Chapter of Sorrow
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OPENING CEREMONY

The Worthy Patron will call members and guests to Order and say:

W.P.—Sister Associate Conductress, you will invite the Worthy Matron and her officers to enter the chapter room.

Worthy Patron calls up chapter, while officers enter to slow music. Conductress leads W. M. to dais, who says:

W.M.—We will join in singing:

HYMN—C. M.

As we life's journey tread,
How thick stand burial urns!
How often comes the warning dread
That dust to dust returns!

Alas! my daughter, Jephthah's cry
Still echoes down the years,
Still Rachel mourns for those who die
With bitter, blinding tears.

What wilt thou, mourner pale?
To have those here again
Whom God hath called from this dark vale
Of sin, and grief, and pain?

Nay! 'Round our columns riven
Let evergreen o'er climb,
Fit type of Life Immortal given
Beyond the shores of time.

And who is this, whose word
Can lift the mourner's gloom?
The same whom sorrowing Martha heard
By Lazarus's sealed tomb.

"Be still!" He gently says,
"And know that I am God!
God's ways are not like human ways,
Submissive meet the rod.

"Then in the Easter morn
Of God's eternal bliss,
The dead in Christ shall rise, new born
And live! Believest this?"
W. M.—Sister Warder, please direct the Sentinel to allow none to enter the chapter room until further orders.

Warder opens door without knocks.

Warder.—Worthy Matron, the Sentinel has received your instruction.

W. M. seats chapter.

W. M.—Sisters, brothers and friends: We have met to commemorate those of our number who have passed on before us to that bourne from whence no traveler returns. Worthy Patron, what is your station in a chapter of sorrow?

As each officer is addressed, he or she should rise and remain standing until the close of the opening ceremony.

W. P.—My station is in the East, which is the source of Light, and admonishes me of my duty in this memorial service, which is to direct the minds of all to the Great Light as revealed in the word of God—that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

W. M.—Sister Associate Matron, explain your duty in a chapter of sorrow.

A. M.—My duty is to impart the lesson conveyed by my badge of office, the refulgent sun, which teaches that the Sun of Righteousness can gild even the darkness of the grave and render forever radiant the land immortal.

W. M.—Sister Secretary, explain your duty.

Sec'y.—To teach the solemn lesson that soon for all of us the record of our earthly life will be forever closed, its lessons all repeated, its golden opportunities forever past, and that then the most momentous of all questions will be whether our names are inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life.

W. M.—Sister Treasurer, explain your duty.

Treas.—To teach the lesson that only such treasures as are laid where neither moth nor rust corrupt will be of use to us when called to render an account of life's labors.

W. M.—Sister Conductress, explain your duty.

Con.—To remind my sisters and brothers that the labyrinth of life is beset with perils, and that only One can so guide the traveler as to bring him safe to the heavenly goal.

W. M.—Sister Associate Conductress, explain your duty.

A. C.—My duty is to remind my sisters and brothers that due preparation must be made for the solemn mysteries of Eternity.

W. M.—Sister Chaplain, explain your duties.

Chaplain.—My duties are to draw your thoughts from earthly partings to heavenly reunions; to offer prayer that the pitying tenderness which wept with the sisters of Bethany will comfort us now, and to remind you that on
our altar rests the message from our Elder Brother where He promises that our
dead shall rise again, while in our Father's house are many mansions.

W. M.—Sister Marshal, explain your duties.

Marshal.—My duties are to make such arrangements for this service as may
be necessary, and to emphasize the thought upon all who engage therein, that
their lips should be silent upon the frailties incident to our common
humanity, and that only kind and reverent mention should be made of those who
have solved the greatest of all mysteries—what lies beyond the earthly
procession of life.

W. M.—Sisters Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha and Electa, you severally
represent the rays of our guiding star. What lessons are we to derive from
your stations there?

Adah.—My color, blue, the emblem of truth and fidelity, teaches us that
those virtues must adorn our lives here to fit us for the life unending.

Ruth.—My color, yellow, the emblem of constancy, teaches us that we must
be faithful in little things, must glean closely in any harvest field, if we
would receive the "Well done" of the Master.

Esther.—My color, white, the emblem of purity, teaches us that our earth
stains must all be cleansed away before we will be worthy to appear with
those who walk in white raiment on the "hills of God."

Martha.—My color, green, the emblem of life on earth and of immortality,
teaches us belief in Him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Electa.—My color, red, the emblem of fervency, of suffering and of love,
reminds us of that Love which suffered even unto death, that thereby He might
conquer the grave.

W. M.—Sister Warder, from your station within the door of our chapter
room, and from that of the Sentinel, which is outside, are there no lessons
to be drawn?

Warder.—We would remind our sisters and brothers that

"There is no fold, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howso' r defended,
But has one vacant chair,"

and that the utmost vigilance on our part cannot prevent the entrance of the
Death Angel into our chapter room.

W. M.—Let us unite in prayer.

Calls up chapter.
Chaplain goes to west of altar.
PRAYER

O God, whose days are without end, make us, we beseech Thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the need of careful preparation for the great hereafter. We thank Thee for the blessed assurance in Thy Word that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, in Whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die; and for the hope we have that the friendships which brighten our earthly pilgrimage are continued beyond the grave, and that although we mourn, it is not as those without hope. Be with us in these solemn services; comfort us with a sense of Thy love, and the knowledge that Thou dost never willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. May we follow the leadings of the Star of the East until we, too, lay down the burdens of life, when unto us may an abundant entrance be given into the glories of the New Jerusalem. Amen,

Response.—So may it ever be.

W. M.—In loving commemoration of those who have passed through the labyrinth of earth, and entered the unknown life beyond, I now declare this chapter of sorrow duly opened.

Seats the chapter.

W. M.—Sister Warder, inform the Sentinel that the chapter is now opened.

Warder opens door without raps.

Warder.—Worthy Matron, the Sentinel has received your instructions.

Here will follow such memorial addresses, obituary notices, eulogies, etc., as may be desired. Recitations and vocal music of an appropriate character may be interspersed. These should never occupy more than forty minutes, that the audience be not wearied before the closing, which is the real memorial service.
CLOSING CEREMONY

W. M.—Sister Warder, please direct the Sentinel to allow none to enter the chapter room during our closing service.

Warder opens door without raps.

Warder.—Worthy Matron, the Sentinel has received your instructions.

W. M.—Sister Associate Matron, will you instruct us in the lessons and duties of this occasion?

A. M.—We have listened to the expressions of fraternal regret concerning those who once met with us in this chapter room, who formed with us the golden chain, and at this altar offered the same vows and prayers as ourselves. They have bowed before that last enemy of the human race, and the places here which were once brightened by their presence shall know them no more forever. But their memories will be enshrined in our hearts until we, too, pass beyond the river. From this solemn memorial service we learn the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, and the importance of the present moment, which alone is ours. But this service is not intended to foster sadness and gloom, but rather to encourage tender memories and holy hopes. We do not forget those who labored with and for us, and it is meet that in some such reverent manner we pay homage to their faithful service. But they are not dead, those whose names are uttered at this hour; they may even now be about us on heavenly errands sent. We ask not why they were called away; we ask not what their present environment or development; we only know that they are surrounded with the same infinite watch-care which upholds us; and there we leave them. We would, however, derive so much of helpful consolation from the lessons here to be given us that we leave this hall not more saddened by the remembrance of our loss, and the inevitable hastening of our own passing on, but rather strengthened and encouraged for the great work we strive to do, that we may better carry on that left to us by those whose earthly hands are pulseless and still. If one heart is thus uplifted and made stronger, our efforts will be indeed blessed by Him who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

W. M.—Worthy Patron, have you further instruction?

W. P.—The name of our Order implies a belief in the Hand which, centuries ago, led the lowly shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem to the Infant Christ, and its teachings impress the truths it was part of the Savior's mission to convey.

Truth, Constancy, Purity, Faith and Charity, the five virtues distinctly taught by our Order, were urged upon His followers by Him who was named in prophecy the Word of God, the Lily of the Valley, the Sun of Righteousness, the Lamb of God, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Those who have listened to the lectures received in this room must have recognized the types therein explained. Scripture teaches that the Immaculate Son of God offered His life in fulfillment of His Father's vow that the soul that sinneth it shall die; that He forsook His heavenly home for the manger cradle; that He interposed Himself to rescue His people from their certain and eternal doom; that He relied with a greater than Martha's faith upon His Father and His God; and
that, like the martyrs of every age, having yielded all else, He sealed His testimony with His blood.

All these lessons fit us for usefulness and happiness here, but in an hour like this, none are so comforting as the belief of Martha that the apparent closing of the Christian's life is really but a pause—a turning of the leaf—to commence a page of new and grand inscription where the record shall be undisfigured by sin and unstained by tears. The friends we mourn have entered upon that vast, inconceivable phase of existence we call eternity, and as they used the talents intrusted to them so will be their reward.

It only remains for us, when we have placed our dead out of our sight, to assist, if necessary, those they may have left behind, and to carry out the work they have left undone. If their aims and efforts were ennobling and worthy, the promotion of those aims by us will be their most fitting monument. The lesson of this hour is that we, too, are fast nearing "The silent, unknown stream," and that soon these services may be held in our memory. Let us so live that when our summons, comes we may depart in the comfort of a religious and holy hope, leaving the testimony of a useful, unselfish life, and an earnest faith in a blissful immortality. May it then be said of us—They are not, for God took them.

W. M.—In the Ritual of the Order of the Eastern Star the color types form an important part of its impressive lessons. At this time we use the fragrant flowers as most expressive of our emotions. They are as beautiful as the graces of a lovely character, and, as fragrant as the memory such leave—a rich legacy to those who come after them. In our Order they suggest many things which they do not to the outside world, and it is therefore appropriate that in the obsequies of our loved and lost they should bear an important part.

Taking cluster of white flowers, she descends to east side of shrine.

It is peculiarly fitting that those officers who conducted candidates through the mysteries of our chapter work should assist when we commemorate those who have entered the sublime mysteries of the Grand Chapter beyond.

Sister Adah, please present your tribute to our memorial star.

As each Star Officer is addressed she will rise, and, during her response, she will place her floral tribute in proper place in star on shrine, slowly and carefully, and return to place and stand there.

Adah.—These blue flowers, symbolizing truth and fidelity, I place here as a token of our fidelity to the Memory of the departed members of our Order.

W. M.—Sister Ruth.

Ruth.—These yellow flowers, symbolizing constancy, I place here as a token of our loyalty to the friends present and the friends who have only gone before.

W. M.—Sister Esther.

Esther.—These white flowers, symbolizing purity, I place here as an emblem of the purity of the ties that bind us to each other.
W. M.—Sister Martha.

Martha.—These green ferns (or sprigs), symbolizing immortality, I place here as expressive of our belief that
"There is no death; what seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call—Death."

W. M.—Sister Electa.

Electa.—These red flowers, symbolizing fervency, I place here as evidence of the fervency of our esteem for those we mourn to-day.

W. M.—Sister Marshal, what is your offering?

Marshal.—

Coming to shrine.

This, my wand of office, which I surrender, in token that my duty in this ceremony is ended, while the emblematic colors of our Order, fresh and undimmed by any sign of mourning, would symbol my hope that, some sweet day, we, and all those whose memories we are now embalming, will step to the grand, celestial music of that glorious company whom no man can number, where,

"Friend with friend,
Our spirits shall blend
In the rapturous transport
That never shall end;
While the crystalline avenues tremble and ring
With honor and homage and praise to our King."

W. M.—Sister Associate Conductress, what is your offering?

Associate Conductress presents membership badge, and also, if an officer has died, the proper jewel, depositing same on shrine at north side of floral star.

A. C.—This, the regalia worn by every member of our Order (and the jewel of the office which was this year left vacant), which I deposit upon our memorial shrine to remind us that all earthly robing and all earthly honors are but dross; and that we must be clothed upon with Christ's righteousness if we would be His in that day when He maketh up His jewels.

Takes position, standing between Martha and Electa.

W. M.—Sister Conductress, what is your offering?

Conductress.—

Presenting small Bible and placing it on shrine at south side of star.

This, that Word which is as a lamp to the feet and a light unto the path, that through the weary labyrinth of life we may never miss the tender leading of Bethlehem's Star, until for us it shall gild the portal of the heavenly city whose Builder and Maker is God.
Takes position, standing between Ruth and Esther.

W. M.—Sister Treasurer, what offering have you?

Treasurer.—

Coming to shrine and placing key beside badge.

This, the key, an emblem of security, reminding us that the treasures we have here in earthen vessels, if securely guarded, will be ours more abundantly when, for us, the portals of heaven shall be unlocked.

Retires to position between Electa and W. M.

W. M.—Sister Secretary, what offering have you?

Secretary.—

Coming to shrine and placing roll beside Bible.

This, a memorial scroll, inscribed with loving care, which is expressive of the record left on the tablet of memory, and reminds us that all earthly records must perish; but that there remaineth a Book of Remembrance for those that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name.

Retires to position between Adah and Ruth.

W. M.—Sisters and Brothers of———Chapter, does our sister express the emotions of your hearts when she says that those whose names she has written are held in loving remembrance?

Members.—Even so.

W. M.—Sister Associate Matron, what have you to offer?

A. M.—

Proceeding to shrine and placing wreath over the star, so that same is encircled.

This wreath, symbolizing in its endless form the vast cycle of God's eternal years, I place here as a token of our trust that the fraternal chain severed so often and so rudely will one day be reunited where we shall miss no broken links.

Retires to position between Esther and Martha.

W. M.—My Sisters, "flowers are Love's truest language," and you have sweetly expressed the language of our hearts as we remember those we would honor at this time. As the presiding officer of this chapter, I place within the center of our memorial star these flowers, reminding us that loyalty to each other and our superior officers is the union of which alone we stand and render our labors beautiful, and that this is but a symbol of the loyalty we also owe to the Center of all light and life.

Places cluster in center of star.
You, my sisters, have placed your emblems testifying to the fidelity, the constancy, the purity, the immortality and the fervency of that love which reaches even beyond the grave.

Taking white flower in her hand.

This flower of purest white was, only a short time ago, a closely sealed bud, the seed of which had to be planted in mother earth, or we could never have seen the glorious flower. Thus it was with the friends we mourn. The cold earth has received the human casket which we all knew and loved, but Christianity teaches that Death is but an event in the grand march of the soul, and that that which is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption. In anticipation of the reunion hour, I place this spotless flower as a last tribute to our fraternal dead.

Places flower on top of star, and steps back to position between Adah and Electa—facing east.

Worthy Patron, will you, who have so often at this sacred altar repeated the solemn vow of the Order, offer for the chapter renewed consecration?

The Worthy Patron calls up chapter, and to slow music proceeds to west of altar. Worthy Matron and officers face altar.

PRAYER

O Father of Mercies, our only help in time of need, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, we give Thee thanks for the good examples of all Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. We humbly beseech Thee for grace to fulfill the duties we owe to each other and to Thee. Direct us in all our doings, and favor us with Thy continual help, that in every walk of life we may so follow the teachings of Thy dear Son that we, with all those who have departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may be gathered in the land where Death comes not. Amen.

Response.—So may it ever be.

Worthy Patron and other officers repair to stations, slow music.

HYMN— C. M

The weary labyrinth of earth
Has fewer hopes than fears.
Our path, e'en from our very birth,
Is crowded oft with tears.
We clasp the warm fraternal hand
Of friends we love and trust,
And lo! they've reached the shadow land,
Leaving with us but dust.

Have we but Martha's earnest faith
To lift the funeral gloom,
We gain the victory over death
Through Him who burst the tomb.
Christ points us to that city fair,
High walled, with pearly gate,
Within the many mansions there
His ransomed children wait.

We then will trust for His dear sake—
Till faith be lost in sight—
That those who sleep in Jesus wake
In God's eternal light.
His Star we see, Lord, let us come
With those who've gone before,
To worship Him and rest at home,
Where partings are no more.

Chaplain.—
Proceeds to shrine during the singing of the last verse and touches in turn the emblems thereon as she mentions them.

This regalia reminds us of the day when we, too, must lay aside the raiment of the body; this book (opening Bible) that soon for each the life story will be ended; the book may close (closing Bible), for all of earth's lessons are said; the key reminds us that that which might have opened much of earthly or heavenly wisdom will drop from the pulseless hand; the scroll, of that fame or honor which once meant so much to us, but which must be laid aside; the baton, of the power and influence for whose use we must render account; and the undraped ribbon, of the joyous hopes which are the Christian's rightful heritage, as he nears the silent river. If all these tokens, symbolizing earthly gifts, are brightened by a Martha's trustful faith, and an Electa's undaunted heroism, then, indeed, will each of these emblems take new meanings, and typify the robe of immortality—the sublime lessons of the limitless hereafter; the key, to treasures of whose grandeur it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive; and the scroll, of hidden glories which shall be revealed, while the hopes of earth shall all be radiantly realized within that city whose builder and maker is God. Electa's cup here represents the form when emptied of the wine of human life. Yet it has a sweeter meaning. These flowers, worn over the heart to evidence the sincerity of our affection for those "who are not, for God took them," are now to be placed within it to express our belief that they are not "lost," but only gone before. (Places cup right side up on shrine.) The ancients preserved the ashes of their dead in sealed urns; but that is not the teaching of our Order. We desire no sealed urn in our thoughts of our loved ones. They are not forgotten, or the utterance of their names forbidden. (Takes bouquet from breast, and detaching blue flower), As they were loyal and loving (drops blue flower in cup), as they were constant and true (drops yellow flower), as they were pure and good (drops white flower), as they were faithful and earnest (drops green sprig), and as they were zealous and devoted (drops red flower), so in our fraternal remembrance, which this cup typifies, will we embalm their virtues and emulate their examples. (Takes cup.) We will not seal these fragrant emblems; rather would we scatter them broadcast over a needy world. In recognition of the virtues evidenced in the lives of those we mourn to-day, I place this cup of fragrant remembrance upon our memorial shrine, with the prayer that each and all obey in their hearts and lives the command of the beloved disciple, St. John the Divine, that we love one another. (Places cup and returns to dais.)
A. M.—Sisters and Brothers of——Chapter, we have received repeated assurances of the shortness of time, and that every day man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets.

Shall not these solemn lessons impress upon us the responsibility and grandeur of this life, which is but a vestibule to an unending existence?

Response.—Even so.

A. M.—Worthy Matron, you have heard the response of this chapter; let it comfort you with the assurance that we will all labor as never before for the great principles we are banded together to promote.

W. M.—It is well. In the trust that we go forth from this room with renewed loyalty to each other, and increased strength for the trials of life, I declare this chapter of sorrow closed.