



# The Temple of Solomon

## November 2009 Knights Templar Education

### Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Florida

In our several Masonic rituals, nothing is more impressive and profound than the Chamber of Reflection. We see it in the first degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and in our own Chivalric orders. We found an article on the Chamber of Reflection. It is more reflective of the Chamber used in the first degree of other rites but it gives us an idea of its use in our rite. Due to its length, we divided the same in three issues. Enjoy!

## The Chamber of Reflection Part Three

by W. Bro. Helio L. DaCosta Jr.

### VARIOUS SAYINGS

Besides the profusion of symbols in the Chamber of Reflection, as our candidate removes the hoodwink, he will read various sentences on the wall. Most often he will read the following sayings: If you think we will find out your defects, you will feel uncomfortable among us. If curiosity spurred you towards us, go away. If you are capable of deception, tremble, you will be found out. If you take notice of human differences, leave, we do not know them here. If your soul is fearful, do not proceed! If you persevere, you will be purified, you will overcome darkness, you will be enlightened. In some rites, such as the Brazilian Rite, other sentences may be found on the wall, such as: Think of God with humility. If you want to live well, think of death. Serve your country with devotion. Remember the great citizens who were Freemasons. Know thyself. If your heart is well intentioned, go on and you will have our support.



### PHILISOPHICAL TESTAMENT

As mentioned earlier, our candidate was given a piece of paper with questions, which he must answer in order to proceed with the initiation. The answers to the questions asked of the candidate become the initial point towards the elaboration of his philosophical and moral testament. The philosophical testament provides a glimpse of the attitude and character of the future initiate and is unique to each individual. The candidate's true nature will be shown in his answers to the proposed questions as well as in his philosophical testament. On the other hand, it can also bring him discredit, depending on his answers. In the Chamber of Reflection, he has time to reconsider his request for admission in our Fraternity. If his motives are not pure as admonished by the writings on the wall, or if he is fearful and not courageous enough, then he might not be able to keep inviolate the secrets of Freemasonry. Furthermore, solitary in the Chamber of Reflection, our prospective initiate can ponder on the questions presented to him, on his life, and future. Therefore, the reflection to which the title of this Chamber refers is not just the pondering of the candidate, but primarily the reflection of his own inner being. This could bring him discredit in certain cases. Note that all the dictionary meanings of the word reflection invoked at the beginning of this exposition are represented in the Chamber and obey the same hierarchical order.

Grand Commandery of Florida Education Committee

Editor: S.K. David A. Aponte, Eminent Grand Generalissimo



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### THE MIRROR

In another ritual of French origin, the Rectified Scottish Rite, during the First Degree initiation, the concept of reflection expressed in the sense of giving back a likeness as in a mirror, is revealed in another way. At the moment the hoodwink is dropped from the candidate's eyes and he sees for the first time the faces of his Brethren around him, the WM says: "It is not always before oneself, that one finds his enemies. That which is to be feared the most is many times behind oneself. Turn around!" When the candidate turns he sees himself in a mirror! This means that the enemy can be also within! Incidentally, the word mirror is in Latin speculum, deriving from the verb specular, which means, to scrutinize. That is exactly what one does in the Chamber of Reflections, as he scrutinizes himself and the symbols around him.

### TRIALS

After the candidate leaves the Chamber of Reflection, he is conducted into the Temple to be subjected to certain trials. Traditionally, the ancients and the alchemists believed that the universe was composed of four elements: earth, air, fire and water. Traditional initiatory societies, such as Freemasonry, have preserved this teaching. Furthermore, one of the marks of these esoteric initiatory organizations was a series of trials through which the candidate was subjected. The Chamber of Reflection, being a cave, becomes then, the first trial, that of the earth, and it is followed later by other trials, as it is made plain by the words of the ritual itself in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

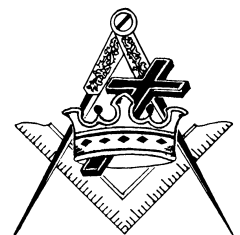
Even without going beyond the scope of this exposition, and presenting the rest of the first degree ritual as performed in most countries of the world, you can imagine what an impression this initial part of the ritual makes on a candidate being ushered into our honorable institution. The Chamber of Reflection teaches, indeed, powerful lessons. True initiation is an individual internal process. Nobody can transform a man but himself. Others may guide and help, but ultimately, the individual alone is the only one who can perform the great work. The Chamber of Reflection truly epitomizes this process. It is my hope, that those of us, who have not experienced this ritual in our Masonic life, have at least derived some small benefit, although vicariously, from this allocution today.

If your Commandery has any ideas or topics they would like to be included in future monthly newsletters, please contact one of the members of the Knights Templar Education and Leadership Committee:

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