



MW Bro. Arthur Smith

GRAND MASTER'S INSTALLATION ADDRESS

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First of all I want to thank the brethren who put this communication together. What a fantastic job! We talk about brethren helping each other; this weekend is a prime example. Now, I never write speeches out—I just speak from the heart, so here goes. The newly invested district deputy grand masters sitting before you here are not *my* district deputy grand master, but *yours*. Together, we will work to ensure we continue to help each other.

I want to thank the past grand masters for their guidance, and the “grand line”—which I have served in for the last three years—for their advice. During the dark days of the pandemic, MW Bro. Don MacKenzie urged us to “improvise, adapt and overcome.” And we did. Last year, MW Bro. Ken Overy asked us to “reset, renew and refresh.” Looking at the brethren here today, I believe we listened, and we are well underway.

One of the most important goals though, was given us by MW Bro. Douglas Franklin, who said, “as a freemason, you will never walk alone.” He is absolutely right. You will never walk alone as a freemason. Brethren, during my year I want to build on all these goals. I want to renew a few things that we’ve let go. I am reappointing a youth committee, chaired by young Bro. Connor Massey,

to listen to our youth groups. If we can help the youth, they will grow up and become good members of the community, reflecting our values and beliefs.

Our strength lies within us, to move forward. My theme will be “let’s move forward to the basics.” Everything we’ve wanted to know about Freemasonry, everything we’ve learnt about how to act, to talk, to think, and feel has been written down for us for hundreds of years. We don’t have to go elsewhere. I was talking to this man—and we don’t always listen when we talk to people, but I listened—and he said the Freemasonry is a way of life. And he’s absolutely right.

So, don’t think that because you see me travelling around, laughing, joking, that I’m not listening. I am. God gave me two ears and one mouth. I love to listen. I mean, I can talk as well. But, if we move forward together we can’t help but grow the Craft. Now, the Craft looks after itself, but freemasons helping and caring for freemasons, that is my goal. We look after anybody, all the time: we contribute our time and money to many charities and community groups. Sometimes we forget to look after ourselves. I’m not asking you to be selfish, and I’m not asking you to give money. I’m just asking you to give a little bit of your time and thoughts to help and care for other freemasons.

I don’t like to hear about a lodge closing because of diminished membership, or other reasons. We have to come together to help each other and perhaps put these lodges that are suffering back together again. I’m not talking about affiliating but not going to meetings. Affiliate and take part in the lodge—let’s help until they can be rebuilt. We teach brethren how to be better men. That is our way. I know what Freemasonry has done for me. Freemasonry is not a competition. We are all the same, whether we are wearing the purple of authority or the white lambskin of an entered apprentice. We are on the level as equals. I believe this.

I believe we can move our Craft forward by doing simple things. Talk to our younger members about how to act, talk, think and feel. What we should be doing is teaching them by our own actions and words. Along with my theme for this year, my motto will be “let’s talk, act, think, and feel like freemasons.”

We ourselves are the best advertisement for Freemasonry that we can get. If you are a proud freemason living our values, you are the best possible advertisement for Freemasonry. This year I promise my heart and soul to helping you, but you have to help me. Help me find what you need to grow the Craft. And if we, your grand lodge officers, can help you, I promise that I will try and do something about it.

Brethren, I thank you for the honour of electing me junior grand warden and allowing me to progress to serve you now as grand master. Thank you, very much.