



# **ORDER OF AHEPA**

**RITUAL OF INITIATION**

**NEW AND REVISED VERSION**

## **RITUAL OF INITIATION**

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO THOSE ADMINISTERING THE RITUAL**

This Ceremony of Initiation is **NOT** intended to be given without preparation. It contains an important message, meant to REMIND MEMBERS, as well as to INSTRUCT CANDIDATES, about the essential purpose of AHEPA. It is based on accurate historical information.

Unless it is presented clearly – with perfect English – and with appropriate care and dignity, it loses all value and the candidates, instead of being impressed, are unaffected.

The only way to practice reading the Officer's Charge is by reciting it out loud. The speaker must know what he is saying; otherwise, he sounds as if he is saying nothing. On the days immediately preceding the initiation, those involved in the ceremony should read their part out loud at least ten times. There is no other way to prepare to give the charge in the initiation without embarrassment to you and your chapter.

The candidates are to be instructed to remain serious with erect posture and shoulders square to the President's Station throughout the ritual. They are to remain silent unless requested to speak.

#### **I. THE CHAPTER ROOM SET-UP**

- The Chapter Room is set up for a regular meeting, with the Altar and Officers' Stations as shown in the AHEPA book.
- The Altar and Stations are appropriately covered with official cloths.
- The Altar contains two tall, white candles and the Bible.
- In front of the President's Station are the Three Respective Emblems and the Warden's Emblem, which is the Chapter's Banner or Charter showing the AHEPA Emblem with the encircling chain.
- Each station – including the President's Station – also has a single, tall, white, lit candle.

The room is now prepared for the initiation to begin.

#### **II. COMMENCEMENT OF THE INITIATION**

- The candidates are introduced appropriately into the ritual room.
- The candidates enter single file with their left arm touching the shoulder of the person in front of him. The lead man is the Captain of the Guard. [If the class is large, he may appoint one or two additional members to assist him.]

- The Captain of the Guard marches very slowly, not rotating anymore, but going directly to the station of the Bible. There, he lines up the candidates all facing the President's Station.
- The Captain of the Guard REMAINS SILENT throughout this procedure.
- No blindfolds are used.

### III. NEW PROCEDURE FOR THE SHORT VERSION OF THE INITIATION

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Vice President:** "Candidates, you are now entering the gates of brotherhood, to be united with us in common cause and dedicated to noble service."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Chaplain:** "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**President:** "Speak evil of no one."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Warden:** "Ever practice brotherly love."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Vice President:** "Be inspired by justice, tolerance, charity, and good friendship."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Chaplain:** "Love one another."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**President:** "Speak evil of no one."

The **President** raps his gavel.

**Warden:** "Know thyself."

The candidates continue facing the President's Station. The **President** raps his gavel.

**President:** "Candidates, we welcome you! We urge you to listen carefully as you receive instruction into the basic principles of the AHEPA. It is our hope that during this ceremony you will gain an insight into our order, understand it's grand purposes,

discover the roots of it's fondest aspirations, and begin to realize how it can enrich your lives."

"In the small country of Greece many hundreds of years before Christ, a new power for mankind was taking form. It was a power unknown in previous history. It was so magnificent that it's creations greatly influenced the whole future of civilized man."

"The power we call Hellenism."

"What is there about Hellenism that promotes democracy? What does Hellenism teach us that is so important? Why should we try to understand it and teach it to others? Why is the Order of AHEPA devoted to Hellenism?"

"These questions will be answered as we continue our proceedings."

The **President** raps his gavel. The candidates continue facing the President's station.

**Vice President:** "Candidates, I welcome you! Hellenism can be compared to a tree whose branches spread out in a majesty of shape and color. The strong and stately trunk, the beautiful branches, and the colorful leaves are the part that we can see and admire. This part corresponds to the Hellenism that we see in sculpture and architecture, in writings of philosophy, drama, and poetry; the Hellenism that we see in it's accomplishments in medicine and mathematics, in government and law, in athletics and games, the Hellenism of glory!"

"But what nourishes this tree? From where does it get its strength and life? It gets them from it's roots that support the tree and give it food so that its creation can proceed. Without these roots, the tree dies."

"What nourished and supported the magnificent culture of ancient Greece? What were the roots of that civilization? The ROOTS were a basic system of VALUES that have been handed down to us and are the foundations of Western democratic civilizations."

At this point, the **Captain of the Guard**, quietly approaches the President's Station and prepares the Emblem that the **Vice-President** is about to describe. The candidates continue to face the President's Station where the Emblems are.

**Vice President:** "There are eight basic ideals that make up this system of values, and we may call them from the octet of Hellenism. These eight basic values are uniquely Greek. They found their birth in Greek soil, and no civilization prior to the Greeks possessed the,."

"You see before you the symbol of the octagon, similar to the one next to it. The symbol contains the eight Hellenic values."

The **Captain of the Guard** points to each section of the Octagon as it is SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY described by the **Vice-President**.

**Vice President:** “ONE: The search for truth. For the Greeks, truth was the concern of everyone.”

“TWO: The supremacy of reason. Truth is reached through the use of reason.”

“THREE: The encouragement of the free mind. Only an open mind can use reason to attain truth.”

“FOUR: The pursuit of excellence. Everyone is encouraged to reach the sublime heights of his ambition.”

“FIVE: The appreciation of beauty. Beauty exists all around us, and we can create it.”

“SIX: The love of life. The Greeks expressed a joy in living and had an optimistic outlook.”

“SEVEN: The passion for freedom. A free person and a free people can release energies for progress.”

“EIGHT: The respect for the individual. This was a revolutionary idea, and it created democracy.”

“These are the eight basic Hellenic values that nourished the glory of Greece and have given brilliance to democratic societies.”

“In the history of Western civilization – and even today – whenever man has found himself confused and floundering, he has found sanity and direction in Hellenic ideals.”

The **President** raps his gavel.

The **Captain of the Guard** now points to the Chaplain’s Emblem. The candidates continue to face the President’s Station.”

**Chaplain:** Candidates, Western Civilization has inherited three great idealistic systems, The Hellenic, The Judaic, and the Christian. We are mindful of the contributions of Judaism, the Ten Commandments from the hands of God, the moral structure which the great religion bequeathed to us and the one almighty God, whom it proclaimed to its everlasting Glory.

The **president** raps his gavel three times, so everyone can rise.

**Oath Giver** or at this time the **President** asks the **Dignitary** present to come forward to administer the Oath. The Oath Giver will ask the candidates to place

their left hand on the Bible, raise their right hand, and repeat the oath. (If there is a large number of candidates, he may ask the front four or five candidates to kneel, place their left hand on the Bible and raise their right hand. Those standing behind them will raise their right hand and place their left hand on the shoulder of the candidates kneeling before them.)

**Oath Giver:**

**Dignitary:** “Candidates, I am about to ask you for a simple pledge of allegiance to the AHEPA and its members. We have all taken this pledge of honor, and it does not clash with your personal beliefs.”

**Oath Giver Continues:** “I, \_\_\_\_\_ [please give your full name and repeat after me], in the presence of all these witnesses, do solemnly pledge that:

“I shall always strive to be loyal to the Order of AHEPA, founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States of America, on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of July 1922.”

“I shall cooperate with other members of this fraternity, to our mutual advantage and for the progress of the AHEPA and its objectives.”

“I shall respect and protect the good name and reputation of my brother AHEPAN and that of his family.”

“Through the practice of the Hellenic ideals, I shall try to be a good citizen and valuable member of my community.”

“I shall always strive to promote and encourage loyalty to the United States of America and to its flag, to its Constitution, and to its laws, and to promote and encourage reverence for its history and traditions.”

“I shall always remember the admonition to love one another. To these vows, I pledge my honor and my conscience.”

At this time the **Oath Giver** asks all the candidates to rise. He also requests that all the lights in the Chapter Room be turned on.

With everyone at the Altar standing, the **Oath Giver** says: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

While the candidates remain standing at the Altar with the Captain of the Guard, the **President** requests that all officers return to their stations.

The **Captain of the Guard** quietly approaches the Chapter’s Charter Emblem of AHEPA. With his sword he points to each item as the **Warden** presents the final charge. The Warden’s light is now illuminated.

**Warden:** “Candidates, the Emblem of the Order of AHEPA represents five virtues. These virtues are faith, justice, hope, power and peace.”

“The cross is meant to remind us of the burdens we have to bear, and that we should share the burden of our brothers whose cross is heavier than ours. The Emperor Constantine was the first to adopt the cross officially as the standard of the empire after he had seen the sign of the cross inscribed with the Greek words meaning: ‘With this, to victory!’

Behind the cross are the ancient Hellenic swords. They should at once remind us of the need for swift and impartial execution of justice, obedience to lawfully constituted authority, and the readiness to uphold and defend Greek democratic institutions.”

“The rays of the sun represent hope, that eternal longing that continues to urge man on to greater accomplishments.

The spread eagle over the cross of faith and the swords of justice represent the soaring heights to which AHEPA aspires and the far horizons toward which it looks.”

“The olive branches represent the peaceful harvest of useful benefits that the members derive from the Order of AHEPA:”

“Benefits that grow from deeply rooted fraternal relations; benefits that come from cooperation; benefits that can be attained only through the teachings of this Order.”

“The crown that you see at the top center of the banner does not represent the crown of a king or an emperor. It represents the Supreme Lodge, the highest executive authority of the Order of AHEPA, with headquarters in Washington, D.C.”

“The octagonal star at the center of the foundation represents the venerable members of the Mother Lodge, eight men who in 1922 conceived the idea, organized, and gave us the Order of AHEPA in Atlanta, Georgia.”

“The large stars at the four corners represent the District Lodges: 27 throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, Greece and Cyprus.”

“The stars enclosed in squares and linked together with a chain represent the more than 400 chapters in the AHEPA domain. As long as these chapters are solidly bound together, there is no power strong enough to break that chain.”

With the candidates still standing at the Altar, the **President** says: “It is now my privilege to give you the permanent secret password and handshake of the AHEPA. These are your proof to other AHEPANS that you belong with them. I again emphasize the word “secret.” The password is given in a whisper in your ear. It is NEVER spoken aloud or written.”

At this time, the **President** steps down from his station, proceeds again to the Altar, and faces the new members.

With the assistance of the **Captain of the Guard**, the **President** demonstrates the manner in which the password is transmitted from one AHEPAN to another. He also demonstrates the AHEPAN handshake.

He then instructs the **Captain of the Guard** to shake hands with and transmit the password to each new member.

After the password and the handshakes, the **President** announces: “This is the conclusion of the formal initiation. Please be seated.”

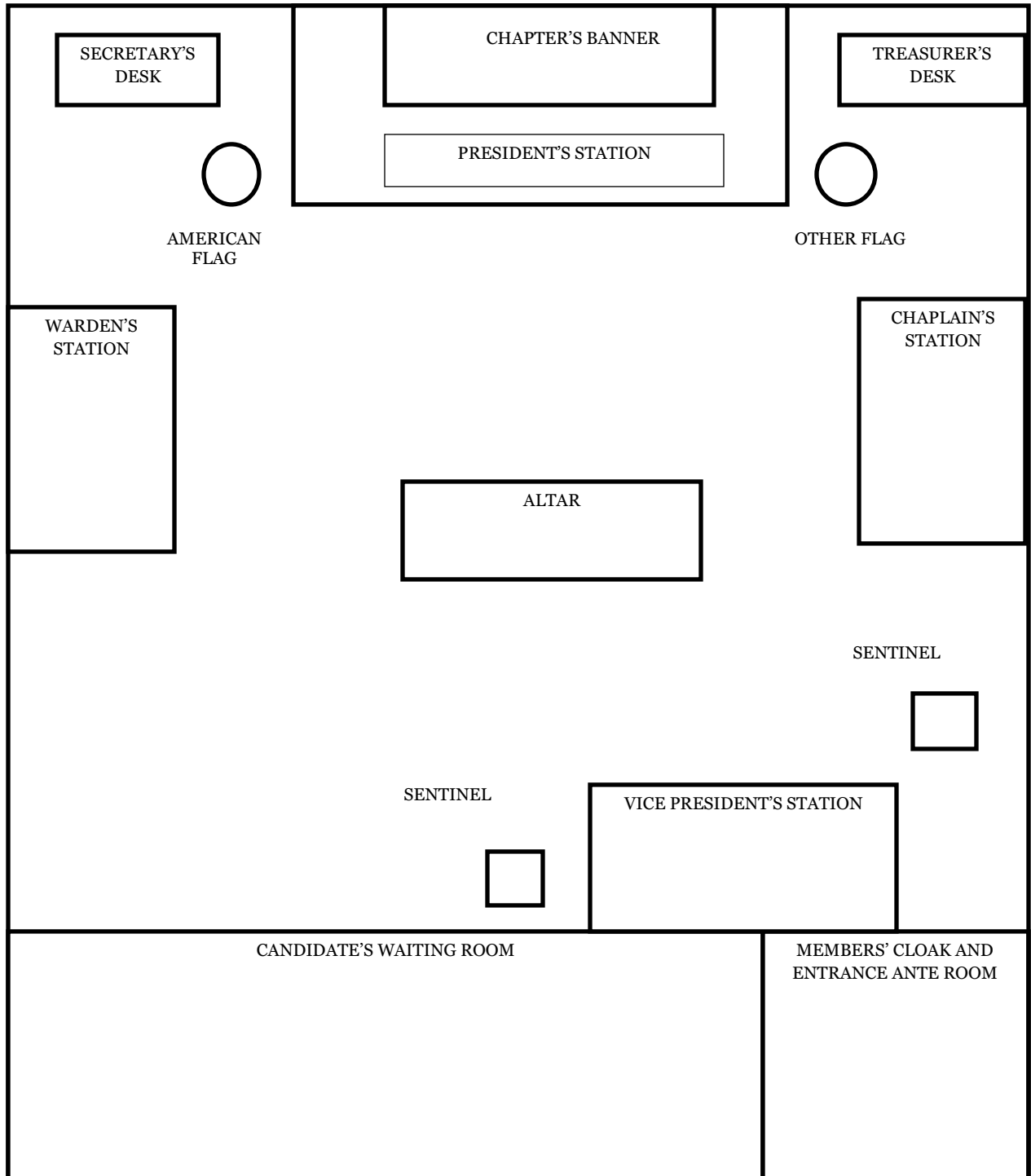
The **President** returns to his station and welcomes the new members into the Order of AHEPA.

#### IV. FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

It is necessary for the **President** to give instructions about the secret sign and the proper procedure to be used at formal meetings within the Lodge Room. With the assistance of the **Captain of the Guard**, the **President** demonstrates the following:

- The secret sign and its use.
- The procedure for entering the Lodge Room after a meeting has begun.
- The procedure for crossing from one side of the Lodge Room to the other during the course of the business meeting.
- The procedure for being recognized and obtaining the floor during a business meeting.
- An explanation of the individual Lodge Room Stations and Altar and how, taken together, they form a cross.
- An explanation of the challenge used to determine if someone is an AHEPA member [using the word beginning with the letter “L”].





**SAMPLE OF A TYPICAL AHEPA CHAPTER ROOM**