

GRAND COMMANDERY of KNIGHTS TEMPLAR of the STATE of NEW JERSEY



S.K. Michael J. Maslanik
Right Eminent Grand Commander
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Sir Knights,

As an operative freemason I am intimately familiar and have a pragmatic grasp of all the working tools of my craft. Layout is one of my favorite operations because it utilizes the science of geometry. During this process elevations are established and perpendiculars, parallels, diagonals, angles, and the proper proportions of a structure are ascertained. The craftsman gives substance to the architect's vision. After the building lines and elevations are established, it is time to use the three working tools which require a firm grip and a clear understanding of their use. These tools are the crow, pickax and spade.

Foundations are built deep in the ground. The most ambitious plans are placed upon the trestle board or laid out by the plumb, level and square are mere conceptions until you pick up a spade, dig, then climb into the ditch and keep digging.

The ditch is dirty and deep and when your back is bent in the performance of your labors you can't even be seen. The ditch must be plumb, level and square to receive the foundation. Often the sides cave in and the mud in the bottom clings to your boots, adding even more weight to your labors. You must continue digging and when the dirt becomes too hard or you encounter obstacles, you must reach for the pickax and crow to chip away and pry at

that which would prevent you from your noble mission. This is an honorable thing that you do, for without your efforts nothing gets done.

It takes many days of sweat and toil to complete this task and when the foundation is laid it is backfilled with the same dirt that you so earnestly removed.

The structure is built, and it seems as though all your efforts have been buried. The new aristocracy arrives for the dedication and amidst the fanfare and champagne pat each other on the back and take credit for the magnificent edifice.

You remember those days that the soft skinned architect in his white shirt and shiny hard hat stood over you with coffee in hand, not daring to get his hands dirty or get in the ditch with you. But take heart my fraters for there was another architect, much greater and unseen, who was watching you. It is the Grand Architect of the Universe who sees all. May the lord be with you and your families.

Yours in Christ,

Michael J. Maslanik, G.C.