

# Ritual of Knight of Malta

## Iowa

2003

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*Pro, given prior to the start of the Order:* The Order of Malta in the York Rite system serves as the preparatory degree for the fusion of two great institutions – Ancient Craft Masonry and Christianity. This Order originated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, A.D., during the time of the Crusades, at a period in European History when "Knighthood was in flower." Christianity, by that time having spread and gained a strong foothold throughout Europe and the British Isles, had a particularly strong appeal to the nobility as well as to the common masses. For the Knight of that period saw in the life, work and teachings of Jesus, the self sacrifice, the helpfulness to the weak and the oppressed, the glad, willing and consecrated service to God and man which should characterize true knighthood. In other words, they found Jesus to be the mirror of chivalry, the ideal pattern of the true knightly, valiant and magnanimous life.

The Order was originally established to give protection and assistance to pilgrims on their journey to visit the sacred places of the Holy Land. So effectively did these Knights perform their tasks, they not only gained the respect, the admiration and the support of the heads of governments, but also the support of the heads of governments, but also the support of the Church and the blessing of Popes.

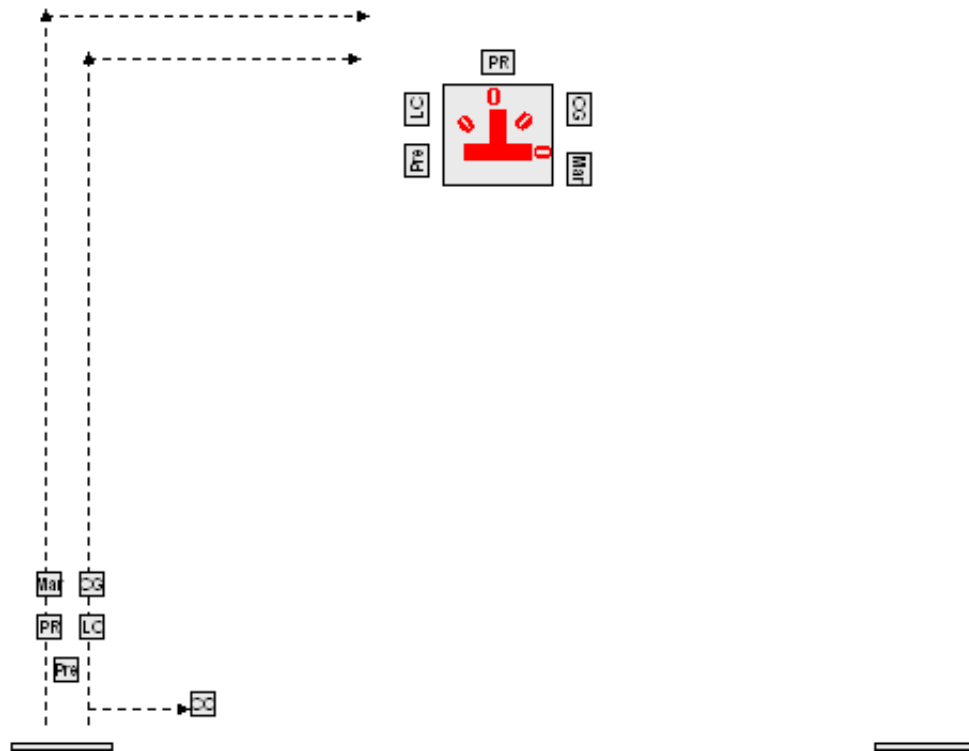
The Orders grew and prospered in both fame and fortune and Pories were eventually established throughout Christendom.

During the centuries that followed, they led a turbulent existence by becoming involved, of necessity, in the quarrels of Emperors and Popes and in the various religious wars which erupted from time to time. A more detailed account of their history will be revealed as you pass through the ceremonies of the Order. We have learned that Ancient Craft Masonry does not concern itself with sectarian religion – it only demands the belief in a Supreme Being.

Since Masonry requires a belief in God and Christianity also demands a belief in God, it follows that these two great institutions have much in common. In uniting the two the York Rite still adheres to one of the greatest tenets of Masonry by refusing to make any distinction among Christians of any particular sect or creed.

Christian Masonry is concerned with the humble, whole-hearted, devoted and consecrated service to God and man as exemplified in the life, work and teachings of Jesus and is not concerned with the intellectual acceptance of any system of doctrines or dogmas.

It is Christianity in its purest and simplest form – unbiased and unprejudiced.



*Officers line up in the preparation room and enter as soft music plays. When all are at their stations:*

*PR:* Knights, be seated.

Captain General, *CG rises*, what is the first and most essential care of Knights of Malta when about to open a Priory?

*CG:* To see that the brethren in arms are secure from interruption from the opposers of the Gospel of the Savior of fallen man.

*PR:* Captain General, see that this assembly is properly guarded, and inform the Captain of the Outposts that I am about to open this Priory.

*CG:* Captain of the Outposts, *CO rises*, the Prior is about to open a Priory. You will station the guards and direct them accordingly.

*CO retires, returns and reports:* Captain General, the Guards are stationed – we are in security. *CO is seated.*

*CG:* Eminent Prior, the Guards are stationed – we are in security.

*PR:* Captain General, what is your duty?

*CG:* To see that every Christian warrior present proves himself a legitimate soldier of the Cross and Brother of the Order.

*PR:* Captain General, you will make the inspection.

*CG goes to the west, about faces and commands:* Knights, ATTENTION.

*All rise. CG will give the Grand Hailing Sign (Trumpet, right over left), and says:* Do you come in peace?

*All knights present will respond,* We come in peace.

*CG:* Then come in peace.

*Returns to his station.*

Eminent Prior, I am satisfied that all present are legitimate soldiers of the Cross and Brothers of our Order.

*PR draws sword and commands:* Knights, Draw, SWORDS.

*All officers and Knights draw swords.*

Brothers, let us lay our arms at the foot of the Cross, and implore a blessing on our present meeting.

*Each Knight will lay his sword on the floor, point toward the East. Officers at the table deposit their swords thereon in the usual manner. All stand in their places with arms crossed upon their breasts.*

**Pre:** Let us pray, O Thou Great Immanuel, the God of infinite goodness, look down upon this Priory with an eye of tender compassion, and incline our hearts to Thy Holy will in all our actions, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

**PR:** Brothers, resume your arms. *All take up swords.* Return, SWORDS.

*All return swords to their scabbards, except the knights at the table, who allow theirs to stay where they are.*

Together Brothers.

*All present give the Grand Hailing Sign and Grand Word of a Knight of Malta.*

Do you come in peace?

**ALL:** We come in peace.

**PR:** Then come in peace.

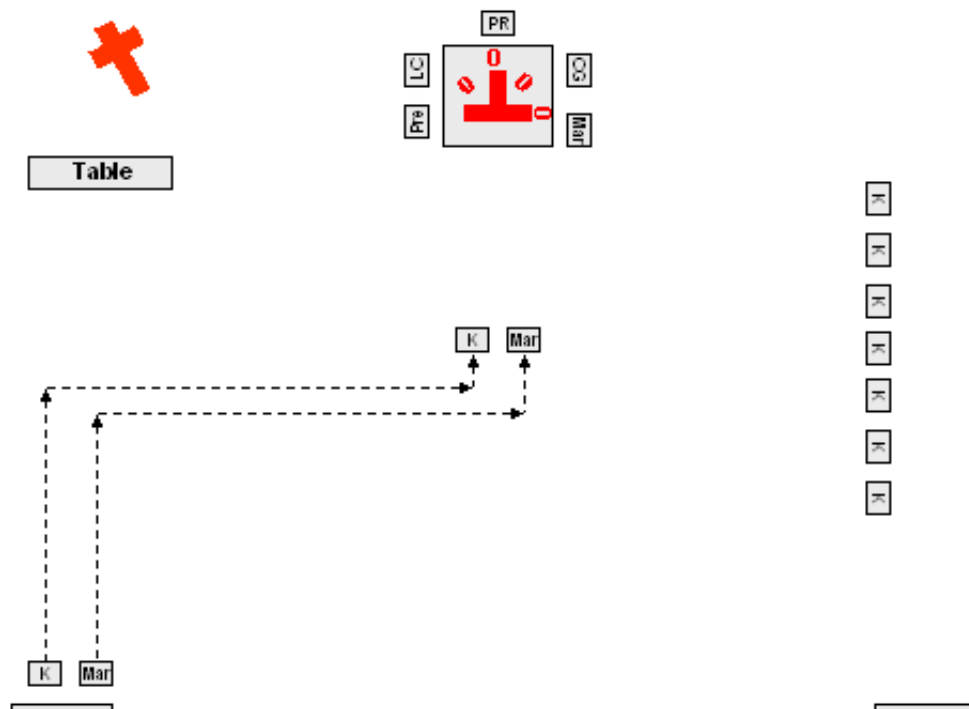
To the Glory of the Blessed Savior, in the name of Saint John the Baptist, and by virtue of the power in me vested, I declare this Priory of Knights of Malta duly opened. Captain General, inform the guard.

**CG:** Captain of the Outposts, inform the Guard that this Priory of Knights of Malta is now open.

**CO retires and returns:** Captain General, the Guard is informed.

**CG:** Eminent Prior, the Guard is informed.

**PR:** Brothers, be seated.



## MEDITERRANEN PASS CEREMONIAL

*The apartment represents a Guard Room. Only one candidate should be active. Those not used should be*

*brought in and seated previous to the introduction of the active candidate. The active candidate should be dressed in dark clothing over which shall be a white mantle with a red cross on the left breast; mantle to be fastened with a white cord and tassel. Candidate doesn't wear a head dress and is girded with sword and belt.*

*PR:* Brother Marshal, Mar rises retire, prepare and present the Candidate.

*Mar goes to center of room, faces PR and gives Sign; PR responds. Mar proceeds by right angles to the preparation room door and goes out. Having prepared K, conducts him to the door and causes him to give the alarm \*\*\* \*\*.*

*CO goes to prep room door and responds \*\*\* \*\*.* *Opens door:* What do you desire?

*Mar:* ..., a Companion of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, humbly solicits to be admitted to the privileges of the Mediterranean Pass, to enable him in safety to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher. He prays also, if found worthy, to be received and enrolled a member of the ancient Order of St. John of Jerusalem, or Knight of Malta.

*PR:* Knights, Attention.

*All rise with Pre and stand with arms crossed on breasts as Pre goes to podium:* Here beginneth the first verse of the twenty-eight chapter of the Acts of the Apostles,

*Reads verses 1 to 6.*

Here endeth the first lesson.

*Returns to station.*

*PR:* Knights, be seated. *All are seated.*

I will now invest you with the Sign of this degree. It is made by holding both hands forward, palms down, as if warming them at a fire. Then grasp the lower or fleshy part of your left hand between the forefinger and thumb of your right hand; raise them with a quick motion, and throw off the right hand with a jerk, as if plucking something offensive from your left hand. This refers to the incident of Saint Paul plucking the viper from his hand and casting it into the fire, and is called the sign of Melita. Reverend Chaplin, you will read another lesson from the Holy Scripture.

Knights, Attention.

*All rise with Pre and stand with arms crossed on breasts as Pre goes to podium:* Here beginneth the Twenty second verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles,

*Reads verses 22 to 25.*

Here endeth the second lesson.

*Returns to station.*

*PR:* The password of this degree is "Fear not, Paul". The Grand Word of this degree is "Melita", the ancient name of the Island of Malta.

Brother A.B., it was customary for the knightly soldiers of the Crusades, previous to their departure for the Holy Land, to prepare themselves by a general confession and reception of the Holy Eucharist, receiving the benediction of the Church. In allusion to this custom, but to avoid the semblance of irreverence to the Sacred Mystery, *Pre goes to table*, we substitute water for wine and commemorate it to remind us of the extreme perils, suffering and destitution encountered by our Pilgrim Brothers of old when on their way to the Holy City, for then they could procure the bare necessities of life only at the sword's point.

*Pre approaches with a tray upon which is a cup of water and a few small pieces of bread. Mar will receive tray from Pre.*

*PR draws sword:* You will now receive bread from the point of the sword and water from the blade. Kneel on both knees.

*Secures a piece of bread with the point of his sword and presents it to K, who receives and eats it. PR then*

*takes the cup in his left hand, supporting the bottom of it with the blade of the sword, presents it to K, who takes it in his right hand and drinks from it. Cup is returned to the tray. Mar then steps back and Pre approaches K*

*Pre, placing his right hand on K's head:* May you be kept steadfast in all your solemn professions, and blessed in all praiseworthy occupations and undertakings.

*Takes K by right hand and says:* Arise.

*Pre releases K's hand, takes tray from Mar, PR and Pre return to stations, Pre returning tray to table first. PR places his sword on the table. Both are seated. Mar remains with K.*

*PR:* This ceremony constitutes you a Knight of Saint Paul, or the Mediterranean Pass; it is the Pass-degree of the Order of Malta.

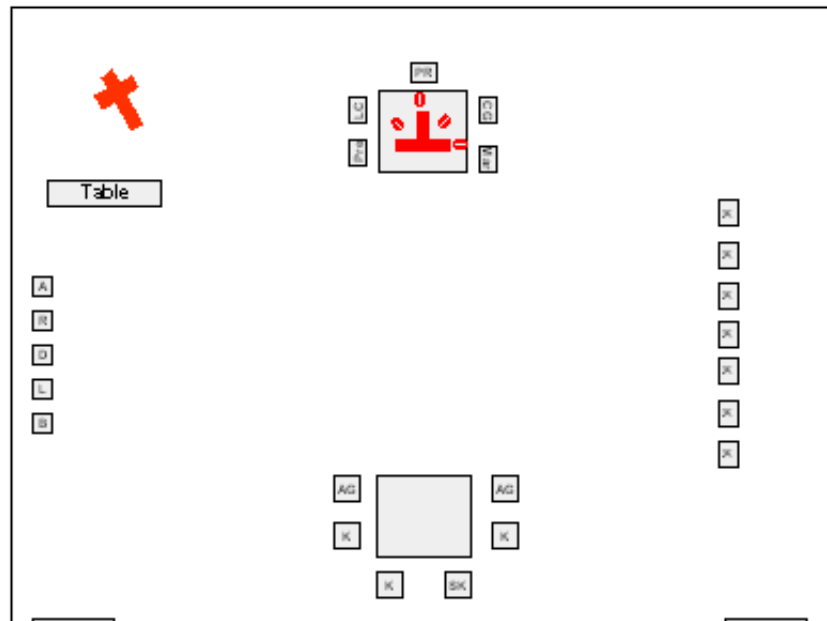
Retire my brother, with the Marshal, until preparations are made for your reception into the Order of Malta.

*Mar retires with K to preparation room.*

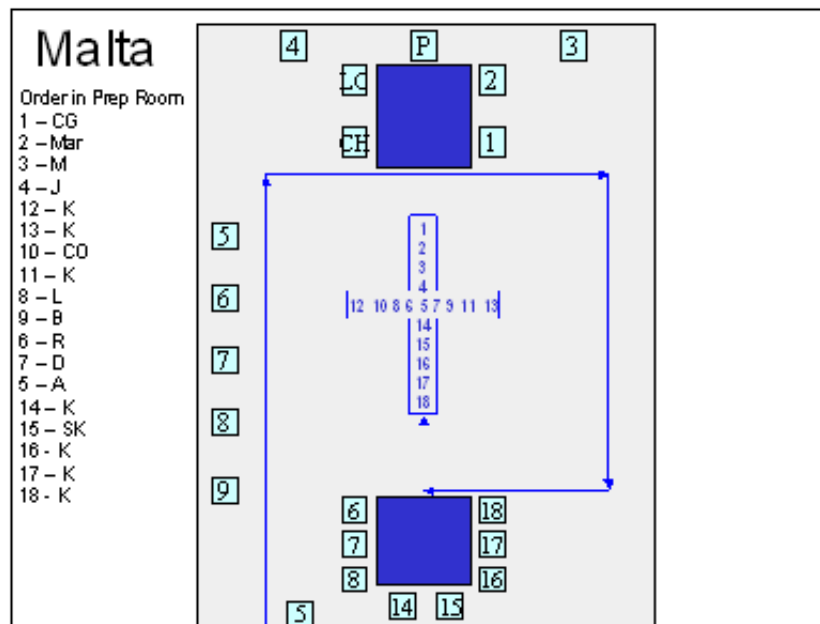
*Officers retire in two ranks, LC to left of PR, Pre behind LC, CG behind PR.*

## KNIGHT OF MALTA CEREMONIAL

### Set up of Asylum:



### Cross:



*Officers and knights in cross should be rehearsed and formed in the outer room first. When all is ready, procession enters, proceeds east along the north side, halts, right faces, and comes to present swords, CG giving necessary orders.*

*PR, LC (on the right) and Pre (in rear, centered) pass in front of the line to their stations and remain standing.*

*CG carries swords, steps forward one pace, right faces and commands,*

*CG: Carry Swords. Knights, Attention.*

*All rise, including K.*

*Knights in line, Left, Face. To the Cross, Forward, CG about faces, takes one step backward to right of Mar, MARCH.*

*CG conducts procession south, west, north to center of the room where they halt forming the cross. After "HALT" CG steps forward one pace, left faces to directly in front of Mar.*

*Order, SWORDS.*

*Lights should go down. Music (Old Rugged Cross). When finished, lights go back up.*

*CG: Carry, SWORDS. To your stations, Forward, about faces, takes one step to the right, one step backward to the right of Mar, MARCH.*

*Conducts procession east, south, west, north, and east. All officers drop out at their respective stations and remain standing.*

*When all officers are at their stations, PR & LC will draw swords in unison.*

*PR: Knights at the Tables, Deposit, SWORDS. All will place swords on tables.*

*Knights, be seated.*

## The Work

*PR: Brother Marshal, Mar rises, retire, prepare and introduce the candidate for reception into this Order.*

*Mar with K, retires to preparation room where K is clothed as in the Mediterranean Pass.*

*PR, after Mar & K have retired: Captain General, CG rises, see that the Altar is prepared and in position.*

*CG: Altar Guards, AG rise, see that the Altar is prepared and in position.*

*AG place the Altar.*

Captain General, the Altar is prepared.

*They return to their places at the table.*

*CG:* Eminent Prior, the Altar is prepared. *CG & AG are seated.*

*Mar, having prepared K, conducts him to the door and causes him to give alarm \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\*\**

*CO rises:* Eminent Prior, there is an alarm at the entrance to our Chapel.

*PR:* Captain of the Outposts, ascertain the cause of the alarm.

*CO goes to the door and responds \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*, opens the door and says:* Who comes here?

*Mar:* A worthy Knight of the Mediterranean Pass humbly craves admission to this Priory.

*CO:* Has he the necessary qualifications?

*Mar:* He has.

*CO:* Give me the Sign, Password, and Grand Word of the Mediterranean Pass. *Done.* Let him wait until his request shall be transmitted to the Prior and Priory, now in council, and an answer returned.

*Closes door and returns to his station.*

Eminent Prior, a worthy Knight of the Mediterranean Pass humbly craves admission to this Priory.

*PR:* Has he the necessary qualifications?

*CO:* He has given me the Sign, Password and Grand Word of the Mediterranean Pass.

*PR:* The answer is satisfactory. Admit the Candidate.

*CO returns to door and opens it door:* You have permission from the Prior to enter. *Stands aside as Mar & K enter. CO closes door and returns to his station where he is seated.*

*Mar conducts K to first (white) banner.*

*B:* Halt. Who comes there?

*Mar:* A friend

*B:* Advance and give the password.

*Mar: In a low tone:* Birth.

*B:* You have permission to pass.

*Mar conducts K to second (red) banner.*

*L:* Halt. Who comes there?

*Mar:* A friend.

*L:* Advance and give the password.

*Mar in a low tone:* Life.

*L:* You have permission to pass.

*Mar conducts K to third (black) banner.*

*D:* Halt. Who comes there?

*Mar:* A friend.

*D:* Advance and give the password.

*Mar in a low tone:* Death.

*D:* You have permission to pass.

*Mar conducts K to fourth (purple) banner.*

*R:* Halt. Who comes there?

*Mar:* A friend.

*R:* Advance and give the password.

*Mar in a low tone:* Resurrection.

*R:* You have permission to pass.

*Mar conducts K to fifth (yellow) banner.*

*A:* Halt. Who comes there?

*Mar:* A friend.

*A:* Advance and give the password.

*Mar in a low tone:* Ascension.

*A:* You have permission to pass.

*Mar conducts K by right angles to west of the Altar. As they halt, music begins.*

*PR:* Brother Marshal, what strange Brother have you in charge?

*Mar:* ..., a Knight of Saint Paul or the Mediterranean Pass, wishes to join our ranks and fight under our banner.

*PR:* Stranger, what proof have you to show us that you are what you profess?

*K, prompted by Mar, points to the Cross on his mantle and says:* I have this.

*PR:* My brother, is it still your wish to join our Order, and fight against all opposers of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

*K:* It is.

*PR:* My Brother, the request you make had been denied to many, because they were deemed unworthy of this Order. But, confiding in your probity and worth, we will grant your request, hoping you will devote yourself with zeal and fortitude to those noble principles of our Order – Faith, Hope, and Charity. Have you any objections to conforming to our rules and regulations and to walking in strict accordance therewith?

*K:* I have none.

*PR rises, picks up sword and returns it to its scabbard, then goes to east of Altar, facing K. Mar goes to his station and is seated.*

*PR:* You will draw your sword, deposit it on the Altar, kneel on your right knee, your right hand resting on the New Testament, Cross and Sword. *Done.* The class and the active candidate will say "I", pronounce your name in full and remain silent.

In the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses, do hereby and hereon, solemnly promise and vow, that I will forever keep and conceal the secrets belonging to the Order of Malta; that I will not communicate them to anyone except to a true and lawful Knight of the Order; and not unto him until after due trial, strict examination, or lawful information, I shall have found him lawfully entitled to the same; or within the body of a regular and duly constituted Priory of Knights of Malta.

Class and Candidate repeat after me:

That I will conform to the Statutes, Rules, and Regulations of the Order and live in strict accordance therewith, under penalty of forfeiting membership and being despised and cast out from all who love honor and integrity. So help me God and keep me steadfast.

*PR draws sword and with it strikes K on right shoulder three times:* Let this teach you to suffer patiently for Christ.

*Returns sword and with the palm of his hand strikes K slightly on left cheek:* Awake! Be not asleep to your duty, but watchful in the faith of Jesus Christ, and be submissive to the greatest affront which may come to you in His cause, ever having the peace of the Lord with you. Let this blow, the only indignity you will have to undergo, remind you that when He was reviled, He reviled not again, and that when He was before Caiaphas, the High Priest, some of those who stood by smote Him with the palms of their hands.

By virtue of the Power and Authority in me vested by the Grand Commandery of the State of Iowa, and in the name of Saint John, the Baptist – the patron Saint of the Order, I make you, ..., a Knight Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes, and Malta. Be zealous and vigilant for the honor of Knighthood.



We admit you to our Order and raise you by a new name. *Takes K by right hand*, Arise, Knight of Malta! Take up your sword and wipe it carefully on your sleeve and return it to its scabbard. *Done*.

As you have wiped away the spots which dim the luster of that blade, so let your future life be pure and undefiled. Its brightness is an emblem of faith; let it never be tarnished. Wield it virtuously. Fear not to encounter dangers and perils for the sake of Christ. Maintain justice, protect and relieve the poor widows and friendless orphans *Pre moves to light candle* for this is the true faith and justification of the Christian Knight. His election, vocation and satisfaction is to offer his soul to God, and his body to perils and dangers in His service.

*Pre approaches with a lighted candle – presents it to PR who causes K to take it in his right hand.*

This burning taper is placed in your right hand, thereby symbolizing that you should always be zealous, and ever actuated by that charity which is the perfection of human life. It also symbolically admonishes you that henceforth you should be a shining light to others by your exemplary conduct.

*PR takes candle and returns it to Pre. PR removes Red Cross mantle as Pre replaces candle on the table, then returns to K with Knight of Malta mantle. Pre takes Red Cross mantle and returns it to the table and is seated.*

*PR, holding up Malta mantle and pointing to the cross:* My Brother, do you believe that the Savior died on the Cross for the remission of sin?

*M:* I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only begotten son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born to the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; and on the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth now on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come Judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and of the life everlasting.

Amen.

*PR:* The Cross is also the sign of our Order. We command you to wear it upon your mantle to designate you as a member thereof.

*Places mantle on K, tying the mantle about his neck with the white cords, saying:* By this cord I bind you in token of your vow and reception into the Order. Take this mantle with the Cross in the name of our Holy Religion, and Saint John the Baptist, for the improvement of your faith, the defense of Christianity, and the service of the poor. For this reason we put the Cross on your breast, that you may love it with all your heart, and that with your right hand you may be ever ready to defend it. I must admonish you, my Brother, should it ever happen, that in combating the enemies of our Order, you should prove unfaithful to your vows, turn your back on your enemies and desert the standard of the Cross and fly, you will be deprived of that Holy Sign, *Pre goes to get Cross*, according to the ancient statutes and customs of our Order, being false to the profession you have made, and you will be cast out from among us as an unworthy and corrupt member.

*Pre presents the Cross of the Order, borne upon a black velvet cushion to PR.*

*PR places cross upon the breast of K, saying:* I now invest you with the Cross or Jewel, of the Order. It is the Maltese Cross. Its eight points are symbolical of the eight languages into which the Order was formerly divided. It has, however a higher and more important meaning than this, for it symbolizes and reminds you of the eight beatitudes recorded in the Holy Scripture.

*Music, "Sanctus" or "Holy Holy"*

*PR draws sword and commands:* Knights, ATTENTION. *All rise, including candidates.* Draw, SWORDS. *Knights on sidelines draw swords, knights at tables pick them up.*

Reverend Chaplin, you will read a lesson from the Holy Evangelist.

*Pre goes to lectern.*

*PR:* Knights, Present, SWORDS

*Pre:* Here beginneth the third verse of the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

*Reads verses 3 to 11, inclusive.* Here endeth the first lesson.

*PR:* Carry, SWORDS. Return, SWORDS.

*Knights on sidelines return swords, those at tables place them back on the tables.*

Be seated.

My Brother, these virtues you should cherish in your heart for the consolation and preservation of your soul. Therefore, that you may have this precious symbol always before your eyes, you will wear it on your breast near your heart, and never desert it or lay it aside.

*Draws sword and commands:* Knights, ATTENTION. Draw SWORDS.

*Knights respond as before.*

Reverend Chaplin, you will read another lesson from the Holy Evangelist.

*Pre goes to Lectern.*

*PR:* Knights, present SWORDS

*Pre:* Here beginneth the twenty-fourth verse of the twentieth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John.

*Reads verses 24 to 29, inclusive.*

Here endeth the second lesson.

*PR:* Carry, SWORDS. Return, SWORDS.

*Knights respond as before.*

Be seated.

I will now invest you with the Sign, Grip, and Word of the Order.

The sign and Grip: One says "Reach hither thy finger and feel the print of the nails." Join right hands and force the first finger into the center of the palm. Then he says, "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side."

Each extends his left hand and presses his fingers into the left side of the other, still holding on by the grip; with the arms thus crossed, they give the Word. One says: "My Lord;"; the other responds, "And my God."

The name of this Sign and Grip is "Infidelitas" – unbelief. It teaches us that there is an unbelief which transcends a rational skepticism; that we should possess a power of faith to receive Divine Truth, even though unaccompanied by physical evidence, and thus entitle us to that commendation of our Divine Teacher, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

I will now invest you with the Grand Hailing Sign and Grand Word of a Knight of Malta; also the Grand Token and Word of the Order.

The Grand Hailing Sign: Place both hands to the mouth as if speaking through a trumpet, right hand in front of the left. The Grand Word of a Knight of Malta, while giving the Grand Hailing Sign, one says: "Do you come in peace?" The other answers, "We come in peace." And the first responds, "Then come in peace."

The Grand Token and Word: Draw swords and come to carry, advance left feet and place them beside each other. Interlace fingers of left hand, moving arms backward and forward as if rowing a boat; the swords held upward in the right hands, saying together the Grand Word: "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

Return, SWORDS.

The Passwords of the Order are: Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. These words are used in commemoration of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Savior.

*Returns K to west of Altar and moves to the east of the Altar. Draws sword and commands:*

Knights, ATTENTION.

*Knights respond as before.*

Reverend Chaplin, you will read another lesson from the Holy Evangelist.

*Pre moves to lectern.*

*PR:* Knights, present, SWORDS.

*Pre:* Here beginneth the nineteenth verse of the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John.

*Reads nineteenth verse only.*

Here endeth the third lesson.

*PR:* Carry, SWORDS. Return, SWORDS.

*Knights respond as before.*

The sacred word of the Order is "INRI". It is formed of the initials of the four Latin words which were set up over the head of our Blessed Savior upon the cross: "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum", "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

*Music, "Agnus Dei" "Lamb of God" should be played. As music starts house lights should go down and a picture of Jesus on the cross should appear on the screen. At the end of the music the house lights go up and P returns to his station, draws his sword, deposits it on the table and is seated.*

You will now give your attention to the Historical and Explanatory lecture connected with this Order, under the direction of the Marshal.

Knight Marshal, *Mar rises*, you will instruct the newly made Knight of Malta.

*Mar*

*Goes south of the Altar to K's right and escorts him to a seat with the class in the south of the room, then proceeds with the lecture.*

The history of this Ancient and Chivalric Order is closely associated with the history of medieval Europe and the Near East from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. During that period Empires rose and fell, many political and religious wars were fought and the Order, being religious in character and dependent upon governments for support and assistance, was directly affected by the fortunes of Emperors and Popes and led a turbulent and sometimes precarious existence; being forced to evacuate its home on several occasions and seek to establish itself in another location.

The dates and names on the different ceremonial banners indicate the times and locations where the Order established itself during those years of sojourning.

It is worthy to note that the Passwords on the banners, while expressive of events in the history of the Order, also indicate the important periods and events in the life of Jesus.

*Bir*

This Order was founded at Jerusalem in the year of our Lord 1099, by the association of a number of pious Knights with the fraters of St. John's Hospital, an establishment previously formed for the relief of pilgrims who had come to worship at the Holy Sepulcher.

The name and date upon the white banner, "Birth," "Palestine, 1099," commemorates the country of our Savior's nativity; the place where the Order was founded, and the first epoch in its history.

*Lif*

After a troubled existence of two hundred years in the Holy Land, and being deprived by the wars raging in Europe of needed and looked for assistance, the Order was compelled to evacuate Palestine, and in 1287 it established itself on the Island of Cyprus, and settled in Limisso. The name and date upon the red banner, "Life," "Cyprus, 1287," commemorates the second place of their sojourning, and the second epoch in their

history.

De

In 1310, the Island of Rhodes became the property of the Order by right of conquest from the Saracens. Here they established themselves so firmly that they were able to maintain their possession for more than two hundred years, and the remains of the fortifications erected there by the Knights, still bear testimony to their engineering skill and ability.

In 1522 the Island of Rhodes was besieged by the Turks, and after a memorable defense, their fortifications being reduced to ruins, scarcely one stone remaining standing upon another, they were compelled to surrender and evacuate the island. For the next seven years the Order ceased to exist as a sovereign power. Hence the name and date, "Death," "Rhodes, 1310" upon the black banner.

Res

From 1523 to 1530 the remnants of the Order wandered from place to place without a home. They went first to the Island of Candia where they attempted to reunite and reestablish themselves as a sovereign power. Hence the name and date, "Resurrection," "Candia," 1523 upon the purple banner.

Asc

In 1530, after seven years of homeless wanderings, the Island of Malta was ceded to the Order by the Emperor, Charles V, upon condition that they would defend it and repress the ravages of the Moorish rovers who at that time infested the southern ports of the Mediterranean Sea. Accordingly they took possession of the Island, became known as "Knights of Malta", and rose to their greatest heights of power and influence. Hence the name and date, "Ascension," "Malta, 1530" on the yellow banner.

Mar

The legend connected with the approach of the Knights to their final and most renowned abiding place has given rise to the distinguishing Sign and Word of the Order. The tradition is, that on coming to take possession of the Island, the Knights approached the shore in their Galleys, two men to an oar, the oars in their left hands and their swords in their right hands, singing a psalm as they rowed, in these words, "Rex Regum et Dominus Dominorum" – "King of Kings and Lord of Lords". The Islanders, seeing them approach in this warlike manner, hailed them through a speaking trumpet, saying in the Arabic language: "Ah tie toom bis sah Lamh?" ("Do you come in peace?") To which the Knights responded in the same tongue, "Ah tie nah bis sah lahm". ("We come in peace.") Then the Islanders responded: "Fa two bis sah lahm." ("Then come in peace.") It is worthy of note that these words or substantially the same, are the common form of salutation between an Arab and a stranger at the present day.

The Mediterranean Pass, which you received in the introductory degree of Knight of St. Paul, tradition informs us, was instituted at an early period of the Order to enable pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land to recognize each other, and as a protection against the Moorish rovers who infested the Mediterranean Sea and Palestine.

There exists within the Order as it has developed, two ceremonials – the American ceremonial and the European ceremonial – and the tables, *pointing to them*, one in the East, the other in the West represent the presentation of union between the two.

*Causes the class to rise and conducts them to a position facing the table in the east.*

The officers representing the American Ceremonial are seated at the Table in the East, on which is represented the upper and transverse limbs of a Latin Cross. Their naked swords, when deposited on the table, all point to one spot – the center – where the heart of our Saviour rested when he suffered upon the Cross. This is symbolic in a degree of the Christian character of the Order. The number five also symbolically reminds us of the passion of our Blessed Saviour, and of His five wounds upon the Cross. The number is again repeated in the rounds of the ladder depicted in one of the quarters of the circle upon

the Cross on the table in the West.

*Conducts class to a position facing the table in the west.*

*As class halt at the table in the West, the eight Knights seated there rise, take up their swords and come to carry.*

There are eight Knights seated at the table in the West. According to the European Ceremonial, these Knights are officers of the Priory. They represent the eight languages into which the Order was formerly divided, which were: Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, Castile, and Anglo-Bavaria. The table at which these Knights are seated has depicted upon it a large Maltese Cross, on the center of which is a circle, divided into four equal quartering by two transverse bars crossing each other at right angles in the center. Each of the four quarters of the circle has a figure depicted upon it.

A ship or ancient galley.

A ladder, with five rounds or steps, with the letters B, L, D, R, A, one on each step, and a speaking trumpet.

A hand and a serpent.

A human skull, cloven in twain from the top with a double-edged sword, and a spear beneath it.

The galley reminds us of the maritime character of the ancient Order, both in war and commerce.

The letters on the steps of the ladder correspond with those of the five ceremonial banners, and are the initial letters of the passwords on those banners.

The hand and serpent reminds us of the history of St. Paul in connection with the Island of Malta.

The human skull, cloven by the two-edged sword, reminds us of the penalty that was inflicted upon traitors to the Order in ancient times. The spear again reminds us of the passion of our Blessed Savior, for with such an instrument they pierced his side.

*Mar:* I will now direct your attention to the Grand Banners of the Order, of which there are two: the Banner of St. John, and that of Malta. About, FACE.

*Class turns about to face banners.*

*StJ:* The Banner of St. John is red, having painted upon it a white Greek Cross, the bars of the Cross extending to the edge of the banner, and on the center of the Cross a "Paschal Lamb."

The letters F, E, R, T are also on the banner, one in each quarter. These are the initial letters of the four words in the Latin sentence, "Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit", which in English is "His courage preserved Rhodes." According to a tradition of the Order, these letters upon the banner had their origin during the Grand Mastership of Villeret, early in the fifteenth century. In 1415 the Turks laid siege to Rhodes, the new home of the Order, and were repulsed by the brave Christian Knights. Amadeus V, Duke of Savoy, having rendered timely and valuable assistance to the besieged Knights Hospitalers during this attack, the Grand Master, in commemoration thereof, caused the letters to be added to the Banner of St. John. The descendents of the Duke Amadeus have, since that time always borne on their shield a white cross, with the word FERT as a device; the word being composed of the initial letters of the Latin words, as before described.

*M:* The Maltese Banner is black, having upon it a silver or white Maltese Cross, with a Cross of St. John on a small shield resting on the center. Around the Cross the legend, "Rex Regum et Dominus Dominorum," King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

*Music, "Gloria in Excelsia".*

*Mar returns class to seats in the south, then returns to station:* Excellent Prior, your order has been obeyed.

*Draws sword and deposits it on the table.*

*PR rises and goes to the east of the Altar:* And now, my Brothers, in behalf of the Knights of this Priory, I bid you a hearty welcome to all the rights and privileges, even to the disinterested friendship and



unbounded hospitality which has ever distinguished and we trust will long continue to adorn and characterize these noble Orders. With the age and the occasion which gave them birth, their adventurous and warlike spirit has passed away, but their moral and beneficent character still remains bright in all its primitive beauty and loveliness, to incite, as in the days of their greatest glory, that spirit of refined and moral chivalry which should prompt us to press onward in the cause of truth and justice, stimulating us to exertion in behalf of the destitute and oppressed, to wield the sword, if need be, when "Pure and undefiled religion" calls us in her defense, and in a Brother's cause, to do all that may become men. They also teach the triumph of immortality ---- that, though death has its sting, its infliction is but for moment; that his frail organization, though here subject to the many "ills that flesh is heir to," possesses an immortal soul which shall soar to realms of endless bliss, and beyond the power of change, to live forever.

My Brothers, you will now be seated.

*Returns to his station and is seated.*

## Closing

*PR:* Brother Knights, Attention!

*All present will stand, draw swords and come to carry. Those knights at the tables will also come to carry.*

Lieutenant Commander, what is the last duty of a Priory of Knights of Malta?

*LC:* To close the Priory in peace and goodwill with all brethren in arms and in Christian charity with all mankind.

*PR:* How can we best effect that noble and Christian purpose?

*LC:* By proving to friends and foes alike, our belief in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Blessed Savior.

*PR:* What are we taught by His Birth?

*LC:* That the great Captain of our Salvation was born to redeem fallen man.

*PR:* What are we taught by His Life?

*LC:* All that is requisite for us to follow, He being the way, the truth, and the life.

*PR:* What are we taught by His death?

*LC:* That the debt of nature must be paid and the right of the law satisfied.

*PR:* What are we taught by His resurrection?

*LC:* That He being the day-star of mercy, has risen to conduct our feet in the path of truth and peace.

*PR:* Thus Brethren in Arms, by the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Blessed Lord and Savior, we are taught to live and die as Christians; remembering that in Him who made His glorious ascension into Heaven, we have a sure and steadfast mediator with the Father, for He hath said, "In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Brothers, I am about to close this Priory, you will assist me in this ceremony. Let us again lay our swords at the foot of the Cross, and invoke a blessing before separating.

*All deposit swords and stand in place, with arms crossed upon their breasts, uncovered.*

*Pre:* Merciful Redeemer of perishing mankind, who hast promised that Thou wouldst be in the midst of those who assemble in Thy Holy Name, look upon us with an eye of tender compassion and so direct us that all our labors may be begun, continued and ended in love to Thee, affection to our brethren, and obedience to the principles of the Order. Amen.

*PR:* Brothers, resume your arms, return them to their scabbards, and let peace reign among us. Together Brothers.

*PR and officers at the table in the East give the Grand Hailing Sign (trumpet), all saying:* You came in peace?

*All:* We came in peace.

*PR with officers:* Then depart in peace.

*PR only:* To the glory of our Blessed Savior, in the name of St. John the Baptist and by virtue of the power in me vested, I declare this Priory of Knights of Malta closed. Captain General, you will dismiss the Guard.

*CG:* Captain of the Outposts, you will dismiss the Guard; this Priory of Knights of Malta is closed.

*CO retires through the Sentinel's door, and returns and reports:* Captain General, the guard is dismissed.

*PR:* Brothers, you are dismissed – go in peace.

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