

MARTHA CEREMONY

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Masonic teaching explains many of the important particulars relating to the building of King Solomon's Temple. This magnificent structure was supported by fourteen hundred and fifty-three columns, and two thousand, nine hundred and six pilasters, all hewn from the finest Parian marble. It was symbolically supported by three great pillars denominated Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, because there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings.

Masonic tradition further explains that these pillars also represented the three ancient Grand Masters: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abif. The Pillar of Wisdom represents Solomon, King of Israel, because by his wisdom he erected that monument of magnificence which immortalized his name. We place the first column on our Altar to represent King Solomon whose wisdom is immortalized to this day. [First column bearer enters from the Northeast corner near the Chaplain and places the column on the Northeast corner of the Altar, then returns to her original place.]

The Pillar of Strength represents Hiram, King of Tyre, because he aided and assisted King Solomon in that great and glorious undertaking. The second column is placed on our Altar to remind us of the strength which is required to complete a task as momentous as the building of such a Temple. [Second column bearer enters from the Southwest corner near the Warder's station and places the column on the Southwest corner of the Altar, then returns to her original place.]

SONG: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

The Pillar of Beauty represents Hiram Abif, because by his cunning work the Temple was beautified and adorned. The third column is placed on our Altar to remind us that in our everyday life there is the beauty of all God's creation in every living thing. In only six days, God created the Heaven and the Earth and all things in them. Indeed, God and his handiwork are evident in everything. [Third column bearer enters from the Southeast corner near the Marshal's station and places the column on the Southeast corner of the Altar, then returns to her original place.]

It may seem strange to some that we would consider these three pillars, or columns, but the work of our Order rests upon the teachings of Freemasonry and these teachings and traditions bring to us many important lessons.

The story of Martha, the fourth point of our Central Star, is that of a young woman who is deeply sorrowed by the death of her only brother, Lazarus. In the absence of Jesus, Lazarus had died and when his sisters, Martha and Mary, heard that Jesus was returning to Bethany, Martha hurried to meet Him so that she could tell Him of her brother's death. It had already been four

days since Lazarus had died, but deep in her heart, Martha knew that Jesus could perform any act. She truly believed that He was the Son of God. When Martha met Jesus outside the city, she fell to her knees, raising her hands toward His face and cried, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Jesus replied, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha expressed her faith by saying, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus realized that Martha's faith was real and that she recognized Him as God's only son and Jesus said, "I am the resurrection the life: He that believes in me, even though he is dead, shall live. Whoever believes in me shall never die. Do you believe?"

Martha expressed her faith in God and His Son and when she and Jesus reached the grave, Jesus called for Lazarus to come forth. Lazarus came out of the grave at Jesus's call and another miracle was witnessed by those who believed and those who did not. Lazarus was reunited with his sisters and many of those whose faith was wavering realized that the power of God and His Son were beyond all earthly things. [Grand Martha goes behind her chair, picks up her emblem and carries to the Altar, placing it on the Northwest Corner of the Altar. She backs to her original position and stands at the side of her chair]

The fourth and final column to be placed on the Altar is the Broken Column which represents the unfinished portion of our tabernacle. This tabernacle may be considered as something tangible such as King Solomon's Temple or it may be considered as something which is not tangible and which, through the faith in our hearts, teaches that even though our earthly life ends, our real life is eternal and never ends.

The Broken Column reminds Masons of the untimely death of Hiram Abif, prior to the completion of King Solomon's Temple and it may remind us of the death of a person cut off in the vigor of life, but it must also remind us that a trustful faith is greater than knowledge. We walk by faith, not by sight.

SONG: "Faith Is the Victory"

These four columns rest upon our Altar as a reminder that through faith in God, we may all overcome the trials and tribulations that come to us.

[All four column bearers advance to the Altar, pick up their columns and exit to their original places/stations.]