

**ORATION UPON THE DEDICATION OF THE BANNER OF THE DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF
MARK MASTER MASONS – 20TH November 2015**

Right Worshipful District Grand Master, Distinguished Brethren, Honoured Guests and Brethren,

We live in an age of constant and rapid change, when today's technology is very quickly rendered out-of-date by the latest product designed to handle processes more quickly, in greater volume or with greater portability and ease of use than ever before.

So why do we continue to utilise something as ancient as a banner - a device that pre-dates even the Bible stories reflected in our Ritual? What is it about the simple, yet often dramatic, images contained within the fabric of this device that makes it so appealing to generation after generation, across cultures and histories? Whether as a nation, a sports team, a regiment, a school or a college – in fact, any group that shares ideals and dreams – we will find that we bestow enormous importance upon the graphic images contained within such a device.

The truth is that a graphic image can possess enormous power and influence, and convey shared identity in a manner unequalled by pages of text. Many of us might decry the excessive use of graphic images in our towns and cities, and along our highways, yet we cannot over-estimate the ability of such devices to influence our behaviour in so many aspects of our lives.

Whilst the banner which we see before us today is not intended to influence us in a material way, it does give us a focus for our identity as members of an organisation that we value and for which we are prepared to make a commitment. Whenever we gather together and identify ourselves with our banner we are sharing common beliefs, values and aspirations. The power that a banner possesses to engender a feeling of community and belonging is reflected in the manner in which we employ such devices - giving them a highly visible central role in our ceremonial.

May the Great Overseer of the Universe bless the banner we have dedicated today, and may the pleasure we have experienced during this simple ceremony be renewed and repeated with each use of this colourful and beautiful device.