

Greetings to a Mason's Lady



GRAND LODGE OF A. F. & A. M. of MARYLAND





Greetings to a Mason's Lady

To the Lady of the new Entered Apprentice Mason:

A man in your family has now received his First Degree in the Masonic Fraternity, and this will undoubtedly raise some questions in your mind.

We hope the information contained herein will be helpful in answering most of those questions.

Sincerely,

Worshipful Master

_____ Lodge No. _____

Located at _____

Foreword

We welcome you as a Mason's lady and take this opportunity to extend our first greeting.

While you personally have not joined our organization, there are certain things that may be helpful for you to know. This little booklet will explain some of them. At the same time, there are matters of general interest about your Mason and his new organization which we think you would also like to know.

Save this booklet as it is unlikely that the information contained herein will materially change in years to come.

When and Where Did It Begin?

The fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons is the oldest, largest and best known fraternal organization in the world. It has its roots in antiquity and is directly descended from associations of "operative masons," the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages who traveled throughout Europe employing their knowledge and skills of their crafts. Masonry as we know it today began in 1717 in England when cathedral building was on the decline and the "operative masons" (or "free masons," as they were known) started to accept into membership those who were not working in the masons' craft, calling them "speculative masons" or "accepted masons."

Freemasonry was brought to the United States by our early settlers. Benjamin Franklin, in an early newspaper published by him, referred to a Lodge of Freemasons as being in existence in Philadelphia in 1730. In Maryland we now have 101 Lodges with a membership of about 17,000. Throughout the world, there are approximately four million Masons, with over two million of them in the United States serving as members of Lodges under the jurisdiction of 51 Grand Lodges.

Masonry does have many traditions and customs that, like all fraternities or sororities, are known only to its members. Contrary to common belief, Masonry is not a secret society, but rather a "society with secrets." If it were a secret society, Masons would not wear Masonic jewelry or publicly mark their many Temples.

What Does Freemasonry Mean To A Member?

It is difficult to summarize all that a Mason learns through his membership; but, briefly, Freemasonry encourages a member to apply broad general principles of morality to his daily living. Membership is limited to adult males who can meet the recognized qualifications and standards of character and reputation. It is not the intent of Freemasonry to interfere with duties that a man owes to his God, his country, his neighbor, his spouse, his family, or himself; rather, by learning to understand, to live, and to practice the fundamental precepts of the organization, he has an opportunity for self-improvement. It helps a good man become a better man, a better father, husband, brother, or son.

The Apron

During the ceremonies of his initiation, each Mason is presented with a white leather apron. To him it is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. In all ages it has been cherished by the rich and poor, the high and low. It is his for life. He will never receive another one and has therefore been cautioned to take it home and has been instructed in its care. While it is perfectly fine for him to bring it to Lodge if he chooses, he need not do so. Linen aprons are provided for his use at the meetings.

His white leather apron is to be placed upon him at his death, if his nearest living relative chooses. Its moral application was explained to him during its presentation. Its physical usage is now revealed to you.

Meetings

Lodges meet in regular sessions and on such other days as are necessary to conduct business and confer the degrees, **each of which is a lesson in morality**. While every Mason's attendance is earnestly solicited, it is not intended that Freemasonry should interfere with one's regular vocation or duty to God, family or country.

Your Mason has invested time and money in joining our fraternity and will be paying annual dues, financially supporting our Masonic Homes, and occasionally may be asked to contribute to other charitable causes. He can best receive the full benefit of membership by frequently participating in its deliberations and functions.

Most lodges periodically have social events to which family and friends are invited, and the Grand Lodge of AF & AM of Maryland annually hosts "informal" and "formal" social and educational events at which you are always welcome. We trust that you will approve and encourage your Mason to attend regularly, and hope that you will join us whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Title

At some time while you are accompanying your Mason, someone will address him as “Brother” which is neither sentimental nor a familiar form of address. **It is a title** - a distinction and an honor - indicating that he has been recognized by another as a Mason.

“Brother” is a form dating back to ancient times and is used in place of mister or a similar title to which one is entitled by virtue of one’s station in life. In Masonry all men are equal. No man is regarded for his worldly wealth or honor, and all distinctions are cast away.

Masonic Oriented Organizations Which Members of the Family May Join

There are several groups to which ladies related to Master Masons may apply for membership if they desire, but this is entirely optional. If there are children in the family, they may become interested in Masonic-oriented youth groups whose teachings of patriotism and love of family will be pleasing to you.

A couple of the women’s organizations are:

- **Order of the Eastern Star:** The oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world to which women and men belong and work together in charity, truth and loving-kindness for the benefit of mankind. It takes as its inspiration five heroines in the Bible who exhibit great strength and perseverance in the face of adversity.
- **Order of the Amaranth:** A charitable, fraternal and social organization which is open to women and men. Its ritual and lessons impart character building, morality and ethics.

Masonic sponsored youth groups are:

- **DeMolay International:** An organization for young men aged 12 – 21, dedicated to preparing themselves to lead successful and productive lives by developing the civic awareness, personal responsibility and leadership skills.
- **International Order of Rainbow for Girls:** A service organization for all girls and young women, aged 11-21, that regardless of race or religious affiliation, develops leadership and public speaking skills, self-respect, poise, and charitable giving through community involvement.
- **Job’s Daughters International:** An organization for girls and young women aged 10-20 who are related to a Master Mason in good standing or one who had been a member in good standing at the time of his passing. Their ritual teaches a greater reverence for God and the Holy Scriptures, loyalty to one’s country and its flag; respect for parents, guardians and elders. It is not a religion or a creed. Members are required, however, to believe in a Deity.

Let Us Know

Please tell us of changes in your home address, telephone number, and email address so the lodge will be better able to serve you.

Contacting the Lodge Secretary is not difficult. His name appears on all dues cards and Lodge communications. If you are unable to contact the Secretary when you need to, call 410-527-0600, e-mail: office@GLMD.org or write to the Office of the Grand Secretary, 304 International Circle, Cockeysville, Maryland 21030-1300. They will provide the information you need.

Illness

In the event your man becomes ill, we want to know. Again, the same method of notifying us can be used as explained above. In the past, members have fallen ill without our knowledge, and their loved ones have been displeased with us for a seeming disregard. However, we cannot address a circumstance we don't know about. Your Mason has joined an organization that wants to assist him when in need, and we need your help to do it.

Masonic Assistance

Across the nation there's a network of Masonic Service Association offices. If, while you and / or your Mason are traveling, you find you're in need of assistance, consult the telephone directory of a major city for the number. If none is listed, a local Lodge will be pleased and able to make connections for you.

Masonic Funeral

Any Master Mason in good standing at the time of his death is entitled to a Masonic funeral or memorial service if he or his family requests it. The request should be made to the Secretary of his lodge who will coordinate arrangements with the family, the funeral home and the officiating clergy.

A service is authorized by the jurisdiction in which one is located and consists of a memorial service at the funeral home, church, or similar place designated by the family or at the graveside only. Pallbearers will be furnished at the request of the family.

Remembrances such as floral emblems or arrangements, and contributions to a charity, are solely at the discretion of the lodge. In general, the lodge will do as much or as little as the nearest relative wishes them to do, within the limits of its resources.

Conclusion

We hope you find this booklet helpful and informative and that it will assist you in better understanding your Mason's role in life. As his Lady you will be afforded many opportunities to form lasting new friendships and share in charitable, social, and educational events sponsored by the Freemasons.

Again we urge you to save this booklet for future reference.

