

## An Introduction to the Ritual of the Grange

This program is designed to give new members a look at the lessons taught by the degrees when they have not had the opportunity to witness a full conferral. It is not intended to replace any conferral of the degrees.

**LECTURER:** As we begin our program to review the ritual of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, let us join in singing together all verses of number 32 in The Grange Songbook, "The Beautiful Lessons We Learn In The Grange".

**MASTER:** The Grange, like other fraternities, has levels or degrees of membership. This Community Grange is responsible for illustrating the lessons of the first four degrees of our Order. The degrees are based upon the seasons of the year, and contain references to farming, crops, seeds and soil in order to teach us lessons of brotherhood, duty to God, morality, and the importance of hard work. The teachings of our Order enable us to be political without being partisan, religious without being denominational, and though it binds its members with a strong tie of fraternalism, it assures individuality.

**CHAPLAIN:** The lesson of the first degree is Faith. The symbols used to teach the lesson are springtime, childhood, and the seed. Faith is the guiding light of our lives. We must have faith in the little things before we can do great things. In the spring the farmer prepares his fields and plants the seed having faith in God's promise of seedtime and harvest. Having faith in our fellowmen inspires them to do greater good.

**MASTER:** The sign and salutation of the first degree illustrates that a good Grange member places faith in God. (Illustrates the salutation of the first degree.) Let us sing together, "Faith of Our Fathers", number 110 in The Grange Songbook.

**SECRETARY:** In childhood, the spring season of our lives, we begin our acquisition of knowledge, and lay the foundation for our lifetime values. Education is a companion which cannot be removed by misfortune, a friend no enemy can alienate, an ornament in prosperity, and a refuge in adversity. As supporters and promoters of education, we express our faith in a brighter tomorrow.

**OVERSEER:** The lesson of the Second Degree is Hope, symbolized by the summer season, and life as a youth. Hope is the expectation with confidence of fulfillment. The sprouting seed teaches us to increase in goodness, and the growing trees to aspire after higher and broader knowledge. From the little grain of corn buried in the earth we have first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, so with the mind when duly nourished with Faith and Hope. Let us sing together, "Whispering Hope", number 108 in The Grange Songbook.

**MASTER:** It is the hope of better things that causes a person to work for his home, his community, and his country. Wherever you go, whatever you do, aim to do good. The sign and salutation of the second degree illustrates that a good Grange member places faith in God, and nurtures hope. (Illustrates the salutation of the second degree.)

**CHAPLAIN:** In the third degree the lesson is charity. The symbols are the autumn season, manhood and womanhood in the season of life, and the ripened grain ready for harvest. As we approach the fall season the rustling corn hastens toward ripeness, the fruits of the orchard color in succession and bid busy hands to gather them. In our lives we must reap for the mind as well as for the body, and from the abundance of our harvest, in good deeds and in kind words,

dispense charity. God loves the cheerful giver, and no less the cheerful worker, for work is prayer. We should labor with cheerfulness and cultivate the habit of looking for better and brighter days instead of mourning over the past. While we strive to make labor honorable we should exert ourselves to make it pleasant and cheerful for all around us. Let us sing together, "Bringing in the Sheaves", number 41 in The Grange Songbook.

**MASTER:** With the sickle we can gather the ripening crop, so in life we gather every bit of desirable knowledge in order to prepare ourselves to give unto others who might be in need, whether in body or spirit. May the salutation of the third degree remind us that a good Grange member places faith in God, nurtures hope, and dispenses charity. (Illustrates the salutation of the third degree.)

**LECTURER:** In the fourth degree, the winter season of the year, and old age in our lives, we learn the lesson of fidelity. It is in the home that we enjoy the fruits of our labors in the fields of the farm and the household, and in the fields of life. In winter we get to rest from active toil in the field, we can sit down with our families, our friends and neighbors, and enjoy together the good things that our labors have brought us. So in old age we enjoy the fruits of a well-spent life, in a happy home, noted for fidelity. In the Grange we pledge to each other a faithful friendship that can endure through all stages of life. May the words to the "Patrons' Chain", number 52 in The Grange Songbook, remind us of our pledge of fidelity and friendship. Let us stand and join hands as we sing it together.

**MASTER:** Let the agate be a symbol of fidelity. May our principles be as firmly impressed as the lasting colors of the stone, and may our friendship be as firm as the stone itself. Please join in the salutation of the fourth degree as it reminds us that a good Grange member places faith in God, nurtures hope, dispenses charity, and is noted for fidelity. (*Seats the members.*)

There are three additional degrees in the Grange, the fifth degree conferred by the Pomona Grange, the sixth degree conferred by the State Grange usually at the annual convention, and the seventh degree conferred by the Assembly of Demeter, the highest ritualistic body of the National Grange. I would encourage each of our members to learn as much as you can about the history and meaning of the degree work of our Order.