



THE CHEVALIER CHARGE (MASSACHUSETTS VERSION)

We all know the old cliché that “familiarity breeds contempt.” We hear the words of our ritual so often that we sometimes tend to forget their meaning. This problem is indicative of one of the most serious concerns of our contemporary society - the "communication gap" -or as Shakespeare called it, the “disease of not listening.”

Man walks apart, though not alone.
He walks among his peers unread.
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said."

-Jean Ingelow

Because of the nature of the Degree of Chevalier, I believe this is an appropriate time for all DeMolays, young and old alike, to rededicate themselves to the purpose and meaning of DeMolay. With this purpose in mind, I would like to repeat some words first written by Dad Wesley Estabrook of Worcester Chapter.

When you made application to your Chapter, you placed with confidence for their investigation the qualities of the life you had lived, the training your parents had given you and which you had exercised daily, and the companions with whom you associated. You must realize the investigating committee found you worthy of

membership. It is not easy to become a member of this great Order, for we are selective of the young men we admit. Our Order is composed of those who have passed this rigid investigation and were deemed worthy of membership. Our trust and confidence was such that you became a member of the Order of DeMolay,

I would remind you at this time that you have taken a serious and solemn obligation at that altar, before God and your brethren. You must always walk and act in accordance with that obligation.

I call your attention to a particular tie in your obligation, wherein you swore that "hereafter, on November 8 of each year, as a memorial to our Founder, Frank Sherman Land, I will hold communion with a fellow Chevalier, or Court of Chevaliers, wherever I may be; and should this be impossible, I will break bread with an Active DeMolay, or a young man in his teens."

This annual form of communion is a reunion of sorts, in observance of this tie in your obligation. It is called an Annual Observance for that reason. It gives all Chevaliers an opportunity to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and rededicate themselves to this great Order.

For a moment, let us pause and review the seven cardinal virtues, as they were first presented to you by the Preceptors:

LOVE OF PARENTS: Never be ashamed, or hesitate to admit your love for your parents, for what they have done for you. Let your actions in every way show your appreciation to your parents, for the love and care they have given you. You were born weak and in need of help. You were born destitute and in need of

assistance and understanding. All that you did not possess at birth, and which you have acquired while growing up, was largely bestowed upon you by the care education and understanding of your parents. Never let it be said of you that because of your parents' station in life, you were ashamed of them, or ashamed to admit your love for them.

LOVE OF GOD: A genuine belief in God and a deep desire for fellowship and service with him are requisites for all men. We teach no special creed in DeMolay. All we ask is that you have a belief in God and demonstrate a reverence and awe for Him. As a poet once said:

You go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together.
Our Heavenly Father loves us all,
So let's walk along together.
The Lord will be at your church today,
But He will be at my church as well.
So, you go to your church and I'll go to mine,
But let's walk along together!

COURTESY: There is no reason for inconsiderate treatment of others. Your dealings with your fellow man should come from the heart and be prompted by a genuine thoughtfulness. How painless it is to say, "thank you", "excuse me" or "I beg your pardon". Respect your fellow man and be courteous to him, for we are all dependent on one another, and we need the love, security and fellowship of others.

COMRADESHIP: Comradeship could be defined as a "loyalty of friends,

linking them together in mutual helpfulness, with an unfaltering fidelity to high ideals." Whether you have been surrounded by many of by just a few friends, you have before you now a group of new friends and brothers.

Remember:

There is a destiny that makes us brothers,
No one goes his way alone.
All that descends into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.
I care not what his temple of creed,
For it holds firm and fast,
That into his fateful heap of days and deeds
The soul of man is cast.

FIDELITY: Webster defines fidelity thus: The careful observance of duty, or discharge of obligation; especially loyalty. When you have learned the obligation which you have just taken, and practiced it in your daily life, you will have fulfilled this precept of fidelity.

CLEANNESS: A clean mind and a clean body are the best preparations for manhood and are qualities upon which a good healthy citizenship depends. Cleanness is an attribute worthy of all men. Be selective in choosing your companions, guard yourself against the lesser temptations of this life, and ever present yourself for the commendation of all good man.

PATRIOTISM: Listen to this verse, written many years ago:

O thus be it ever, when free man shall stand

between their loved homes and the war's desolation.
Blessed with victory and peace, may the Heaven rescued land
praise the power that has made, and preserved us a nation.
'Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
and this be our motto, In God is Our Trust.
And the Star-Spangled Banner, in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

This fourth stanza of our Star-Spangled Banner is not very well known, yet it is filled with patriotism; a belief in our form of government, and the courage to defend itself against all external foes and internal tendencies which might lead us to destruction. Be thankful, my brother(s), that you were born in a country where an organization such as ours may meet freely and openly, without fear of the consequences; and that ours is a country filled, from its beginnings, with a spirit of burning patriotism, and a devotion to the cause of liberty.

These seven cardinal virtues are not the only system of values, but they are fundamentals upon which any young man may proudly build his way of life and take his place in civilized society. They are the weapons in the struggle of man toward perfection; in himself and in that society. As a Chevalier, I urge you, and each of you who have been so honored, to dedicate yourself anew to these high ideals.

I greet you, my Brother(s), and congratulate you on being created a Chevalier of the Order of DeMolay; and I encourage you – in fact, I admonish you, to live up to the faith which we have placed in you, and to be ever worthy of being called "Brother".

Originally written by Dad Wesley A. Estabrook, of Worcester Chapter. Additional material was added by Dad Carl M. Hogan of Battle Green Chapter, Lexington, for use in the Chevalier Degree.

This charge was delivered by Dad Hogan at the Chevalier conferral on Dad Charles R. Austin of Lynnfield Chapter in the late 1960's. Dads Hogan and Austin delivered this charge throughout the Commonwealth until the early- to mid-1980's.

Dad Austin delivered this charge at the conferral of the Chevalier Degree for the then-State Master Councilor, Brother William R. Currier, in 1978. Additionally, edited by Dad Currier in the mid-1980's. Dad Currier delivered this charge at various Chevalier Investitures for almost thirty years throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and delivered it for the last time on November 2, 2014, to assist in the investiture of the then-State Master Councilor, Brother MacLean Bruce Rankin. Brother Rankin, Bro. William H.M. Blake, and Brother Jacob O'Connell have all delivered this charge since as part of their duties as officers of Bay State Court.