Be a Rose-Croix!

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Christian Bernard serves as the Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC worldwide. In this essay from his book So Mote It Be! he invites us to be Rose-Croix together.

Twenty-one years! This was my age when I received, as a gift from Ralph Maxwell Lewis, the following words: “Be a Rose Croix!” At the end of his incarnation, on January 12, 1987, this illuminated soul left vacant the office of Imperator of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis which he had held for nearly fifty years. Between the time he solemnly spoke these words to me in the Supreme Temple in San Jose, California, and his transition, fifteen years had elapsed and during that time not a single day passed that his words did not impress themselves upon my mind. It is the same today, and these very words still echoed deep within my heart when I, myself, was installed in the office of Imperator in April 1990.

He did not say: “Be a Rosicrucian!” or “Serve the Rose Croix!” He told me: “Be a Rose-Croix!” A commanding, profound look then accompanied his voice, and his words penetrated into the depths of my soul. I should have received this injunction with great joy, indeed have considered it an honor, but instead an indescribable feeling of anguish and sorrow gripped me. At the time, I found it difficult to analyze my reaction, but later on I understood that my inner self had realized the magnitude of such an order and the difficulty in obeying it. I have not achieved the Rose-Croix state, but I have done my best to keep the torch of our Order burning and, in doing so, I have had to face many ordeals. Difficult challenges have placed obstacles in my path. The forces have been awesome and still are, but when my courage wavers, I find renewed hope by placing myself under the protection of the Rose-Croix, my ideal; and then that profound look and the voice of Ralph M. Lewis saying to me “Be a Rose-Croix” impose themselves upon me.

When one becomes a member of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, one learns the meaning of Rosicrucianism and of being a Rosicrucian. But to what state does being a Rose-Croix truly correspond? In the Rosicrucian Tradition, the expression, “Rose-Croix state,” refers to the state of perfection. Can it be achieved? Yes, but when and how? I had the opportunity to ask this question of Ralph M. Lewis himself and he answered: “To be a Rose-Croix is to be a Rosicrucian first.” I have inferred from this answer that in or-
der to attain the Rose-Croix state and be-
come a Master, it is first necessary to study
as a disciple, even though this state may
last for tens or hundreds of incarnations.
Therefore, the word
first meant “pa-
tience,” but it signi-
fied even more. First
means “first of all,”
and, consequently,
“above all” a Rosi-
crucian. It cannot be
otherwise for those
who have chosen to
follow a traditional
and initiatory path
such as that offered
by the Ancient and
Mystical Order Ro-
seae Crucis.

To be a Rosicru-
cian means to be on
the Path to Enlight-
enment; to be a Rose-
Croix signifies having come to the end of
that Path. Our inner self knows and un-
derstands this finality. To know and to un-
derstand is like being there already. There-
fore, “Be a Rose-Croix” also means: “Let
us behave as though we have arrived.” It is
a very great responsibility and challenge,
for as Rosicrucians we may stumble and
even fall, make fundamental errors and yet
proceed, as Rose-Croix we cannot do so.
To be a Rose-Croix is to be an example. It
is also to be a light so powerful that it dis-
pels darkness. The Rose-Croix is initially a
Rosicrucian, but whose qualities are excep-
tionally developed.

By definition, the Rose-Croix must
possess all virtues, but to me eight of them
seem the most essential. They are obedi-
ence, confidence, patience, humility, sim-
licity, tolerance, strength, and love – a
virtue that cannot be dissociated from
other virtues and from all existing virtues.
The Rose-Croix is therefore obedient,
confident, patient, humble, simple, tol-
erant, strong, and loving. Other qualities
may be added to these, for their number
is inexhaustible in comparison with what
must constitute the perfection of human
nature.

“Be a Rose-
Croix,” I was or-
dered one day.
Alone, I shall not be
able to succeed. So I
am asking you: “Let
us be Rose-Croix!”
and let us help one
another. If you are
already a Rosicru-
cian, do not look at
the distance that re-
mains to be traveled
so as to attain this
state of perfection,
but see instead the
distance that you have
already traveled. In this way, you will mea-
sure the worth and beauty of the Rosicru-
cian Path, upon which I am happy to walk
beside you. If you are not a member of the
Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis,
perhaps one day you will be? In that case,
you will discover how much life takes on
its full meaning when we give the Rose its
rightful place upon the Cross.

So Mote it Be!