

## The White Apron – an LEO Presentation and Discussion

SETUP: The LEO should be wearing his white apron the night he presents this. If possible, bring in two (2) cloth carpenters aprons or any type of workman's aprons – one old and worn from use and the other new or fairly new. If this cannot be done be ready to describe them in the presentation to give the Brethren a visual image in their minds. Place them on the backs of a chair so they are visible to all.

LEO: Brethren, when you, as newly raised Master Masons, were presented your white aprons, what were you told to do with them?

Brethren actions – they may give many answers. Keep taking them until someone gives you the usual one: “We were told to put them up in a drawer and keep them clean until we die and are buried with them” or something similar. If this one does not come up, then give it yourself either as LEO or as what you were told.

LEO: Brethren, you are doing some remodeling, or having some work done around your house, or maybe even building a house. Look at these workman's aprons. One is new and clean. The other is worn, obviously used, soiled, and seen many days of use. You are interviewing two men to do the work you need. One is wearing the new apron and the other is wearing this one that is obviously not so new. Just from the appearance and with no other information from them, which one is your mind beginning to tell you to hire and why?

Brethren actions – most likely they will say the one wearing the old worn one because it shows he has experience. If not lead the discussion that way by saying something like “which apron shows the one with experience?”

LEO: Exactly. When we look at the old worn one, we do not see the wear upon it as a stain. We see it as a patina of experience and hard work. The same should be with our own aprons in masonry. What does the Entered Apprentice Apron Lecture say about wearing our aprons?

Brethren actions - Keep receiving answers until someone gives an answer similar to we were told to wear it throughout an honorable life suffering no stain upon it. Once this is given begin a discussion on what is meant by no stain upon it. Include in that discussion the contradiction of the white apron concerning when we wear it– how can we be told to wear it throughout an honorable life when made EAs and then told when we are raised to put it up until we die? Both cannot be right. What brought about this contradiction? Remind the brethren that at the beginning of masonry, lodges did not always furnish an apron for the meetings. You brought with you the one given you when you became a mason and that one was worn for every masonic function that needed the apron worn.

LEO wrap-up: Brethren, we seem to have a contradiction. As EAs we are told to wear it throughout an honorable life. As a Master Mason we are told to put them up until we die and then have them buried with us. Also that maybe there might be a special night called a White Apron Night to wear them while we live. Both obviously cannot be correct by ritual so which is in the ritual and which has simply become custom (wait for answers)? Wearing them is in ritual. Somewhere back in time, someone began the custom of putting them up – most likely when lodges began to provide meeting aprons and if you did not wear those meeting aprons, the lodge was out the money used to buy them. Think on this, Brethren, the wear and soil one gets on even a masonic apron by wearing it to do honorable masonic labors, is that a stain or is that the patina of good honest work much like that old workman's apron here (either point to the one brought with you or re-describe it if one not brought)? If patina, what does that patina then show to all who see you (wait for answers)? Yes, patina gained by honorable masonic labors – is that not the patina all of us want to show the world? Besides, with the other choice, you are buried with a stranger – do you really want to be buried with a stranger? So, then wear them, my brothers, wear them in an honorable life until The Great Architect gives you the new name upon the white stone and He sees that patina when welcoming you Home.

WB John F. Maxwell

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