

Part Three

Tenebraê, Extinguishing of the Lights

: 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.]

Officer parade in under the Sign of the good Shepard.
(1 Rap) *

1 - 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. Brothers and Guest in attendance, you will now, therefore, rise and bow your heads with me, under the Sign of the Good Shepherd. Brother Orator. **(Three Raps) *****

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

S - 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.

ALL: So mote it be. (1 Rap *)

[The Brethren take their seats.]

1 - 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.]

1 - 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 pre-selected Brother, who is either off-stage or near the light switch, dims the lights in the room.]

5 - Voice 1: 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.

[Voice 1 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.]

5 - Voice 2: 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.

[Voice 2 extinguishes the second light, on the opposite far end, as described above.]

5 - Voice 3: 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.

[Voice 3 extinguishes the third light.]

5 - Voice 4: They endeavored to illuminate the mind with science, philosophy, and knowledge; but the people knew them not and put them to death.

[Voice 4 extinguishes the fourth light.]

5 - Voice 5: 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.

[Voice 5 extinguishes the fifth light.]

5 - Voice 6: 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.

[Voice 6 extinguishes the sixth light.]

5- Voice 7: 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.

[Voice 7 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 Altar]

Remembrance of Recently Deceased Brethren

S - 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?

1 - 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.

S - 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.

1 - 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.

X - Secretary: Brethren attend, recorded here, as in our hearts and memories, are the names of our honored dead. We shall miss them. **(Reads Names of deceased Brethren)**

Scottish Rite Funeral Service

(There is a brief pause for the funeral team to depart and return)

6 - M Wise Master: Knights and Brethren, again we lament the loss of a brother who sleeps the sleep that knows no waking and, submitting to the will of God, adoring him as our Creator and Preserver, and trusting in his mercy as our Father, let us proceed to do what duty demands. The body of our beloved Brother, _____, a 32° Degree Scottish Rite Mason, lies before us, overtaken by that fate which must sooner or later overtake us all, and which no worth or virtue, no wealth or honor, no tears of friends or agony of loved ones can avert or delay; thus, teaching us the impressive lesson, continually repeated, yet soon forgotten, that every one of us must depart this life, and that our soul must be what we have chosen to make it, even as man makes it here, by living well or ill.

7 - M Sr. Warden: We, following our ancient Masonic custom and obeying the commands of duty, do not pay these last honors to our Brother's memory. Him, they cannot profit. He is beyond the reach of honors and censure alike. To us, they may, and should, be profitable. They gratify those whom he loved; they show our appreciation of his virtues; they encourage others to labor and endeavor to deserve like honors; and they show to the world that the ties, sympathies and obligations of Masonry cannot be snapped asunder by the hand of Death; for that man is esteemed to die miserable for whom none, save those of his own household, shed a tear or pay a solemn sigh.

8 - M Jr. Warden: It is a great act of piety, and honorable, to inter our Brethren according to the proportions of their condition, and so to give evidence that we appreciate the desire to imitate their virtues. Solemn and appointed mourning are good expressions of our affection for the departed soul and of his worth and our value of him; and, they have their praise in nature and in manners and in public customs. Something is to be given to custom, something to fame, to nature and to civilities.

9 - M Orator: My Brethren, it is an act of grace and wondrous mercy that we are admitted to speak to the Eternal God, to make plaint to Him as to a Father, to beg of Him remedy and ease, support and counsel, health and safety, deliverance and salvation. Wherefore, since this sorrow has fallen upon us and the Lord hath commanded us, in such cases, to pray unto him, let us ask of Him power and assistance to do our duty and His favor for those; who are afflicted in even greater measure than ourselves. **LET US PRAY:**

Our Heavenly Father, as it hath pleased Thee to take from our ranks one dear to our hearts, we beseech Thee to bless and sanctify unto us this dispensation of Thy providence. Look upon us, and upon those whom this Death has more sadly bereaved and distressed, in mercy and pity! Support us, and them, by the strength of Faith in all afflictions, and refresh us, and them, with the comforts of a holy hope in all sorrows! All help cometh from Thee; from Thee flows all comfort and consolation. Be Thou our strength and our guide, preserve us from sin, keep us in peace and holiness and help us to serve Thee in thankfulness and obedience, granting to us, in this world, knowledge of Thy Truth and, in the world to come, life everlasting. Amen.

All: So Mote it be!

6 - M Wise Master: Brother Sr. Warden, what is our first duty in this sorrow that has fallen upon us?

7 - M Sr. Warden: Wise Master, to submit without murmuring to the dispensations of our Father who is in Heaven, to pay Him the profoundest homage, knowing that all He wills is infinitely wise and just, and to trust implicitly in His inexhaustible mercy; for we are assured that the dead shall live again. Our Brother is not here. This body over which we mourn is not he, but only that which was his human and material part, until God laid His finger on him and he slept. He was mortal; but he has now put on immortality. In what state and where he is, we do not know; but only that he has not ceased to be and that he is in the hands of his Father, Who loves and pities him, as He doth all the children He hath made.

6 - M Wise Master: Brother Jr. Warden, what is the second duty this misfortune imposes upon us?

8 - M Jr. Warden: Wise Master, to inter the body of our Brother after the manner of Masonry, knowing that when we do this for our dear friend, it is not done to a person undiscerning, as a fallen tree, but to one whose soul yet lives and peradventure would perceive our neglect and be witness of our transient affections and forgetfulness; and, if that not be so, yet God sees us, and solemn reverence is due the dead, who are now nearer God, than we, that are yet for a little while imprisoned in the body. Death is that harbor whither God hath designed everyone, that there he may find eternal rest.

9 - M Orator: Very eloquent are the still lips of the dead! With a pathos and impressiveness that, no living lips can equal, or even approach, though they may have been sanctified and made prophetic by coals from the Holy Altar, laid upon them by Angels, these lips preach to us a sermon that cannot be translated into words.

Most eloquently they tell us how vain and empty are all the ambitions, hatreds, jealousies, the disputes and rivalries, the struggle for wealth and place and power, for rank and reputation of human life. How indifferent now to praise or censure, to undeserved eulogy or equally undeserved blame, to all the prizes of human ambition, to all the glories of human greatness, to all the beatitudes of human love.

6 - M Wise Master: It is a common thought that in the grave all men are equal; the fortunate and the unfortunate, the humble and the great, for there they mingle their dust, while God and the Angels only can distinguish their souls.

8 - M Jr. Warden: Our mortal life is but a span long. The days of our pilgrimage are few. Everywhere around us, as we look out into the night, we can see the faces of those we have loved and who have fallen asleep before us, shining upon us like stars.

7 - M Sr. Warden: While we think a thought we die and the clock strikes and reckons on our portion of Eternity. We form our words with the breath of our nostrils and have the less to live upon, for every word we speak; and those things that can survive us, our works, our words, our immortal thoughts, our influences, and the effects of our good deeds, are more to the world that survives, than we ourselves are. We pass away and are forgotten but these continue to live. Let selfishness and especially the selfishness of vice, learn this lesson and changing, endeavor to leave something to live beyond their passing.

9 - M Orator: Once our Brother lived and labored: but now his star is set on this world and he has passed into the Light that lies beyond the darkness. We shall no more hear his voice, until we also have awakened in another world. Let us, then, not morning like those that have no hope, pay the last offices of pious duty

to the dead; since he, like one who sails slowly away from the shore of a dear land, a little while ago familiar to him, and hears in the stillness of the night the murmur of our voices and sees, as the Angles do, these obsequies and the evidences of our affection.

6 - M Wise Master: I adjure you, my brethren, by this Holy Symbol of the Rosy Cross, the emblem of Faith, Hope and Immortality, not to permit your duties to the dead to cease with these sad ceremonies. Right his cause; do justice to his memory; defend his reputation. Thus, let us all prove ourselves true Knight Rose Croix and good Masons.

It Remains that we who are alive should so live, and by our actions attend the coming of the day of fate, that we neither be surprised nor leave our duties imperfect, our sins uncanceled and our persons unreconciled; but that when our bodies return to the elements, our souls may ascend to the regions of eternal Light, wherein is the Hold House of the Heavenly Temple of the Lord.

God has written manifold and wondrous truths in the stars; but the revelations of His love is no less plain in the flowers that are the stars of the earth. "Emblems of our great resurrection, emblems of the brighter better land". We strew them on the body (casket) of our Brother as an apt expression of our affection and equally, of hope and of reliance on that beneficence of which they are the unmistakable of eloquent expression.

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. Amen.

All - So mote it be!

Fiat Lux, Relighting of the Lights

Wise Master: * (Three Raps)**

S - ORATOR: Let us Pray! 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.

Wise Master: * (One Rap)

9 - Voice 1: 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.

[Voice 1 lights the first light, following the same sequence used in extinguishing the lights.]

5 - Voice 1: So may the light of Truth illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 2: 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.

[Voice 2 lights the second light.]

5 - Voice 2: So may the light of equality and freedom illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 3: 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.

[Voice 3 lights the third light.]

5 - Voice 3: So may the light of true fraternity illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 4: 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.

[Voice 4 lights the fourth light.]

5 - Voice 4: So may the light of knowledge and wisdom illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 5: 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.

[Voice 5 lights the fifth light.]

5 - Voice 5: So may the light of Charity illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 6: 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.

[Voice 6 lights the sixth light.]

5 - Voice 6: So may the light of self-realization illuminate the world.

5 - Voice 7: 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 hinder the rights of others.

[Voice 7 lights the seventh light.]

5 - Voice 7: So may the light of individual liberty illuminate the world.

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

1 - Wise Master: Brothers Guardian of the Temple, Expert, and Master of Ceremony attend the altar.

The Guardian of the Temple and Expert go the north and south of the altar. The Master of Ceremony goes to the west of the altar and picks up the Bible and holds it while the expert and Assistant Expert turns the altar cloth. The Master of Ceremony returns the Bible.

1 - 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.] * (Three Raps)**

Wise Master: 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.
Amen.

ALL: So mote it be.