

HOLY SAINTS JOHN

By: WB Richard Miner

Most of us have wondered why in the opening the lodge do we use the phrase "Dedicated to the Holy Saints John". And why do we refer to the Saints John as our Patron Saints. Why the Holy Saints John?

To try to answer these questions, let's first look at who were these two Saints John? In part the answer can be found in the Bible, which tells us that there are two Saint Johns, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint John the Evangelist. St John the Baptist according to tradition was born on June 24 or the summer solstice and was a cleric who adhered to strict moral law. He was beheaded for his moral and single minded beliefs. Saint John the Evangelist is described as the most loyal and closest of the 12 disciples. Some credit him with writing the Gospel of John and the book of Revelations,.

History also tells us, that as Europe starting moving out of the dark ages, guilds of craftsman began to form. It was customary for these guilds to adopted a protective Patron Saint and use their feast day(s) as a gathering for celebration as well as the conducting of guild business. Stonemason Guilds often choose one or both of the Saints John because of their loyalty to moral law and faithfulness to man. As these operative Masonic guilds turned in to speculative Masonic lodges these characteristics of loyalty and faithfulness became the bases for their believe and teachings. It was therefore natural, that our ancient brethren would choose them as guiding principles upon which to build a well regulated lodge as well as their lives.

In the second section of the Entered Apprentice lecture, the Saints John are referred to as "perfect parallels," Saint John the Baptist representing adherence to moral law and Saint John the Evangelist representing loyalty to family and fraternity. In the Entered Apprentice degree we are also given geometric figures; a circle around a point bound on the right and left by two single parallel lines, which we are told is to remind us to keep our actions within do bounds. It is my opinion, that within this reference to "prefect parallels" the answer to why our lodges are dedicated to the Holy Saints John lies.

As we are told in the Entered Apprentice lecture, one of these lines represents Saint John the Baptist with his proclaiming Moral law and the opposite but equal line represents Saint John the Evangelist with his emphasis on loyalty to God and man. As Masons this instructs us in the importance of setting both a moral and personal boundary by which we can conduct both our lodges and lives. The distance from the point within the circle then becomes the area in which we can act and conduct business without exceeding these moral and social boundaries set by the Saints John. By regulating our lives and lodges within the area of the circle we will remain within the bounds with both man and God.

So the next time you hear "Dedicated to the Holy Saints Johns", think first of your relationship with God and next of your actions towards all mankind but more especially to a brother Mason.