



New Mexico Supplement



D.W. Winchester, PGC
Grand Commander

Greetings Sir Knights,

It has been a quandary of mine as what to write for this February. As I was looking through my small archive of writings, I came across a booklet from Philip A. Hardiman KYGCH. As my thoughts were of this same matter, I believe his words are more appropriate than anything I could write. These will be his words almost verbatim of his booklet and are a good piece of information for everyone in this time of recruitment, I had to read these articles more than once to really get the intent that he was talking about. I hope this article and the next ones helps us in our endeavor to bring more Masons into the fold. Here is what he had to say:

MASONRY AND THE YORK RITE AN INTRODUCTION

“The journey through the York Rite degrees and the orders is down a path that can lead to enlightenment. It is a complicated journey that can be completed on various levels-complicated by the mysteries of symbolism and the effort required to achieve the higher levels. This effort involves attention and awareness on the one hand and concentration and will-power on the other. It is essentially a spiritual journey drawing on Old and New Testament scripture for its ritual underpinnings. Although the three orders or Templar require a Christian profession of faith, the degrees that precede it do not.

“Nevertheless, proceeding down the path of the Blue Lodge and York Rite Degrees is not a religious endeavor. Although Masonry teaches matters of religious significance, it is neither dogmatic nor doctrinaire-only teaching and requiring belief in two related concepts: 1) the existence of God: and 2) the immortality of the Soul. Hence, though certain doctrine held by some religions is strongly intimated in Masonic ritual, it is up to the aspirant to accept or reject for himself that doctrine, and to fashion for himself from the ritual an understanding of his relation to God, to himself, and to his fellow Man. After initiation, though, all Masons accept the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

“Why then the term “aspirant”? Simply because the object of Masonic ritual affirms that he freely and monetarily offers himself as, or “aspires” to be, a candidate—to learn what he can from the ritual and his association with the Masonic Brotherhood. He furthermore affirms that he wishes to be able to serve his fellow

creatures, with the knowledge and those skills, and to set them in the broader context of spiritual growth and development.

“So the York Rite Path is composed of rituals performed and conferred by four separate but linked organizations: 1) the Blue Lodges, or Craft Masonry; 2) Royal Arch Chapters, or Capitular Masonry; 3) Cryptic Mason Councils, or Cryptic Masonry; 4) Commanderies or Knights Templars, or Chivalric Masonry. Membership in each organization requires membership in the previous. Hence, the ritual experience is progressive, and it takes time for the ritual to have its full impact. Some who have followed this Path feel that all that Masonry has to teach is embodied in the first three degrees of the Blue Lodge; that all that comes after is mere elaboration, perhaps clarification. This is not correct. The first three degrees of the Blue Lodge (the Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason degrees) are only preparatory for that more profound work on oneself that can be consummated only in the higher degrees.

“This is not to say that those men who go no further than the Blue Lodge have not acquired some personal growth of great significance. Indeed, they have; and in fact, they may achieve the more profound work on themselves through other organizations, like the Scottish Rite. Or they may, in fact, be content with the moral and ethical teachings and perhaps with the opportunity to donate to worthy charitable causes that benefit mankind in general and go no further in the ritual experience.”

This is an excerpt from the Royal Arch Path by Philip A. Hardiman. KYGCH-Please read this more than once to get the full effect of his writing.

Courteously,

D. W. Winchester,
Grand Commander

KEEP IT ON YOUR CALENDAR

- The **Grand York Rite Quarterly Meeting:** January 25, 2020, at 9 a.m. at the Grand Lodge Offices in Albuquerque. (**Breakfast provided by the Youth Groups served at 8 a.m.**)
- The **Grand York Rite Sessions:** April 16 – 18, 2019 at the Ballut Abyad Shrine in Albuquerque

Photo by Michele Balke

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