

*General Conference of Grand Councils
Royal and Select Masters,
Prince Hall Affiliation,
USA and Bahamas, Incorporated*



MOST ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANION

FREDRICK JOYNER, KYGCH

**GENERAL CONFERENCE
THRICE ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER**

ANNUAL ADDRESS

APRIL 30, 2022



*General Conference of Grand Councils
Royal and Select Masters
Prince Hall Affiliation, USA and Bahamas*

*Fredrick Joyner, KYGCH
General Conference Thrice Illustrious Grand Master*

April 30, 2022

To the Elected and Appointed Officers of the General Conference of Grand Councils, Royal and Select Masters, Prince Hall Affiliation, United States of America and Bahamas Incorporated, Past General Conference Thrice Illustrious Grand Masters, Distinguished Dignitaries, affiliated jurisdictions, and all who compose this aggregation of Illustrious Companions

Greetings,

Before I begin this address, permit me to share with you the obligatory disclaimer that the views expressed today are solely those of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the General Conference, its Officers, members, or affiliated jurisdictions.

My fellow Illustrious Companions, once more and again we have been sustained by God's fraternal twins of Grace and Mercy which has allowed us to assemble for the General Conference of Grand Councils, Royal and Select Masters 34th Annual Grand Assembly and the General Conference of Grand Courts, Ladies of the Circle of Perfection 17th Annual General Conference. We realize and recognize that God didn't have to do what he did, but he did it and for that we say much obliged.

"I am acknowledged as such and have wrought my regular hours". Those hallowed words are the epitome of a Royal and Select Master. Regrettably, I am not blessed with neither that perfection of the command of language, that metrical composition of Divine conception, nor that sagacity of Cryptic Rite metonymy to articulate to you what it means. However, I can tell you that if the Royal and Select Masters had not labored in silence and secrecy to preserve that which was lost, future generations would not have been able to discover and bring it to light. The degrees of Royal and Select Master teach many important lessons, but the subtle meaning of the degrees is often missed.

In 2012 in Atlanta, GA, I attended my very first General Conference. Who knew that approximately 10 years later, I would be the presiding officer of this grand body. Thank you for reposing special trust and confidence in my ability by electing me to this prestigious position. I am extremely honored and humbled to oversee such a diverse group of individuals and I do not take it for granted. Make no mistake about it, I come to be of service and not to be served. I am merely the vehicle, but you, the Illustrious Companions are the engine.

Today, I stand on the shoulders of giants who have paved the way for me. If I can be half of the leader of those who have come before me then my tenure as General Conference Thrice Illustrious Grand Master just might be a success.

NECROLOGY

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” (Job 14:1-2)

Life is an uncertain chain of events whereby the young may die, the old must die but the wise know not how soon. We are charged with assembling and assisting in the ceremonies in commemoration of an Illustrious Companion whom the Supreme Architect has seen fit to summons.

Thereby paying the last tribute of our affection and demonstrating the sincerity of our esteem and devotion to his memory. As we brought nothing into the world with us, it is certain that we can take nothing out.

For it is the natural wish of man that he be remembered when he has passed from this transitory scene and that words of commendation be spoken in his behalf.

As we pause for a moment of silence in remembrance of those Illustrious Companions who have departed from this transitory existence to a land of endless duration, let us take inventory of our very own lives being ever so mindful that this world is not our home; we are all just passing by.

May they continue to rest in paradise and may you continue to keep their loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.

STATE OF THE NATION

“When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.” (Mark 13:7)

Our country is divided among many ideological lines. This great nation has sustained attacks from without and within. We are facing unprecedented hard times due to rising gas prices, new voting laws, gun violence, and a supply chain shortage. We are continuing to battle a faceless enemy that has claimed many lives in the United States and abroad. Regardless of political affiliation, everybody must come together to play a part in solving the issues that plagued us.

I reminded of a song that I think sums it all up:

*Fear in the air, tension everywhere
Where the world's headed, nobody knows*

*People moving out; People moving in
Why, because of the color of their skin*

*The only person talking about love thy brother is the preacher
And it seems, nobody is interested in learning but the teacher*

*Segregation, determination, demonstration, integration,
aggravation, humiliation, obligation to our nation*

A ball of confusion, that's what the world is today.

STATE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established." (Proverbs 16:3)

The greatest challenge to any organization is its membership. We have a few Illustrious Companions who have been called on time and time again to perform certain tasks while others merely observe. There is no limit to the great things that can be achieved if we stop focusing on who will get the credit. Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something. The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few.

COVID-19 has impacted many of our plans and programs, but we are adjusting and adapting while remaining safe during the pandemic. This too, shall pass. For behind every dark cloud, there's a silver lining.

Despite our current environment and the various obstacles that have been put before us, we continue to proceed on a due easterly course. We have received numerous phone calls about the Cryptic Rite in general and the General Conference in particular. We are growing and the sky is the limit to what we can have. I am cautiously optimistic that the Cryptic Rite's future is bright.

In order to sustain this growth, we can no longer live by the mantra of we have always done it this way. We can no longer afford to neglect to mentor, nurture, and cultivate the next generation of Illustrious Companions. We can no longer place self-interest above best interest. We must be about the business at hand and even when doing what's right is unpopular, we must take a stand. What's right is not always popular, and what's popular is not always right. I would rather be real and respected than to be popular and accepted.

We are redefining Cryptic Rite Masonry by being innovators but none of it would have possible without God. When your trust is in God, your faith is well founded and there is no way that you can lose. If God is for us, who can be against us.

We are ever so mindful that while on the road to success, there's a curve called failure, a loop called confusion, speed bumps called friends, and red lights called enemies.

But if we let the Lord lead and guide us and proceed under his direction, we can lessen if not avoid any impact. When God is in the equation, the situation solves itself.

We will continue to shoot for the moon and even if we miss, we will be with the stars.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“That some achieve great success, is proof to all that others can achieve it as well.” (Abraham Lincoln)

In conformity to the ancient masonic traditions, customs, and courtesies, I submit a few of our accomplishments:

- 1. We attended the Jurisdiction of Ohio’s virtual Annual Grand Assembly.*
- 2. We attended the Jurisdiction of Maryland’s Annual Grand Assembly.*
- 3. We attended the 128th Imperial Council Session of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine of North and South America and its Jurisdictions, Incorporated.*
- 4. We attended the Jurisdiction of Texas’ virtual Annual Grand Assembly.*
- 5. We held two (2) virtual GGCRSM Officer's/Cabinet Meetings via zoom platform.*

OFFICIAL ACTS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE THRICE ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER

“A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.” (GEN Douglas MacArthur)

In accordance with Article II, Section 1 (a) of the Constitution of the General Conference of Grand Councils, Royal and Select Masters, Prince Hall Affiliation, United States of America and the Bahamas Incorporated, I am required to communicate in writing a statement of official acts during the recess of the General Conference. In conformity to the Constitution, I do hereby submit the following:

- 1. Issued Proclamation 01-2022 for the 34th Annual Grand Assembly in Rosemont Illinois, April 29 - May 1, 2022.*
- 2. Issued a warrant and presided over the Jurisdiction of Indiana’s convention of Royal and Select Master’s Councils.*
- 3. Sent invitations to the National Leaders of the Prince Hall Affiliated York Rite Family, General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International, United Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (Northern and Southern Jurisdictions), Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles Mystic Shrine of North and South America and its Jurisdictions, Incorporated for attendance at the 34th Annual Grand Assembly.*

CONCLUSION

“When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.” (Proverbs 2:10-11)

I am somewhat perplexed and intrigued with the intricacies of how we perceive the truth; how we are willing to accept the truth or reject it in order to give ourselves peace of mind when confronted with inconvenient realities. It seems that we as members of the masonic family have become experts, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in deconstructing what we know are factual truths and then reconstructing them to be more appropriate, more righteous, and even more politically correct.

To further illustrate my point, allow me to share the following story with you: One day a man named Truth and a man named Lie stood by a river just outside of town. They were twin brothers. Lie challenged Truth to a race, claiming he could swim across the river faster than Truth. Lie laid out the rules to the challenge stating that they both must remove all their clothes and at the count of three, dive into the freezing cold-water swim to the other side and back. Lie counted to three, but when Truth jumped in, Lie did not. As Truth swam across the river, Lie put on Truth's clothes and walked back into town dressed as Truth. He proudly paraded around town pretending to be Truth. Truth made it back to shore, but his clothes were gone, and he was left naked with only Lie's clothes to wear. Refusing to dress himself as Lie, Truth walked back to town naked. People stared and glared as naked Truth walked through town. He tried to explain what happened and that he was in fact Truth, but because he was naked and uncomfortable to look at, people mocked and shunned him; refusing to believe he was really Truth. The people in town chose to believe Lie because he was dressed appropriately and easier to look at. From that day until this, people have come to believe a lie rather than believe the naked truth.

The moral of this story, and how it applies to us as Masons and society as a whole is that as individuals, being truthful means that we can grow and mature, learning from our mistakes. For society, truthfulness makes social bonds, and lying and hypocrisy break them. We often either consciously or subconsciously reject certain truths in our personal lives or in the world around us for the sake of our peace of mind. We often turn our back to the cold hard truth, even if it's at our own peril. Individuals can be presented with irrefutable yet inconvenient truths regarding masonry, but they shun those truths and decide instead to believe the well-dressed lie, especially if it benefits their agenda or idealistic narrative.

In the Volume of Sacred Law, truth isn't just for thinking, but for doing. The importance of telling the truth is underlined and listed as one of the Ten Commandments in which God tells us that, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”. We accept certain aspects of a factual reality, while omitting or outright rejecting other aspects of that same reality in order to drive home a point we want to make.

Truth is one of the tenets of our profession but too often we tell an individual what they want to hear instead of telling them what they need to hear.

We have some ordinary Illustrious Companions who have made extraordinary contributions to this General Conference and the Cryptic Rite. Allow me publicly to say to each of you, thank you and know that the service that you have rendered is not in vain and neither did you spend your strength for naught. I appreciate all that you do, and I am forever indebted to each of you.

I would be remised if I didn't thank the Lovely Ladies of the Circle of Perfection led by General Conference Royal Grand Perfect Matron Alicia Chisolm. You are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow. Beauty is always needed to adorn.

I thank all of you for your support, prayers and words of comfort but most of all your friendship. I will continue to do the very best that I can and will continue to do so until the end. I ask that you pray for me, I pray for you and watch God change things.

I would like to leave you with this thought, the true test of a leader's character is what he does when no one is watching. Therefore, be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

May God Bless you and Heaven smile down on you and our General Conference of Grand Councils and Grand Courts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Amend Article XII, Sections 2(b) and (c) so that the General Conference can design a PGCTIGM's jewel, apron, and crown for all Actual and Honorary PGCTIGMs. Rationale: Our PGCTIGMs should be distinguished just like other past leaders of our York Rite Family. We are not trying to be like them, but we will not be lesser than them.*

2. *Amend Article VI, Section 3(a) of the Constitution to read Any jurisdictional Grand Council dropped from the rolls for nonpayment of annual donations may reinstate by resubmitting an application for membership and paying the amount of \$500.00. (delete "current annual donation"). Rationale: Currently, there is no penalty when reinstating. An organization should be held to the same standard as an individual who has been dropped and wishes to reinstate.*

3. *The title of Emeritus be bestowed on General Conference Grand Recorder Leroy R. Gary for his 19 years of service to the General Conference of Grand Councils, Royal and Select Masters, Prince Hal Affiliation, United States of America and Bahamas, Incorporated. Rationale: May the work he has done and service he has given speak for him.*

Yours in Cryptic Vault,

Fredrick Joyner

MIC Fredrick Joyner, KYGCH

General Conference Thrice Illustrious Grand Master

NOTES