

ROSICRUCIAN PURITY a more in-depth look

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This paper will be more of a "presentation within a presentation". I urge everyone to refer to my earlier paper on "ROSICRUCIAN PURITY," which is printed online at the Nebraska College MSRICF website. I was also honored to have that paper published in the "Ad Lucem" XIII scholarly report of The High Council of the Masonic Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Foederatis, for the year 2006. In this presentation, I wanted to briefly touch on a few topics mentioned in that presentation....and enable a closer look at Rosicrucian Purity.

As noted in that previous article, Freemasonry strives to make good men better men. The analogy of stonemasons transforming a rough-ashlar into a perfect-ashlar is very noble and inspiring. That notion reckons that the "good" elements of a man's character are within his being, if the "bad" elements are chipped-away and refined.

The ancient Rosicrucians focused on seeking wisdom and understanding. Our task as modern Masonic Rosicrucians is to first & foremost recognize that Almighty God is the Author, Architect, Designer and Creator of the entire universe. It naturally follows logically that God bestows the knowledge that all mankind possesses. It is our task as modern Masonic Rosicrucians to not only strive for "Perfection" measured by the Square, but also simultaneously strive for the deeper component of "PURITY" which we measure by evaluation .

In my earlier paper, I used examples of copper, silver and gold coins. Those coins which are made of precious metals always retain their storage of value. By contrast, many modern coins which are made of cheaper materials have no inherent worth ---yet, they may look similar, feel similar, and masquerade as having a similar value as the older coins based on assurances...yet the new coins have no precious value down deep within their core. It is by that strict examination: "Pure to the core," which illustrates why PURITY is so rare; which makes it of great importance.

I used the example of Purity extending to images contained in works of craftsmanship. I believe that stained-glass windows help us understand the concept of purity by setting a tone of reverence and awe seen in some select works of art.

I commented upon a beautiful stained-glass window inside the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church at Beloit, Kansas. Over the altar is an image of "the All-Seeing Eye of Almighty God" within a triangle. Surrounding it are angels. Since writing the original "ROSICRUCIAN PURITY" article, I have had the opportunity to see two other special stained-glass works located inside a different Church. At the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in St Marys, Kansas (near Topeka, KS) I saw two separate windows which stand out:

-- One window was the image of the Cross & Crown exactly as we know it in our Knight Templar Commanderies.

-- The other window had the image of a red passion cross with the inscription: "In Hoc Signo Vinces".

Just seeing those images made me think about our Lord Jesus Christ. It reminded me historically of the Cross that Jesus was crucified on. It reminded me of the vision that Constantine the Great saw in the sky. It reminded me of the spread of Christianity around the world, along with trials and tribulations. It also reminded me of my own Christian faith. It reminded me of my promises and obligations as a Master Mason, a Knight Templar, a Knight Rose Croix, a Knight Companion of the Red Cross of Constantine, and as a Masonic Rosicrucian.



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Stained-glass windows do not carry much meaning if they are just a mix of jumbled-up chaotic colors. Detailed images of attitudes of piety, reverence, thought, contemplation, prayer or valiant action in a realistic, life-like setting is what conveys the special meaning. Many Churches had stained-glass windows before the era of television and movies. For many people: visual scenes have a greater grip on one's own memory.

By seeing those images in a stained-glass window, it serves to jog our memories, validate our purpose, bolster our commitment, and temper our resolve to do actions which are honorable, laudable as well as reverent.

We, as Ancient Free & Accepted Masons use implements (such as the Plumb, Level, and Trowel, etc) as the symbolic "Working Tools" to refurbish our character from the rough ashlar to a more perfect one. In my opinion, the emblem of the All-Seeing Eye of Almighty God was used in Rosicrucian circles well before being introduced into Craft Masonry and the other degrees. Masonic Rosicrucians seem to use symbols, which allude to "Life" or aspects of what once was "alive" (such as the Rose and the Cross ...which itself once was a living tree; the All-Seeing Eye; and the Beehive of Industry). I have recently learned about the existence of over 35 stained-glass windows at St. Mary Catholic Church at High Hill, Texas (near Schulenburg, Texas). Window #32 is denoted: "The Eye in a Triangle ---the Providence of Almighty God." It contains the All-Seeing Eye of Almighty God within a triangle...and all of that within a circle. It is said to symbolize the All-Seeing Eye of God that looks out from the triangle of the Trinity. (Photographs attached)

The special works of art depicted on stained-glass, which merge purely Masonic symbols with Rosicrucian symbols of life, greatly enhance the Christian meaning and interpretation of messages conveyed by Church windows. At first glance, some people may only see images of the Lord, or the Apostles, or saintly scenes. By knowing the symbolism associated with each image, a deeper meaning might be understood. By comprehending the purpose of the symbolism, we may attempt to emulate those great Christian virtues imparted therein. By heeding the meaning of the message, we will walk more uprightly and be a credit to ourselves, our family and friends, our church, our nation, and truly serve our Creator.

Sources/ References:

- (see the expanded article: ROSICRUCIAN PURITY at the Nebraska College MSRIFC web site)
- article site: <http://www.masonic.benemerito.net/msricf/papers/marples/marples-rosipurity.pdf>
- "Ad Lucem," Vol. XIII, , pages 25-28: "ROSICRUCIAN PURITY -- With Gold, Silver, Copper and Stained-Glass Windows"-----year 2006 scholarly reports of The High Council, Masonic Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Foederatis. Robert G. Davis, IX°, KGC, Editor.
- Personal visit by James A. Marples to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Beloit, Kansas.
- Personal visit by James A. Marples to Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, St Marys, Kansas.
- Personal correspondence sent from Leo J. Kainer, Finance Committee, St. Mary Catholic Church, 2833 FM 2672, Schulenburg, TX 78956 to James A. Marples...dated 21 January 2007. Mr. Kainer also sent color photographs depicting the images of stained-glass window #32.

About the Author:

James A. Marples, VII°, is a life member of the El Dorado, KS York Rite Bodies; the Lincoln, NE Scottish Rite Bodies; as well as the Royal Order of Scotland. He is also a member of Holyrood Council #61 of Knight Masons; the Allied Masonic Degrees; and the Red Cross of Constantine.



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