

ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER of the RED CROSS

The First Step Chivalric Orders

We congratulate you on your admission into the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and taking the first step in your journey of becoming a Knights Templar.

Your Objectives

Upon completion of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross material, you will be able to:

- Describe the early history of Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.
- Identify the elected and appointed officers of an Illustrious Order of Red Cross.
- Identify the Masonic symbols and emblems associated with the Order of the Red Cross.
- Identify the purpose of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.
- Complete the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross examination.

Early History of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross

“This order, whose legend dates it far anterior to the Christian era and in the reign of Darrius, has no analogy with the chivalric orders of knighthood. It is purely Masonic and intimately connected with the Royal Arch degree. In this country it is always conferred in a Commandery of Knights Templar and is given as a preliminary reception in that degree.

The legend is as follows: “After the death of Cyrus, the Jews, who had been released by him from their captivity and permitted to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the temple, found themselves obstructed in the undertaking by the neighboring nations especially by the Samaritans. Hereupon they sent an embassy, at the head of which was their prince, Zerubbabel, awaiting a favorable opportunity, succeed not only in obtaining his request, but also in renewing the friendship which had formerly existed between the king and himself.

In commemoration of these events, Darrius is said to have instituted a new Order and called it the Knights of the East. They afterwards assumed their present name from the red cross in their banners” (Bennett, p. 100). The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross although an integral part of becoming a Knight Templar was never an actual chivalric order such as the Orders of Malta and the Temple. (Conner, 1894).

“THE learned Sir Alfred Creigh, whose name is a household word among American Knights Templar, used the following language in a report to the Grand Commandery of Pennsylvania, September, 1867: "The Ritual of the Red Cross was manufactured by Webb and his associates from kindred degrees not of this Order. It requires no argument to demonstrate

that this degree has no connection whatever with the orders of Christian knighthood, nor never should have been incorporated into an order whose sublime teachings are of Jesus as the Redeemer of the world—in his editorial character, as the way, the truth and the life."

The equally scholarly and thoughtful Sir George S. Blackie made a report to the Grand Commandery of Tennessee, May 9, 1871, in which he used the following strong language: "The inconsistency is glaring—the ceremonies are foreign to Christian knighthood. How utterly out of place does the Christian candidate appear when, as a preliminary to the glorious truths of the New Testament, he is introduced to a Jewish Sanhedrin, captured by pagan soldiers, and after having been entertained with an apocryphal legend at the banquet of a pagan monarch, he is sent out into the world without having heard of the name of Christ."

The unanimous adoption of the revised Ritual of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross by the Grand Encampment, in Denver, on August 10, 1892, explains and settles the misconceptions of these dear Fratres forever, and yet a few words may not be out of place at this time. The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is not a pagan rite, nor is it a mere social observance. It is an Order founded upon TRUTH, recognizing the GOD OF TRUTH as the only one true and living God. As such it is a proper preparation for the solemnities of the Order of the Temple.

Darius believed in the same one that Israel did when he registered a vow with that God to rebuild His Temple in the destroyed p. 11 city of Jerusalem. No doubt he registered that vow

under the promptings of his Jewish friend, Prince Zerubbabel, who was the recognized Chosen of God. Darius kept that vow, demonstrating his love of TRUTH and his reverence for Judah's Jehovah. The most exalted TRUTH was present implicitly, in Judaism, and the Law of Judaism was the schoolmaster that brought us to Christianity. The most exalted TRUTH is now explicit in Christianity. In Judaism it was the seed, then the blade, and then Christianity ripened it into the ear. So is the TRUTH of all truths implicitly in the Order of the Red Cross, and the candidate finds that same truth, but explicitly, in the Order of the Temple. As Judaism was a preparation for Christianity, so let, the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross be a preparation for the Christian Order of the Temple". (Conner, p. 7-8)

Elected and appointed officers of an Illustrious Order of Red Cross.

Conclaves are meetings held by Commanderies of Knights Templar, and are generally opened in that degree, called the Order of the Temple. The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, however has its own officers but they typically do not open conclaves. Thus the officers for conferring the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross consist of:

- Sovereign Master
- Price Chancellor
- Prince Master of the Palace
- Master of Calvary
- Master of Infantry (Companion Conductor)
- Excellent High Priest
- Master of Finance
- Master of Dispatches
- Standard Bearer
- Warder
- Sentinel
- Guards (Three or more)

Symbols and emblems associated with the Order of the Red Cross.

THE BANNER OF THE ORDER: It is of green color. In its center is a star of seven points, painted on gold, within which is painted the blood-red Cross of the Order, surrounded by the Motto: "Magna est Veritas, et Praevalebit," – "Great is Truth, and it will prevail". The letters on the arms of the Cross are black.

THE RED CROSS OF THE ORDER: It is of blood-red color, of equal arms and angles, with the letters on the extremities of the arms, D T J L. The four arms, thus indicating Deity, Truth, Justice and Liberty. These commemorate our faith in God, and in the grand characteristics of this Illustrious Order. This Cross is the Jewel of the Order, and may be properly worn by the members thereof, suspended by a green and red ribbon.

Purpose of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross

The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is not a pagan rite, nor is it a mere social observance. It is an Order founded upon TRUTH, recognizing the GOD OF TRUTH as the only one true and living God. As such it is a proper preparation for the solemnities of the Order of the Temple.

Quiz 2

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