

## **Masonic Minutes—January Two**

### **York Rite Bodies of Missouri**

Inquiring minds often seek to find the answer to this question; “What is York Rite Masonry and why should I be interested in it?” The York Rite or American Rite is one of several Rites of Freemasonry. A Rite is a series of progressive degrees conferred by various Masonic organizations or bodies, each of which operates under the control of its own central authority. The York Rite specifically is a collection of separate Masonic Bodies and associated Degrees that would otherwise operate independently. It consists of four distinct and separate sovereign Masonic bodies:

- The Symbolic (or Blue) Lodge (Ancient Craft Freemasonry)
- The Chapter of Royal Arch Masons (Capitular Freemasonry)
- The Council of Royal and Select Master (Cryptic Freemasonry)
- The Commandery of Knights Templar (Chivalric Freemasonry)

All of these are established on the principle of self-governance where the senior officers are elected by and from the membership of that particular organization. The symbolic degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, as conferred in the United States, are considered to be degrees of the York Rite. If you are a Master Mason then you have received the first three degrees of this Rite. It is perfectly natural that having begun your Masonic work in this Rite, you should want to continue in it. Therefore, since the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry are the first three degrees of York Rite Freemasonry, those who have attained the degree of Master Mason may petition for the remainder of the York Rite Degrees and Orders.

As a Master Mason, an overseer of the Work, you are taught many moral lessons and are prepared for the life to come, but the Temple of life is not yet completed. Those faithful Craftsmen who have diligently labored so long are deprived of the WORD because of the wickedness of others. This WORD was to entitle them to WAGES that were to be paid for their faithfulness. Because of the archaic symbolism used in the Ancient Craft Degrees, the concepts are often difficult to comprehend. The York Rite Degrees and Orders exist to explain and make clear the wonderful knowledge imparted to us in symbolic form, and to supply that which was lost but later FOUND. It is a natural progression for those Master Masons who are seeking further light.

Nearly all Masonic Bodies have a designated charity; each is unique to the sovereign organization. The various charities of the York Rite Concordant Bodies help fund research in the field of central auditory processing (CAP) disabilities, medical research, support of the Masonic Youth organizations, fund the restoration of eyesight through surgical procedures, trips to the Holy Land for worthy Pastors and Clergy, and Educational Scholarships. If you are interested in more information about this branch of Freemasonry, seek the counsel of a lodge member who is affiliated with the York Rite. You can also discover more at this website: <http://www.moyorkrite.org>