

**“Preserving our Past while Preparing for our Future”**

**2012 Worshipful Master’s Inaugural Address**



**Robert L. Ellis, II**

**The 77<sup>th</sup> Worshipful Master of Victory Lodge #23  
Free and Accepted Masons  
Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia**

**December 23, 2011**

**Masonic Temple  
1000 U Street, NW  
Washington DC, 20001**

# **Worshipful Master's Inaugural Address for 2012**

**Robert L. Ellis, II**

**Victory Lodge #23, PHA**

**Washington, DC 20001**

**December 23, 2011**

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

To: The Senior and Junior Wardens  
Grand Lodge Officers  
Distinguished Past Masters  
Officers and Members of Victory Lodge #23

Good Afternoon!

As is the custom in our ancient and honorable fraternity, we always invoke the aid of Deity before entering upon any great or important undertaking. Let us pray!\*\*\*

*Prayer Omitted:*

My brothers, I greet you in the most humble and appreciative way I can... Simply to say thank you... Thanking you for all that you've done for this Lodge over the past year. I stand here today proud, pleased, high privileged and extremely grateful to the Officers and Members of Victory Lodge #23 for allowing me yet another opportunity to serve as your Worshipful Master for the ensuing year of 2012. It is indeed an honor for me to accept this awesome challenge and I continue to pray that you will know that my heart is dedicated to doing the best that I can in moving Victory 23 forward.

I ask that you lend an attentive ear to my Inaugural Address, as I humbly share with you the etchings of our Trestle board for Victory Lodge #23 for the ensuing year of 2012.

## **STATE OF VICTORY LODGE #23**

I am careful to remind us that our accomplishments over the past year were significant in many ways, but we are still aggressively moving forward to meet some of the outstanding challenges that linger on our Trestle board. Our membership is not as large as it was in 2009, 2010 or in 2011 but I am optimistic that we can stop the erosion of declining membership during the 2012 Masonic Year by retaining the members we already have, reclaiming those members who have become inactive or dropped and move aggressively to bring in new members.

The State of Victory Lodge #23 will always be defined by the results of our work and our practice. It is our duty to ensure that the state of Victory remains in a stable and consistent state. Reaching this state will require each member of this lodge to take on an active role in carrying the load. We all must be willing to put in work. Commitment, Communication and Teamwork are the key ingredients to ensure the continued success of this great lodge we all love. I am here to Remind You that you get out of Masonry what you put in to it. You must be willing to come out to our Bi-weekly Practice, our monthly lodge meetings and our monthly community service project. Brethren, Victory is growing but not at a pace that will allow us to become too relaxed. I need everyone's support to help carry the share of the load of Victory. There are a number of Lodges within our own jurisdiction who's history and existence are at risk of being lost.... forever. I need your help in ensuring that Victory does not fall in that category. So what do you need Worshipful Master?? Glad you asked my brother. I need brothers who I can depend on to help confer our degree's and march in our annual jurisdictional parades (St John's Day, Prince Hall Day). Brethren, the WM, SW and JW can't be the only members of Victory showing up for these events. It would be great if brothers would request to do any of our Charges, symbolisms, or the addresses. It would be great to know beforehand exactly how many brothers from Victory will be attending the Grand Lodge School of Instructions on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays to help represent Victory #23. Our Past Master's have carried this lodge for so long and now I am soliciting more help from our newly raised brothers as well as those brothers who simply want to sit on the side line and watch. Brothers, I need your help in ensuring this lodge we all love continues to live. Just remember, it takes more than a faithful few to carry a lodge. We all have families. We all have jobs. We all have other demands outside the lodge that require our support but not all things conflict with Victory's bi-weekly practices and monthly meetings. Besides, these events are scheduled well in advance. During the 2012 administration there is no way you will be able to say honestly that you did not know the date and time a practice or an event was scheduled. I stand here today requesting that every brother dedicate more of his personal time to Victory to participate in our practices, activities and jurisdictional events to help ensure Victory continues to live. If not, this could very well be the beginning of the End.

## **VISION**

My vision for Victory Lodge #23 has not changed. We will continue to support our Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia in cementing our position as the leading jurisdiction in the Prince Hall Sodality. Our vision remains consistent with the legacies of our Lodge's forbearers' and the stellar work that has been done throughout the years. This vision is a result of demonstrated leadership and strict adherence to the tenets and ritualistic proficiency that has been the hallmark of our existence.

## **FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY**

In 2012, our financial situation will continue to be challenging. I will continue to depend on our fiscal officers for advice and counsel in the areas of fiscal responsibility, as well as the determination of reducing our monthly and annual expenditures. I remain hopeful that we are moving in the right direction, that direction which will move us to a place where our primary mission of charity can be dispensed routinely.

I am calling on each of you to take on an active part of our fiscal planning, by doing your part by paying your dues on time, participating in as many of Victory Lodge #23 activities as you can; and contributing financially in any way that you can.

## **MEMBERSHIP IMPROVEMENT**

Our greatest challenge, as prevalent as it has ever been, remains to be our membership. This challenge remains as daunting today as it has been in years past. We must not only recognize that membership is important, but we must be proactive as individuals to increase our membership numbers in Victory Lodge #23 in 2012 and beyond. Membership is not only important in terms of revenues, but it is important in terms of our ability to deliver services we have vowed to do in our community.

If you know a member of Victory Lodge #23 who has been dropped from our rolls or who has become inactive over the years, I humbly ask of you that you simply give that brother a call and see how he's doing. Let him know that the Officers and members of Victory Lodge #23 are thinking about him and would love to have him back in the fold of Victory, health and business permitting. We all will be grateful to you and our lodge will benefit from your efforts because of it.

The Membership Improvement Goals for the year are as follows:

- Bring in at least 2 New Members
- Reclaim 10% of our "dropped" Members
- Retain 95% of our "intend to drop" Members

Each active member of Victory Lodge #23 is a member of the Reclamation Committee because I feel each of us has a personal relationship with some member of Victory who has either been dropped from our rolls or who has become inactive over the years. I expect each member to actively work to retain and reclaim members over the course of the year.

## **TEMPLE IMPROVEMENTS**

While it is noted that the Charitable Foundation is responsible for this building we all use, all of us are members of the Charitable Foundation and must pay a vital role in its financial support. Victory Lodge #23 Temple Improvement goal for the year is to make at least a \$500 financial donation to the Charitable Foundation in support of the Temple improvement project to help

our Masonic home be brought up to the architectural gem of the community that it ought to be.

### **MASONIC EDUCATION**

One of the principles of Masonry is that "Knowledge is obtained by degrees. Wisdom dwells in contemplation; there we must seek her." Let us then my brethren apply ourselves to learning about Masonry.

#### **Officers School of Instruction**

Victory #23 will hold Schools of Instruction twice a month for two (2) hours from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at our usual practice facility in Camp Springs located at the following location:

Prince Georges County Building  
Department of Family Services  
6420 Allentown Road  
Camp Springs, MD 20748

The building is located at the intersection of Allentown and Brinkley roads in Camp Springs MD. We need instruction because we want to help increase our floor work performance. We need it because it is our ritualistic and administrative excellence that attracts and retains members in our Order. We need it because we forget what we have learned if we are not constantly reminded through our ritualistic instruction and administrative practices. This is as true today as it was years ago. PM Clarence K. Chambers will Chair our SOI's and PM Lynwood Leach II will Co-Chair.

#### **New Members School of Instruction**

Educating our New Members as to "who we are" and "what we do" is imperative to sustaining their membership. We must remember that these new brothers are just that, "NEW" and they know nothing about what we do as Masons or what our Organization is chartered for. Teaching them the tenets, principles, and precepts of Masonry will help them to understand "who we are". Informing them of "what we do" to help mankind should cause them to want to get involved in our community service projects. PM Thomas F. Chambers will Chair our New Members Schools of Instruction for the ensuing year of 2012. After the conferring of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, our new members will meet every Monday evening at the home of PM Phil Chambers in order to make proficiency and to continue their quest in Masonry. Brethren if you were raised at sight by our GM or if you would have been out of the fold of Masonry for a while and would like to attend one of our New Members SOI's one week, please contact PM Thomas F. Chambers and inform him of your desires. You will not be disappointed. I assure you!!

#### **Masonic College**

The Masonic College is alive and well. Be ye reminded that the MWPHGLDC has instituted a requirement that beginning in 2011, all brethren aspiring to become Worshipful Master will be required to obtain a Certificate of Completion from the Masonic College and Leadership Academy. As a lodge, we will adhere to this new requirement. I encourage each brother who

aspires to ascend to the East in this lodge, please apply Now to attend the Masonic College and Leadership Academy.

### **RITUALISTIC WORK**

It is now time for Victory Lodge #23 to stop the erosion of our ritualistic work and get back to “ritualistic excellence”. I am asking that each Officer, Elected and Appointed do their ritualistic studying on their own time and when we meet at our Schools of Instruction, each member come to practice strictly to exemplify what they have learned. As Masons, we should be about the business of the Lodge. For the 2012 Masonic Year, I have established the following ritualistic goals:

- Degree Proficiency - Conferring of Degrees in a highly proficient manner
- Officers and Members making Motions - All brothers should be able to make a motion
- When to use what sign (Degree vs. Fidelity)
- Approaching/Departing the Altar correctly during communication
- Funeral Work

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The most important secular commitment we have is to reach out to the communities around us and prove to them by our works, that we are a preeminent and relevant community oriented organization. We must let the community know that we are an integral part of them and that we care about their interest and concerns. As Masons, we should be in the business of helping others. Victory Lodge #23 has a solid history of providing good community service projects to those in need in our community and we are poised to continue that trend during this administration. For the 2012 Masonic Year, I have established the following Community Service goals and initiatives:

- Award one \$1,000 Scholarship to a deserving, graduating high school student
- Volunteer at least 100 Man Hours to the Ambassador Baptist Church “Bread of Life” Food Distribution Program
- Donate at least 10 pints of blood (in support of the Grand Lodge Initiative)
- Have at least two (2) brothers sign up as an Organ Donors – MOTTEP
- Volunteer at the PG County Senior Citizen Picnic
- Support the All Shades of Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Initiative
- Donate at least (4) Thanksgiving Baskets to needy families of our community
- Donate to the American Cancer Society
- Donate to the MS Society
- Donate to the American Heart Association
- Donate to the Susan G. Kolman for Breast Cancer Research
- Donate to the March of Dimes

## **YOUTH BODIES SUPPORT**

Victory Lodge #23 will continue to support our Order of the Knights of Pythagoras, through financial contributions as well as mentoring efforts. We will continue our history of supporting Neal Harris Council #5 KOP by making financial contributions as well as supporting their various programs. PM Lynwood Leach Sr will be our primary POC for the Neal Harris Council #5.

## **FAMILY RELATIONS**

I urge you to continue to order your priorities so that you place God, family, and job before Freemasonry. I pray that you will find time, in accordance with the length of your cable tow, to give of your service to the Masonic Order. During this administration, I expect that you will bring your families to share in our 84<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Divine Service in January as well as our Annual Cookout in June. Show the world who Masons truly are by showing them our families.

## **FRATERNAL RELATIONS**

In 2012, we will forge ahead with building tighter bonds with our Brother Lodges James H. Hill #16, Prudence Lodge #27 and Philadelphia Lodge #74. We will do this by visiting our brother lodges at least one time this year as a lodge. We will try to support one another's community service projects and other activities to help foster teambuilding and enhance the opportunity to build new relationships. We will visit James H. Hill Lodge #16 on March 9, 2012 during their March 2012 monthly communication. We will visit Prudence Lodge #27 on April 14, 2012 during their April 2012 monthly communication. We will travel up to Philadelphia on Saturday June 9, 2012 to visit our brother lodge for their June 2012 monthly communication.

As we relate to other organizations, nothing is more important than our relationship with our very own sister chapter, Electa Chapter #6. Victory Lodge #23 will continue to support our sister chapter in all of their undertakings, for they are indeed a vital part of us. As a lodge, we will visit Electa Chapter #6 on January 12, 2012 during their monthly meeting in January 2012 for WM Shari McCoy's inaugural program.

## **IN CLOSING**

My brothers you have been most supportive and helpful in carrying out the initiatives on our trestle board over the years and I trust that the favorable level of support will continue as we embark upon new challenges that are sure to arise as we proceed throughout this Masonic Year. Our programs continue to improve and we are gaining more visibility and support for them. Thanks to all for all that you do and what I know you will continue to do.

The future of Victory is bright. With your continued support, we will Preserve our Past as we Prepare for our Future. Remember brothers to always keep Your hands in God's hands. For we know not what tomorrow holds but we do know who holds tomorrow.

## **Scripture:**

I Corinthians 14:40

*"Let all things be done decently and in order."*

**Theme:**

*"Preserving our Past while Preparing for our Future".*

**Motto:**

*"When All Is Said and Done... Don't Let More Be Said Than Done..."*

Finally brethren, be ye all of one mind, live in peace and may the God of Love and Peace delight to dwell with and Bless You.

Fraternally Submitted,

*Robert L. Ellis II*

Robert L. Ellis, II  
Worshipful Master 2012  
Victory Lodge #23, F.&A.M., PHA  
Washington, DC