

THAMES DIVISION

(Oxfordshire, Berkshire, & Buckinghamshire)

R.III.Kt. the Rev'd Timothy J. N. L'Estrange *Intendant-General*

III.Kt. Ron Bridger *Deputy Intendant-General*

III.Kt. Michael Caseman-Jones *Divisional Recorder*

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ST FRIDESWIDE CONCLAVE No 339

meeting at Woodstock.

Richard Skym - 01296 651337 - clerk@waddesdonpc.freeserve.co.uk

ST PAUL'S CONCLAVE No 372

meeting at Wokingham.

W John Redpath - 01252 653634 - williamredpath39@gmail.com

QUEEN MARY CONCLAVE No 444

meeting at Banbury.

David K Jesson - 01295 814922 - davejesson@wychwoodhouse.com

UNIVERSITY CONCLAVE No 468

meeting at Oxford.

Padraig Belton - 07812 559090 - padraig.belton@gmail.com

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CONCLAVE No 469

meeting at Aylesbury.

J Paul Deakin - 01905 640358 - Pauldeakin58@aol.com

ST HELENA CONCLAVE No 518

meeting at Marlow.

Richard Skym - 01296 651337 - clerk@waddesdonpc.freeserve.co.uk

Plans are currently advancing for a new Conclave in Olney.

Companions of the Holy Royal Arch who profess the Christian religion and seek to further their Masonic interest and knowledge are warmly invited to contact the Divisional Recorder for further information, or any one of the above who will be only too pleased to assist. Contact may also be made via our website:

www.thamesdivision.weebly.com

The Masonic and Military Order of the
Red Cross of Constantine

and

The Orders of the Holy Sepulchre
and of St John the Evangelist

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Following the Craft and the Royal Arch,
the next step in Freemasonry for a Christian Mason is
the Red Cross of Constantine.

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The Red Cross of Constantine

An Ancient Masonic Order

The Rancliffe Charter founding the Order dates from 1796 and since the establishment of Grand Imperial Conclave in 1865, now administered from Mark Masons' Hall, the Order has steadily grown. Conclaves are to be found world-wide, with many overseas sovereign Grand Conclaves now established.



The Red Cross Story

The story of the Order is based on the legend of the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to the Christian faith in 312 AD. That was the year in which he secured his famous victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge (28 October) following the miracle which is celebrated in the first degree of the Order.

The results of this battlefield victory were the legalisation of the Christian faith, an end to the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, the union of the eastern and western divisions of the Empire, and a new era of peace and stability.

On his triumphant return to Rome, Constantine, with the help of his chief bishop, Eusebius, is said to have formed a Conclave of Knights of the Red Cross from among his Christian troops, and used them to replace the traditional Praetorian Guard as the personal bodyguard of the Emperor.

The Three Degrees of the Red Cross

The Red Cross is an Order of three degrees. The first degree, by which one becomes a Knight of the Red Cross, is a very short and simple ceremony, but with a profound and moving legend and moral.

The second degree (Priest-Mason or Eusebius) is normally only conferred on those elected as Viceroy (the number two chair) of a Conclave, although it may be conferred on others, by dispensation.

The third degree (Prince-Mason) is conferred only upon those elected as Sovereign (the number one chair) of a Conclave. Both of these degree ceremonies, whilst short in length, are complex and profound, packed with deep symbolism, and widely regarded as amongst the most moving of Masonic ceremonial.



The Appendant Orders

Most Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine will take several years to reach the second and third degrees. However, those intervening years will not be empty ones! The Knight will be gradually ascending the ladder of office within his Conclave, learning more about the Red Cross tradition and legend. He will also, at a convenient point, be admitted to two further Christian Orders of Masonry which are controlled by the Red Cross of Constantine.

Known jointly as 'The Appendant Orders', these are the Order of the Holy Sepulchre (conferred in a Sanctuary) and the Order of St John the Evangelist (conferred in a Commandery). Any Red Cross Conclave may open a Sanctuary and Commandery to confer these Appendant Orders, but it happens only rarely, as the complex ceremonies require much preparation and commitment. They are spectacular and deeply impressive ceremonies based upon the Christian story, and they always leave a lasting impression upon those who receive them.

Regalia

The regalia is simple. A breast jewel on a purple ribbon, and a purple sash, form the Red Cross regalia. On admission to the Appendant Orders a white sash is worn, with a second breast jewel (on a white ribbon). Later, there are different breast jewels on admission to the second and third degrees, and alteration to the sash on promotion to Divisional or Grand Rank.

These five degree ceremonies are highly prized by our members.