

## **Royal Arch Masonry** **The Path to More Light** **in Masonry...**

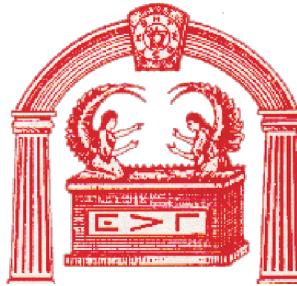
In each of the first three degrees of Freemasonry, the candidate expresses a desire for light. But once he has been raised, we tend to leave him to his own devices. Those true seekers will find the Royal Arch degrees to be the best “next step” on the path to more light in Masonry.

The six Royal Arch degrees are intimately related to the first three degrees in Masonry. They detail the story of the completion, dedication, destruction, and rebuilding of King Solomon's Temple including the recovery of the lost secrets.

The Royal Arch Degree completes the Blue Lodge Mason's basic instruction and prepares him for a lifetime of seeking light. In Virginia our ancient Constitution of Masonry (Chapter 3, Section 4, Number 7) states, “to exercise all degrees of the Ancient Craft, and consequently the Royal Arch.” This clearly shows the intimate connection between the Blue Lodge and the Royal Arch from ancient times.

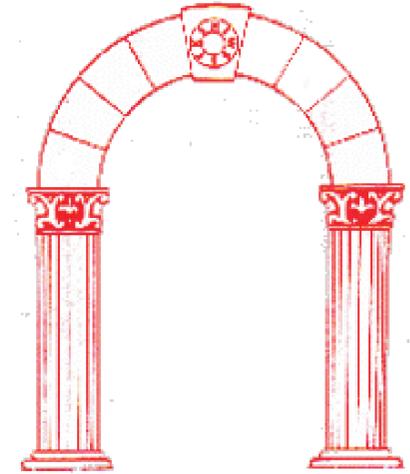
### PLEASE NOTE:

This material is intended for, and should only be given to, those who have received this degree. Its purpose is to assist new Most Excellent Masters to better remember & understand their experience in this degree.

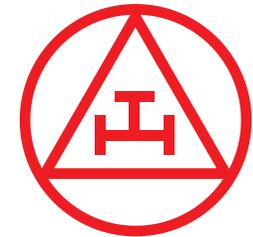


For more information or to obtain a petition, please contact the nearest Royal Arch Chapter or the office of the Grand Secretary  
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This material was produced by the Committee on Membership Development and Education, Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia, Donald L. McAndrews, Chairman, and for exclusive use by and within this Grand Jurisdiction



# **Most** **Excellent** **Master**



**Royal Arch Masonry**  
*Uncovering The Lost Secrets*

# Most Excellent Master the completion and dedication of the Temple

This beautiful degree is peculiarly practiced in the Americas and almost nowhere in Europe. It celebrates the completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple by constructing, from biblical accounts, an historically appropriate ceremony. The presiding officer represents King Solomon who presided at the dedication of his Temple. In our dedication ceremony, the Craft processes with joyous song to seat the Arc of the Covenant and to place the last remaining keystone or capstone in a principal arch which at last completes the building. With more singing, the Craft symbolically lay aside their implements and regalia, demonstrating that the work is done. Finally, with more singing, the candidates are received and acknowledged as Most Excellent Masters by each member present.

At this time, the degree recounts the biblical and historical event of the dedication which is taken from II Chronicles. At the dramatic conclusion of this ceremony the charge is given to the newly made Most Excellent Masters. They are informed that one of their great duties is to dispense light and truth to the uninformed Mason. They are reminded of the impossibility of accomplishing this without an accurate acquaintance with the lectures of each degree. They are informed that they have been accepted with an indulgence, based on the belief

that they will diligently apply themselves to become so acquainted. And finally, they are charged with applying themselves to study and the acquisition of knowledge as a responsibility of this honorary degree. Along with the grip and word of this degree, the candidate is given the admonition to be charitable of a brother Most Excellent Master's faults and failings.

An explanation is given at the end of this degree, that when the Temple was completed, the craft were freed, permitted to travel in foreign countries, work and receive Master's wages. But because it was necessary to keep the Temple in continual repair, King Solomon retained a sufficient number for that purpose, and organized them into a Lodge of Most Excellent Masters.

The elaborate ceremonies attendant with the dedication of King Solomon's Temple impress upon the candidate that the Glory of the Lodge can not only fill His house of worship, but that it can also illuminate the hearts and minds of men devoted to His service in the true spirit of sacrifice. In his *Royal Arch Textbook*, John Dove writes, "None but the meritorious and praiseworthy; none but those who by diligence and industry have progressed far towards perfection; none but those who have been seated in the Oriental chair by the unanimous suf-

frages of their brethren, can be admitted to this degree of Masonry.

"In its original establishment, when the Temple of Jerusalem was finished, and the fraternity celebrated the capstone with great joy, it is demonstrable that none but those who had proved themselves complete masters of their profession were admitted to this honor; and indeed the duties incumbent on every Mason who is accepted and acknowledged as a Most Excellent Master, are such as render it indispensable that he should have a perfect knowledge of all the preceding degrees."

The Most Excellent Master Degree is a fitting and necessary chapter in the story which begins with the construction of King Solomon's Temple (Entered Apprentice Degree) and concludes with the work of rebuilding the Temple under Zerubabel after the Jewish exile in Babylon. It gives us the historical perspective which necessarily leads to the conclusion of our great story and forcefully points out our expanding duty as Masters of the Craft. The Most Excellent Master Degree is the foundation which helps us to bridge the gap of time and arrive back in Jerusalem knowledgeable and properly prepared for the discoveries which, in darkness and secrecy, have laid waiting for four hundred and seventy years.