

## **THE CRAFT AND ROYAL ARCH MASONRY**

Your qualification as a Master Mason enables you to join a Royal Arch Chapter.

The Grand Lodge of New Zealand has a special relationship with the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of New Zealand. Rule 71 of the Book of Constitution recognises six degrees as Pure Ancient Freemasonry and the degrees of Mark Master Mason, Excellent Master, and the Royal Arch are considered an extension of Craft Masonry.

The Grand Master is the head of Craft Masonry in New Zealand. All business in a Craft Lodge, except degree work, is conducted in the First Degree (or Entered Apprentice Degree) and a candidate, once admitted a Freemason, may attend all regular meetings. Lodge members are called Brethren. A Craft Lodge, governed by a Master and his two Wardens, forms part of a District, governed by a District Grand Master. Districts are grouped into Divisions, governed by a Divisional Grand Master.

The Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of New Zealand is presided over by the First Grand Principal. The Supreme Grand Chapter controls the Degrees of Mark Master Mason, Excellent Master, the Royal Arch, the four Degrees of the Cryptic Council, the Royal Ark Mariner Degree, and the Red Cross of Babylon Degrees.

Three Principals jointly govern a Chapter and each Chapter is part of a District governed by a Grand Superintendent. Districts are grouped into three Divisions overseen by a Divisional Grand Principal.

Royal Arch Masonry, like the Craft, is open to men of all faiths who profess a belief in a Supreme Being. It continues the process of self-improvement towards a perfect superstructure. Based on stories of the Old Testament, the Degrees take the candidate from the building of the Temple of King Solomon to the aftermath of its destruction when the Jews were carried into captivity. Ultimately Cyrus, Emperor of Persia, granted them permission to return from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. In clearing the ground of the original Temple for the new foundations the candidate makes a number of discoveries which, without transgressing the bounds of religion, lead him to contemplate his personal relationship with his Supreme Being.

In this sense, “pure Ancient Freemasonry” can be seen as a journey of discovery and self-knowledge, with the Royal Arch expanding the practical lessons of the Craft and extending the philosophical teachings.

The structure of the Degrees with some of their symbols are shown below.

### **Advancement to the Degree of Mark Master Mason**

Conducted in a Lodge of Mark Master Masons under the control of a Worshipful Mark Master



This ceremony introduces the candidate to practical aspects of ancient Craft Masonry which are currently omitted from the first three degrees. Symbolically it presents lessons of practical value and marks the final act in the building of King Solomon's Temple.

### **Acknowledgement of the Degree of Excellent Master**

Conducted in a Lodge of Excellent Masters under the control of a Worshipful Excellent Master



Here the Candidate receives permission to undertake a metaphorical return from Babylon, the land of captivity, to Jerusalem to assist in building the second Temple, thus beginning the journey towards his spiritual home.

### **Exultation to the Degree of the Holy Royal Arch**

Conducted in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons under the control of the First, Second, and Third Principals



This degree encompasses the lessons to be learnt from the building of the second Temple. It guides the candidate's progress to a greater understanding of the whole meaning of

Freemasonry so that, having corrected his imperfections, he may humbly, yet confidently, hope to be admitted with the Sanhedrin and be welcomed by the Prince.

### **Cryptic Degrees**

Conducted in Councils of Select Master, Royal Master, Most Excellent Master, and Super Excellent Master under the control of a Thrice Illustrious Master



Membership of further degrees and orders in the Masonic system is available to Royal Arch Masons who wish to continue their advancement in Masonic knowledge

### **Degree of Royal Ark Mariner**

Conducted in a Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners under the control of Worshipful Commander Noah



### **Red Cross of Babylon Degrees**

Conducted in Councils of Knight of the East and Knights of the East and West under the control of a Most Excellent Chief

