

KNIGHT TEMPLAR FUNERAL SERVICE GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. No Knight Templar can be buried with the funeral honors of Knighthood unless he is in good standing.

2. An unaffiliated Knight is not entitled to Templar honors; but the Commandery may grant them, or it may withhold them, without breach of Knightly duty.

3. It is the duty of the Eminent Commander to convene the Commandery, upon notice of the death of a Sir Knight who may be entitled to receive funeral honors, upon request, made when living or by his family after his decease, for the purpose of attending the funeral ceremonies.

4. The Knights, on such occasions will attend in full uniform, with or without sword, pursuant to the regulations, their sword-hilts (if used) and the banner of the Commandery (if present) being suitably dressed in mourning.

5. On the coffin of the deceased Knight will be placed his chapeau and sword; and if an Officer, his jewel, trimmed with crape.

6. The Eminent Commander (or his designate) will preside during the ceremonies, pursuant to the ritual. If Grand Officers or Past Grand Officers be present, they will be allotted a place in the procession according to their rank.

7. During the viewing or as occasion demands an honor guard will be placed at either end of the coffin. The Honor Guard will be changed at appropriate time intervals, and will remain in place until the conclusion of the service.

8. The Commandery contingent will assemble in the Funeral Home (or wherever the Service may be held) and march in according to rank (highest to lowest) with the Eminent Commander (or his designee) and the Sir Knight who will do the sword lecture in the lead.

9. At the conclusion of the Funeral Service, the Sir Knights in Uniform will file one at a time to the coffin, execute a 'hand salute' and then right (or left) face and file away while the Sir Knight behind him executes the same movement. When the last Sir Knight pays his respects, the Sir Knight conferring the sword lecture will pay his respects, followed by the Eminent Commander (or his designee) who will do the same.

10. After the Eminent Commander has paid his respects, by command, the two guards will take two paces forward, face each other, return swords, left & right face toward the coffin, and then execute a hand salute, after which they will about face and march from their duties by command. (Senior Officer to execute the commands)

11. The Evergreen Cross to be placed in the Coffin by the Eminent Commander (or his designee) shall be fashioned from evergreen, approximately twelve inches long with the cross arms being approximately eight inches.

KNIGHT TEMPLAR FUNERAL SERVICE

(Originally arranged by Sir Knight Arthur W. Craft, PC, Shawnee Commandery Number 14, stationed at Lima, OH)

Sir Knights, and friends, we are gathered here to pay tribute to the memory of one whose dedication and concern for Templar Masonry has consistently reflected a total obedience to the Christian Religion. Our Bibles admonish us, "Be still and know that I am God." Let us be reminded of this once again as we reverently come to this hour. In thinking of him whose memory we honor here this evening, we recall his warmth, his friendship, his kindness, his support, his affection and his fraternal love.

Therefore, it is appropriate, at this time, to reflect upon the good works of our Sir

Knight, _____ and his contribution to our beloved order. I'm sure his contribution and participation have created in the hearts and minds of his Brethren a lasting memorial in

the form of the Cardinal Principles we all profess.

Recite Personal & Masonic History

And so it is in that spirit and that recognition that we direct our remarks as we gather here this evening, knowing and believing full well that our departed Sir Knight has entered into a Life Immortal, and we remember his knightly qualities and commend his spirit to God.

Let us pray,

Our Father, in heaven, thou hast promised to be with us in time of need. We are again impressed with our weaknesses, and we turn to Thee whose power endureth forever. The walls we build are broken down, but the edifice of God is eternal, and his refuge is everlasting. We beseech Thee, thou, almighty one, to hear with favor our humble petition for thy blessings in our hearts distress. Thine infinite wisdom has called another Sir Knight from our Asylum to meet with us no more. Wilt thou strengthen us in our weakness and cast thy divine light on our darkness. We come to thee with spirits bowed low, and ask the bounty of thy mercy and grace to draw us nearer to thy throne. Wilt thou support us through our afflictions of time, and prepare us for thy presence in eternity and bring us to a blissful reunion with our departed Brothers and Sir Knights in that house not made with hands? Amen and Amen.

Sir Knights in the solemn ceremonies of our Order we have often been reminded of that great truth, we are born to Die. The mournful funeral knell has betokened 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 presume to say to his direful presence, "who dares approach?" "A pilgrim warrior has been summoned, and there is no discharge from that war." A burning taper in the life of our Commandery has been extinguished, and none save the High and Holy One, can now re-light 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 longer shield him from wrong and oppression.

At a time like this, to say, "We are sorry," is not easy, and so meaningless. There remains a grief so deep, that nothing any man can say will make it any easier, and yet, that's the kind of grief the family of our departed Sir Knight must be experiencing now. We can feel for them; we can sorrow for them, but we cannot help them. So, in times like this we cling to faith.

Life, death, and resurrection are the foundations of our faith as Knights Templar. But sometimes we become confused and forget that it is WE who are in the land of the dying, and he, whose body lies before us is in the land of the living. Almost from birth, we have been undergoing a process of disintegration, which finally ends, soon or late, with the chemical elements of our bodies returning to mingle with the elements of the earth, while our souls pass on into the land of the living, our eternal HOME.

HOME - There can be no word in any language so sweet, so steeped with such cherished sentiment. No matter what our childhood, it was the happiest period of our lives; the time to which our thoughts turn most often as we grow older. Many will remember these lines of James Whitcomb Riley:

After awhile we have in view
The old Home to journey to,
Where the mother is, and where
Her sweet welcome waits us there.
How will click the latch that locks
In the pinks and holy hocks,
And leap up the path once more
Where she waits us at the door;
How we'll greet the dear old smile

And the warm tears, after awhile.

Home - A place where beauty has had time to grow. Where memories have gathered giving depth and meaning to our lives. To return home is a privilege we begrudge no one. If one of our friends is able to visit again in the surroundings of his youth, we are glad for him. We look forward to some occasion when we, too, may enjoy the same pleasure. And so, let us think in terms of our departed Sir Knight having gone home. We should not grieve, save for our own sorrow in no longer being able to enjoy his company and friendship. We should rejoice that he has been able, at last, to accomplish the end we all desire so much, that of going home. "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." "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. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor to come, nor power, 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."

"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, and then shall be brought to pass, the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh! Death, where is thy sting. Oh! 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."

"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 paths of righteousness for his namesake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Let us pray:

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, Oh Lord, these bereaved ones now before thee. 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 shall be broken, wilt Thou oh 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.

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. 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 feelings were genuine and undisguised.

His virtues linger in our memory and the recollection of his finer qualities is a consolation in this hour. We, who knew him so well in our Knighthood, feel that in his departure from among the living, something has gone out of our own lives that can never be again. Thus as human ties are broken, the world becomes less and less, and the hope to be united with friends who are gone grows more and more. Here is immediate compensation, which, while it cannot assuage our grief, may teach resignation to the inevitable doom of all things mortal.

While we gather in the presence of a body, once, and so lately warm with life and animate with thought, no lingering for a brief moment at the dark portal of the tomb, like a beam of Holy light, the belief must come, this cannot be all there is of day, stricken human nature cries out; there must be a dawn beyond the darkness and a never setting sun, while this short life is but a morning star.

Remember then, as I wish to remember best,
Our sunsets here are dawning's in the west,
And when you see as I have seen
At evening time, the verdant green
Of life, of songs and laughter everywhere,
Remember then as I like to remember best,
There is no sunset here, or anywhere;
Our sunsets here are dawning farther west.

(Sword Presentation) (Remove sword from scabbard on casket)

Our departed frater was taught that the sword in the hands of a true and courteous Knight is endowed with three excellent qualities; "It's hilt with justice impartial; it's 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 wide 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 a new day, received justice tempered with 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. (Replace sword in scabbard on casket)

(Passion Cross of evergreen)

This symbol of the Christian faith, hope and trust, we again place above the breast of our frater. 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 glorified in its promise of salvation, so ought we 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 pledged to the noble duties of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, 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 infinite compassion upon this moment in their hour of desolation.

As he, for whom we are all mourners, was true to us, and faithful to the ties of our Knighthood, so shall we be true to those closest to him, he left behind, in the practice of the principles of Templar Masonry and in tender memory of our loved and lost. He gave much of his time to us in devotion to our cause. We owe a grateful acknowledgment to his friends for his social companionship and service, and mingle our sorrows at parting with them.

And that the same benevolent Savior who wept tears of sympathy over the grave at Bethany, will

support and comfort all those who put their trust and faith in him. And so our friend and Sir Knight has passed through the sunset of this life and is entering into the dawning of a new and finer existence, on the far side of Jordan, in the green fields of Eden; a bigger, broader, more peaceful, tranquil and soul satisfying land than we can now imagine.

We are standing upon the seashore. A ship at our side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength, and we stand and watch her until, at length, we see only a ribbon of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then we hear someone at our side say, "There she is gone." Gone? Gone where? Gone from our sight -- that is all. That ship is just as large in mast and hull as when she left the pier, and just as able to carry her load of living freight to the place of her destination. Her diminished size lies only in our perspective; for just at the moment when we say "There, she is gone," there are other voices ready to take up the glad shout, "There - she is coming."

So let us carry away with us this comforting thought, that while we are gathered here to mourn the loss of our departed Sir Knight, there are many dear ones - even now - greeting him beyond that far horizon as he in turn, will someday welcome us.

"I cannot say, and I will not say
That he is dead. He is just away.
With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be since he lingers there.
Think of him still as the same, I say;
He is not dead - he is just - away."

Let us Pray;

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, oh, most merciful God, to take to heart this lesson of mortality and to labor unceasingly in the discharge of the important duties Thou hast assigned to us, may we be guided by faith and humility, courage and constancy to the end that we may accomplish our allotted pilgrimage acceptable in thy sight. And when our career on earth is finished, may we enter into that abundant life, which thou hast assured us through Jesus Christ, our Lord, awaits thy faithful servants in the blessed asylum above. Let us pray the Lord's Prayer (utilizing debt and debtor)

And now, "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be and abide with you all evermore." Amen.