

“Templar Ritual Relationship to the British Royal Funeral”

A short time ago, we witnessed for the first time in over seven decades the funeral for a British monarch. The ritual and pageantry of that event is the most impressive in the world, which we only seldomly see. At one time, the British royal ritual was rivaled by France and the Holy Roman Empire, but those traditions, many at the end of World War I, have been replaced. The core of the British funeral has remained steadfast since the death of the last Anglo-Saxon King of England, Saint Edward the Confessor on 5 January 1066. You will see that there is a clear relationship to these royal rituals with those of Knights Templar, for they developed side by side over the last nine centuries.

First, the passing of authority from one to the next is seamless, from “God Save the Queen” to “God Save the King.” The government election process has been separate from the royal funeral and succession process, as the British public elects representatives to Parliament, and there was no doubt, codified in law since 1689, that Charles III would become King at the passing of his mother Queen Elizabeth II. Where previously, elections for the DC Grand Commandery were held on the same day as Installation, we changed our procedures so that elections are separate, and over four months prior to, the Installation of the new leadership team. This aligns to the Grand Encampment that has a clear succession, and the next Grand Master is known three years in advance. In this way, the Sir Knights, as with the monarch’s team, can focus their efforts on the ceremony.

Secondly, there is clear similarity in the salute to the superior and the acknowledgement of hierarchy. In Templary, since the ancient Templars of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, Knights used the hand salute, the Roman symbol that “I am unarmed and acknowledge you in friendship” the junior knight salutes his senior. In the Masonic Lodge, a Brother presents the due guard to the Master or Warden. In Royal Britain, the subjects bow deeply to the sovereign, and he returns with a slight bow, seen many times during the events of the funeral and accession.

Next, the seniority and hierarchy of rank is evident in both systems. During the royal procession of the monarch’s casket from place to place, the lying-in state, and the funeral and burial, military units and pall bearers are arranged by protocol. Various

military services are highlighted at contrasting times, due to history, and military regiments are formed based upon the longevity of service. We see this concept at Commandery Opening and Closing ritual, the procession of the Commander to the Triangle followed by his leadership, the Generalissimo, Captain General, and Prelate. The Grand Encampment where Grand Commanders are introduced to the Grand Master by seniority of the establishment of their Grand Commandery.

Next, one essential element is present at all times and hidden in plain sight. The Masonic tiled floor, called Mosaic Pavement, the iconic white and black checkered pattern, existed in Ancient Egypt and Greece and within King Solomon's Temple. The pattern represents balance, symbolizes light and dark, the duality of good and evil, the Sun that rules the day and the Moon that governs the night, or the source of light and the absence, or darkness. This floor has existed in Westminster Abbey since the twelfth century, near the time of Sir Hugh de Payen, first Knight Templar Grand Master's visit to England in 1128. This floor is also present at St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, location of the Queen's burial and home of the Knights of the Garter. Templars and Brother Masons all know that this floor exists in every Lodge and Commandery.

At this point, we are awaiting the coronation that will take place in May 2023, the formal crowning of the Sovereign. We will witness here Charles III and royal symbols of the realm, such as the Sword of Justice, the Scepter, and the Orb, and taking the oath of office. We see these elements in Templary during all installations. The Grand Commander and all Eminent Commanders take the historic oath, hold a sword of office, as guards are present with the National Flag, Beauceant, and banners.

Upon strict examination of the British Royal Funeral and a Templar change of command, there is no doubt that there is a connection between royal protocol and the rituals of the Knights Templar. Numerous elements are in common with similar histories. There is therefore no doubt to the historic connection between the Ancient Knights Templar and the monarchies of the European Middle Ages.

In His Service,

Sir Knight Robb Mitchell, KCT,

Right Eminent Past Grand Commander 2022