The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross

For

The State of Nevada

10 June 2014
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Abbreviations:

S.M. Sovereign Master

[Other players are the Marshal, The Master of Infantry, and the Master of Cavalry]

Paraphernalia:

Costume for the players above
A scepter for the Sovereign Master
A Baldric (Green Sash) for each candidate
A sword and scabbard for each candidate
The Red Cross Banner
Work:

[An exemplar may be used. The class shall participate in those parts of the Ritual where indicated. When an exemplar is used the class shall be placed in a convenient position where they can witness and hear the ceremony, and participate when necessary. The entire class shall be conducted into the Audience Chamber, by the Marshal, and the exemplar shall be placed a few paces from the Altar, which shall be placed before the class enters:]

S. M.: The Illustrious Order of the Red Cross is conferred in a Council duly convened, and the ceremony must be conferred in full or short form. I will confer the Order upon you in short form, and proceed to invest you with the attributes of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross. Before doing so, however, I must require of you the following declaration:

(All candidates must make declaration)

S. M.: Companions, do you on your honor as Royal Arch Masons, and in the presence of God and these witnesses, declare that you will be forever faithful to the trust we are about to repose in you, and that you will keep inviolable our secrets, and maintain the honor of this Council.

Candidates: I do.

S. M.: [Recites Historical Lecture:]

HISTORICAL LECTURE

The Scriptures inform us that for their sins, and those of their forefathers, the Jewish people were led into captivity by Nebuzar-adan, Captain of the Guard of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. As slaves they
tilled the valley of the Euphrates and of the Tigris, until Cyrus destroyed the Chaldean dynasty.

During that captivity, Zerubbabel, Crown Prince of the House of Judah, and Darius, son of Hystaspes, formed an alliance of friendship which was probably terminated only with death.

One of the first acts of Cyrus was the liberation of the Jewish captives. He then permitted them to return to Judea, that they might rebuild the City of Jerusalem and its Temple, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed.

The foundation of the Second Temple was laid five hundred and thirty-five years before Christ—Zerubbabel, the Royal Prince, Jeshua, the High Priest, and Haggai, the Prophet, laying the same.

Cyrus died, and his son, Cambyses, succeeded him on the Medo-Persian throne. On complaint of the Cutheans, and other contiguous tribes, Cambyses commanded the work of the City and Temple to cease. During the nine years that followed, scarcely anything was done on the walls of Jerusalem, or the Temple.

Cambyses died and the Magians seized the throne, from which their usurper was driven, in a little over a year, with great slaughter. Then the Seven Great Families of Persia laid hold of the government, and Darius ascended the throne.
He appointed Zerubbabel, his friend, to be Governor of the Jews that had returned to Mount Zion under the decree of Cyrus the Great, and afterwards appointed him to that place of great trust—a guard of the Royal Bed-chamber—for the protection of the person of the King. There were three of these Guards, and they were chosen by the Monarch because of his implicit confidence in their loyalty.

Fifteen years after the Jews had laid the foundation of the Second Temple (520 B.C.) they were forced to call a Grand Council to consult about the state of the country. Cambyses was dead, and the Magian usurper, Smerdis, had been driven from the throne, to give place to Darius, Son of Hystaspes, whose favoring of the Jews was believed to be almost as marked as that of the Great Cyrus.

Darius spread a feast at his capitol, and invited thereto the Princes and Rulers of the realm. That feast was thoroughly enjoyed, and at its close "they every one departed to bed at their own house, and Darius the King went to bed."

The King slept lightly, and awaking he fell into conversation with his Three Guards. He suggested, as a part of the festivities of the morrow, that they three engage in a public discussion of some interesting question, as had been the custom on similar occasions from time immemorial, and that he would reward with a princely gift the successful contestant. The King then propounded the following question:
"Whether Wine was not the strongest?—Whether Kings were not such?—Whether Women were not such, or whether Truth were not the strongest of all."

Esdras makes the Guards suggest both the questions and the prize, but we follow the story as told by Josephus.

Again the King slept, and the Guards prepared for the friendly contest of the following morning. When the King arose he sent for the Princes and Rulers to meet him in the Audience Chamber, and witness the contest between his Guards.

The contest began in time by one of the Guards declaiming in favor of the strength of Wine, followed by another in favor of the power of the King. Then the Jew, Zerubbabel, contended for the supereminency of Women, concluding with a noble deliverance in favor of Truth.

The brilliant assembly burst forth into applause when Zerubbabel concluded, and the King awarded him the prize, with these words: "Ask for somewhat over and above what I have promised, for I will give it unto you because of your wisdom."

Then "Zerubbabel put him in mind of the vow he had made in case he should ever have the kingdom." Now this vow was "to rebuild Jerusalem, and to rebuild therein the Temple of God, and also to restore the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged, and carried to Babylon."
And behold the King was pleased to arise and to kiss his eloquent Guard, Zerubbabel, and to grant his request. Zerubbabel returned to his people in Jerusalem with great joy, and the rebuilding of the City and Temple was immediately resumed. Darius not only kept his vow, but made large contributions to the rebuilding out of the Royal Treasury.

The details adopted to more beautifully round out the drama, and more pointedly teach the lesson of the almighty force and the importance of Truth, do not entrench upon the facts of history.

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, and is a proper preparation for the solemnities of the Order of the Temple.

Darius believed in the one God, when he registered a vow to rebuild the City and Temple of Jerusalem, a vow he religiously kept. "Blessed be the God of Truth," on the lips of Darius purges the memory of his early reign from all taint of Sabianism, into which he wandered in later life.

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.

S. M.: Today, you, and each of you, are Zerubbabel, as we go back in time to the Court of King Darius and the Founding of the New Order.
Princes and Rulers, to perpetuate unto all ages the remembrance of
this happy occasion, and the events which have renewed our early intimacy
with Zerubbabel, we propose to found a new Order. It shall be instituted to
inculcate the almighty force and the importance of TRUTH. It shall be forever
known as THE ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER OF THE RED CROSS, and upon you, Zerubbabel, as
a further proof of our friendship and esteem, we will confer the honor of
creating you - its first member. But before we can do so we must demand of
you a solemn Vow to be forever faithful to the Laws and Regulations which
we now establish for the government of that Order.

Prince Zerubbabel, you will now approach that Altar, on which lie a
copy of the Sacred Writings of your people, and what we are assured are the
symbols of your Ancient Craft.

You will kneel upon your left knee, your right knee forming a square,
your left hand resting upon the Sacred Writings, Square and Compasses, and
your right hand upon your heart.

[Done. Marshal shall assist exemplar and then arrange other candidates
standing behind the exemplar left hand on the exemplar’s shoulder or whoever is in
front of them. Right hand on their heart.]

Princes and Rulers, arise, and witness this Vow.
OPTIONAL RUBRIC

(In conferring the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, the Sovereign Master, in administering the vow of the Order, may have the candidates repeat paragraph # [1], the Sovereign Master will recite paragraphs [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], and the candidates will repeat paragraph [7].)

[All candidates must participate in the Vow.]

OBLIGATION OR VOW

S.M.: You will say “I”, pronounce your name in full, and repeat after me: - Of my own free will and accord, and in the presence of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, and these witnesses, do hereby and hereon, solemnly and sincerely promise and vow, that I will forever keep and conceal the secrets belonging to the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross;

That I will not communicate them to anyone except to a true and lawful Companion of the Order; and not unto him until after due trial, strict examination, of lawful information shall have found him legally entitled to the same; or, within the body of a regular and duly convened Council of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.

I further promise and vow, that I will stand to and abide by the Rules and Regulations of this or any other Council of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross of which I may become a member.
I further promise and vow, that I will answer and obey all due signs and
summons sent to me by legal authority, or given me by the hand of a true
and lawful companion of the Order, if within the distance of forty miles,
natural infirmities and unforeseen events alone exempting me.

I further promise and vow, that I will vindicate the character of a true
and courteous Companion of the Order, when traduced, and that I will assist
him on all lawful occasions.

Furthermore, I promise and vow, that I will not assist at the founding or
opening a Council of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross unless there shall
be present at least nine regular Companions of the Order or the
representatives of three separate Councils operating under a lawful warrant.

I further promise and vow, that I will not attend or be present at the
conferral of the Order upon any person who shall not have received all the
prior degrees of Freemasonry, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

To all this, I solemnly and sincerely, promise and vow, with a firm and
steady resolve without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret
evasion in me whatever; binding myself under no less a penalty than that of
having my house pulled down, the timbers thereof set up, and I hanged there
from and that, until the last trumpet shall sound, I be expelled from the
society of all true and courteous Companions of the Order, should I ever
knowingly or willfully, violate these, my sacred vows, as a Companion of the
Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.

So help me God and keep me steadfast.
S. M.: Arise, and approach the throne.

S. M.: And now, Zerubbabel, we will confer upon you the highest honor in our gift by creating you the first member of this new Order. You will kneel on your left knee.

S. M.: [Raising his scepter.] We now create and constitute you a Companion of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, which we now found; and we do hereby create and constitute each of the Princes and Rulers present a Companion of said Order.

[Dub each candidate (or, just the exemplar) on the right shoulder with the scepter and then lower the scepter to the table.]

Arise, Companion Zerubbabel, and with this hand receive a hearty welcome into this new Order, which will be ever ready to protect, vindicate and defend you.

[Raise exemplar with your right hand.]

Princes and Rulers, be seated.

S. M.: [With Green Sash in hand. Green Sash is rested on right shoulder – put on over the head from the left side. Other candidates should also now be invested with their own Green Sash by the Master of Infantry.] I now invest you with this Green Sash, and make it the insignia of this new Order, which is designed to perpetuate the remembrance of the events that have occasioned the renewal of our friendship, and to inculcate the almighty force and the importance of TRUTH.
Let its color ever remind you that TRUTH is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every virtue.


[The Master of Infantry approaches with a belt and scabbard and clasps the belt around Zerubbabel. Master of Infantry makes sure the S.M. has the sword for the exemplar — The other candidates each get their own sword and scabbard.]

S. M.: [Taking up exemplar’s Sword.] I now present you with this Sword. In the hands of a true and courteous Companion of this Order it will be endowed with three excellent qualities: — its hilt -with FAITH, its blade -with HOPE, its point -with CHARITY. Let these teach you that he who draws his sword in a just and virtuous cause, having FAITH in God, may reasonably HOPE for victory, ever remembering to extend CHARITY to a fallen foe. You will return it to its scabbard.

[S.M. presents the exemplar with the sword. Exemplar returns the sword to its scabbard. Done.]

There, let it remain until consumed by rust, rather than draw it in the cause of Injustice, Falsehood, or Oppression, - for JUSTICE, TRUTH, and LIBERTY are the Grand Characteristics of this Illustrious Order.

S. M.: [Resuming his seat.] You will now be instructed in what we decree to be the attributes of this Order, and the MEANS OF RECOGNITION among its members. These are:


[2] The Persian Countersign, which is that of the Realm.

The Sign, Grip, and Word of a Companion of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.

S.M.: Companion Master of Cavalry, you will communicate these as we direct.

[Master of Cavalry takes position in front of Zerubbabel. If there are other candidates to participate in this – line them up now.]

S. M.: Draw, Swords. [All candidates draw swords.]

1. The Jewish Pass is given with three cuts of the sword.

   On guard. Give cuts.

   [Parry One.
   Parry Two,
   Parry Three.]

   It is given over an arch of steel, which your swords now form.

   Advance your left feet and place them beside each other; place your left hand on each other’s right shoulder; the pass is – Judah – and the response is – Benjemin. The companion challenged (exemplar) will always give the pass and, if correct, the companion challenging (teacher) will give the response.

   Communicate.

   [Done.]

   Carry, swords.

2. The Persian Countersign is given with four cuts of the sword.

   On guard. Give cuts.

   [Parry One
   Parry Two
And, under an arch of steel, which your swords now form.

Advance your left feet and place them beside each other; place your left hands on each other’s shoulders. The countersign is – Tetnai – the response is – Shethar-Boznai. The companion challenged (exemplar) will always give the countersign – Tetnai – and, if correct, the person challenging (teacher) will give the response – Shethar-Boznai.

Communicate.

[Done.]

Carry, swords.

3. **The Red Cross Word** is given in a similar manner with four cuts of the sword.

On guard. Give cuts.

[Parry One
Parry Two
Parry Three
Parry Four]

Advance on your left feet; place your left hands on each other’s shoulder. The word is – Veritas – the response is – Truth.

Communicate.

[Done.]

Carry, swords.
4. The Sign, Grip, and Word of a Companion of the Red Cross is given with three cuts of the sword and a thrust, which brings the points of the swords to each other’s left side near the heart.

The sign is given on the first cut.

On Guard. Give one cut.

[Parry One.]

It is like the winding of a trumpet; Thus –

[ Demonstrate the sign.]

Give the sign.

[Done.]

The Grip is given on the third cut.

Give the second and third cuts.

[Parry Two

Parry Three]

Advance the left feet, and place them beside each other.

Interlace the fingers of your left hands.

[Done.]

Turn side to side, and raise interlaced fingers until the elbows form a square.

[Done.]

Now, bring the points of the swords to each other’s left side near the heart.

[Done.]

The Word is – Libertas – the response is – Liberty. The second word is given in response to the first.

Communicate.

[Done.]

Carry swords. Return, swords.
[Teachers are told to be seated. Master of Cavalry brings the candidates before the throne or altar and the Master of Cavalry resumes his station.]

S. M.: On entering or retiring from a Council of the Red Cross, you will advance to the center of the chamber, face the Sovereign Master, and give the sign. It alludes to the penalty of your vow, where reference is made to the sound of the last trump.

**THE BANNER OF THE ORDER**

[The Master of Cavalry goes to the banner and illustrates as the Sovereign Master talks.]

S. M.: The Banner of this Order shall be of green color. In its centre there shall be a Star of seven points, within which shall be a Red Cross of equal arms and angles, surrounded by the Motto, *Magna est Veritas, et praevalebit*, —"Great is Truth, and it will prevail."

The Cross shall be the emblem of this Order, the four arms indicating **DEITY, TRUTH, JUSTICE, LIBERTY.** These will commemorate our faith in God, and in the Grand Characteristics of this Illustrious Order.

[The Master of Cavalry returns to the candidates as the leader of the candidates. All candidates will give the sign when retiring. The Master of Cavalry will lead the candidates out.]

END, OPTIONAL SHORT CEREMONY