THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH (an explanation)

adapted by MEC Norman McEvoy Grand Chapter of BC&Yukon (Canada) from an information leaflet date and origin unknown. December 19, 2011

The following definition is Article 2 of the Original 1813 United Grand Lodges of England , Articles of Union:-

"Pure Ancient Masonry consists of Three Degrees and no more, namely Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch"

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain the Holy Royal Arch and its close connection with the Craft Degrees.

It is generally considered that the teachings of the Craft Lodge are considered complete in themselves. The more these Degrees are studied, the more you start to realize that they leave many questions unanswered.

Was the Temple ever finished??.
Was what was lost ever found??
What would happen if a Mason endeavoured to receive pay for work he was not qualified to do??
A study of the Bible will answer some of those things that have been left hanging and unanswered, but our rituals do not follow the biblical stories too closely.

The Holy Royal Arch Degree, or Capitular Masonry, was probably founded in England between 1740 and 1760. At that time the original TWO degrees were being expanded and altered, while many "new" Degrees were being introduced.
The Hiramic Legend being first worked circa 1730.
Some early writers claim that the Holy Royal Arch Degree arose as a result of the "word" being lost and provided for its recovery
Many other Degrees were introduced in this time of change, for instance, it was in this period of time that Scottish Lodges introduced the Mark Master Mason Degree.

It is very interesting to note that the only Concordant Body recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England is the Holy Royal Arch.

Today, in North America and possibly elsewhere, the Holy Royal Arch Degree is the FINAL Degree in what is commonly referred to as the "York Rite" Degrees which includes the following:
Mark Master Mason ; Past Master or Virtual Past Master (depending on location) ; Excellent Master or Most Excellent Master (again depending on location); and culminating with the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch, or Chapter, is not a "Higher Degree" but another step in the sublime story revealed through symbolism.

The Mark Master Degree is closely related to the Fellowcraft Degree.
It is a very effective Degree and its lessons are very clear indeed.

The Virtual Past Master Degree, as practiced in the United States of America, and some Provinces in Canada, is a ceremony of passing and qualifying the candidate to make further progress in his search for further light. The Past Master Degree is of Scottish origin and serves exactly the same purpose.

The Most Excellent Master Degree, as practiced in most parts of North America, deals with the dedication & celebrations that took place at the completion of King Solomon's Temple and is a most impressive ceremony. The Excellent Master is of Scottish origin and deals with the qualifying of those wishing to assist with the rebuilding of the Temple.

Lastly, the Supreme Degree of the Holy Royal Arch exemplifies the return of the Israelites from captivity, what they discovered on their return and the commencement of the rebuilding of the Temple. This also includes the discovery of the Lost Word.!!

Membership in a Chapter is a prerequisite for application for membership in a family of other "York Rite" Concordant Bodies, many of which fill in even more gaps" in the Craft Lodge legend and even some from the Royal Arch Degree itself.
Each of these bodies, in their own way, provide even more Masonic light.

Unlike Craft Masonry, where solicitation is not permitted and application must be of "your own will and accord" there is no such restriction in Chapter.
The brother need only seek out a fellow brother whom he knows to be a member of the Holy Royal Arch and request an "Application for Exaltation".
You may even be invited to attend an "Information Evening" or approached directly by a Companion to become a member.

Should any part of the above information have proved to be of interest, we offer the following points in Summation:-

- Are you eager to advance your knowledge of Freemasonry and its symbolism?
- Darkness will give way to Light, what was lost will be found!
- Freemasonry is like graduating from High School, now you want to go on to College & University
- There are no religious restraints in Chapter, same as our Craft Lodge.

In closing, may we use this opportunity to extend an invitation for membership & our hand in Fraternal Brotherhood.