

# CALIFORNIA KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

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## Greetings Sir Knights of the Great State of California.

*by Sir Knight Craig L. Flagtwet*

As we grind through the Dog Days of Summer, I would like to share with you some of the highlights of our York Rite membership program.

Before discussing the details of the program, I would like to reflect on why we came to the realization that we must do something to improve our membership.

When I was a young Mason, freshly raised, I often observed the emotion displayed by our senior members when taking part in or discussing important events. This outward display of their love for our fraternity impressed me and left its mark on my mind. I now, some 30 years later fully understand that love and attachment for our great fraternity.

As we make our journey through the various experiences and degrees of our fraternity, it should start to soak in on us that we are no longer men who joined a fraternity. When it finally happens and you realize what you have become and are a Mason – not merely a member of the fraternity – the responsibility for the care and protection of her really hits home.

We the current members of California Freemasonry in general, and the Rites (Scottish and York) of Freemasonry, must take responsibility for the continuation of our Rites, degrees, and Orders. The only way to do this is to share them with an increasing number of qualified Master Masons.

The Grand, and or state level officers, of our Masonic Rites are in a unique position to be able to gain an audience and capture the attention of our Symbolic Lodge brothers. Many of whom have not been exposed to a proper explanation of what the Rites of Freemasonry have to offer in the way of further light, fellowship and long-term friendship that comes as part of becoming members of these masonic bodies.

We the officers of the Grand Commandery discussed and agreed to take part in presenting information at Symbolic Lodge meetings throughout the State. These presentations are already being given and have meet with very favorable results.

We present a brief program explaining all the York Rite degrees and orders – a overview, not in-depth, so as to keep it interesting and enjoyable, followed by a question-and-answer session. When we have concluded the presentation, we provide, at no cost to interested members, a copy of *The York Rite of Freemasonry* book written by *Past Grand Commander Frederick G. Speidel*.

This book available from the Grand Encampment, covers the entire York Rite system from 1st Degree thru Order of the Temple. It does not give away any information that should only be gained by experiencing the degree or Order. What it does accomplish is provide a basic understanding of the system of degrees that they, as Symbolic Lodge members, are already involved in and provides a brief of the Chapter, Council and Commandery. This book, when provided with a proper presentation, helps them understand what the York Rite is and what's in it for them. When the presentation is complete and the books are handed out, it is a good idea to have the

members of that lodge who belong to the York Rite stand, so the interested Master Masons may find a brother to talk to about their interests and questions and to provide an application when the time is right.

We have an inventory of *The York Rite of Freemasonry by Speidel* in our Grand Commandery Recorders office and in my office, to provide them in the north and the south. They are available at no cost to those willing to make presentations on behalf of the York Rite of Freemasonry. The Grand Commandery Department Commanders can provide further information and assist by making presentations at local Masonic lodges.

This approach is not complicated nor extreme. It is, however, very effective and provides the interested Master Mason with enough information to decide if he is interested in advancing.

Any Member or Lodge interested in having a presentation, please contact the Grand Recorder of

the Grand Commandery of California. or myself. and we will either schedule the presentation or assist in doing so. The time is now for us to take action to secure the future of our beloved York Rite.

This simple plan and program will grow the entire York Rite of Freemasonry in California. We must plant – so the fraternity may harvest.



You will know them  
by their works,

*Craig L. Ragtvet*  
Grand Commander

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