

## SAINT CASSIEN as a Patron Saint of Masonic Rosicrucianism

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Recently, I read an article by Bro: Harvey L. Ward, PM, on the subject of "The Holy Saints John". Most of us, as Masons, are generally familiar with the phrase "Erected to God and dedicated to the Holy Saints John". Most people realize that Saint John the Baptist was a second-cousin to Jesus Christ. And, Saint John the Evangelist used the Epistles to define what traits compose Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth -- as well as giving us insightful Revelations of the days to come on Earth. Both men named "John" were important to the spread of Christianity --as a "Faith", but also by their "walking-the walk" of their actual "practicing of virtuous principles". That is what made them unique. Many of the allied branches of Masonry utilize "Saint John" as a role model of Virtue for helping the sick, aiding the distressed, educating the orphan and burying the deceased. In parts of the United Kingdom, various Orders are referred to as "The United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple and of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta. In today's Roman Catholic circles there is parallel organization that distances itself from any admitted connection to ours; yet it nevertheless has the same historical root. It is styled "The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta". There are some non-Masonic affiliated protestant groups in England and elsewhere styled as "The St John Ambulance Corps" or "Venerable Order of Saint John", etc. Their names may vary, but their mission remains virtually identical: To help those in Suffering or in Need. The ones which have been in existence 150 years or longer are considered the most 'legitimate' ---although some imposter groups exist as well.

Masonic Rosicrucians are legitimately and genuinely a Society of Scholars. Various imposter groups exist today calling themselves 'Rosicrucians' too. As the Biblical saying goes: "By their fruits, ye shall know them." Imposters generally boast labels, titles, and names --- primarily to boost their own egos or to peddle their wares or gimmicks. By contrast: legitimate groups EARN their stripes, and deserve recognition because they help Others more than just boasting on themselves. As legitimate Masonic Rosicrucians, we study a blend of Masonic, Philosophic and Mystical subjects that help fortify our basic knowledge of the Craft and society at-large. Our judgment is not clouded by theories. We don't seek to convert people's hearts or change people's minds. We always acknowledge and worship Almighty God. No mortal man speaks for our spiritual or religious destiny. We are not a School of Learning (as such), but a resource for an individual person to enlighten their mind and elevate their moral character. "Information" is free-flowing, regardless of whether it is contained or stored in the brain, or in a book, or in a computer file. We invite sharing of knowledge and information ---pure & simple. The Abbey of Saint Victor, in Marseilles, in the south of France was named after the local soldier, Saint, and martyr, Saint Victor of Marseilles. It was founded by John Cassien, who actually founded a monastery and an abbey: one for women and the other for men.

With regard to the Abbey of Saint Victor. It was founded in the 4th Century (A.D.) by the aforementioned Saint Cassien who sailed into the port of Marseilles "full of fresh ideas on monasticism acquired in Palestine and Egypt". A fortified medieval church was built on the remains of an ancient necropolis. The earlier Church was destroyed by invading Saracens, and it was the city's first basilica and with its formidable proportions, it was an impressive seat of religious learning and an administrative center for Clerics; as well as a sacred chapel, retreat and sanctuary. It was rebuilt in the 11th Century, then fortified against further attack in the 14th Century. Its crudely peaked windows demonstrate the dawning transition from Romanesque arches to Gothic points. Chunks of the earlier Church remain in what is by far the best attribute which still can be seen: the crypt, St. Cassien's original, which is buried under the new Church's medieval structure." Upstairs, is many diverse sights including the tomb of St. Victor, who was ground to death between two millstones, probably by the Romans. There's also passage into tiny catacombs where early Christians worshipped St. Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, said to have washed ashore at Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer. The boat in which they landed is reproduced in canoe shaped cookies, called navettes, which are sold during the annual procession for Candelmas in February as well as year around." As an interesting side-story: I might briefly note that centuries later (circa the year 1868, the American actor and Mason, William J. Florence, 33° and a Knight Templar, (who was also a Roman Catholic himself) sailed to Marseilles, France, where he



attended a party attended by bankers, diplomats, and royalty. The exotic sights he saw there were a mix of Jewish, Christian, and Moslem traditions and garb (including red fezzes) respectful salutations, ritualistic customs and regal pageantry. From this basic inspiration: he collaborated with Dr. Walter M. Fleming, M.D., 33° and a Knight Templar, in writing the original Ritual of the Mystic Shrine of North America.

Our Society of the Rose & Cross (more commonly referred to as Rosicrucianism) was founded by another seafaring-man, Father Christian Rosenkreutz (1378-1484) a Roman Catholic monk whose original intent was to travel to 'The Holy Land' from his native Germany ---with the hope of visiting the Holy Sepulchre or tomb of Jesus Christ and thence return to Europe to form his own Religious Order. While on the island of Cyprus, his companion (a fellow Monk) died. Consequently: Fr. Rosenkreutz later continued onward and his travels were diverted to Damascus, Syria and parts of Arabia. There are scholars who maintain that he never got to see his beloved Jerusalem. I disagree. I believe that Fr. Rosenkreutz did indeed visit Jerusalem and he then traveled back to Europe ---entering into Spain, France, and eventually Germany --where he died at age 106. Fr. Rosenkreutz, undoubtedly, also spent some time in Marseilles, France. It was a crossroads of travel (then and now). It was a hotbed of ancient traditions combined with the latest societal trends.

Blessed Guillaume Grimoard was made abbot of St. Victor's on 02 August 1361. He became Pope in 1362 and was known as Pope Urban V. He expanded the Church and surrounded the abbey with high crenellated walls which gave a castle-like appearance; as well as gave troops something to stand behind to shoot arrows or hurl spears or otherwise have a good vantage-point (as if it were a literal fortress to defend) with open gaps to observe any hostile advancements by foes. It was among the finest in "defensive architecture." Pope Urban V, returned to St. Victor's in May 1367 and held a consistory (meeting with the College of Cardinals) there, in the Abbey.

As Masonic Rosicrucians we have a deep interest in this Abbey. Rosicrucians were a Defensive group, not a group of aggressors. The Abbey was once rich with ancient manuscripts, collected from the 12th Century to the 16th Century. Speculation has it that the de'Medici family acquired many of those old books. Some may still be in existence elsewhere. Other theorists speculate that the old books became property of the then-King of France. Again, their existence or whereabouts is largely unknown. In any event, it is almost a certainty that many legitimate Rosicrucian documents and writings were among those housed at that Abbey. It is oddly curious that a different Pope (Pope Clement XII) ordered the dissolution of the Abbey of St. Victor on 17 December 1739. In cannot be mere coincidence that this same man (Clement XII) issued a missive of paranoia "In Eminenti" in April 1738. Even most Catholic scholars of today admit ---either publicly or privately--that Freemasonry was innocent of the charges made by Clement XII.

As much as Freemasonry arose out of the stonemason guilds, Rosicrucianism arose out of the desire to help our fellow-man by kind words, thoughts, acts, and deeds. The fundamental Belief in Deity was a Supernatural Truth introduced into Masonry by Rosicrucian adherents. Roman Catholic members of the Society of the Rose & Cross (Rosicrucianism) saw no harm in meeting in harmony and in good will with men of other faiths. Non-Rosicrucians and Non-Masons who were Roman Catholic viewed the Masonic Fraternity and the separate Rosicrucian Society with suspicion, jealousy and....sadly, hostility. Even subsequent Popes and members of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy at-large were not immune from hearing false reports, and issuing knee-jerk reactions which only exacerbated such falsehoods.

The irony is the one Pope (Urban V) saw the benefits of honorable Fraternities and Societies; whereas other Popes had a counter-view of hostility and opposition. Similarly, the Popes who started and sanctioned the Order of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon (sometimes referred to as the 'Order of the Temple' or 'the Knights Templar') in the 12th Century had different mindsets than the Popes who sought the Order's suppression in the 14th Century...and we have a murky mix of mindsets now in the 21st Century. One thing is for certain: VIRTUE WILL VINDICATE ITS GOOD NAME.



Our task today is to Honor the Worthy; and separate "fact" from "fiction." Our Lodges of Education can educate us on Masonic History; on ritualistic procedures, renditions, and protocol. But, in my opinion, we also have a need for Rosicrucian Colleges of Education and Enlightenment: to glean the Wisdom of the Ages; to redeem the reputations of our departed friends and Fratres; and to Glorify Almighty God. If we think, act, work, and live "honorable and virtuous lives" --- we will go a long way toward elevating the Society of the Rose & Cross into the honorable and scholarly Society which is merely a handmaiden to Religion, and not a substitute for Religion. We invoke the aid of all the Saints to help us perform our duties. They are literally our role-models. If "the Holy Saints John" are the Patron Saints of Craft Masonry; and Father Christian Rosenkreutz the Founder of Rosicrucianism --- then, it is only logical that Saint Cassien is the Patron Saint of our Society of the Rose & the Cross. His beliefs in "Defending the Faith" and honoring figures such as Mary Magdalene are examples of his valiant efforts toward remembering the Honored Dead; helping numerous people who were in distress or otherwise needing aid; extending such aid freely (gratis); and amassing a library which documented the 'collected wisdom' as Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz originally envisioned when he formed our Society. Saint Cassien's friend, Pope Urban V, was one of the few who echoed that sentiment ---and sanctioned the establishment of the Abbey and provided for its protection.

Ancient stonemasons were primarily interested in "skills" (knowledge of the ' working-tools of the trade.' Emulation of admirable traits and veneration of Saints was introduced into modern Freemasonry via Rosicrucianism. "The Brotherhood of Man, under the Fatherhood of Almighty God" isn't a mere slogan. It shows that we (as Masons and as Rosicrucians) truly Honor and genuinely Revere our Creator. Furthermore, we make every effort to tangibly practice "The Golden Rule" and "Love Thy Neighbor as Ourselves." Our Symbolic Lodges are Dedicated to the Holy Saints John. Our Rosicrucian Colleges should likewise remember Saint Cassien. Accumulation of books and preservation of record-keeping is futile unless the reader, student, Brother or Frater has a sincere desire, keen knowledge, and a deep willingness to keep information intact AND subjects in context, so that further advancements may be made to help ourselves and our fellow Creatures. Saint Cassien's influence reveals that "Wisdom" (whether it be Ancient Wisdom or Modern Wisdom) is useless unless we apply it in positive, constructive directions. Our efforts should be geared toward doing what is pleasing in the Eyes of Almighty God. So Mote It Be.



Saint Cassien

#### Sources / Recommended Readings:

- ....AND DEDICATED TO THE HOLY SAINTS JOHN" ---An inquiry into the designation of the Saints Johns as Patron Saints of Freemasonry" by W.: Bro.: Harvey L. Ward, PM., who presented it to R.T. Schafer Lodge No. 350 F&AM of The Grand Lodge of Florida.

- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences by Albert G. Mackey 33° and a Knight Templar.



- Fodor's Travel Guide website:

[http://www.fodors.com/world/europe/france/provence/review146223html?sms\\_ss=email&at\\_xt=4dd0529ee4753876%2C0](http://www.fodors.com/world/europe/france/provence/review146223html?sms_ss=email&at_xt=4dd0529ee4753876%2C0)

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