



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

Barry E. Newell, KTCH, KCT, Editor
306 Maple St., Emmett, ID 83617
ksigmason@gmail.com

Message from the Editor

Sir Knights,

I apologize for missing last month's edition. In future publications, I'd like to start incorporating into the Upcoming Events the appendant bodies such as AMD or Red Cross of Constantine.

Upcoming 2022 Events:

AMD Masonic WeekFebruary 10-13
Grand York Rite of AlaskaMarch 3-5
Special Conclave, GEKT March 12
Grand York Rite of OregonApril 7-9
Easter.....April 17
Grand York Rite of IdahoApril 21-23

What is Monasticism: Part 1

By Barry E. Newell

The medieval Knights Templar are routinely referred to as 'warrior monks' because they blended the asceticism and

piety of medieval monks with the intensity and zealotry of the crusading knight. Their monastic lifestyle was heavily influenced by the Cistercian order, which was, at that time, led by St. Bernard who wrote the original Latin Rule of the Templar order. As a Knight Templar in the York Rite of Freemasonry, I had done only a minimal amount of research on monasticism, but with getting more involved with the Rosicrucian Society, I've started looking more and more into the practice and I can't say, that amid the chaos of the world, that it hasn't crossed my mind that living in an isolated monastery wouldn't be the worst thing.

Monasticism isn't a cookie-cutter tradition and is found not just in Christianity, but also in Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Manichaeism, and Jainism, and as such it is hard to have a definition that truly covers all facets of monasticism in all of these religions. A definition would need to be very broad and leave the particulars to a specific religion. One that I found is:

“Religiously mandated behaviour (orthopraxy), together with its institutions, ritual, and belief systems, whose agents, members, or participants undertake voluntarily (often through a

vow) religious works that go beyond those required by the religious teachings of the society at large.”

Some practices are universal practices such as asceticism which is “a lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals.” It is important to note that while monasticism incorporated asceticism, it does not mean that all forms of asceticism are monastic. Seclusion is also universal, but may take different forms. Some types of monasticism are completely isolated (as seen in early monasticism) while some may be located near towns/villages, but are secluded within a walled sanctuary. Celibacy is not universal to all monastic orders, but a clear majority of monastic traditions do practice celibacy. Celibacy shouldn’t be practiced to spite the rite of marriage or conception (as some have seen it), but rather a practice is to rid oneself of material distractions and as a show of one’s love to God. One last characteristic that seems universal across monastic traditions is that it doesn’t exist in societies that lack written religious text. Christian monasticism developed early in the history of Christianity, but it is not mentioned in the Scriptures.

The word “monasticism” is derived from the Greek word “monachos” meaning “living alone”. Men who practice monasticism are monks and women are referred to as nuns. While monasticism is found in various world religions, the focus of this article is that found in Christianity and then primarily Western Christianity. To its practitioners, Christian monasticism is a way of life, a vocation from God where one sought a state of freedom from the material world and to reunite with God. Although monks and nuns are or were often viewed as extreme in their practices,

they were instrumental in preserving and transmitting knowledge, skills, cultural goods, arts and sciences, and artifacts through the generations.

As Christian monasticism developed and evolved, regulations were created. These regulations would become known as “Rules,” the most famous of which is the Rule of St. Benedict, the Rule of St. Augustine, and the “Masters Rule”. Monastic life, as regulated by the Rules, usually consisted of prayer (lots of praying), reading, and manual labor.

Within Christian monasticism, monks were considered equal in status, and although some were called to serve in various offices of the monastery, authority rested solely in the title, not the man himself. Depending on the time and the rule they followed, in addition to the Abbot, you could also find the following positions: Almoner, Cantor, Cellarer, Chamberlain, Circuitor, Hegumen, Infirmerer, Kitchener, Librarian, Mother Superior, Prior, Sacrist, and Treasurer.

It should be noted that monks can be both laymen or clergymen. Often monks who were priests were known as “hieromonks.” I would also like to note that Oblates are laypersons who are affiliated with a monastery but are not monks. If one is seeking admission to be a monk, they are first referred to as a postulant before being a novice for a predetermined period of time.

Editor’s Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.