

The Ceremony of

Returning our Secrets to the Safety of Darkness

This ceremony complements the Illuminating of the Pedestal that is conducted immediately after the Chapter is opened.

The Ceremony of Returning our Secrets to the Safety of Darkness should be conducted at the closing of the Chapter, immediately **before** the I.P.Z. (or other designated Companion) makes the Closing Address - "Companions, this Convocation being closed, nothing now remains but, according to ancient custom, to lock up our Secrets in a safe and sacred repository, uniting in the act of - Fidelity, Fidelity, Fidelity, Fidelity - and may God be with us all."

In complementing the Illuminating of the Pedestal, this Ceremony of Returning our Secrets to the Safety of Darkness should remind the departing Companions that what they have learned in the Chapter should guide their lives beyond.

The **movements** and **wording** of the Ceremony are as follows :

M.E.Z. - Companion Sojourners, you will return our Secrets to the safety of darkness.

The three Sojourners step forward. Then, having received the snuffers from the Prin. Soj. if needed, the 1st Asst. Soj. and the 2nd Asst. Soj. walk respectively along the South and North sides of the Ensigns, at an equal pace, halting when they are level with the Pedestal.

They then turn inwards, facing each other across the Pedestal, close enough to the candles to conduct the following ceremony, whilst obviously ensuring their surplices are not in danger from the candles!

P.Soj.- "And the lives of the People were enlightened by the Secrets they had learned." The 2 Large Candles in the West are then extinguished to represent the Light now shining within the People.

"And the People pledged to maintain these Secrets in their hearts by day and by night." The Large Candle in the East and the Small Candle in the West are extinguished to represent the Light of the Secrets seen throughout the lives of the People.

"Then the Priests commanded the People to disperse and return to their homes." The 2 Small Candles in the North and South are extinguished representing the Light now reposing in the Peoples' hearts beyond the veils of the Temple.

The Asst. Sojs. take one pace back, pause, turn together to the West, pause, then in unison return to the West of the Ensigns to line up with the Prin. Soj. All three Sojourners court bow to the Principals and then return to their places.

In our Chapters, most M.E.Z.s read the Illuminating of the Pedestal. This is perfectly acceptable, but of course they may recite it if they have the confidence to do so accurately. Similarly the Principal Sojourner may recite or read the above words.

The importance is in retaining the dignity of the ceremony.