

MINNESOTA SUPPLEMENT

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WHY THE YORK RITE Ray Hayward PM, KCT, HRAKTP

If I were asked why anyone should join the York Rite, one of my first answers would be that anyone who has joined a Blue Lodge in practically anywhere in America, is already a York Rite Mason and can continue the journey. I would tell them that the oldest and most accepted version of the Lost Master's Word is revealed in the York Rite where future ages found out the right.

Many parts of the dialogue between the second ruffian and Hiram, and between King Solomon and the craftsman all become clear in the later York Rite degrees. I would tell them that the York Rite is the template for all degrees that have been added or rewritten in the last 200 years. I would say that the York Rite degrees engage all five senses as well as the spirit, intuition, and emotions, instead of just the eye and intellect.

I would tell them that the York Rite follows a basic Biblical sequence with the degrees imparting lessons from various books of the Bible. The three degrees of the Blue Lodge, the four degrees of the Royal Arch Chapter, the three degrees of the Cryptic Council, and the first Order in the Commandery, the Order of the Red Cross, follow the Old Testament. Beginning with the Order of Malta and concluding with the Order of the Temple (Knight Templar degree), the Commandery ritual follows the New Testament. Even though the fundamental York Rite ritual ends with the New Testament, I would tell them there is no graduation or end to Masonic learning. In every degree after the Master Mason degree, a York Rite candidate continually seeks further Light because there is no end to Light. No finishing schools exist where you get to the end of Light and seek no more.

I would also put to rest the most questioned and confusing part of the York Rite, the Commandery, with its Christian overtones. There are many applications of the teachings of Christianity, some of the most well-known being Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and the various Evangelical movements. I would say that the Commandery and its chivalric ritual, is a uniquely Masonic application of these teachings, just as the Blue Lodge is a Masonic application of the teachings of Judaism.

I would say that the appended and invitational bodies in the York Rite are some of the most interesting and educational. These York Rite bodies preserve many of the

