

Gregg Hall
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What is Rosicrucianism?

Rosicrucianism is believed to have come from a German Lutheran Pastor named Johann Valentin Andrea. Scholars believe that he is the author of the fictional work *Fama Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*. Written in 1614, the book tells the story of Christian Rosenkreuz, a German Monk, who set off on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher with an elderly monk. When the elderly monk dies on the trip, Rosenkreuz continues on his journey and in Damascus he encounters some sages and he stays to study under them for 3 years. He then moves into Egypt for further studies. He spends several years in Egypt and attends a conference in Fez where African and Arabian philosophers meet yearly to compare their studies and travels. He eventually travels to Spain, but receives a poor reception so he returns to his native Germany. Rosenkreuz decides to form his own society to foster the reformation of morals and science, based on what he has learned on his travels. At first he started with three monks from his former monastery, but he eventually raised the number to eight. After imparting his knowledge, they decide that they should split up in pairs with two staying with Rosenkreuz, and the others traveling the world to pursue their learning. They set up rules about how they should behave. They would dress according to the custom of the place they were at, they would find someone to replace them when they passed, they would meet yearly at the Temple of the Holy Ghost or to send notice that they would not be able to attend, and that they would keep the order secret for 100 years. When Rosenkreuz passed away, he was not replaced, so their number stayed at 8. It was said that Rosenkreuz's grave would remain hidden for 120 years and that when it was discovered the Order would no longer be hidden. When Rosenkreuz's grave was discovered it contained all of the teachings and information that he had gathered over his life.

While the order described in the book was never actually discovered, many sought its existence, and the first outward group was formed by alchemists in The Hague in 1622. By 1625 it found its way to Britain and various publications started to appear. It is believed that Chevalier Ramsey, who is credited with creating many of the “higher degrees” in masonry used some of the Rosicrucian ideas within those degrees, and thus the interconnection with masonry was started. The word Rosicrucian is often associated with rose crux or rose cross, however it is actually ros crux, which means dew cross. Dew was considered by ancient chemists as the most powerful solvent of gold. In alchemy gold is considered to be a synonym of light. So the Rosicrucian uses the dew to transform the gold/light into the philosopher’s stone.

Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis

In the 1870’s various US Masons traveled to England and received the degrees under the Societas Roseicruciana in Anglia (SRIA), however they could not get SRIA to charter new college in the States, so they sought Charters from Societas Roseicruciana in Scotia SRIS, the High Council in Scotland. In 1880 there were three colleges one in Philadelphia, one in New York and one in Vermont.. These three met and formed the Societas Rosicrucianae Reipublica Confoedera America (SRRCA), the name was changed to the Society of Rosicrucians in the USA and finally in 1934 was changed again to what we now have today.

Membership in the Society is by invitation only, and is open to Master Masons in good standing who profess Christian Belief. There is a limit of 72 members per college. There are 45 States that have colleges plus the District of Columbia. California and Texas are the only states that currently have more than one college.

The officers of the College are the Chief Adept (Appointed by the Supreme Magnus), Celebrant (Elected), Exponent (Elected), 1st to 4th Ancients (Elected), Secretary (Appointed by the Supreme

Magnus), Treasurer(Appointed by the Supreme Magnus), Prelate, Conductor, Torch Bearer, Guardian, and Acolyte. Those officers not appointed by the Supreme Magnus or elected are appointed by the Chief Adept. And while the Celebrant runs the meeting, the Chief Adept is the presiding officer.

Purpose of the Society

The society serves two purposes, the first is to confer the various orders. The first order consists of the Grades of Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus, and Philosophus. The second order consists of the grades Adeptus Minor, Adeptus Major, and Adeptus Exemptus. The third order consists of the grades of magister and Magus. Members are admitted to the first order on election. They are then selected by the Chief Adept for elevation to the second order based on merit, after having been a member of the College for at least 3 years, having presented papers and or performing service to the College. The third order is conferred by the High Council and Fratres of the Third order are members of the High Council.

The second purpose of the order is for research and education. Members of the Society should be those that are interested in learning and exploring hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. This means that there is a very broad scope of topics to be explored and are open to the imagination of the members. Papers are submitted to the College by the member that wrote the paper, our college collects those papers on our website for those that are willing to share. Further the High Council also solicits papers that are printed in an annual book which is provided to the members on a national basis. So, if you have a good and interesting topic there is a possibility for your paper to be added to that collection as well.

The First Order

The Zelator Grade is one of initiation. In it the candidate is given his first introduction to the symbols of the Order. As it is initiatory only, those explanations are brief. The candidate is exposed to the 4 elements and told that in Ancient times these were used as a purification process for the candidates. He is given the word INRI and an explanation of its importance. He is then told that it is his duty to investigate the secrets of Nature and is given an example in the power and properties of numbers.

The Theoricus Grade gives us further instruction into how the four elements interact with man, and how they relate to our spiritual journey. We are then given instruction about the body and the Soul and how the forces of the world shape our existence, and how God is in us as part of our Soul. We are then instructed in colors and how colors are symbols and how those symbols related to the world around us.

The Practicus Grade introduces the candidate to Alchemy. It is explained that there is both a physical alchemy and a spiritual alchemy. During the lecture the candidate is introduced to Hermes Trismegistus and the Emerald Tablet. The idea of elements is discussed and then briefly how modern science has changed our understanding, but even modern science can lead back to alchemical understandings. The philosopher's stone is then discussed, and the difficulty in making such a stone, due to having lost the knowledge of what exactly is used to make the stone. We are then given some ideas how alchemical ideas can be used in other areas such as a study of religion.

The Philosophus Grade tells us that we must study the other religions of the world and the great philosophers. Through this study one will learn of the great truths contained therein and to come to an even greater understanding of the Christian Faith. This is the shortest of the four Grades of the First Order and its underlying message is that the work of the first order is completed and one must engage in self study, to prepare one's self for receiving the Grades of the Second Order.