

## **THE JESUIT LINK in the Growth and Preservation of**

### **MASONIC ROSICRUCIANISM**

by

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The name of Christian Rosenkreutz is forever linked to Masonic Rosicrucianism. The following is my view that he was a real person and not a fable or a myth. From the scarce records available, most scholars feel that he was born to a poor family in Germany (of noble heritage). He was placed in a monastery at age five and raised by monks. At adulthood, he took religious Vows and became a Roman Catholic priest. For the remainder of his life, he remained unmarried and celibate.

Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz was born in 1378 and died in 1484 at the age of 106 years. To put this in a more understandable historical setting: The German theologian Martin Luther was born in 1483 ....one year before Rosenkreutz died. Luther was an Augustinian monk who became a Roman Catholic priest, himself in 1507. During Rosenkreutz's whole life, Germany was a thoroughly Roman Catholic nation. Both Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz and Fr. Martin Luther wanted to see reforms and modifications made within the Church. Neither man wanted to form a sect which would break-away from the established Roman Catholic Church.

Monasteries were numerous in Germany. At some point Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz decided to accompany a monk from Germany to a trip to Jerusalem to see the Holy Sepulchre, the burial place of Jesus Christ ....(now said to be the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). Unfortunately, the companion died at Cyprus. Rosenkreutz continued on to Damascus (now in Syria). Some scholars pose theories that Rosenkreutz never went to Jerusalem because of ill-health. I believe evidence may point to the contrary.

While it is likely that Fr. Rosenkreutz may have suffered a bout with ill-health which TEMPORARILY postponed his planned trip to Jerusalem ---- I believe he indeed arrived there. Nearly all accounts of his life describe his study of Medicine, Science, Physics, and Philosophy while at Damascus. He perfected his skill of mastering languages and knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. Incredibly, accounts of his later years tell of his travels to Egypt, then to Damcar and various cities in Arabia, then back to Egypt, thence on to various Mediterranean Sea ports, then to the city of Fez, in Morocco; on to Spain, and eventually back to Germany.



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**On top of that, he lived to the ripe old age of 106. Ill-health was NOT a hurdle in all those travels!!! Fr. Rosenkreutz was able to visit nearly every place he set out to see.**

**It is significant that Fr. Rosenkreutz spent so much time visiting ports in the Mediterranean Sea. At that time, the Knights of St John of the Hospital were influential all along those sea routes. In addition to them, the Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (an Order founded in 1099 after the First Crusade) were entrusted to guard what remained of Constantine's original basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, itself. Fr. Rosenkreutz had relatively easy access to Jerusalem at that time. He never renounced his religious Vows; and he never did forsake his family. One of his strongest supporters was his cousin (his father's brother's son) who was known in Rosenkreutz's Society simply as "Brother I.O." which illustrates that the band of brotherhood he founded was built upon the rock of flesh and blood of his own relatives. This is somewhat reminiscent of John-the-Baptist being a second-cousin to Jesus Christ. Spiritual journeys of faith often include more than one member of a person's family. Having said that, it seems obvious nothing in Rosenkreutz's life was renounced or repealed. It was in keeping with his faith that he should go and see Jerusalem and walk where Jesus walked.**

**The whole intent of his original planned journey to Jerusalem was to return to the monastery and give his fellow monks a report of what he witnessed. He did! Many of the monks had never ever before ventured beyond the grounds of the closed, secluded monastery in Germany. Rosenkreutz hoped that the insight he gained would be passed-on to others. When he formed his Society or Collegium, it focused on the duality of being a College of Learning and a College of Fellowship. A central theme swirling around these dual objectives was enlightened knowledge and new approaches to healing. The members of the Society of the Rose and the Cross were to have a dual instruction:**

**To care for the sick "free," meaning free of charge = gratis. And, they were to "be free from limitations" as to WHO was treated; WHAT methods of treatment were used; WHEN it occurred; WHERE it occurred; and HOW it was done. In Fr. Rosenkreutz's mind, caring compassion knew no bounds. To critics of that model, it sounded peculiar. More reasonable people would simply describe it as an unconventional approach to the mind, body, and soul.**

**Still, Christianity remained central to the Society. Nearly all accounts of Fr. Rosenkreutz's Society have the members going out in pairs, in different directions -- -two by two--- in missionary fashion, stopping to break bread and offer prayers of thanksgiving and to extend assistance to persons in need. This is remarkably similar to the Biblical story in Luke 24: 13-16, which relays the story of two of Jesus' disciples walking to the village of Emmaus about 7 miles from Jerusalem. The members of Fr. Rosenkreutz's Order were encouraged to seek wisdom by**



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interacting with people and to gain new members. They were expected to return and report back at regular intervals. I believe that this method was Biblically inspired and took added meaning when Rosenkreutz's companion died in Cyprus, as well as Rosenkreutz's solo trips in the overall Holy Land region. Traveling with someone is far-more safe and secure than traveling alone. It re-enforced how the clasped hands of a special friendship (a Brotherhood) is handed down from God. And, when a Brother or Frater dies, we experience a loss...a void. That is why Fr. Rosenkreutz wanted the members of the Society to learn from nature, and replenish the Society by replacing one's self with another member to carry-on. It was simply a focus on new times and new seasons ahead.

Fr. Rosenkreutz developed "Rules" for the members of his Order. This was done in the same tradition as "Rules" for other Roman Catholic Orders such as the Cistercians, the Benedictines, the Dominicans, and others. One of the Rules which Fr. Rosenkreutz mandated for the Society is that its members should wear the routine wearing apparel/garments worn by the people of whatever country the member resided in (to avoid any clashes of culture or to be mistakenly labeled a "heretic). This was undoubtedly due to the Spanish Inquisition which lasted from 1481 to 1820. I give that timeline to show the timely relevance of Fr. Rosenkreutz retreating from Spain to his native Germany. The Inquisition was in full-force just three years prior to Rosenkreutz's death.

I fully believe that Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz was attempting to found a new religious Order within the Roman Catholic Church. Although he was exposed to Jewish life as well as Arabic/Muslim culture and various other foreign philosophies - ----- he did not abandon his Christian faith. Members of the Rosy Cross showed their belief in Jesus, the Rose of Salvation who died upon the Cross. That symbol was to show that man's temporal death would be eclipsed by God's Grace with eternal life for the soul. The Franciscans are a Catholic Order founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi. Franciscans had a visible presence in Jerusalem all during Fr. Rosenkreutz's life, and that influence continues to this very day, with the Latin Patriarch Michael Sabbah and Franciscan friars now serving as custodians of the Holy Sites there.

Rosenkreutz's Society was to have been secret for over 100 years after his death. In as little as 50 years after his death, another group formed, in 1534. The Society of Jesus (also known as the Jesuits) was founded by Saint Ignatius Loyola. This society over the centuries became heavily involved in Canon Law, as well as in Education, Arts, Music, and Exploration. The Society of Jesus and the Society of the Rosy Cross ministered to the sick, and to prisoners. Neither Society had an official habit or garment for its members. The Society of Jesus (like the Society of the Rosy Cross) endeavored to help the poor and educate the youth. Both Societies stressed Missionary work. In the early years of their missionary activities, the Jesuits came



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across remnants of Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz's Society. In later years, the Jesuits adopted an intense zeal with fraternal interactions, and this led them to Masonry.

When I first read Bro. Albert Pike's book, "Morals and Dogma," I noticed Pike made an offbeat remark which was historically wrong, but which indirectly bore grains of truth in later centuries. Pike called the Templars "uneducated Jesuits". He was referring to the Knights Templar who were living prior to the year A.D. 1314. The Jesuits weren't even founded until 1534. However, Bro. Pike was undoubtedly exposed to an oral history in which he mistakenly transposed generations. His colleague, Bro & Dr. Albert G. Mackey states in his "Encyclopedia of Freemasonry" that the Jesuits took a keen interest in Ancient Craft Masonry and even greater interest in many of the higher degrees, especially Knight Templar, Knight Rose Croix and Knight Kadosh. Mackey is reticent to give the Jesuits much more credit beyond that. Perhaps their greatest impact was in the Knight Kadosh degree, in which the Jesuits influenced its development...at Lyons, France in 1743. According to Bro. Mackey, the French records speak of "the Kadosh of the Jesuits"!!! The word Kadosh itself means "Holy," and the emblem of a Knight Kadosh was a Teutonic Cross with motto "Deus Vult" (God Wills). Incredibly, the Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem have as their emblem a Cross of Jerusalem in Cardinal red with the nearly identical motto "Deus Lo Vult" (God Wills It).

These are cases in Germany and France, of Roman Catholic religious Orders that Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz had interacted with in his lifetime, now mingling with the Masonic fraternity. This intimate co-mingling ultimately led to an intertwining of fraternal purposes, and even the Jesuits influencing the designs and symbols of Masonic emblems (such as that of Knight Kadosh). And, for a period of years, it was common to have Jesuit men who were Masons and Rosicrucians.

Enlightenment was akin to education itself. The Jesuits long supported Education at all levels, so it was just a natural step for them to embrace Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. With both Pike and Mackey giving credence (even in slight part) to Jesuit participation in Masonic degrees ----- It speaks volumes!!!! It is something that shouldn't be overlooked or discounted. Pike and Mackey bravely made those admissions of Jesuit Masons during the 1880s when the Vatican was issuing condemnations of Masonry. It is certain that Pike and Mackey grudgingly admitted this, because they did not want to find anything admirable to say about a Vatican which was oppressing them at the time. It is my hope that someday, sometime (perhaps in the distant future) all the Records of the Vatican Library will be open to all. It is my hope that those records (if they still exist) would reveal a happier time when some members of the Church of Rome met as Masons and as Rosicrucians.



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**Pike and Mackey knew quite a bit about Templar history --- both ancient and modern. Pike was a Past Commander of Hugh de Payens Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar, of Little Rock, AR. Mackey was a Past Commander of South Carolina Commandery No. 1 of Charleston, SC. Both men had been active in Royal Arch Masonry and both knowledgeable about Rosicrucianism. For them to admit any type of Jesuit involvement is crucial to any historian who studies Masonry and Rosicrucianism.**

**Germany appears to be the "cross-roads" for many distinguished personalities in Masonry and Rosicrucianism. Rosenkreutz hailed from Germany; Baron von Hund is initiated into the three degrees of Craft Masonry in Germany in 1741. Then, Baron von Hund and the Chevalier Ramsey travel to France and the Kadosh degree is first seen there in 1743. Within a few years, various Rites sweep across continental Europe into England. Various accusations are made to link members of one Rite or another to the Jacobite cause in England. The Baron von Weiler claimed to have received the degrees in Rome, the reception being made in a Church of the Benedictines, with two monks in attendance.**

**In my view, the trail of Masonry and Rosicrucianism goes from the overall Holy Land area to Rome, then to Germany, then to France, and then to Britain.**

**While the Jesuits had a protective role in preserving Masonry and Rosicrucianism.....meetings were largely in Churches or an Abbey. After the Protestant Reformation, Germany became divided into two main camps: Catholic and Protestant. In mainly protestant countries, men wanted to meet in public meeting halls, even taverns, or in people's own homes. Many Jesuits could accept this. Many were willing to follow Fr. Christian Rosenkrentz's example by interacting with Hebrews, Muslims, and Christians of other denominations. However, some were not. Undoubtedly, word got out about any innovations which brought about dissatisfaction. And, those reports got back to Rome. By the mid-1700s, the members of the Society of Jesus were themselves persecuted by their own Roman Catholic Church. The Pope suppressed the Jesuits in 1773. In Prussia, King Frederick the Great (himself a high degree Mason) refused to issue proclamations of the suppression of the Jesuits. He returned the favor by protecting them!**

**I believe that before the Reformation, both Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism were stable and fairly pure in their overall composition (as contrasted to the rise of factional dissention from within and rise of upstart imitators from outside, which bore no resemblance to the genuine Orders themselves in later years).**

**It is obvious that the Jesuits who took an interest in Masonry and Rosicrucianism endeavored to do their best in Uplifting the Character of Man (with regard to Freemasonry); and they Lifted the Shroud of transforming the ills around us into**



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**Virtues around us (with regard to Rosicrucianism). I deem that comparable to the discovery of penicillin by Sir Alexander Fleming (who was a Mason). From all accounts, he was a just & upright man & Mason. In his quest for means of healing, he discovered that penicillin is made from mold (which is a bad element), but when penicillin is developed, the result switches from something bad to something that has good therapeutic value. I am certain that Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz, with his training in Medicine so many centuries ago, would have been pleased.**

**Decades ago, when there was limited understanding of how penicillin worked -- -the unknowing person might attribute it to magic or internal alchemy inside the body (which is just another way of saying a 'physiological reaction'). By lifting the veil of mysticism in an unknown area, "the un-comprehended of yesterday" becomes the "scientific knowledge of today".**

**As far as Hermetic or sealed knowledge is concerned, there is nothing wrong with knowledge being sealed or kept private until conditions warrant its disclosure. Again, I use a medical example to illustrate the necessity ---- Imagine a pharmaceutical company developing, field testing, an obtaining a patent on a particular medication. Confidentiality may be necessary to assure that a new breakthrough is tried & true; and to assure that the genuine product is brought to market (and not a fraudulent look-alike). Both Masonry and Rosicrucianism have been plagued by illegal, clandestine, and fraudulent entities that prey on people who do not find the genuine Orders.**

**In many ways, so-called "Hidden Knowledge" or "Hidden Secrets" are quite visible. The human mind is much like farmland, it has to be cultivated and it has to be nourished. And often, the land produces a bounty beyond that first harvest. Detractors may call the philosophies of Hermes Trismegistus esoteric. It is regrettable that they may also try to link it with the occult in some sort of sinister way. A Hindu or Buddhist may speak of good karma...but it can be compared to the Christian verse, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz maintained that knowledge must be used to care for & improve the lives of others. Pure, genuine, and legitimate Masonic Rosicrucianism holds that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Saviour. Masonic Rosicrucianism recognizes that Almighty God created ALL THINGS in this Universe. Mankind has learned much, but it is God's Will which allows us to use our senses to pull aside the veils which have obscured our glimpse of the bounteous world and its resources which God has given us.**

**Throughout history, whatever was deemed legitimate and genuine has often been copied, imitated, and corrupted. Spurious and clandestine beliefs carry no real worth...they die or wring-out a bleak existence without achieving anything which can be passed to the next generation. A counterfeit coin may fool someone who doesn't examine it closely, but, a coin of pure gold will carry its value for thousands**



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of years. Masonry and Rosicrucianism have been copied by fraud, but legitimate members focus on the advancement of all that is "good" in the eyes of our Creator.

I believe that the Jesuits used their influence and personal involvement in an honorable and laudable fashion which enabled them to be a Protectorate for Masonry and Rosicrucianism. In the 17th and early 18th Centuries, knowledge was limited especially in the areas of Philosophy, as well as in the Arts & Sciences. Higher education was out-of-reach for most of the common people. New discoveries were often due to either Vatican patronage or Royal patronage. The Jesuits were accustomed to participating in Masonic & Rosicrucian activities in places which were generally on church property --- either in a Church, in a University, or in a library. England had been a Roman Catholic nation, but as time passed, the country as a whole cherished its own autonomy. This expansion of thought & belief made its way into Masonic and Rosicrucian circles. According to the United Grand Lodge of England, it has never been known precisely WHY some Irish Masons found difficulty entering into Lodges in London, England in the 1740s. In a strange twist, the newer group were styled (Antients) (those mainly in Ireland), with the older group styled (Moderns).

I believe that the struggle between 'Antients' and 'Moderns' had its roots with devoted Jesuit Masons who endeavored to keep the Craft pure and without innovations. They wanted to keep intact the systems they so ardently admired and participated in. This struggle went on many years. In the midst of it all, the Jesuits were themselves suppressed by the Pope in 1773. Then, we see the merging of a United Grand Lodge of England in 1813 and the Jesuits being re-established by the Pope soon after in 1814. It is exceedingly rare for the Catholic Church to abolish a society and then, within 50 years, re-establish it. I believe that the timing reveals when Jesuit involvement occurred and when it ceased in regard to Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. In any event, I am grateful to the Jesuits for their involvement in the Societies in which we participate today.

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Recommended Readings:

- \*Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry...by Albert G Mackey
- \*Morals and Dogma...by Albert Pike, published by Supreme Council, 33rd, Southern Jurisdiction.
- \*Encyclopedia Britannia
- \*Funk & Wagnall New Encyclopedia
- \*Fama Fraternitatis
- \*Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkretz
- \*Catholic Encyclopedia
- \*Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, (Association in Malta);
- \*U.S. Jesuit Conference



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