

FIRST CONTACT TO THE NEWLY RAISED MASON

Dear Brother _____,

I congratulate you upon being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason! Masonry is full of rich teachings and enigmatic symbolism; it is nearly impossible to receive and understand it all. I encourage you to attend Lodge and witness every degree as often as you can. Every time you attend, you will pick up something “new”, which may have escaped your notice from the time before. The teachings and knowledge from Masonic symbolism we call “*Light*” or “*Divine Truth*”. A wise man will always have a desire for the “*Light*” as you did when you became an Entered Apprentice, then “*more Light*” as a Fellowcraft, and the “*further Light*” as a Master Mason.

In the Blue Lodge, its ancient secrets and basic moral principles are only partly revealed. Even when the Master Mason degree is concluded, you are left with only a Substitute Word, but you must plan for the solution of your fraternal and spiritual problems. Remember, “*Behold the Temple is not yet completed*” and later the Master’s Word is lost, and a substitute given “*Until future generations shall find out the right*”. This means that there must be “*further Light*”. And it is my duty to inform you there is! Join the York Rite, today, and discover “*further Light*”.

From 1717, it was almost a century before the various groups in England were consolidated and the powers and prerogatives of the Grand Lodge were acknowledged and accepted. Still, the tradition that Masonry existed “*From time immemorial*” persisted. Changes and innovations were vigorously resisted. After years of negotiations and the testing of innumerable degrees that clamored for Masonic approval, the Masons of England formed the United Grand Lodge of England, December 27, 1813, and definitely defined the elements of Ancient Craft Masonry in their General Laws and Regulations as “*Pure ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, those of Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.*” The York system is completed in the Knights Templar.

At that time, only Past Masters of Blue Lodges were qualified to receive the Royal Arch Degree. It was then deemed that this degree was so important, Master Masons, who having received the Mark Master Degree, were then able to become (Honorary) Past Masters, thus making them eligible to witness completion and dedication of King Solomon’s Temple, and receive the long “*lost Masters Word*” in the Royal Arch Degree. In Virginia, Royal Arch Chapters confer the Mark Master Degree, Past Master Degree, Council Degrees (Select Master and Royal Master Degrees), Most Excellent Master Degree, and the Royal Arch Degree.

The Commandery of Knights Templar offers the Chivalric Orders of Christian Knighthood through the *Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, Mediterranean Pass and Order of Malta*, and the *Order of the Temple*. These Orders as they are called, are most impressive and explain the Christian interpretation of Freemasonry. Discover for yourself, “Why every Christian Mason should be a Knight Templar.”

The Virginia's York Rite provides that further "Light" through the most beautiful Degrees and Orders in all of Freemasonry given by Royal Arch Chapters, and Commanderies of Knights Templar.

No doubt you have been told, or you will be told eventually, that the degrees conferred in the Blue Lodge embodies the whole of "Light". ***That is true, but it is also misleading!*** The old idiom "**the devil is in the details**" meaning that something might seem simple at a first look but will take more time and effort to compete than expected.

Many Masonic scholars agree that the narrative of the Craft, as illustrated in the three degrees, is not the whole story. The Degrees of York Rite Masonry complete the story and provide answers to many questions that the newly raised Master Mason may have. The symbolism of the Royal Arch picks up where the Symbolic (Blue) Lodge leaves off. The symbolism of the Blue Lodge degrees emphasizes the building of King Solomon's; the Royal Arch Masonry continues in this vein by emphasizing symbols and allegories of the Second Temple, the Ark of the Covenant, a further symbolism of Solomon's temple completed, and the Lost Word which is given to the Royal Arch Mason. The Commandery Knights Templar Orders have a Christian orientation, their teachings are based on the crusades of the original Knights Templar and are based upon the practice of the Christian virtues, moral values, and spiritual lessons.

Freemasonry teaches us that it is a progressive science, a system of ethics wherein moral precepts is taught by lessons based on the allegorical use of the operative craftsman's tools. Symbolic (Blue Lodge) Freemasonry prepares the candidate in the use of symbolic stone for that Spiritual Temple. Capitular and Cryptic (Royal Arch Chapter) Freemasonry instructs the candidate in the allegorical use of operative tools of the craftsman. Finally, Chivalric (Commandery Knights Templar) Freemasonry instructs in the allegorical use of the weapons in the discharge of the duties of knighthood whereby the Moral Temple, built and restored in Symbolic, Capitular and Cryptic Freemasonry, can be defended and beatified by the precepts of Christianity.

The rich history of York Rite Masonry is undeniable. The York Rite is historically the oldest and purest of the appendant Rites. Every Master Mason should be fascinated by the lessons and mysteries of Freemasonry provided by the Blue Lodge

As a Master Mason, you are entitled to petition the Appendant Bodies of Freemasonry. I look forward to hearing from you soon and again welcome you as a Brother to our Fraternity. Please contact me at Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Sincerely and Fraternally Yours