

**Commander in Chief,**  
Through you to the **Most Wise Sovereign,**  
And my **Ill. Brethren,**

**My 18<sup>th</sup> degree**  
by  
Ill. Bro. K.S. Dadzie

Similarly to all the degrees I have taken to date in the AASR, the 18<sup>th</sup> degree has not failed to be rather impressive and memorable. For someone like me, with a Roman Catholic background, I have to say that some of the parts of the ritual seemed very familiar (at first). During the evening, I reminded myself to search for the meaning behind the “veils” so that I could penetrate throughout it and contemplate a better understanding of the ceremony.

I would herein like to share with you some of my understanding of this 18<sup>th</sup> degree of the Chapter of Rose Croix or Order of the Knight of the Pelican and Eagle.

We started with the virtues of **Wisdom, Strength and Beauty** which, in an interest of illustration, I will like to place in inverse order to as follow **Beauty, Strength and Wisdom** in other words **Body, Spirit and Soul**. This is part of the known or the accepted notion of **Trinity** in each and every Human Being. At this level in our progression, this is a knowledge that is accepted (I hope) by all present here.

Those three virtues if not properly used will only lead to “death”. This death could be the death of the Body, death of the Spirit and/or death of the soul (in no particular order). Each death in this case has a manifestation on the current life and that impact/manifestation can be seen by an expert/well trained eye. At the end of the day, death is still a very relative concept.

*Some may consider death as the end of all things. Others may consider it to be a transition from one level of consciousness to another or simply put to another vibration level.*

We at some point on the journey (of the degree), fact which could also be transposed in our own lives, meet a “friend and guide”; in this case **Raphael**. I was very intrigued by the name of our Conductor: **RA-FAL, RA-PHA-EL**. According to Jewish tradition, Raphael was one of the four angels which stood around the throne of God --Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael. The name “Raphael” means “God has healed” or “the Medicine of God.”

Raphael then leads us to the **Mysterious Ladder**:

The virtues of **Faith, Hope, and Charity** are once again revealed to us. With each of them we learn to elevate ourselves from our material or earthly nature to the more prosperous plan of our nature.

**Faith** – “Leads from Earth to Heaven.”

With Faith all things are possible. We can change our lives through Faith; but, Faith only by itself is not enough.

**Hochelaga Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix  
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*Hope* – “A virtue that supports when oppressed by shame and sorrow”  
With Hope we conceive. We give life to things. We put the creative force in motion.

*Charity* – “The perfection of all virtue”.  
It harmonizes, removes the evil eye as the individual is doing the “right deed”. It protects and it bounds us even more with the Divine.

*Judea - Nazareth - Raphael - Judah* => That we are of a Kingly Tribe, for we have been on the journey and have traveled on the same road as others before us. We are Princes; we are constituted & created Knights.

*I.N.R.I.* = > The Great Exemplar. Ultimate proof of LOVE. (This part does not require further explanation)

All of the above are “keys” to a *better life now and to come*. These keys grant certain privileges, but they also come with responsibilities/duties.

*The Table Ceremony* was another memorable part of the degree.  
I deduced the following symbolism from that ceremony:

*Unleavened Bread*: symbol of Life.

*Salt*: Anything that is not pure in us or between us will be purified and anything that is good will be preserved. The salt has that special ability of Preservation & Purification.

When drinking the *wine*, which symbolizes blood or the sacrifice, we say “*Pax Vobiscum*”. We do not know in which area of the brother’s life he needs *Peace*, but, we wish that Peace be with him.

We are all part of the same *Unity* regardless of the name that we give to the deity on a daily basis; however, we are duty bound to one another as a result of being part of the ONE and ONLY, the Alpha & Omega, the Begin and the End.

*I wish Peace onto each of us.*  
*I wish that Peace always surround us.*

*“Pax Vobiscum”*

Fraternally submitted,  
In the bounds of the order,  
Ill. Bro. K. S. Dadzie