



My Family

My speech to the Lodge
on the occasion of vacating
the Office of Master

We are Family!

Brethren I want to say thank you to a number of people, but as has been my want over the last 2 years I'd like to include little presentation as well!

I have taken as my text for this short presentation, a slightly amended version of the words of an ancient and prophetic verse, translated, I believe, by the well-known medieval philosopher and nun, Sister Sledge:

"We are Family: I've got all my Brothers and me
We are Family: come on, everybody, and see"

This verse, Brethren, offers us two great messages. The first is that we are, indeed, a family; we refer to ourselves as a Fraternity and to each other as "Brother", indicative indeed of the fact that we are all the same family.

It is said that we choose our friends but must live with our family and this, too, is fundamentally true of our institution. In 1995 I was initiated into Lodge no.448 knowing only my proposer and seconder and here I am today, the Master of, in my humble opinion, the finest representative of our truly international family, and that is Lodge Albert.

And what a fine example Freemasonry is! We are a society, working with that love and harmony which should always characterise Freemasons yet representing so many different races, cultures, faiths, political persuasions: really, just a microcosm of the finest principles of the Craft.

Like all families we have little squabbles, minor arguments that are usually founded on a misunderstanding, all too easy with our chosen communication method of e-mail. How many times have we all thought "I wish I hadn't said that?" Yet, like all families, these are soon forgotten and forgiven.

All families have the occasional free spirit, one who just can't fit in and we are no exception. As a family, we must try and understand such individuality, perhaps even compromise but, to use the words of another great philosopher, the Vulcan Mr. Spock, "the needs of the whole are greater than the needs of the individual". As an aside, surely the Starship Enterprise is the greatest example of Freemasonry; so many races - Vulcans, Cardassians and even Romulans living and working together in peace and harmony.

I wonder if there are Lodges on the SS Enterprise? Is RW Brother James T. Kirk the Provincial Grand Master of the Romulan Sector? My apologies, I digress.

Moving on to the second message in my little text: "We are Family, come on everybody and see". The subject of Masonic Openness is too big and too difficult to discuss here today.

Difficult because it must be acknowledged that in some countries, Masonic membership could cause a Brother to fall foul of State legislation; in others membership is not socially acceptable and even in lands where individual freedom is enjoyed, misunderstanding of our Fraternity causes individuals difficulty with their employers.

I dream of the day when the World will understand the fundamental principles upon which we are founded, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, allied to our special and deeply held belief in freedom, justice and equality; in the peace and harmony that must come from tolerance and understanding, from respect for the culture and beliefs of our fellow creatures; all of the things that this Universal family of Freemasonry so well represents. And to which you Brethren had first Installed me as Master on the

When that day comes, Brethren, we will all be proud to stand up and say:

"We are Family: come on everybody and see".

Brethren I'd like to say a few "thank yous!"

First of all to the Past Masters of the Lodge for all the support and help given to me over the last 2 years. It has been, indeed, invaluable. Not only the support given to me but to the Lodge in general by filling Offices, for example. Particularly, thanks goes to PM Peter Moir who has been my mentor since joining Freemasonry, and will, I hope, continue to be so.

To the Brother Secretary and Brother Treasurer, I know from 1st hand experience that these jobs take up a lot of time and their support and efforts are not only appreciated by me but by the Lodge in general.

To the members of the various committees on helping organise various social activities and maintain the fabric of the Lodge, again these jobs take up a lot of personal time, so again many thanks Brethren.

To the Bar Staff who give up countless hours of their own time to ensure that, not only us on a Thursday, but at the many, many outside functions as well!

To the many Brethren who have "helped out" on an "ad hoc" basis, filling Offices, selling raffles etc. etc.

And finally to all of the Brethren of Lodge Albert, I thank you for the honour you have bestowed on me over the last two years: I can only give you my pledge that I shall continue to work diligently for my Family and, I trust, I will be handing it on, pure and unsullied, to my successor.

Thank you, Brethren!