

DEDICATION OF MASONIC HALLS

Halls or Temples used exclusively for Masonic purposes should be dedicated.

The ceremony is conducted by the Grand Master, or by his Deputy specially commissioned for that purpose.

On the day appointed, the Grand Master and other members of the Grand Lodge meet in a convenient hall or place contiguous to the hall to be dedicated, and open the Grand Lodge.

The Lodge-room is arranged as usual, and with a table for the Symbolic Lodge (or carpet) placed the same as for the ceremony of Constituting a Lodge.

The Grand Master is waited upon by a messenger from the Lodge, who addresses him as follows:

MESSENGER: Most Worshipful Grand Master, the brethren of _____ Lodge, No _____, being animated with a desire to promote the honor and interests of the Craft, have provided a suitable meeting place for their convenience and accommodation; and they now desire that it be solemnly dedicated to Masonic purposes, agreeably to ancient forms and usage.

GRAND MASTER: It is well; inform the brethren that in due time we will comply with their request.

The Grand Master and Grand Lodge are then escorted, in procession, to the hail. The procession may be formed and arranged to suit the particular occasion, having reference to the number and rank of those present; generally the same as in constituting a Lodge.

On arriving at the hall, the procession halts; the brethren open ranks, face inward, and all, except the Grand Officers, march in reverse order, between the lines, into the hail.

The Symbolic *Lodge* is placed on the table prepared for it.

The officers of the Lodge, invested with their proper jewels and clothing, will assume their respective stations and places. The Lodge should not be opened.

The Grand Master, preceded by the Grand Marshal, then advances between the lines of the Grand Officers, the procession following in reverse order.

As the Grand Master enters the hail, the brethren are caused to stand and give the Grand Honors (3 x 3).

On entering the hall, the Grand Lodge Officers pass once around the Symbolic *Lodge*, halting in front of the West, and the vessels of Corn, Wine and Oil and the tapers (lighted) are placed, respectively, at the East, West and South of the Symbolic *Lodge*.

The Grand Officers march around to their respective stations, and the officers of the Lodge resign their seats to them. The Great Lights are placed upon the Altar by the Grand Bible Bearer.

Instrumental music should accompany the marching.

All being seated, an appropriate ode, or chant, may be sung by the choir.

The principal Architect, or brother having the management of the building in charge, addresses the Grand Master.

ARCHITECT: Most Worshipful Grand Master, having had in charge the construction of this edifice, and, to the best of my ability, having accomplished the task assigned me, I beg leave to surrender to you the implements committed to my care when the foundation of the structure was laid (*presents to the Grand Master the Square, Level and Plumb*), humbly hoping that our designs, and our labor in the erection of this edifice, may meet your approbation and be crowned with success.

GRAND MASTER: Brother Architect, the skill and fidelity displayed, in the execution of the trust reposed in you at the beginning of this undertaking, have secured the entire approbation of the Grand Lodge. In this, I am pleased to congratulate you; and we sincerely pray that this Hall may continue a lasting monument to the good taste and to the spirit and liberality of its founders.

DEP GRAND MASTER: Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Hall in which we are now assembled, and the plan upon which it has been constructed, having met with your approbation, it is the desire of the Fraternity that it should now be dedicated, according to ancient forms and usage.

GRAND MASTER: Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master and brethren, it is with pleasure that we accede to your request, and we will now proceed, according to ancient usage, to dedicate this Hall.

The Grand Lodge Officers will assemble around the Symbolic Lodge, under the direction of the Grand Marshal.

The Symbolic Lodge (or carpet) is now uncovered by the Grand Marshal; and, while solemn music is played, the Grand Lodge Officers form around the Symbolic Lodge, the Grand Master at the East of it.

FORMATION

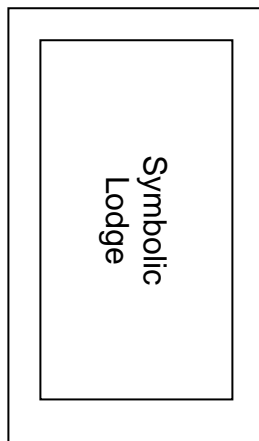


Grand Senior Deacon

Grand Master

Grand Junior Deacon

Deputy Grand Master



Grand Chaplain

Grand Lecturer

Grand Secretary

Grand Historian

Grand Junior Warden

Grand Standard Bearer

Grand Bible Bearer

Grand Marshal

Grand Tyler

Grand Senior Steward

Grand Senior Warden

Grand Junior Steward

Grand Deacons and Grand Stewards cross rods.

The Grand Officers march once around the Lodge and halt; the music ceases; and, all kneeling (on the right knee), the Grand Chaplain offers the following

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GRAND CHAPLAIN: Great Architect of the Universe! Maker and Ruler of all worlds I Deign, from Thy celestial temple, from the realms of light and glory, to bless us in all the purposes of our present assembly. We humbly invoke Thee to give us, at this and at all times, Wisdom in all our doings; Strength of mind in all our difficulties; and the Beauty of harmony in all our communications. Permit us, O Thou Author of Light and Life, Great Source of Love and Happiness, solemnly now to dedicate this Hall to the honor of Thy glory. Amen

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

All arise and the procession again moves slowly once around the Lodge, while a passage of Scripture (I Kings, vii, 15-22) may be read by the Grand Chaplain, or the choir may sing the following

ODE

Air: *Old Hundred*

Genius of Masonry, descend,
And with thee bring thy spotless train,
Constant our sacred rites attend,
While we adore thy peaceful reign.

The procession having again made the circuit around the Lodge, the Grand Master standing at the East, the Deputy Grand Master presents the vessel of Corn to the Grand Master, saying:

DEP. GRAND MASTER: Most Worshipful Grand Master, in the dedication of our Temples it has been our custom from time immemorial to pour Corn upon the *Lodge*, as an emblem of nourishment. I therefore present you this vessel of Corn, to be employed according to ancient usage.

The Grand Master then, striking thrice on the Lodge with his gavel, scatters the Corn on the Lodge (or carpet), saying:

GRAND MASTER: In the name of the Great Jehovah, to Whom be all honor and glory, I do solemnly dedicate this Hall to *Freemasonry*.

The private Grand Honors are then given, if the ceremony be in private; if the ceremony be in public, then, instead, the public Grand Honors are given (3 x 3).

The procession then moves twice around the Lodge, while the following stanza is being sung:

Bring with thee Virtue, brightest maid:
Bring Love; bring Truth and friendship here;
while kind Relief will lend her aid
To smooth the wrinkled brow of care.

The Senior Grand Warden presents the vessel of Wine to the Grand Master, saying:

GRAND SENIOR WARDEN: Most Worshipful Grand Master, Wine, an emblem of refreshment, having been used by our ancient Brethren in the dedication of their Temples, I present you this vessel of Wine, to be used on the present occasion, according to ancient Masonic custom.

The Grand Master pours the Wine upon the Lodge (or carpet), saying:

GRAND MASTER: In the name of the Holy Saints John, I do solemnly dedicate this Hall to *Virtue*.

The private Grand Honors are given, if the ceremony be in private; if public, the public Grand Honors--(3x3); after which the procession moves solemnly three times around the Lodge, while the following stanza is being sung:

Come, Charity, with goodness crowned,
Encircled in thy heavenly robe;
Diffuse thy blessings all around,
To every corner of the Globe!

The Junior Grand Warden presents the vessel of Oil to the Grand Master, saying:

GR. JR. WARDEN: Most Worshipful Grand Master, Oil is an emblem of that peace and joy which should animate every bosom on the completion of important undertakings. I therefore present you this vessel of Oil to be used according to ancient Masonic custom.

The Grand Master then pours the Oil upon the Lodge (or carpet), saying:

GRAND MASTER: In the name of the whole Fraternity, I do solemnly dedicate this Hall to *Universal Benevolence*.

The private Grand Honors are given, if the ceremony be in private; if public, the public Grand Honors are given (3 x 3), after which the following stanza is sung:

TO Heaven's high Architect all praise,
All praise, all gratitude he given,
Who deigned the human soul to raise,
By mystic secrets, sprung from Heaven.

The Grand Chaplain (all kneeling) then delivers the Invocation.

INVOCATION

GRAND CHAPLAIN: May the Lord, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, bless the brethren, here assembled, in all their lawful undertakings, and grant to each one of them, in needful supply, the *Corn* of Nourishment, the *Wine* of Refreshment, and the *Oil* of Joy. Bless all our brethren, the children and the widow, wherever dispersed, and grant speedy relief to all who are either oppressed or distressed. May we finish all our work here below with Thy approbation, and then have our transition from this earthly abode to Thy heavenly temple above, there to enjoy light, glory and bliss ineffable and eternal. Amen!

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

GRAND MASTER: Glory be to God on high!

RESPONSE BY THE BRETHREN: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!

The Symbolic Lodge is then covered by the Grand Marshal; the Grand Officers return to their stations and places, and the Grand Master delivers the following or some other appropriate Charge.

CHARGE

GRAND MASTER: Brethren, the ceremonies we have performed are not unmeaning rites, nor the amusing pageant of an idle hour, for they have a solemn and instructive import. Permit me to point out to you, and to impress upon your minds, the ennobling sentiments they are so well adapted to inspire.

This Hall, designed and built by *Wisdom*, supported by *Strength*, and adorned by *Beauty*, we are first to consecrate to Masonry, in the name of the great *Jehovah*; which teaches us, in all our works, begun and finished, to acknowledge, adore and magnify Him. It reminds us, also, in His fear to enter the door of the Lodge, to put our trust in Him while passing its trials, and to hope in Him for the reward of its labors.

Let, then, its altar be devoted to His service, and its lofty arch resound with His praise! May the Eye, which seeth in secret witness here the sincere and unaffected piety, which withdraws from the engagements of the world to silence and privacy, that it may be exercised with less interruption and less ostentation.

Our march around the *Lodge* reminds us of the travels of human life, in which Masonry is an enlightened, a safe and a pleasant path. Its tessellated mosaic pavement symbolizes to us the checkered diversity and uncertainty of human affairs. Our step is time; our progression, eternity.

Following our ancient constitutions, with rays-tic rites we dedicate this Hall to the honor of *Freemasonry*.

Our best attachments are due to the Craft. In its prosperity, we find our joy; and in paying it honor, we honor ourselves; but its worth transcends our encomiums, and its glory will out-sound our praise.

Brethren, it is our pride that we have our names on the records of Freemasonry. May it be our high ambition that they shed luster on the immortal page!

This Hall is also dedicated to *Virtue*.

This worthy appropriation will always be duly regarded while the moral duties, which our sublime lectures inculcate with affecting and impressive pertinency, are cherished in our hearts and illustrated in our lives.

As Freemasonry aims to enliven the spirit of Philanthropy, and promote the cause of Charity, so we dedicate this Hall to *Universal Benevolence*, in the assurance that every brother will dedicate his affections and his abilities to the same generous purpose; that while he displays a warm and cordial affection for those who are of the Fraternity, he will extend his benevolent regards and good wishes to the whole family of mankind.

Such, my brethren, is the significant meaning of the solemn rites we have just performed.

How many pleasing considerations attend the present assembly! While, in almost every other association of men, political animosities, contentions and wars interrupt the progress of Humanity and the cause of Benevolence, it is our distinguished privilege to dwell together in peace, and to engage in plans to perfect individual and social happiness.

In conclusion, we offer our congratulations to the Worshipful Master, Wardens, Officers and Members of this Lodge. We commend their zeal, and hope it will meet with ample recompense. May their Hall be the home of Piety, Virtue and Benevolence! May their Lodge continue to flourish; their union to strengthen; and their happiness to abound! And when they, and we all, shall be removed from the labors of the earthly Lodge, may we be admitted to the brotherhood of the perfect, in that building of God, that Hall not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Grand Master then addresses the Grand Marshal as follows:

GRAND MASTER: Worshipful Brother Grand Marshal, make proclamation that this Hall has been solemnly dedicated, in *ample* form, to the purposes of Freemasonry.

PROCLAMATION

GRAND MARSHAL: I am directed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master to proclaim, and I do now proclaim, that this Hall has been solemnly dedicated, in *ample* form, to the purposes of Freemasonry.

The Grand Chaplain is conducted to the Altar and pronounces the benediction

BENEDICTION

GRAND CHAPLAIN: Almighty and Everlasting God! Giver of every good and perfect gift! Bless, we beseech Thee, this Hall which we have this day dedicated and consecrated. Send down upon Thy servants who shall here assemble the healthful spirit of Thy grace. Guide us through life; and when our labors are ended, gather us into Thy mansion above, and Thine shall be the glory, forever and ever. Amen!

RESPONSE: So mote it be.

The Grand Lodge may re-form in procession and march to the apartment where it first convened, or it may be closed in the Hall, as its convenience may dictate.