The Open Door

(A Memorial Service)

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This ceremony may be given under the Good of the Order following prescribed ritual as allowed in your state, or it may be given after the close of chapter.

This ceremony requires:

Five Star Points
Chaplain
Soloist
Person to carry the cross
Person to take the part at the altar

The cross may be easily cut from plywood or from styrofoam. If plywood is used, it should be covered loosely with crinkled aluminum foil. A cross about four feet high with corresponding crossarm is a nice size for the average chapter room.

Each Star Point carries a small double spray of flowers not more than 12 or 14 inches in overall length. These may be natural or artificial flowers, but should be in star point colors and all the same variety of flowers. Each spray should be tied tightly in the middle with a length of 2-1/2 inch width ribbon with ends long enough to go around the wood of the cross and tie securely in the back. A bow of ribbon in the middle of each spray adds much to its beauty.

A support upon which the cross can rest after Electa has fastened her flowers should be provided. Possibly you could borrow a piece of equipment for holding sprays from a funeral director. It will work splendidly.

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Those taking part enter from the two doors at the west end of the chapter room in the following order:

From the anteroom:
- Adah
- Ruth
- Esther

Preparation room:
- Chaplain
- Electa
- Martha

When the above six have reached and are standing at their stations, the person who carries the cross and the one who takes the part at the altar enter from the two doors. The one with the cross takes her place in front of and at Adah’s right, facing Adah. The other stands just west of the altar.

The soloist should be seated near the instrument. She does not come in with the others.

When all are in their places, the soloist rises and sings all but the last verse of some appropriate favorite hymn. The soloist remains standing throughout the rest of the ceremony.

PERSON at the altar says:

Through an open door with cheery smile
They have stepped from sight for a little while;
We miss them, indeed, but memories frame
Each one in a picture that bears his name;
And who shall say that life ever ends
As long as we live in the hearts of friends?

And so, in the hearts of the members of
---- ---- ---- Chapter will always be enshrined the names of ---- ---- ----. (Here follow the names of those memorialized along with any additional data that may be desired.)

ADAH speaks:

The high ideals that they held
Gave them such inner light
They walked with honor, unafraid,
Intent on doing right.

Adah fastens flowers lengthwise on the upper part of the upright piece of the cross. Cross is then carried to Ruth.

RUTH speaks:

We honor them for love they shared
With friends and family,
And as they gave so must we give
In kindest charity.

Ruth fastens flowers on cross below Adah’s blue flowers. Cross is carried to Esther.

ESTHER speaks:

Allegiance to our nation’s goals
And to our country’s flag,
They pledged with zeal and fervor that
Was never known to lag.

Fastens flowers below the yellow flowers of Ruth so they are nearer the lower end of the upright piece. Cross is carried to Martha.

MARTHA speaks:

Their steadfast faith looked far beyond
Time’s changing, shifting sands;
Their hope was fixed upon a home
Not made with mortal hands.

Fastens flowers on left end of crossarm. The cross is then carried to Electa.

ELECTA says:

They gave the cup of generous aid
To sister and to brother,
For in God’s precious, Holy Book
They read, “Love one another.”

Fastens flowers on right side of crossarm. Cross is then carried to the support provided for it and left there. The person who carried the cross now stands beside it.

PERSON at the altar says:

And now to our God, who knows what is best,
We leave our beloved to whom he gives rest;
And we who remain give our pledges anew
To honor our Order, to be faithful and true.

She steps back to place between Esther and Ruth. The Chaplain comes to the altar.

CHAPLAIN'S prayer:

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we are grateful that Thou art a loving Father who cares for Thy children and hears them when they pray. We come to Thee knowing that Thou art a never-failing source of wisdom, understanding, comfort, and strength in time of need.

In Thy merciful goodness, forgive us for our failure to trust Thee more, and grant that in the strength that Thou gives we may go forth to live lives of such beauty and worth that we may claim eternal life through the Savior, who has promised us, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Amen.

Chaplain steps back between Martha and Esther. The soloist at this time sings last verse of the hymn used in the beginning; or you may desire to have her sing some song that you think particularly fitting or which is a favorite in your community. If it stresses the immortality and the Open Door into Heaven theme, it will be much better.

ORDER OF RETIREMENT:

The person standing by the cross moves up to Electa; they form a couple. At the same time, Martha turns to form couple with Chaplain; Adah and Ruth form couple; Esther and person who took part at altar form couple. They may leave chapter room either through separate or same door.

THE END