

M. Ex. Comp. Rod Ponech

Grand First Principal Grand Chapter of Alberta

March 2021 (one year after the start of the Pandemic)

My Companions,

The season of Spring, with Easter, Passover, and the planting of crops, gardens, and flowers, brings to each of us the promise of renewal.

The past year has been difficult for many reasons as we faced isolation, illness, loneliness, mourning, economic hardships, and toughest of all, the uncertainty and abject lack of confidence in what the future holds for us as individuals as well as for society.

However, finally today there is a real sense of excitement for the future. Vaccines are being administered, we made it through the “second wave”, the economy is slowly re-opening, and recovery seems on the way.

Grass is showing between patches of snow. Spring is in the air. The long winter nights have become spectacular early morning sunrises with light now extending into the evenings. The temperatures are rising slowly each day with the promise of long, warm summer days ahead.

For two years I have been imploring every Companion to

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven” Mathew 5: 16

and I must acknowledge that at times, this request seemed very difficult to pursue with what the last year has thrown at us. However, there is another quote from the Bible which gives us inspiration:

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1: 5

The Apostle John tells us that our light continues to shine in the darkness. This past year has not dimmed our efforts, not lessened our light - the darkness has not overcome it.

To all of you who have faithfully laboured in the quarries of our Royal Craft keeping our light shining this past year, I extend a most sincere “Thank-You” on behalf of the Grand Chapter, on behalf of your Districts, and on behalf of your individual Chapters.

The confidence displayed in the future of the Royal Arch is truly inspiring. I hear of so many new Companions waiting patiently to be admitted to Chapters, and the Chapters planning - then planning again - and again – just to be prepared for the first opportunity when we can meet safely and greet new members.

It is absolutely astonishing to see how our Craft has adapted to ZOOM, Go-To-Meeting, Google Meet, Video-Conferencing and Face time. We may have seen more of each other this year than any previous year. Although it is not the same, it has confirmed the necessity of Masonic Brothers and Companions staying in touch.

This pandemic, and our foreseeable victory over it, will become one of the shared memories not only of the past year in Royal Arch Masonry, but of those which span generations: V-E Day, President Kennedy’s assassination, 9-11, and now we add - COVID-19. For those of us who actually experienced these events, no explanation is ever necessary, and for those too young to have lived through them, no explanation could ever suffice.

Let me finish with a positive note as we look forward with the promise of renewal this season. We can have confidence that our “Light of Freemasonry” will continue to shine brightly as we eagerly anticipate Chapters reopening once all Companions can attend safely.

But, for the moment, please continue to wear a mask, maintain social distancing, wash your hands, and most importantly GET YOUR VACCINATION!

My Companions: stay safe, protect yourselves, your families and others, and just be patient a bit longer, until we can safely meet again.

Just as Easter brought salvation and hope to the first Christians two thousand years ago, so also does this Spring bring hope and the resurgence of our Royal Craft.

Fraternally,

Rod Ponech,
Grand “Z”