



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

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Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

Also, I'd request that the Commandery Recorders please send me the dates of any of their activities to list in the next editions.

Upcoming 2023 Events:

Alaska Grand York Rite.....March 2-3
Pocatello Exemplification..... March 3
Oregon Grand York Rite.....April 6-8
Idaho Grand York Rite.....April 13-15
Washington Grand York RiteMay 11-13

A Roman New Year

By Barry E. Newell

"The day dawns prosperous: be propitious all, with tongue and heart. Now good words

on a good day must be spoken. Let ears be free from lawsuits, let mad disputes forthwith be absent. Malicious tongue, put off your business!"

This quote is taken from the first book of Ovid's *Fasti*, a six-book poem on the origins of holidays in the Roman empire. A great portion of the first book deals with the Roman god Janus, who is the god of beginnings, travel, transitions, war and peace, doors, gates, passages, and endings, which is significant to the New Year and for whom the month of January is named after. It is important to note that the Greeks had no equivalent god to Janus.

The god Janus was often depicted as having two faces so he can look forward to the future and to the past. In Ovid's *Fasti*, Janus appears before the bard holding "a staff in his right hand and a key in his left." He goes on to tell Ovid that he is known by many names including Chaos and describes that he has been around since the elements separated and the material world formed. He states that he was formless and as the world came out of chaos, so did he:

"At that time I, who had been a round mass and a bulk without form,

resorted to a shape and limbs appropriate to a god. Even now, small indication of my once chaotic shape, what's in front and behind in me appears the same."

He is most known for time and transition, but being the god of the "beginning and the end" also included conflict. During times of war, the doors of the Temples of Janus were left open and closed during times of peace. The exact nature of Janus is debated, but he is seen to be a god venerated not and used to symbolize more than just sacred practices, but even the mundane; he is venerated for his part at the beginning of time, but is invoked by farmers during the harvest. There were numerous rites to Janus because he could be worshiped at the beginning of the year as well as each month and was also venerated at the beginnings and ends of important events such as the harvest or military seasons. He is sometimes also seen as a uranic deity which is the personification of the sky and is a deity dealing with the creation myth of a particular faith, religion, or mythology.

The first, or kalends, of January, was especially important in the celebration of Janus. It was to be a day of good luck and kindness so as to be a good omen for the rest of the year. This custom carries on today with the singing of Auld Lang Syne or serving "good luck foods" on New Year's Day.

January 1st is set as the beginning of the New Year and is held in the cold of winter rather than the spring when life springs anew because Janus states:

"The winter solstice is the first day of the new sun, the last of the old. Phoebus and the year take the same starting point."

Now, let us not dwell on the past, but look forward to a new dawn, a bright new year full of opportunity. I wish you all a very Happy New Year!! May it be prosperous and full of blessings.

