

## MMM DEGREE - PROCESSIONS

Brethren, it is interesting that in the Mark Master Mason degree the craftsmen perform two processions to receive wages at the apartment of the SW. In the first procession the candidate is last. He is probably last because he's nervous, knowing that he had substituted the keystone for his own work, because from its singular form and beauty he had concluded that it belonged to some portion of the Temple. It is also fitting that he is last as it allows the more experienced workmen, who had already received their wages, an opportunity to witness the nervous young craftsman face his dilemma as he attempts to receive his wages. When detected as an imposter, the more experienced workmen exclaim "strike off his hand". Perhaps they were alarmed that a newer craftsman demonstrated a unique thirst for Masonic knowledge. King Solomon in his wisdom pardoned the young craftsman and ordered him back to the quarries.

In the second procession, the candidate is first and now knowing the Token, he is paid his wages. It is fitting that he is first as it allows the older members time to check-out the wages that the young craftsman received. And behold, although he had come in at the eleventh hour, he is paid equal to the older members and they complain that those who came in at the eleventh hour are made equal to them.

This incident is recorded in St. Matthew, Chapter 20, Verses 8-16: "So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: For many be called, but few chosen."

Brethren, the most important lesson in the MMM degree is not for the candidate, but for our older members, as articulated in the exhortation portion of our ritual.

"..the GGOTU will make no distinction of persons in the distribution of his beneficence, but will give alike to all who endeavour to obey His Divine commands". We must realize that, painful as it may be, seniority has no monopoly on wisdom or fraternal maturity. The Masonic vineyard is open to all, and he who works most diligently, even though he may come in at a later hour, will not find himself placed below those, who, although they may have come earlier, have not put heart and soul into the task.

How fitting that the Mark Master Mason degree is one's first introduction to a Chapter - we know that while this degree is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Masonic degree, it has not necessarily always been conferred as the first Capitular degree. Records show that the Mark Master degree has both preceded and succeeded the conferral of the degree of Royal Arch, but the message heard from the Mark Master is indeed appropriate for initial entrance into the Chapter irrespective of its chronological placement based on the overall sequence of legendary and biblical events.

Rt. Ex. Comp George Fairbairn  
Grand Third Principal  
August 21, 2020

Source:  
Volume of the Sacred Law  
Book of the Work, Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario