

The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 107 December 2020



Most Worshipful Brother John Smith OSM MSA.

Grand Master's Christmas Message

John Newton was born in 1725 and his father, a sea-captain, took him to sea at the age of 11. He soon became a slave trader and after 30 years of profiteering from others misery, he eventually became an abolitionist and wrote the words of the song *Amazing Grace*. He had finally come to understand God's grace and unmerited favour for a lost soul like him and the first words: "*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see*"; reflect the experience of his redemption and personal conversion.

At Christmas approximately 2,4 billion Christians throughout the World will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Although several billion non-Christians will not celebrate Christmas, they accept the Christmas period as one during which tolerance, good will, peace and harmony should abound. I know that our members will tolerate and respect each other's faith and beliefs and so I wish you all a blessed festive season. As we may not communicate with you again before early January 2021, I also wish you and your families a very happy, healthy and prosperous new year. Above all, stay safe!

MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA
Grand Master – Grand Lodge of South Africa

The new Grand Master's Inaugural Address

Brethren, I am relieved that this day has finally arrived and yet I am humbled by the knowledge that I have been installed into an office which most

Freemasons may never have the honour of occupying. We started this year optimistically with our annual Chains conference. Shortly thereafter we were locked down and yet we still optimistically proceeded with the election of the new Grand Master during May. As such elections are based on merit, I was pleased that I must have gained the respect of the members of this Grand Lodge to have been elected, unopposed, to this office.

Notwithstanding our optimism, it became apparent that the Covid Pandemic would not abate soon and so, in an act of unselfish statesmanship, the Immediate Past Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother David Duncan OSM, retired on 27 June 2020 and I took over the control of the Grand Lodge in the role of Acting Grand Master. In terms of our Constitution, all other Grand Lodge offices then became vacant and so I duly appointed the active Senior Grand Lodge Officers, who immediately assumed their duties and responsibilities. As today is the first opportunity for us to meet physically since such appointments, it will be my honour and privilege to obligate and symbolically invest these Grand Officers in their respective offices.

The Aim of this Grand Lodge is to build a multi-cultural Brotherhood of good men who practice Brotherly Love, Charity and Truth and who are united in the enhancement of Wisdom, High Moral Standards, Equality and Justice for all persons. I therefore believe that Freemasonry is more relevant today than it ever was and if we are united in a common goal, there is little we cannot achieve.

Hierdie Grootlosie is amper 60 jaar oud. In die lewe van enige normale persoon, sou hy of sy teen hierdie ouderdom 'n mate van wysheid en ondervinding opgedoen het. Die Grootlosie het wel hierdie wysheid verwerf en ondervinding opgedoen en daar is meer as 120 Grootlosies in die Wereld wat ons erken as gevolg van ons vasberandenheid om die beginsels van Vrymesselary streng na te volg en te handhaaf. Ons lede word herinner om die Goue Reël toe te pas, naamlik: doen aan ander soos jy wil hê hulle aan jou moet doen. Ons sal dus aanhou streef na wysheid, waardigheid en geregtigheid vir alle persone. Ons glo ook dat daar geen



Sincere Best Wishes
for a blessed
Festive Season
and for
Peace, Health and Happiness
throughout 2021
from

the Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA,
and all the Grand Lodge Officers.

person leef wat so verstoek van mag of geleentheid is, dat hy nie veel tot die welsyn van sy medemens kan bydra nie. Ek is dus oortuig dat as ons hierdie basiese beginsels 'n lewenswyse maak, ons die ware vrugte van ons al oue Orde, nie net sal pluk nie, maar ook terdeë sal geniet.

In the long history of the World, only a few generations have been afforded the privilege of being Freemasons. Let us therefore not shrink from the responsibilities which we so voluntarily accepted when we took our obligation as Apprentice Freemasons, but let us rather welcome and embrace them and use the energy, the faith and the devotion which we bring to this endeavour, to improve the lives of all the persons in our Country and, indeed, in the whole World.

I thank the Great Architect of the Universe for sparing me and thereby enabling me to become installed in this office today and I will continue to pray for the wisdom and the strength to discharge my duties and responsibilities. I thank the Past Grand Masters for your assistance and guidance. I particularly thank Most Worshipful Brother Geoffrey Edwards OSM, who has also been appointed to the very important office of Grand Secretary, and all the other Brethren who have worked tirelessly to ensure that my Installation today is a success and one of which we can be justly proud, particularly under the present circumstances. All your efforts are greatly appreciated.

I thank the Deputy Grand Master, the Assistant Grand Masters, the Provincial Grand Masters and all the Grand Lodge Officers for so enthusiastically accepting your appointments and for immediately seizing the opportunity to discharge your respective duties, long before you were obligated and invested. I am proud and excited at the depth of leadership and character which exists amongst you and which bodes well for the future of this Grand Lodge. I also thank all the other members of the Grand Lodge and particularly the members of my own lodge, Lodge De Goede Hoop, for your continued support and encouragement throughout my Masonic journey and especially during the past few months.

To all the members of the United Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the Grand Lodge of Scotland who practice their Freemasonry in South Africa, I thank you most sincerely for your Brotherly love, for your personal friendship and for your continued support of the Grand Lodge of South Africa. To all the members of the foreign Grand Lodges who we have met through the internet and with whom we have interacted on a virtual basis during the past months, thank you for your fraternal acceptance of us and the inclusion in your activities. This regular online interaction, which we continue to enjoy, has unequivocally shown that we are not only a group of men who may have certain international connections, but that we are truly a world-wide fraternity of which I am proud to be a member.

I thank my late father for not only introducing me into Freemasonry but also for proposing me in my mother Lodge, being Lodge De Vereeniging. I also

thank my own Brother, Stephen, for not only assisting me today as my Regalia Bearer but also for your continued support and encouragement. Lastly and most importantly, I thank my wife Edelweiss and my daughter Andrae for your unconditional love, affection and patience. Thank you for the many sacrifices you make, thus enabling me to pursue my Masonic interests.

We are on the cusp of yet another new and unknown year. Few of us could have foreseen the challenges which we have had to deal with when we started this year. As we consider an uncertain future, let us take comfort in the words expressed in the Volume of the Sacred Law when David instructed Solomon on building the temple at Jerusalem. He said: *“Be strong and courageous and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you”*.

As far as our own future is concerned, the Grand Committee has resolved that we will endeavour to resume our Masonic labours on the 1st February 2021, subject to and in terms of strict conditions and protocols, which will not only ensure the safety of our members but also that we do not contravene any of the prescribed Covid Regulations. We are further preparing interim Rituals to meet these requirements and we will be careful that they do not detract from nor compromise our principles or the meaning and solemnity of our ceremonial degree workings. We will also continue with and promote the close and fraternal relationship which we enjoy with all the attendant Masonic Orders which operate in our Country.

The feeding scheme which we implemented shortly after the lockdown has been a success and by the end of this year we would have provided more than one hundred thousand meals to orphaned children in the poorest communities. We will continue with similar projects in the new year. As we now approach the festive season, let us be mindful of the needs of others and let us be a blessing to all persons during this season of joy and thanksgiving.

To all the Brethren who have travelled from all parts of the country to physically attend this installation ceremony today and the banquet this evening, I thank you most sincerely for your sacrifice and your commitment, which is greatly appreciated. I wish you all an enjoyable sojourn in Cape Town and a safe return to your loved ones. To our Christian members and their families, I wish you all a very blessed Christmas. To our Jewish members and their families, I wish you all a very happy Hanukah. To all Brethren throughout the World, I wish you and your families a very happy, prosperous, safe and healthy New Year.

Finally Brethren, with a good conscience as our only reward and with history as the final judge of our deeds, let us continually seek the blessing of the Great Architect of the Universe in all our thoughts, words and actions and let us go forth and practice Freemasonry without fear and in the certain knowledge that here on Earth, God's work, must truly be our own.

**MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA
Grand Master**

Installation of MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA at de Goede Hoop Temple on 5th December 2020



In this picture from our new Grand Master's Installation, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA (centre front) is surrounded by his Grand Lodge Officers, PGL Chain-bearers and senior members of the local Sister Constitutions, all appropriately wearing masks.

Installing the Grand Lodge of South Africa's new Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA was always going to be a challenge. After all, we are still fighting the impact of the Covid pandemic, travel is very limited and applying such disciplines as social distancing, temperature control, sanitisation and limited participation based on available space were all essential components in our planning. The reality was, however, that these could be there for some time to come - and we really needed to install our new Grand Master.



Anyway, we finally decided to perform the Installation on Saturday 5th December 2020 in the de Goede Hoop Temple in

Cape Town. As the physical attendees would be limited to a maximum of 50 and foreign Grand Lodges would not be able to join us, we further decided to have the event professionally filmed and, on 12th December, stream it to our members, the Sister Constitutions and foreign Grand Lodges. Using Zoom, we could then formally receive the heads of visiting delegations.

Traditionally the retiring Grand Master installs his successor, but even here Covid interfered with our plans. MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM had recently spent several days in hospital fighting Covid and, sadly, was not available. The honour of performing the Installation thus fell to MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM - the only other surviving Past Grand Master. While several of the Grand Lodge Officers were, understandably, unwilling to travel, Grand Lodge was able to assemble a full team and all of the Officers taking part excelled themselves.

The ceremony itself had been modified to cater for the Covid imposed restrictions and also to allow us to have it professionally filmed for public distribution. The Lodge was formally Masonically opened and put at ease before the Installation and filming commenced and, at the ceremony's end was formally closed again.

The new Grand Master recited his obligation on his father's family bible and had his biological brother, Stephen, as Regalia Bearer. Family values matter in Freemasonry and this was a fine example of keeping the really big moments "in the family". To cater for Covid demands, all other Officers taking obligations were each given their own bible.



Having been installed, the new Grand Master gave an inspiring address and then installed his Deputy, RW Bro Brandon Topham (left) and all of those Grand Lodge Officers who were present.

The ceremony, which had been filmed by Bro Ebert Steyl, was then streamed to our Brethren and the Masonic world on Saturday 12th December and, at this occasion, the Grand Master welcomed the representatives from 15 Grand Lodges. Amongst them were 12 Grand Masters, including Ireland, Scotland and New York. Delegates were, in fact, from all over the Masonic world.

The link to the Installation YouTube video is below:

[GLSA Grand Master's Installation](#)

Grand Master's Installation Banquet

On Saturday 5th December, after the Installation of our new Grand Master, some 100 Brethren and their wives and partners attended a memorable Banquet at the Kelvin Grove club in Newlands. We have, of course, been going to Kelvin for a number of years now to celebrate Masonic Spring Balls and other such events and are used to having well over 200 people and a packed dance floor. This was, inevitably, very different.



Seated at the main table were MW Bro Geoff & Val Edwards, MW Bro John & Edelweiss Smith, RW Bro Brandon & Mari Topham

Despite the differences, however, this very unique evening was unforgettably special. The ambience was exceptional (assisted by an extremely accomplished pianist playing all the tunes that we know and love), the food was excellent and just being together again made it all so very worthwhile. We all made very sure that our new Grand Master, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, had a night that he will always remember.

John was accompanied by his charming wife Edelweiss, while daughter Andrea, brother Stephen and other family members were also in attendance. The toast to the Grand Master was proposed by MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM and, as always, John responded most eloquently.



The new Grand Master also took the opportunity to physically hand out the various special awards that he had announced at the Grand Lodge AGM. Most of the recipients were present and as the citations were read it became abundantly clear as to just why they had been honoured in the way that they had.



RW Bro Avron Jacobson MSA, RW Bro Frans Appelgryn, RW Bro Brandon Topham, MW Bro John Smith OSM MSA, RW Bro Peter Duckworth, Wor Bro Jeremy Rundle, VW Bro Simon Nash

The recipients were Wor Bro Riaan Croucamp (Secretary of the Year); VW Bro Simon Nash (Best Commissioned Officer paper); Bro David Lucas (Best Masonic paper); RW Bro Brandon Topham (Securing of our 18A status); RW Bro Avron Jacobson MSA (Support of Zoom meetings); Wor Bro Jeremy Rundle (Web site and technology support).

Perhaps the warmest applause of the evening was for a previously unannounced award of a Grand Lodge



Charity Jewel to RW Bro Peter Duckworth. Peter is a Past District Grand Master of the UGLE and an Honorary member of Lodge de Goede Hoop. His extremely generous support of our Masonic Homes has much helped to enrich the lives of our appreciative residents.

Overall it was a memorable evening and will long be remembered by all those privileged to have attended.

Almoner's Corner

While Covid is certainly impacting on the members of our Grand Lodge, few have been called to the Eternal East. Sadly, Wor Bro Braam van Zyl (Johan van Riebeeck) is, however, a recent victim. He served our Grand Lodge for some 45 years, was a stalwart in the country Lodges and a senior member of Royal Arch. Our sympathies are extended to his wife, his son, Bro Tertius, and the the family at this very difficult time.

Other Covid afflicted Brethren include the Past Grand Master, MW Bro Dave Duncan OSM (Friendship) who is now recovering steadily at home, but is still lacking his normal energy. Also, Wor Bro Schalk Erasmus (de Morgenster) continues his dogged fight in a Gauteng hospital. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and, in fact, with all those Brethren who are being affected by this scourge.

To these Brethren and all the others who are recovering from operations or other ailments, please know that we are thinking of you and pray that the year ahead will be a happier one for you.

To all of our Brethren, let us remember that while we are celebrating the festive season, we have Brethren and widows who are perhaps feeling very lonely and forgotten about at this time. Give them a call, pop round to say hello and do whatever you can to remind them that we are true Masons and, as such, we care.

If anything is known about a Brother in distress, please share it with your Divisional Almoner.

Southern	Wor Bro Cobis Wilson	083 2844684
Northern	Wor Bro Reuven Coenen	071 6120577
Central	Wor Bro Johnny Cambanis	083 9865397
Eastern	Wor Bro Johan v d Merwe	083 3010219
E Cape	Wor Bro Ian Hetherington	082 9545297

When consulted, a wise Physician advised that the best medicine for Humans is "Care and Love".

He was asked what to do if this didn't work. He smiled and answered "Increase the Dose".