

The Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine
and the Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and of St. John the Evangelist

Division of Essex



2 Conclaves meet at Orsett

Langdon Hills Conclave No. 417
St. Peter on the Wall Conclave No. 364

Langdon Hills Conclave meets on 4th Monday in January, 3rd Monday in June and September (Installation)

St. Peter on the Wall Conclave meets on 4th Saturday in March, 1st Saturday in June and 1st Saturday in November (Installation)

If you want to know more about these Conclaves please email rcsessex@btopenworld.com

For further information on the Red Cross of Constantine see below

Red Cross of Constantine Division of Essex

Candidates in this degree recognise how Christianity can be embraced by seeing how the legend of Constantine's conversion is set within Masonic ritual that is linked with the history of the Roman Empire. Constantine, a Roman, was destined for the college of Emperors, but following the death of his father, he was hailed by the Legions in York as Augustus and became the Governor of Britain and Gaul. After several successful battles across the Alps and Italy, he eventually established himself as the lawful Emperor of both the East and West and transferred the capital of the empire from Rome to Byzantium later to be named after him.

He was the first Roman Emperor to openly encourage Christianity and his conversion began one evening after- a long day's march with his army when, in what he believed was a sign from heaven, he and his army saw in the sky, and by the rays of the setting sun, a pillar of light in the form of a special cross. To sanctify the minds of his pagan army, he had made a standard bearing a Cross like that seen and ordered it to be carried before him in his wars. Several Christians in his army came forward and avowed their faith following which Constantine directed that they should wear on their armour a red cross. Having been successful in battle it is said that Constantine with the help of his chief bishop, Eusebius, opened a Conclave of the Knights of the Order whose members became the bodyguard of their Sovereign.

Red Cross of Constantine

This Christian Order is in two parts. The first ceremony consists of the Candidate's admission, obligation, and then the installation as a Knight Companion of the Red Cross of Constantine, in which the historical basis of the Order is also detailed.

The Appendant Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and of St. John the Evangelist were attached to the Red Cross Order at an early date and a separate Certificate is issued to members of these Orders. Although separate degrees they are always conferred together

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre

Tradition asserts that this degree originated after the discovery of the true Cross by St. Helena. It is concerned with the three days which intervened between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Knight of St. John the Evangelist

This is the second of the Appendant degrees which are always conferred together and is founded upon a tradition concerning a remarkable discovery made at the ruins of the Temple at Jerusalem and the subsequent foundation of the Knights of St. John.

HISTORIC NOTE

The Masonic Order of the Red Cross of Constantine appears to have been first organized in the United Kingdom by Charles Shirreff about the year A.D. 1780. In 1804 it was reorganized by Waller Rodwell Wright. During the next fifty years the Order was not very active, but the Grand Imperial Conclave was reassembled in 1865, when William Henry White was elected Grand Sovereign and duly enthroned. Since 1865 working has been steady and continuous, and daughter Grand Imperial Conclaves have been formed from England throughout the world. The original title, "The Imperial, Ecclesiastical and Military Order of the Red Cross of Rome and Constantine," indicates its ritual scope as a three grade Rite of " Prince, Priest, and Knight ".

Essex

In Essex, the Division includes conclaves which meet at Colchester, Chingford, Upminster, Southend-on-Sea, Harlow, and Orsett .

Qualifications

The prerequisites for joining the Red Cross of Constantine are that a candidate must have completed his third degree by being exalted into the Holy Royal Arch (Chapter), and must express a belief in the Christian Trinity-in-Unity.

Regalia

In the Red Cross of Constantine the regalia consists of a purple sash (usually supplied by the conclave) with a jewel. Having taken the Appendant Orders a mainly white embroidered sash replaces that of the Red Cross and an additional breast jewel is worn.

What will you get from it ?

Most members will say that the Red Cross of Constantine is a very friendly order and the most gentle of Christian Orders. It leaves a lasting impression on all those who join with its readily understood story of Constantine's conversion. It is a pleasant mix of masonry, religion and the military with impressive and colourful ceremonies which never fail to leave a lasting impression on new candidates and old members alike. Each Conclave can expect regular visits from the Intendant-General or his Deputy, and these are looked forward to with eager anticipation by the members