

APPENDIX

CHAPTER OF ROSE CROIX
THE CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND RENEWAL**An Overview of the Day**

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another” (John 13:34). These are the words spoken by the Master of Nazareth as He broke bread with His Disciples at the Last Supper. They are simple words. Yet they express the most sublime truth: all men are brothers. We share one origin and one common obligation. The Great Teacher in this one *Mandatum Novum*, New Commandment, summarized the highest wisdom of all ages. He knew His time was near, that in a few hours He would be betrayed, humiliated, and crucified. Despite this knowledge, He loved and taught love as the one absolute rule that can measure life.

In commemoration of this truth and of its central relevance to the Scottish Rite, Rose Croix Chapters traditionally observed Maundy Thursday (its name, a corruption of the Latin word *mandatum*, commandment) on the middle day of Holy Week. It has been called, variously, “Holy Thursday,” “The Day of the Supper of the Lord,” and “The Day of Mysteries.” Also, traditionally, the Christian world fixes it using the date of Easter Sunday, which is the first Sunday after the full moon, which happens on or after March 21, the vernal equinox. Freemasonry has remembered this special day, and Brethren have gathered throughout the world to reaffirm their faith in the universal fraternity of mankind. The first written record of such observance is a ritual of the Eighteenth Degree which Charles de Ladebat prepared and published in 1856 in New Orleans. The *Code of Statutes* adopted in 1866 lists Maundy Thursday as a feast day, and as of 1878, the *Statutes* indicated its observance as obligatory.

In deference to the Maundy Thursday rites of churches, however, in 1994 it was deemed appropriate that a Scottish Rite nonobligatory “Celebration of Remembrance and Renewal” should replace the traditional Maundy Thursday observance and be held near the vernal equinox, March 21.

The words of this ceremony speak to the hearts and minds of all men. But words alone do not suffice. The Great Master matched His words to acts. He knelt before each of his Disciples and washed the feet of each as an act of total humility and love. In this symbolic act of self sacrifice and service, the message took on practical form. The truth was given substance. Intention without action is of little use.

The Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal, including the Mystic Banquet, is not a religious observance. It is neither the Feast of the Passover nor a Sacrament of Holy Communion, although it commemorates the spirit of both days.

Chapters of Rose Croix traditionally observe the celebration of the Mystic Banquet as a memorial service honoring the Knights of their Chapter who have passed

on during the preceding year. This observance strengthens the ties of brotherly love, past and present. We meet together to break the bread of fraternity, to reconcile ourselves with those we may have offended, and to drink the wine of refreshment and renewal. Thus, we celebrate the lives of our departed Brethren and promise to abide by the New Law, the Law of Love, with our present Brethren and all mankind.

In this celebration, we also commemorate the lives all those who labored to improve mankind and were rewarded with betrayal, punishment, and death. Whether poet, religious leader, scientist or social reformer, all who seek to elevate humankind may be considered as Brethren. Masonry is duty, and its practice, often fraught with personal sacrifice, requires the performance of duty for the good of humanity.

Passover

Through ritual we define ourselves. We join, in a means deeper than words, in a shared tradition. Whether we are in a ritual or only observing it, we act out our beliefs, and in so doing, we become what we believe. This is true of the Jewish Passover, a covenant meal whereby a people created itself and continues to define itself. The ritual's roast lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. Moses forewarned Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go. The Pharaoh of Egypt endured nine plagues that devastated the land, yet he was stubborn. He denied Israel's cry for freedom. Then came the tenth plague.

The Angel of the Lord struck down the firstborn of every Egyptian family, including that of the Pharaoh himself, but the Angel "passed over" the homes of the children of Moses. They had placed a ritual lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels of their homes as a token of their fidelity to Jehovah. Crushed, Pharaoh gave orders for the Hebrews to leave and quickly. They did, pausing only long enough to eat hurriedly the hasty meal they had prepared.

Through the timeless prism of history and myth, the Passover ritual gives perspective to current situations. The people of Israel recall in it the bondage of Egypt, the flight to the Promised Land, and their unending battle to secure freedom. In the Passover, we see a reaffirmation of the covenant between God and man, a reinstatement of the principle that all men must be free and that they will have divine sustenance in this effort.

In observance of this feast, Jesus of Nazareth gathered His Disciples on the night He was betrayed.

The Passover is a religious celebration, the "feast of all feasts," for Jewish society. It is also a symbolic statement for all mankind. In the Passover ritual we see hope rewarded, persecution overcome, hardship endured, and freedom won. Physical and spiritual liberty are victorious. Tyranny is overthrown. With God's help and with unfailing faith in this divine guidance, all men can look to the shining light on the mountains of human dignity and freedom. The Passover prom-

ises escape from the land of darkness and bondage—no matter what the clime or time—to all men. It is this essential theme that binds the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry so closely to this greatest of Jewish feasts, the Passover.

Jamshedji Nauroz

The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry traces its mythological and traditional origins back to the Medieval Ages and into antiquity. The ancient wisdom of Pythagoras is as relevant as the mysteries of Dionysus and the biblical histories of King Solomon. In fact, the taproot of the Craft goes deeper still to the very oldest of cultures and religions Parseeism, or the fire worship, the veneration of light as a symbol of illumination or divine truth, in Persia and India.

It is no mere coincidence that the Parsee festival named Jamshedji Nauroz occurs on the 21st day of March, the vernal equinox. King Jamshedji, the second monarch of the old Peshdadian Dynasty, which lasted 700 years, introduced the solar calendar to his people and declared the first day of the vernal equinox a festival bearing his name. This decision corresponded with a Persian tradition that the world was created at the vernal equinox, the world's original creation being echoed in the annual rebirth of life as spring sets in. The seasonal change from dormancy to growth reflects a deeper philosophical principle.

The religious basis of Parsee fire worship is Zoroastrian dogma. Zoroastrianism rests on an absolute distinction between light and dark, good and evil, truth and falsehood. There is no moral or metaphysical relativism to blur the edges of moral categories. The believer is taught to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, embracing the first and abhorring the last. He is enjoined to seek Light and to shun darkness, ever to nurture in himself the spiritual and beneficial while shedding gross material interests and desires. The feast of Jamshedji Nauroz, taking place at the vernal equinox and placing such stress on a dualistic interpretation of life, recalls the principal lessons of the Eighteenth Degree, especially equilibrium, balance, and harmony in life. The philosophy of Jamshedji Nauroz complements the ideals of the Craft and reveals how fundamental and timeless the principles of Freemasonry are to all humanity.

Conclusion

Christian, Jew, Parsee—each keeps the festival of the vernal equinox in his own manner, whether it is the observation of Holy Thursday, the Passover, or Jamshedji Nauroz. Each event, appropriate to its special significance, is reflected in the Mystic Banquet which the Brethren of the Scottish Rite traditionally celebrate near the vernal equinox, March 21. Here the Rite commemorates the dignity and divine origin of man. It sees the essential truth which structures each ritual. In the diversity of image, place, and detail that each observance affords, the Rite brings into clear focus the elemental lesson of Rebirth, Freedom, and Fraternity.

The Parsee Jamshedji Nauroz teaches us ever to value truth and virtue. The Jewish Passover underlines the alliance between man and God, a covenant built on freedom and dedicated to liberating man from all domination, whatever its form may be. The Christian Holy Thursday brings us the absolute New Commandment: "Love one another." The Scottish Rite Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal is like a mighty river into which many streams feed. It combines the strengths of each tributary making the confluence into one clear channel of personal faith and action. Refined from age to age and country to country, the one Masonic message comes to us in the Craft; and Nature herself, through spring, underlines the universal theme.

Each observance is at or near March 21, the vernal equinox. As the earth brings forth life, these special days point to man's spiritual, intellectual, and moral rebirth. Each holds out the hope that the Mystic Quest for the Lost Word may meet with success. The sincere man will find a reality that is seen with more than eyes. In the midst of life's fleeting shadows, these rituals shed a bright light that reveals an abiding hope and a sustaining confidence in man's innate ability to be reborn.

Like nature in spring, we can shed the burdensome winter of selfish materialism and spiritual decay. We can bring forth new fruits of personal and communal accomplishment. Man is a part of nature and made with the same hand that brought light and shape to Earth which was "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2). Both nature and man are images of God; both came from the divine plan of the Great Architect of the Universe. The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry has retained this truth in the Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal, a ritual that honors the great religions of man by a unified statement of divine purpose and human capability. Let us join in this observance, a sublime celebration of Rebirth, Freedom, and Fraternity.

Lux et Tenebris, Light and Darkness

Light-dark. Good-evil. Life-death. Hope-fear. These are the polar opposites of life. They represent the ends of the spectrum of existence. In their dynamic juxtaposition, their eternal combat, we can see life as a creative, developing force. "More light!" These, the last words of Goethe, the great German poet and Freemason, represent the philosophy of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. We seek more light. Even when faced with the darkest of times, with apparent death itself, we know that light and life will triumph, that the myriad demons of ignorance, prejudice, and hatred cannot overcome the forces of knowledge, fraternity, and love. The dawn will come. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). It will never go out.

These are the concepts represented in our ancient ritual of *Tenebrae*, the "Extinguishing of Lights." One by one, we see the candles quenched. Bit by bit, the darkness gathers. Evil strengthens. The forces of chaos increase. Despair looms

and seems to triumph as the last light disappears. We are cast into utter darkness. There seems no hope, no salvation, no rekindling of life possible.

Then, miraculously, a splinter of light shatters the gloom. It flickers. It seems to vanish. Then it glows with a renewed brilliance, all the brighter it seems for shedding its beams in total darkness. Feeding upon hope and courage and compassion, it flares forth reigniting the candles that had been extinguished. Our lives reflect this light, and we kindle within ourselves renewed confidence and joy.

So the symbolic meaning of Tenebrae brings the Craft's Light to all Masons. A candle of understanding in our hearts mimics the altar's flames and lifts us to new heights of Masonic aspiration. Then we, having inward lamps, pass these on to others, opening their eyes to the brilliance of Freemasonry. Tenebrae asserts in candle, wax, and flame the simple truth that faith, hope, and charity will never die. Darkness must yield to light. Tyranny will fall to freedom. Order and truth will ever conquer chaos and error.

Mystic Banquet

It is hard to conceive of any rituals more beautiful and inspiring or any ceremonies in Masonry more soul stirring and profound than the Tenebrae and the Feast of the Paschal Lamb or, as it is often called, the Mystic Banquet or Feast Obligatory. To our Jewish Brethren, it signifies the Feast of the Passover, which is an annual reminder of the priceless heritage of freedom and a call to struggle for it by eternal vigilance. To our Christian Brethren, it signifies the Last Supper Jesus and His Disciples attended to celebrate this ancient festival, after which there followed His death and resurrection.

The Passover was a festival instituted to commemorate Jehovah's "passing over" the Israelite houses while "passing through" those of the Egyptians in order to destroy the firstborn of each household. In the early history of these celebrations, a lamb without blemish was taken from the flock on the 10th and killed on the 14th day of the Hebrew month Abib, which occurred at the spring of the year. The blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on the two side posts and the upper door post, and the flesh eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs before the morning. Jehovah, passing over the blood stained doors, slew the firstborn in the Egyptian houses not similarly protected. St. Paul likens the Paschal Feast to the resurrection of Christ, but, no matter what the interpretation, in Masonry it has no creedal significance. To our Brethren of the Rose Croix, it is known as the Mystic Banquet, and it is obligatory, at least in spirit, for every Knight Rose Croix, on this special day, to break bread with a Brother and partake of a portion of roasted lamb. This beautiful ceremony is but another method of bringing to our minds those great moral truths which we already have been taught. It is in that spirit that we assemble, as Masons and as Brethren, bound with solemn ties and no thought of any particular creed or religion.

Where the members are gathered for dinner prior to Tenebrae, the ceremony of Extinguishing the Lights, the symbolism of the Mystic Banquet should be explained to the Knights attending the ceremonies. They are as follows:

1. *The Matzo*, or unleavened bread is also called Bread of Affliction. It is symbolic of the bread which the Hebrews made when they hastily left Egypt, because they did not have enough time to allow their dough to leaven. The Matzo is the most important symbol of the Passover.
2. *The Moror* or bitter herb (represented with a small slice of horseradish) is symbolic of the hardships which the Israelites endured when they were slaves in Egypt.
3. *The Haroses* is a kind of paste of apples, almonds, raisins, and wine symbolic of the mortar the Israelites used when they were slaves in the construction for the Pharaoh of the treasure cities Pithom and Ramses.
4. *The Shank Bone* is symbolic of the Paschal Lamb that was sacrificed and eaten on the eve of the Passover.
5. *The Hard-boiled Egg* is symbolic of life and springtime when nature renews life.
6. *The Cup of Wine* (purple grape juice) is commemorative of the promise made by God to Moses to redeem the Israelites by bringing them out of bondage.

An explanation of these symbols of the Mystic Banquet gives the ceremony much of its true meaning; however, the preceding explanation is not ritualistic and, hence, need not be included as such in any ceremony. It is not permissible to substitute an actual banquet for the Mystic Banquet although a dinner preceding the ceremony is appropriate. See the report of the Committee on Rituals and Ceremonial Forms, *Transactions 1947*, page 294, which reads in part as follows: It is difficult for us to make a rule that should be followed in all the Bodies, because in some Valleys, members travel a long distance to attend the Services, and a dinner preceding the ... [ceremony] is found desirable. We think they should not, at this time, be forbidden. In the larger Valleys no problem arises because of the old custom of having a repast prior to the Service. But, we find that they do not distract seriously from the spirit and intention of the ... [occasion].

Articles Used in the Observance

1. Seven candles (a Menorah may be used, but is not necessary)
2. Matches (do not use a cigarette lighter)
3. A bowl of water (for dousing the matches)
4. Purple grape juice
5. Individual cups
6. One plate of whole matzo [mat zah] or unleavened bread
7. One dish of moror [mohr or] or bitter herb (sliced horseradish)
8. One dish of haroseth [hahr oh seth] (a paste of apple, almonds, raisins, and wine)
9. One roasted lamb shank, with bone (the meat chopped into bite size morsels)
10. One hard boiled egg in shell
11. One plate or bowl of salt
12. One unused goblet in the center of the table
13. Mystic Scroll (with names of members who died in the past year)

The table, with white cover upon which these items are to be arranged, may be of any shape or design. Care should be taken to make sure that the candles are set firmly in their holders, and a fire extinguisher should always be kept nearby. The most prominent features on the table should be the lights and the unused goblet. The candles are lit by the Master of Ceremonies following the Mystic Banquet (or the optional ten minute address). The meat of the roasted lamb should be cut into small pieces, each secured to a toothpick, with the bone left in the center of the plate.

[Optional Distribution Ceremony: Consideration should be given to audience participation. If, however, there are more than thirty people in the gathering, it may be wise to limit distribution of the Mystic Banquet to the actual Officers participating in the ceremony. The participation of large audiences complicates and lengthens the ceremony. This same consideration should be implemented in the distribution of matzo, lamb, and purple grape juice.]

CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND RENEWAL

Part One: Remembrance of Recently Deceased Brethren

Note: Scottish Rite caps should be worn during this entire observance.

[Officers rise to their feet prior to speaking their parts and sit down when they are finished speaking.]

Wise Master—Brethren and Knights, we assemble in the spirit of fraternity at the vernal equinox, the commencement of spring, to renew acquaintances, to remember our friends, and to pledge ourselves to aiding humanity. We are taught that before commencing any laudable undertaking, we should first invoke the aid of Deity. Officers attendant, you will now, therefore, rise and bow your heads with me, under the Sign of the Good Shepherd. Brother Orator.

[After the Brethren rise, all Officers bow their heads under the Sign of the Good Shepherd.]

Orator—Great Architect of the Universe, source of all Light and giver of all good graces, be with us now as we remember the true purposes of our Fraternity. Grant us health, peace, and wisdom that our days may be long and fruitful. Let us remember the lessons and sacrifices of those who have gone before us so that we may, by their examples, better our own lives and those of our fellowmen. To the glory of Thine Ineffable Name, amen. So mote it be.

All— So mote it be.

[The Brethren resume their seats]

Wise Master—Spring is a time of beginning, but also of remembrance. As nature offers gifts of renewal following the dead of winter, she reminds us that she is immortal and that from apparent death springs life eternal. The hard black earth softens and is broken by the tender green shoots that promise to renew the gift of life by seed and fruit. By this renewal, nature offers hope that man will survive the grave and that he is, in some measure, immortal. Thus, life continues. With whom do you stand my Brethren? Are there faces lacking from this group which you knew in the past year? Have you laid a friend and Brother to rest? On this occasion, let us celebrate the lives and commemorate the deaths of our Brethren who have passed on so that we may ever keep them with us while we live. For no man is ever truly dead as long as he lives in the hearts and memories of his friends and loved ones, and if his influences continue to act for good.

Orator—Wherever they may be, the Knights Rose Croix form a great circle which encompasses the past as well as the present. The same vows and duties that bind us to each other bind us to our ancestors, for we have received our inheritance through them. This fraternal chain, called the Mystic Circle, is forged

of links which pass into eternity. It becomes our duty, therefore, to honor our Brethren past as we renew our fraternal ties to our Brethren present. Remember always that perfect love knows no death and that what virtue unites death cannot separate.

Wise Master—My Brethren, let us now recall by names those of our number who, in the past year, have completed their earthly labors. Brother Secretary, you will take up the Mystic Scroll and read aloud the names of our Brethren and Knights who are recently deceased.

Secretary—Brethren, attend. Recorded here, as in our hearts and memories, are the names of our honored dead. We shall miss them.

[Optional Memorial Ceremony: As the names of the dead are read, they may be memorialized in a fashion selected by the Officers prior to the meeting. For example, roses may be laid in a wreath or circle, or a rose may be distributed to any widows present. Alternately, a cross or circle made up of small lights may be gradually illuminated, or an appropriate sound effect, such as a chime or a gong, may be sounded after each full name is read slowly and with dignity. Whatever forms of expression the memorial may take, the ceremony must be simple and easily staged. It is important to be considerate of time during this memorial. The ceremony then continues.]

Secretary—Wise Master, these, our Brethren and fellow Knights, are no more.

Wise Master—Be not sad, my Brethren, but let us rejoice that these men lived, that we knew them, and that they were one with us in the Mystic Bond of Freemasonry. Let us celebrate their lives by making the best of their examples. So mote it be.

All—So mote it be.

Part Two: Mystic Banquet

Note: Remember that this ceremony is neither the Feast of Passover nor the Sacrament of the Last Supper. It should not be conducted in any way to create that impression.

Wise Master—Now, Brethren and Knights, attend with me the Mystic Banquet. Knights Senior and Junior Wardens, approach and prepare the Bread of Fraternity.

[The Senior and Junior Wardens break matzo (unleavened bread) on two plates.]

Wise Master—Brethren, I give to you all the Bread of Fraternity. You will receive it as a group, taking your lead from me.

[The Senior and Junior Wardens distribute the matzo and return to their places, next to the Wise Master.]

Wise Master—Take, eat, and give to the hungry.

[At these words, all eat together. Senior and Junior Wardens return to their stations.]

Senior Warden—The Feast of the Passover was first observed by the Hebrews in Egypt. On the tenth day of the first month, the people were ordered to take a lamb in its first year, without blemish, arrange themselves by families in numbers suitable for its consumption, and keep the lamb until the fourteenth day of the month when it was to be slain, roasted, and eaten with unleavened bread. The blood of the lamb was also placed on the doorposts and lintels of the houses during this observance. The Destroying Angel, seeing this blood, passed over the homes of the Hebrews and slew the firstborn of the Egyptians. Thus, the blood of the Passover Lamb symbolized redemption. The ceremony of Passover is observed by the Jewish people to this day.

[*The Senior Warden gestures to the following as he mentions them.*] The *moror*, made of bitter herbs; the *haroseth*, a paste of apple, almond, raisins, and wine; the salt and hard boiled egg are all symbols of hardship and renewal.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus of Nazareth also celebrated the Passover Feast with His Disciples. His observance of this Feast is now known by Christians as the Last Supper. As such, it was instituted as the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Wise Master—Here, we partake of the lamb, which has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence, not as a religious ceremony, but in remembrance of the Great Commandment of the New Law of Love which surpasses all boundaries. By this act we signify our desire to reconcile with anyone we have wronged so that we may be innocent of malice. Let us also, thereby, renew our vows to humanity at large. Knights Senior and Junior Wardens, approach and receive the Paschal Lamb.

[*The Senior and Junior Wardens take the morsels of lamb on two plates.*]

Wise Master—Brethren, I give to you the Paschal Lamb. You will receive it as a group, taking your lead from me.

[*The Senior and Junior Wardens distribute the roasted lamb and return to their places, next to the Wise Master.*]

Wise Master—Let us remember the admonition: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.” (At these words, all eat together.)

Junior Warden—Wine is the Masonic symbol of refreshment. Let it, therefore, remind us of the first fruits of the earth, and of spring’s renewal and bounty. The earth does not withhold her gifts from any man because of color, creed, location, or nationality. Even so (*Junior Warden gestures to goblet*), let this empty goblet, in the center of the table, teach us kindness and generosity with the needy, whether he is friend or stranger. In moderation, wine makes the heart glad, but in excess, it causes men to stumble and err. Let this wine also recall our first lesson in Masonry: to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds. In the spirit of renewal, hope, and joy for the ensuing year, let us now partake of this wine.

Wise Master—Knights Senior and Junior Wardens, approach and prepare the fruit of the vine.

The Senior and Junior Wardens serve the wine (purple grape juice) in small cups.

Wise Master—Brethren, in the spirit of renewal, hope, and joy for the ensuing year, I give to you all the fruit of the vine. You will receive it as a group, taking your lead from me.

The Senior and Junior Wardens distribute the cups of wine (grape juice) to all members and return to their places, next to the Wise Master.

Wise Master—Take, drink, and give to the thirsty.

At these words, all drink together.

[Optional ten minute address: Some Valleys may desire to include a brief address at this point in the ceremony. The Wise Master selects and introduces both the speaker and the topic, but he should ensure that the subject of the address is in keeping with the spirit of the ceremony. In any case, it is important to keep the audience in mind and to limit the presentation to no more than ten minutes. At the conclusion of the address, the Wise Master thanks the speaker. Before continuing with the ceremony, he waits until any applause is over.]

Part Three: Tenebrae, Extinguishing of the Lights

Wise Master—Brother Master of Ceremonies, you will light the tapers.

The Master of Ceremonies either lights the candles or, if electric, turns on their switches. He then resumes his seat.

Wise Master—Now, Brethren and Knights, attend with me the most solemn purpose of our gathering, that we may recall those who, loving mankind, gave all that they possessed, and were rewarded with death.

[A preselected Brother, who is either off stage or near the light switch, dims the lights in the room.]

Wise Master—When the Great Architect created the heavens and the earth, there was darkness, and He alone was the One True Light. But He was pleased to place lights in the sky that His creatures might both live and see. Even so, throughout history men have appeared to dispel the darkness of fanaticism and superstition with the Light of Truth. Whether poet, religious leader, scientist, or social reformer, all who sought to elevate humankind brought with them the Light of Truth. But the people, often blinded by vices, put them to death.

Wise Master extinguishes the first of seven lights or candles, commencing with one of the outermost on either side. The subsequent lights should be extinguished from the outside in, alternating each time, leaving the center light for last.

Senior Warden—Their pure and lofty lessons were intended to ensure the happiness of mankind by proclaiming perfect equality and freedom; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[Senior Warden extinguishes the second light, on the opposite far end, as described above.]

Junior Warden—They came to persuade all men to be upright and to become one family of Brethren; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[*Junior Warden extinguishes the third light.*]

Orator—They endeavored to illuminate the mind with science, philosophy, and knowledge; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[*Orator extinguishes the fourth light.*]

Almoner—They came to teach Charity and to put loving-kindness in the place of greed, hatred, and persecution; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[*Almoner extinguishes the fifth light.*]

Master of Ceremonies—They came to lead mankind through the darkness of the night of ignorance by proclaiming that the immortal part of man is a ray of the Divine Light; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[*Master of Ceremonies extinguishes the sixth light.*]

Guardian of the Temple—They came to ensure that mankind was protected from brutality and that individual liberty was to be preserved; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[*Guardian of the Temple extinguishes the seventh and last light. The meeting room should now be very dim or, for dramatic effect, nearly dark except for a light on the Orator.*]

Orator—In all ages, mankind has brutally murdered its liberators, reformers, and best exemplars. To us, in this season, we need look no further than the Apostle of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity who was crucified 2000 years ago for proclaiming the Law of Love. No greater law has been uttered than His simple words, “Love one another.” At the very least, He was a great teacher of mankind, and whatever our private views may be beyond that, none can dispute the wisdom of the New Law.

The Great Architect mercifully hides from our vision what is to befall us in the future. We know not what tragedies await us on the morrow. For this reason, let us work while it is yet day, and let us endeavor to fulfill our duties and dispel the darkness which you see here represented. Let each of us bring light to the world by the practice of virtue, and let us labor for its own sake, knowing that he who sows does not always reap. But rest satisfied, my Brethren and Knights, that you labor not in vain, for if one life is benefited or improved by your own, you have done well.

With whom do you stand my Brethren? Are there faces in this group which you will not see next year? Will you lay a friend and Brother to rest?

Let us, henceforth, celebrate the lives of our Brethren who have passed on, keeping them ever with us while we live. Remember, no man is ever truly dead as long as he lives in the hearts and memories of his friends and loved ones, and if his influences continue to act for good. So may it be with each of you. So mote it be.

All—So mote it be.

Part Four: Fiat Lux, Relighting the Lights

Wise Master—Brethren and Knights, at the commencement of our Masonic careers, each of us knelt before an altar and asked for Light. This request granted, we came to understand that Light is the primary Masonic symbol because it reveals the world to us as it is. But Light is more than a mere symbol, for life could not exist without it. We are taught that every man is a ray of the Divine Light and that we are to be Soldiers of the Light, ever vigilant. And, although the lights of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity have been extinguished from time to time upon the earth, yet man bears within his breast the spark which can ignite these anew. “Let there be light” is both a Divine command and a moral obligation. In humble commemoration of that august event, I now say, “Let there be light,” even the Light of Truth.

[Wise Master lights the first light, following the same sequence used in extinguishing the lights.]

Wise Master—So may the light of Truth illuminate the world.

Senior Warden—Equality and freedom are in the hearts of all who consider the just welfare of their neighbors. To deny a man these rights is to deny an instinct given by the Great Architect of the Universe.

[Senior Warden lights the second light.]

Senior Warden—So may the light of equality and freedom illuminate the world.

Junior Warden—To walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man is to make us as one family of Brethren. Every true man concerns himself with the welfare of both his family and of humanity.

[Junior Warden lights the third light.]

Junior Warden—So may the light of true fraternity illuminate the world.

Orator—Man’s unending quest is to understand the nature of reality. To aid him in this search, he developed science and philosophy, which combat superstition and ignorance.

[Orator lights the fourth light.]

Orator—So may the light of knowledge and wisdom illuminate the world.

Almoner—At some time in life, all men find themselves in need. To give to the less fortunate without the hope or expectation of recompense is the practice of Charity. We are taught to have fervent Charity, for Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

[Almoner lights the fifth light.]

Almoner—So may the light of Charity illuminate the world.

Master of Ceremonies—The purpose of true initiation is self realization. “Know thyself” is at once the dictum of sages and the greeting placed above the doorways of ancient temples. When we realize who and what we are, we not only seek

to improve our own lives but also the lives of others. The great teachers of every age have proclaimed that the immortal part of man is a ray of the Divine Light and that we are all children of the Most High.

[Master of Ceremonies lights the sixth light.]

Master of Ceremonies—So may the light of self realization illuminate the world.

Guardian of the Temple—Protection from brutality and the exercise of individual liberty afford all other freedoms. To deny any man his individual rights, merely because his practices differ from our own, is to deny him the measure of his creation. Man has the right to live as he will, as long as he does not thwart the rights of others.

[Guardian of the Temple lights the seventh light.]

Guardian of the Temple—So may the light of individual liberty illuminate the world.

[The lights in the room are dramatically raised to full intensity.]

Wise Master—Brethren and Knights, the Word of Life and Regeneration is recovered, and the Law of Love lives! We are to proclaim it and to live it so that we may be worthy of the titles and honors we bear. Let us forever unite to protect the rights of others and, thus, of ourselves. When labors are to be placed upon our shoulders, let us remember those who sacrificed for us and did not shirk the call to duty. May Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity reign supreme, and may the Great Architect grant that we meet again in this group next year, in the bonds of unity and peace. (*Wise Master raises both hands, palms open, above head.*) Brethren, Knights and guests, I give to you all the hope of spring renewed with its attendant bounty. May Brotherly Love prevail, and may we ever be united in every social and moral virtue, cemented in the mystic and universal bond of Masonic Brotherhood. So mote it be.

All—So mote it be.

FINIS