

FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE ORDERS OF MASONIC KNIGHTHOOD

Adopted by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States at America in its 38th Triennial Conclave held in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 23-26, 1931, with revisions made at the 42nd Triennial Conclave held in the City of Chicago, May 24-25, 1943.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

(1) Every Knight Templar who was in regular standing at the time of his death is entitled to be buried with the funeral honors of Knighthood. An unaffiliated Knight Templar is not entitled of right to such honors but a Commandery may grant them to him without breach of Knightly duty.

(2) Upon notice of the death of a Sir Knight entitled to funeral honors and upon his previous request or the request of his family, it is the duty of the Commander to convene his Commandery for the purpose of attending the ceremonies.

(3) The Sir Knights will wear the Templar Dress Uniform, their sword hilts being suitably draped in mourning. In inclement weather the Templar Fatigue Uniform, with or without swords, may be worn and uncovering may be omitted. If the Standard Guard be present with the Colors the latter shall be furled and draped in mourning.

(4) A small Templar Cross should be placed on the casket. The chapeau and sword in scabbard, and, if the frater was an Officer, his jewel trimmed with crepe, shall also be placed there.

(5) To receive and escort the remains to the place designated for the service, the Commandery will march in the usual order of parades, preferably in charge of the Captain General with the Commander and staff, including the Prelate, wearing his Robes of Office, and the Honor Guard, marching at the head. On arrival, the line will be formed opposite and facing the hearse. The Commander will pass to the front into the home or funeral parlor and report for duty. The Honor Guard (six Sir Knights under command of one of their number) will precede the casket and later march at the side of the hearse. As the casket appears the Captain General will command: 1. *Present*, 2. *SWORDS*. He will then face front and assume the position of "Salute Swords." When the casket has been placed in the hearse, he will resume the "Carry," face about and command: 1. *Carry*, 2. *SWORDS*. He will then form column of threes and proceed to the front of the column, behind the Police escort and musicians if they are present. The Commander and staff will follow the Commandery and precede the hearse. The Sir Knights will march at "Reverse Swords" and the Commander and Staff at "Secure Swords."

(6) As the procession arrives at the place designated to hold the service, the Commandery will resume "Carry Swords," form a line as before, facing the place where the hearse will be halted, and execute the "Present Swords" as the casket is being removed and placed upon the carriage. They will then "Return Swords" and march in a column of files into the Chapel, Asylum, or burial place, uncovering at the door if it is a Church and remaining so while within the Church, preferably remaining at the south side of the bier and retaining their formation so as to be able to leave in the same formation. The Commander and Staff, who have followed the column, will take position at the head of the bier or in the East, and the Wardens at the foot of the bier.

The casket is brought in and placed upon the bier, the Guard of Honor, at "Carry Swords," being on either side. The family and friends are seated on the north side of the bier. When all is in readiness the Honor Guard will, upon command, form the arch of steel over the casket.

(7) No fixed rules are possible as changing conditions are the governing factors. If the service is to be wholly at the cemetery, the "bier" will become the "grave." No provisions are made for seating the participants in this Ceremony but this can be done by the Captain General, in which event he will bring the Commandery to "Attention" before the reading of Scripture lessons or Prayer.

(8) Preferably the larger part of the funeral service is rendered at the house of the deceased, at a church or at some place of public assembly, but the entire rites may be given at the grave. The service will be conducted according to the following ritual.

(NOTE: The Guard of Honor may be used at the house or at the public place of assembly, and if used will "Cross Swords" over the casket at the beginning of the service.)

All being in readiness the choir may render an appropriate selection.

RITUAL

EMINENT COMMANDER: Sir Knights, in the solemn ceremonies of our Order, we have often been reminded of the great truth that we are born to die. The mournful funeral knell has be-tokened that another spirit has winged its flight to a new state of existence. An alarm has come to the door of our Asylum, the messenger is Death; and none presumes to say to the direful presence, "Who dares approach?" A Pilgrim Warrior has been summoned, "and there is no discharge in that war." A burning taper in the life of our Commandery has been extinguished and none save the High and Holy One can relight it.

The earthly remains of our beloved frater lie mute before us and the light of the eye and the breathing of the lips in their language of fraternal greeting have ceased for us forever on this side of the grave. His sword, vowed to be drawn only in the cause of truth, justice and liberty, reposes in its scabbard and our arms can no more shield him from wrong or oppression.

(If the Guard of Honor is used at the house or at the public place of assembly, its members will here execute "Carry Swords" and "Order Swords" at a signal from the Commander, but they remain standing at the sides of the casket.)

It is meet, at such a time, that we should be silent, and let the words of the Infinite and Undying speak, that we may gather consolation from His revelation, impress upon our minds lessons from His wisdom and learn the meetness of preparation for the last great change which must come upon us all.

Let us be reverently attentive while the Prelate reads to us a lesson from the Holy Scriptures.

CAPTAIN-GENERAL: 1. *Un*, 2. *COVER*.

(The following passages of Scripture or some portion thereof should then be read.)

PRELATE: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. So teach us to number our days that we may get us an heart of wisdom.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me -Bless His Holy Name.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust.

"As for man, his days are as grass. As a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children to such as keep His covenant and to those that remember His precepts to do them.

"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God, and if children of God, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us.

"If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him really give us all things. And who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For; as in Adam, all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, and houses not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O! Death where IS thy sting? O! Grave where is thy victory? The sting of Death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ.' Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

"Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever."

PRELATE makes the following prayer, or an extemporaneous one if preferred:

"Lord of Light! In this trying hour of calamity and sorrow, we humbly lift our hearts to Thee. Give us, we pray, that light which cometh down from above.

Thou hast mercifully said in Thy Holy Word that the bruised reed Thou wouldst not break. Remember in mercy, O Lord, these bereaved ones now before Thee. Be Thou at this hour, the Father of the fatherless, and the widow's God. Administer to them the consolation which they so sorely need. Cause us to look away from this sad scene of mortality to the life which lies beyond the grave. Lead us, by Thy grace and spirit, to turn our attention to those things which make for our everlasting peace. And fix our thoughts more devotedly on Thee, the only sure refuge in time of need. And at last, when our earthly pilgrimage shall be ended, 'when the silver cord shall be loosed and the golden bowl be broken' wilt Thou, O Father, be indeed Immanuel - God with us. May the 'lamp of Thy love' dispel the gloom of the dark valley, and we be enabled by the commendation of Thy Son to gain admission into the blessed Asylum above. Amen."

CAPTAIN GENERAL: 1. *Re*. 2. *COVER*. 3. *Be*. 4. *SEATED*.

(CHOIR renders appropriate music if desired.)

PRELATE: Sir Knights, there is one sacred spot upon the earth where the footfalls of our march are unheeded; our trumpets quicken no pulse and incite no fear; the rustling of our banners and the gleam of our swords awaken no emotion. It is the silent city of the dead, to which another of our number is now to be borne, (*or*) where we now stand (*if in the cemetery*). Awe rests upon every heart, and the stern warrior's eyes are bedewed with tears which never shame his manhood.

This Sir Knight was our Brother. With him we have walked the pilgrimage of life and kept watch and ward in its vicissitudes and trials. He is now beyond earthly praise or censure, but we remember him in scenes which the world witnessed not, where fraternal feeling was genuine and undisguised.

His virtues linger in our memory and the recollection of his finer qualities is a consolation in this hour.

(JUNIOR WARDEN steps forward, removes sword from scabbard and presents the sword hilt foremost, over his left arm, to the Eminent Commander.)

EMINENT COMMANDER: Our departed frater was taught that the sword in the hands of a true and courteous knight is endowed with three excellent qualities: "Its hilt with justice impartial; its blade with fortitude undaunted, and its point with mercy unrestrained." He could never grasp it without being reminded of the attributes it symbolized. To this lesson, with its deep significance, we trust he gave wise heed. An inspired and heartening hope leads us to the comforting belief that he met the trying hour of dissolution with fortitude undaunted, and, waking in the dawn of the new day, received justice tempered with that mercy unrestrained which is the glorious attribute of the Son of God, and entering through the gates into the City has been admitted to the blessed companionship of just men made perfect in the realms of light and life eternal.

(COMMANDER replaces sword in scabbard on casket.)

(SENIOR WARDEN steps forward and presents a cross to the Prelate.)

PRELATE: This symbol of the Christian's faith, hope, and trust, we again place above the breast of our frater. (*Done.*)

Though the Cross may, at times, in the history of the world have been the badge of oppression and wrong; yet its real significance has ever remained in the heart of the Christian warrior. If an inspired apostle was not ashamed of the cross, neither should we be; if he gloried in its promise of salvation, so ought we to rejoice in it as the inspiring symbol of our faith in the life beyond the grave. May this faith have been an anchor to the soul of our departed frater -may it have created in him a serene confidence in the life everlasting, a present realization of the life beyond.

Our frater was one of our mystic band, bound by fraternal ties and pledges to the noble duties,

of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and binding up the wounds of the afflicted,

(or)

of protecting innocence, relieving distress and binding up the wounds of the afflicted.

To his friends and relatives we tender our heartfelt sympathy and affirm our faith that He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb looks down with the infinite compassion upon the widow and the fatherless in their hour of desolation; and that the same benevolent Saviour who wept tears of sympathy over the grave at Bethany, will support and comfort all those who put their trust and faith in Him.

(If the ceremony has been held in the home, chapel, or Asylum, the procession will now be formed as indicated above and proceed to the cemetery. After arriving at the grave, the lines are formed as hereinbefore described, and the officers and Guard of Honor at "Order Swords," stationed as there provided. The Junior Warden then removes the sv.vrd and chapeau from the casket which will then be lowered into the grave.)

PRELATE: "I am the resurrection and the life saith the Lord. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." To the earth we commit the remains of our frater, *(here cast some flowers or earth on the casket)*, earth to earth, *(here cast again)*, ashes to ashes, *(here cast again)*, dust to dust. Delivered from the limitations of this life his soul yet liveth and abideth in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ whose life is the judgment of our works and whose resurrection is the pledge of our immortality. Sir Knight, Farewell! God speed thee on thy heavenly way.

PRELATE: Let us pray,

CAPTAIN GENERAL: 1. Un., 2. COVER (or if seated, 1. Commandery, 2. ATTENTION, 3. Un, 4. COVER.)

PRELATE: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Author of life and light, inspire our hearts with wisdom from on high, that we may glorify Thee in all our ways. May we have Thy divine assistance, O most merciful God! to take to heart this lesson of mortality and to labor unceasingly to redeem our misspent time. In the discharge of the important duties Thou hast assigned us may we be guided by faith and humility, courage and constancy, to the end that we may accomplish our allotted pilgrimage acceptably in Thy sight. And when our career on earth is finished, may we enter into that abundant life which Thou has assured us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, awaits Thy faithful servants in the blessed Asylum above."

(Or the following prayer may be used)

"Almighty and Ever living God, our heavenly Father, our Supreme Grand Master:

"As we leave our Frater in Thy tender care, wilt Thou draw very near to those who were nearest and dearest to him, and graciously comfort and support them in their bereavement. And wilt Thou help us all to realize more and more clearly that with each passing day we ourselves are all advancing toward the day of our own final transformation. And, O, our heavenly Father, wilt Thou enable each and all of us as Thy followers, to use the remaining time that may be allotted to us in supporting and upholding the almighty force and importance of Truth, by practicing in our daily lives out of the Commandery those high, moral and Christian virtues that are inculcated in it. We ask in the name of the blessed Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, the Great Captain of our Salvation, Who hath taught us all to say:"

COMMANDERY: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

**Taps are sounded or chanted. (If chanted use words printed following finish of service.)*

BENEDICTION

PRELATE: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be and abide with us all evermore. Amen."

CAPTAIN GENERAL: 1. *Re*, 2. *COVER*.

(The services being concluded, the Commandery is formed in column by the Captain General and marched to the entrance of the cemetery in silence, or at the tap of the drum.)

**(Tune: "Taps.")*

"Frater, good night,

Must thou go

When the day and the night

Need thee so?

All is well,

Speedeth all to their rest."

Finis.