EASTER PROGRAM

Worthy Matron:

At this time we approach a season of the year that is filled with a spiritual meaning which brings joy and gladness to the world. More than nineteen hundred years ago a man lived and died, and lived again. His life changed the hearts of men until the whole world has been revolutionized. A review of one of the most tragic events of history might be appropriate at this time, in order to bring to our hearts the full significance of the meaning and purpose of His life. Worthy Patron, will you read a few verses of the Scripture as an introduction to the story our officers and members will now bring to the attention of our Chapter?

Worthy Patron:

Worthy Matron, I desire to read extracts from the Gospel of St. John the Beloved Disciple, whose report of the crucifixion of our Lord is given from the standpoint of Christ's spiritual ministry. (John 19:16-19; 41-42 - Living Bible Version)

Then Pilate gave Jesus to them to be crucified. So they had him at last, and he was taken out of the city, carrying his cross to the place known as "The Skull," in Hebrew, "Golgotha." There they crucified him and two others with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign over him reading, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The place of crucifixion was near a grove of trees, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because of need for haste before the Sabbath, and because the tomb was close at hand, they laid him there.

Associate Matron (rising and addressing Worthy Matron):

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Associate Matron.

Associate Matron:

May I speak?

Worthy Matron:
You may.

Associate Matron:

If the Scriptures closed at the verses just read by our Worthy Patron, we would all be most miserable, for we would be a people without hope. A nation without a guiding light. But reading farther we find these words (Luke 24:1-6):

But very early on Sunday morning they took the ointments to the tomb -- and found that the huge stone covering the entrance had been rolled aside. So they went in -- but the Lord Jesus body was gone. They stood there puzzled, trying to think what could have happened to it. Suddenly two men appeared before them, clothed in shining robes so bright their eyes were dazzled. The women were terrified and bowed low before them. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He has come back to life again! Don't you remember what he told you back in Galilee -- that the Messiah must be betrayed into the power of evil men and be crucified and that he would rise again the third?"

Long, long ago it was into an empty tomb that His disciples looked before they could realize that He had arisen. So it is with us, today. We see our fondest hopes die. We watch our dearest plans fade away. We weep beside the place where our ambitions and our pride have been buried beneath the burdens of life. We carry our cross up the steep hill of human endeavor and stumble and fall upon the pathway. We are crucified many times as we live out our years. And at times our crushed spirit cries out in anguish. We kneel at the foot of our cross, but looking beyond the grief and pain we may vision an empty tomb. We may see a glorified cross. To the soul who accepts his cross willingly, it will become a signpost directing his path into highways of peace.

Conductress:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Conductress.

Conductress:

Life is a pathway we all must travel, and each traveler is seeking peace. But there are rough places along the way. Storms assail, weariness overtakes us. The longer the road, the slower our steps become. We cannot see the tomb as a promise, there
would be little to live for. What a blessing that beyond the tomb we have the promise of life eternal.

(Song: "Low in the Grave He Lay." - first and last verse)

Associate Conductress:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Associate Conductress.

Throughout the labyrinth of life, like the labyrinth of our beloved Eastern Star, we wind and turn and pause to receive our lessons. A wise word dropped by a lecture here, a golden message of wisdom offered by those who have traveled the path before us imparts to us a hidden wisdom that great minds have proved. And the love and patience we build into our daily lives, as we travel our earthy course, is a full testimony that the illuminated cross directs our way into paths of peace, if we will but follow the gleam. A wise man once said we must enter the empty tomb before we could see the glorified cross.

Associate Patron:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Brother Associate Patron.

Associate Patron:

Once, in the days of my youth, I thought all my days would be full of joy and gladness. I was certain that my lips would always hold a song. In the plans I had built for myself I had made no place for sorrow. But as the years crept on heartache and pain entered my life and the song left my heart, I knew what it was to weep and pray and cry aloud in my grief. I crept to a tomb of human desires and found the place empty. But looking beyond the tomb I found a light. I discovered that others who had crept into the empty tomb were following a light, the same as I. We grew to be closer friends because we had felt the hurt of pain and had wept tears of agony. Tonight I want to admonish all who are carrying a load of sorrow to cease from their grief. It may be a night of weariness as we watch by the empty tomb, but joy cometh
in the morning. It was at early morn the watchers found he had arisen. Joy cometh in the morning. We all should remember that.

Adah:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Adah.

Adah:

Long before the events of history that we are reviewing tonight took place I lived and enjoyed the love of my father and my family. It was the custom of that time for men to make a vow, and to keep the vow. You all know how Jephthah, my father, made a vow, and to keep him from dishonor I gave my life. In every generation, men and women have made vows and broken them. But there have been men and women who kept their vows in spite of all adversities. And in keeping the faith untarnished they have brought to human experience the glory of immortality. At this Easter-tide this Man, Jesus, kept His vow. He said, "I will arise again."

Ruth:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Ruth.

Ruth:

When I went with Naomi back to her homeland I left my relatives and friends to go into a strange land among strange people. After I left my kindred I became a gleaner in the harvest fields of Boaz. You know how his love for me and my marriage to him brought about a new family. And out of our union was born Obed who was the father of Jesse, my grandson. And my great-grandson was David. And this same Jesus whom you honor tonight was of the branch of Jesse of the House of David. Perhaps the love and devotion that I had for Naomi was handed down through my line into the life of Jesus. It gives me joy to know that I, a gleaner in the field, gave Him part of my life. And He, loving the poor and the humble, gave His life to save a lost world.
Esther:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Esther.

Esther:

My love for my people was stronger than my love for my own life. And when I appeared before the King to plead for the lives of my people, I knew if the King saw fit he could put me under the sentence of death. But I had decided that the life of my own people was worth more than my own and I was willing to die to save my kindred and my race. You know how the King forgave me for entering his presence with my plea, and how my people were saved. If I had not loved my people more than life itself I would not have been willing to offer myself to the King. So it is with this Jesus. I lived almost 500 years before He was born, but I know that He must have loved the world of men more than life itself to die upon the cross for them.

Martha:

Worthy Matron.

Worthy Matron:

Sister Martha.

Martha:

When Jesus visited my sister Mary and my brother Lazarus and me, we often talked of things of which the world then little knew or dreamed. We knew that days of sorrow were ahead. And some of the things He said to us we did not understand, but we believed His words even if we did not understand the meaning. When He came and spoke the words that brought my brother Lazarus forth from the tomb, many were filled with amazement. But I knew that had He been there Lazarus would not have died. I told Jesus so. On that early morn when Mary went to the tomb to weep, I remembered that He had said He would arise again. It had been so disloyal to doubt that He would return. And Lo! Mary and Peter and John found Him, walking in the garden. The tomb was empty. The stone had been rolled away. He had arisen.
Worthy Matron.

Sister Electa.

Electa:

I am sure that had I lived in the time when Jesus walked the streets of Galilee my heart would have recognized Him as the Christ. When I heard the story from St. John my very soul was melted within me. And I humbly knelt at the foot of the glorified cross and wept my sins away. Soon the soldiers came. They knew I had been a pagan and had not always believed as a Christian. So they tried to frighten me. They threatened me and told me to trample the cross under foot. They handed me a small cross so that I could really trample it in the dust. But in my heart I knew that what John had told me was true. And holding the image of that cross of shame to my heart, it become a glorified cross for me. I could not deny my Lord.

Worthy Matron:

We have heard the words of testimony here tonight. As an exemplification of the beauty of sacrifice and the reward of faith, we will now witness a living cross, and at the conclusion of the tableau I will ask our Chaplain to offer a prayer. [Worthy Matron calls up Chapter.]

[INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING CROSS: WARDER STAYS AT HIS STATION DURING THIS CEREMONY. CHAPLAIN STAYS AT HER STATION UNTIL AFTER CROSS IS COMPLETED. CONDUCTRESS AND ASSOCIATE CONDUCTRESS WILL LEAD EACH LINE. CONDUCTRESS WILL LEAD SOUTH LINE AND ASSOCIATE CONDUCTRESS WILL LEAD NORTH LINE. ALL WILL MARCH DOWN SOUTH OR NORTH LINE RESPECTIVELY TO EAST LINE, TURN TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, GO TO IN FRONT OF WORTHY MATRON AND MAKE THE CROSS. ASSOCIATE MATRON AND ASSOCIATE PATRON SHOULD BE THE LAST IN THEIR RESPECTIVE LINE.]
As soon as the Cross is formed, the Chaplain will leave her Station and kneel at the altar.

Chaplain:

Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the tribute we have witnessed tonight, showing forth the Glory of Thy Son, and the purpose of His coming to earth may find lodgment in each heart. May we go forth with courage renewed to meet tomorrow. In times of doubt and despair, may we see the glorified cross uplifted to guide our feet. And may the empty tomb become a symbol of a faith reborn. All this we ask for Thy Name’s sake. Amen.

[After Chaplain has finished this prayer, All remain in cross to sing “The Old Rugged Cross” (first and last verse). Chaplain leaves first to go back to her station. The remaining officers march to west marching line and back to their respective stations.]