**The Ceremony of The Three Roses**

**A Service for A Mason's Lady**

**Rev. David Ritchie – Grand Chaplain - 2011**

 I now stand before you dressed as a Master Mason. As Masons we say that we take good men and make them better. The question is better what? Hopefully better fathers to our daughters, better sons to our mothers, better uncles to our nieces, better brothers to our sisters, and most especially better husbands to our wives.

My Brothers lay down your tools for a soul has rejoined it's creator. We have been called here today to pay our final respects to Lady\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the wife of Brother\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We gather with heavy heart and a true sense of loss. To

(Brothers Name)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, her family, her friends and those who knew her best we offer our sympathy and prayers.

As Freemasons we are taught that when clouds gather darkly, when sorrow and affliction come nearest to our hearts, that we should look humbly to the Supreme Architect of the Universe for that hope, comfort and support he alone can give.

**Let us Pray:**

*Comfort us and give us hope, O Lord. Be with us and those whom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ held dear. Strengthen us for the days ahead and heal us of the hurts of this world. Bless the*

*memories we hold dear of the life and times shared with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Let us have faith to remember that death is not the end ,it is the beginning and that as we leave this earthly home ,we enter into one not made with hands ,but eternal in the heavens. Amen*

**Response:** So mote it be.

From the book of Proverbs we read:

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself in strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all. ”Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

Let us also hear words of hope from the 121st Psalm:

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help is from the Lord who made the heavens and the earth. The Lord will not allow your foot to be moved, the Lord who keeps you will not slumber or sleep. The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is the shade of your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day or the moon or stars by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and coming in from this time evermore.

In Architecture columns support great buildings or monuments. To a Mason the column can represent life and strength and the broken column represents death. For

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this is a fitting symbol. By her strength she supported her faith and her community. She supported her friends in their times of need. She supported her family:

Her parents through the trials of age and her children through the trials of youth and adolescents. What we honor here most today is the strength and support she gave to our

Brother\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ throughout their life together. Supporting him in times of trouble comforting him in times of need, sharing in his joys and accomplishments and walking

with him through his Masonic journey. But as is the fate of all living things an end must fall. The column is broken and that support so loving given shall be missed.

We place now a red rose for the man she loved and shared with us. (Red Rose placed in prepared spot.)

We place a white rose in thanks for all she did. The meals prepared, the evenings home alone and her support. (white rose placed)

We place a yellow rose in friendship. She broke bread with us, she worked with us, she sat beside us and laughed with us at our dinners and banquets. (Yellow rose placed)

Finally we place a sprig of green to remind us of that eternal life. We are but separated a little while and shall soon meet again.

Lady\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has enriched us all. My Brothers how often has she provided for our tables at lodge? How often did she sit home alone? How often did she attend a gathering that was about us and held little for her? How often did she praise our gentle craft to family or friends. She may not have been a member but she was an important part of our fraternity.

**Let us pray:**

*Supreme Architect of the Universe, Let Brotherly Love strengthen and cement us at this time of loss. May the promise of eternal life comfort us and all who held \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*dear. Let us go forth into the world having been made better for having known\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Be with our brother and his family at this time of sorrow. May we ever live and work so that when the final role is call we may hear, “Well done good andfaithful servant, well done.” May we depart now with hope and peace in the knowledge of your love. Amen*

**Response:** So mote it be.

Brother\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we offer you our sympathy and the knowledge that our loss is felt by all assembled here and that this humble gesture can not alleviate your pain or

honor her whom you loved in fitting terms but, know this my brother you will always be in our thoughts and prayers and \_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be in our memories.

Will the brethren here assembled please file past and pay your respects at this time.

(The brethren approach one at a time, after a moment of respect, the brother will place his right hand over his heart and solemnly and formally bow. Filing out. Offering short personal condolences on the way out.)

The roses and green may be placed by the orator or by individual brothers while the orator explains. Personal remembrances can be added at beginning or after placing of roses.