed with receiving the conferral at the Lodge where their Council meets. This will help strengthen the bond of fraternity. And members who participate in conferrals will enjoy

participating in their councils. This will also help with a better understanding of the meaning of the degree. And it will help with knowing rituals better. I received my council degrees in my home council. At Alhambra Council where I am a member we conferred the Royal Master Degree upon a new member. He was impressed. The bonds of Fraternity were strengthened. Increased conferral of degrees in home lodges promises greater lodge participation both by its members and the newly conferred members.

#3

Work Parties

Lodges need continual upkeep. A good way to create fellowship and get constructive projects completed is through work parties. The work must be organized in a manner that will tap into a person's work mold. Someone may volunteer and then be given an assignment he is not suited to perform. Make this person feel welcome when he shows up. Give him coffee and a doughnut and start with some good conversation. This Companion needs to feel welcome. Be sure to give him a job he is comfortable performing. And make sure to recognize his abilities and keep the conversation friendly. You will discover traits this person has to offer to help with maintaining the Lodge and he will want to become more involved with Council/Lodge activities.

#4

Events

Thinking of an event, or events, Companions may be interested in attending is challenging. It involves manpower and material. Ladies should be included at some of the scheduled events. If some of the events are for Masons only have a separate event involving the Ladies. Ask Companions for their input on what they would want attend. Look online for suggestions.

The following suggestions were taken from the e-mail membership awareness by David R Bedwell:

- **Give someone a job greeting new members.**
- **Never let a Companion sit alone.**
- **Follow up with a personal note to a new member thanking him for being with you in Council.**
- **Give members a questionnaire they can use to evaluate fellowship or Council activities.**
- **Don't waste time during your meetings. By making your meeting more of an event, adding some excitement or interest to the meetings will bring members back.**
- **Ask every member to be involved by accepting an assigned date to lead a discussion in Freemasonry. MSA Short Talk Bulletins are valuable for assistance.**
- **Attendance is directly related to the feelings a man has about joining other men in a fraternal setting. Attendance is also related to having a good time. If**

they do not find fellowship, friendship or the connection they expected in their Council, they will not come back.

In closing I would say the one thing a member can say to a newly joined member is this: “Say Companion, can you give me hand? I could really use your help.”

Personalize the experience. Make this person feel truly welcomed and needed. If we make it personal and engaging, increased participation will be the fruit of our labors.

Companions it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Orator for the past year.

Thank you for your time today.

III

CALL TO VESPERS, 2018

By Raymond Davies

Our Holy Father has given us this day to experience the glorious works of His creation and all its wonders. As we approach the evening of this day, let us pause to reflect on those who He caused to be our Companions, leaders, and mentors while they were in this earthly existence.

And let us especially reflect on our Creator's Love for us.

We offer our prayers of thanksgiving when we read From Psalm 117:

“You are my God, and I will give thanks to You: You are my God, and I will exalt You. I will give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have heard me, and have become unto me a salvation. Give thanks to the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.”

With the quietness of reverence, we now take time from the duties of our day to approach the throne of Grace for an uplifting of our spirits and to honor those recently departed from our presence.

Join with us now as we cause our minds to reflect on the truth of the Love of our Father, and the Salvation

gained by the loving gift of our Lord and Savior. We can feel the Father's call for this time of vespers, as He bids us to come to His throne and pray.

Invocation

Holy and Merciful Father; we now come before Your throne with praises and thanksgiving for Your Saving Grace, We thank you for the sustaining gifts of Your Spirit. We thank You for bringing us together safely under Your loving protection. As we express our gratitude for the glories of Your Everlasting Light, we seek Your guidance. May our thoughts and voices 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 all face while in this world.

Father, Your sacred word reminds us that it is important that we be concerned with the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Strengthen us as we labor to reach those in need of comfort with the message of Your Grace. May we always seek to serve You by serving the needs of those whose burdens are even greater than our own. It is by this service that we may display that 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 Father, as we turn our attention to You, may the remembrance of the inspiring ideas of Your divine scripture fill our thoughts, so that the sure knowledge of Your divine presence among us will influence all that we do, and bring Glory to You. May our thoughts always be worthy of Your Holy Presence. As followers and laborers for Your Son Jesus Christ, we claim your gift of Grace; and with a heartfelt gratitude to our Savior, we are very much aware of how far away from You we would be without Him, and we are equally aware of 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 messages of our Savior. We pray for Your comfort for those whose burdens may be even greater than our own. May the benefit of the touch of Your Glory in our lives inspire them and make their burdens bearable. May we serve You with acts of caring for all Your children. For these

things Lord, we seek Your divine blessing, through Your gift of Grace, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. *Amen.*

**Old Testament Scripture
1st Chronicles, Chapter 23; Verses 27 through 32**

According to David's final instructions, the Levites twenty years old and up were counted.

Their job was to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the LORD's temple. They were to take care of the courtyards, the rooms, ceremonial purification of all holy items, and other jobs related to the service of God's temple. They also took care of the bread that is displayed, the flour for offerings, the unleavened wafers, the round cakes, the mixing, and all the measuring.

They also stood in a designated place every morning and offered thanks and praise to the LORD. They also did this in the evening, and whenever burnt sacrifices were offered to the LORD on the Sabbath and at new moon festivals and assemblies.

A designated number were to serve before the LORD regularly in accordance with regulations. They were in charge of the meeting tent and the holy place, and helped their relatives, (the descendants of Aaron), in the service of the LORD's temple.

In Memoriam

While we pause this afternoon to remember all Sir Knights who passed 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

Paul Edward McElwain, KYGCH

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

Born November 1, 1933 in San Diego, California

Entered the Supreme Asylum on September 8, 2017

Most Eminent Sir Knight

Richard Thomas Cooper KYGCH

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

Born November 24, 1930 in Columbus, Ohio

Entered the Supreme Asylum on November 9, 2017

Most Excellent Companion

Herbert Eugene Neely, KYGCH

**Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California**

Born November 18, 1923 in Oklahoma

Entered the Supreme Asylum on April 29, 2017

Most Excellent Companion

John David Phinney, KYGCH

**Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California**

Born February 11, 1921 in Oklahoma

Entered the Supreme Asylum on July 28, 2017

Most Excellent Companion

George Feick Jr., KYGCH

**Past Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in
California**

Born September 25, 1927 in Pennsylvania

Entered the Supreme Asylum on April 22, 2018

Right Excellent Companion

Frederick Gilbert Kleyn III

**Past Grand Lecturer of Royal Arch Masons in
California**

Born May 30, 1939 in Jackson, Mississippi

Entered the Supreme Asylum on May 24, 2017

New Testament Scripture

Second Colossians, Chapter 3: Verses 17 - 24

*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the
Father by him.*

*Wives, follow your husband's leading, as it is fit in
the Lord.*

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not only while someone is watching, as those who act falsely; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

VESPERS MESSAGE

SERVE THE CAUSE

After experiencing a spiritual awakening after a lengthy visit with Pat Boone, rock star Bob Dylan wrote a song that begins with the lyrics:

*“You may be an ambassador to England or France
You may like to gamble, you might like to dance
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.*

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
It may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.”*

From the Twenty-Third Verse of the Third Chapter of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians we read the instruction:

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

This is the inspirational scripture chosen to guide the actions of this Grand Commandery this past year, and this chosen passage of scripture is followed in Colossians by the passage

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

These passages begin with an instruction that we are to be passionate in our service, intending our efforts to be serving our Savior and not expecting any thank you from society.

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, by maintaining our dedication to our commitments of faith, and by taking appropriate actions that are

befitting those commitments. It is our task to exert our efforts to serve for the honor of the Lord.

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 dedicated to our cause and be laborers for the Lord with the same fervency as those whom we are honoring this afternoon. Those who were our friends and mentors.

The Sir Knights we honor this afternoon lived lives heartily working for the cause. They are examples of how we should live our lives. Not displaying our beliefs only one evening a week to look good and feel good, but with the switch turned on all the time to the glory of God.

The Companions and Sir Knights we honor today honored our Holy Father and sought his guidance faithfully in their daily lives. They held dear their families, respected their elders, and were considerate of their fellow citizens by being 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 society's thoughts that are self-serving. We now regularly encounter the attitude that everything is revisable based on the perception and rationalization of each individual; that all rules, laws, and regulations should be

occasionally examined and revised to reflect changing opinions; and that all accountability should be imposed in accordance with the 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 the responsibility of others in the community that are believed to be better able to provide those resources.

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 should be reflected in prayer and action. They paid heed to the words of Jesus pointing to the responsibility of displaying the truth given to us from the beginning; that we are to love one another as He loves us.

Those we honor today listened to the instructions in the epistles that believers are to 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. Never looking for pats on the back, they did these things because they were the right things to do.

There is another song, written by the Christian artist Carman, that near the end has the lines:

*“I have made my decision, I have stated my claim
I have drawn a line in the sand and I'll not be
ashamed*

*With the world behind me And the cross before
By the grace of God I will serve the Lord”*

May we, as Companions and Christian Knights, respectfully remember those who mentored us - and emulate them by living the ideals of our Orders, the commandments of our Creator, and the loving instructions of our Lord and Savior. Yes indeed, we serve somebody, and like those who labored before us, and as an inspiration for those yet to come, with all our heart we serve the cause; we serve the Lord. Amen

Vesper Service for Grand Officers' Wives

Opening

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

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
“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.**

Remembering

Sister **Grace Austin Maier**, widow of Grand Prelate Emeritus Father Charles Maier:

Born July 9, 1924

Passed to the Celestial Chapter of the Beauceant on August 2, 2017

Laguna Beach, California

Prayer and Conclusion

Bless those who mourn, eternal God, with the comfort of your love that they may face each new day with 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 thoughts presented in this Vesper Service influence our lives so that we continue to stand fast and hold traditions that cause us to be bright shining examples of the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Amen