

# To The New Mason's Lady

*Written by the Grand Lodge of New York*

A man in your family has received his First degree in the Masonic Fraternity. He is now an Entered Apprentice and you are now a Mason's Lady. We take this opportunity to extend our first greeting to you. While you personally have not joined our organization, there are certain things that may be helpful for you to know in the future. At the same time, there are matters of general interest about your Mason and his new Fraternity that we think you would like to know.

## **WHEN AND WHERE DID IT BEGIN?**

The Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons (F.&A.M.) [or A.F.& A.M. - Ancient Free and Accepted Masons] is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. It has its roots in antiquity and is directly descended from the association of "operative masons," the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages, who traveled through Europe employing the skills of their craft. The organization, as we know it today, began in 1717 in England when cathedral building was on the decline and the "operative masons," or "free masons" as they were known, started to accept members who were not members of the mason's craft, calling them "speculative masons" or "accepted masons."

Freemasonry was brought to the United States by our early settlers. Today, there are over 700 Masonic Lodges in New York with membership totaling nearly 90,000. Throughout the world, there are approximately five million Masons, with nearly three million of them in the United States.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FREEMASONRY?**

The basic purpose is to make "better men out of good men"; better fathers, better husbands, better brothers, and sons. We try to place emphasis on the individual man by strengthening his character, improving his moral and spiritual outlook and broadening his mental horizons. We try to build a better world . . . by building better men to work in their own communities.

Membership is limited to adult males who can meet recognized qualifications and standards of character and reputation.

## **IS FREEMASONRY A SECRET ORGANIZATION OR A RELIGION?**

The answer is NO. A secret organization is one which conceals its membership, has secret meeting places and which the public has little knowledge regarding its organization or its principles. This does not fit the Masonic Fraternity at all. Our secrets are a very few in number and deal with methods of personal recognition, some details of our degrees and privacy of each member's ballot.

Freemasonry is not a religion, although it is religious in character. Every applicant for Masonry must express a belief and a trust in God. Masonry does not take the place of religion, but stresses the personal commitment and involvement in the individual faith of each member.

## **WHAT ARE THE DEGREES?**

Lessons in Masonry are taught in three separate stages in our Masonic Lodges. The degrees, in order are Entered Apprentice (first degree), Fellowcraft (second degree), and Master Mason (third degree). Each blends Masonic moral philosophy in a unique lesson which is intended to have a serious impact and influence on the man who receives the degree.

### **WHAT ARE MASONIC APRONS?**

The symbolic apron was worn by operative masons to protect themselves from rough stones and tools. Presently, it is a badge of fraternal distinction. It represents the white lambskin, a symbol of innocence. Some decorations may appear on Masonic Aprons and often designate an officer or special recognition. All are, however, a proud display of membership in this world-wide Fraternity.

### **WHAT DO MASONIC SYMBOLS MEAN?**

The most widely recognized symbol of the Fraternity is the Square and Compasses with the letter "G" in the center.

Members wear it to remind themselves of their obligation to the lessons learned in their Lodges, and to identify their membership to other Masons and all people. Masonic symbols have wide meanings, some directly related to the tools used by actual operative masons and some, represent the need for order and direction in life. The letter "G" represents God, the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

### **WHEN ARE MEETINGS HELD?**

Lodges meet in regular monthly sessions and on such other days as are necessary to conduct its business and ritualistic work. While every Mason's attendance is earnestly solicited, yet it is not intended that a Lodge should interfere with one's regular vocation or duty to family, God, or country.

Your Mason has invested time and money in joining our Fraternity. He can best receive all that he should by frequently participating in its deliberations and events. We hope that you will approve and encourage him to attend regularly, and we hope also, that you, too, will join us whenever possible for the guest activities held by the Lodge.

### **SHOULD I CONTACT ANYONE WHEN MY MASON IS ILL OR HOSPITALIZED?**

In the event our member becomes ill, we would appreciate knowing. You may call the Master or Secretary of his Lodge. Your Mason has joined an organization which wants to assist him and you when in need, and we need your help to do it.

### **WHAT CAN YOUR INVOLVEMENT BE?**

Countless opportunities abound through active participation and membership in any of the numerous Masonic-related ladies' organizations. You are encouraged to share in many social activities, parties, dinners, dances, tours, civic events, and charitable efforts of the Lodge. Many full family activities are regularly scheduled. Non-Masonic friends and families may also take part in many Masonically supported programs.

We hope you will be proud that your husband has chosen to become a member of the world's oldest and best fraternity. We welcome you as a "Mason's Lady."