



Grand Chapter Committee on Education

The Anointed High Priest Degree

The Anointed Order of High Priesthood also known as a “chair” degree, is conferred upon present or past High Priests, typically during the time of the Grand Chapter’s annual grand convocation. In Virginia, it is a requisite to being recognized as a Past High Priest when his year has ended.

It tells the story of Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and his encounter with Melchizedek, High Priest of Salem. The candidate participates in a breaking of bread and sharing of wine, assumes an obligation to preside justly over his chapter, and to regard all Companion High Priests as true friends and Brothers. He is then solemnly anointed, consecrated and set apart to the Holy Order of High Priesthood.

The scripture verses relevant to this degree are Genesis 14:1-3, 8-24, and Genesis 33:18-20.

The central element of the jewel of a past high priest is a representation of the breastplate worn by the High Priest in the Holy Temple of Jerusalem, its twelve precious stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel. It was through this breastplate that God could communicate to the High Priest by causing the air currents to flicker the light from the candle onto the two sacred jewel stones held by the High Priest, the Urim (representing light and excellence) and the Thummim (representing perfection and completion), and thence reflected upon the breastplate where they would cause flashes upon the stones. A flash from each of the two sacred jewel stones onto each of the breastplate stones indicated the particular Hebrew letter engraved upon that respective stone. When not in use, the Urim and Thummim were kept in a pocket behind the breastplate. Three equilateral triangles, or deltas, are each a symbol of the sacred name of God, the pronunciation of which is no longer known to man. The Hebrew characters, collectively known as the Tetragrammaton, inscribed on the deltas are believed to be the consonants of that sacred name.