**Order of Paladins**

**Arming Ritual**

The Arming is the initiation ritual that turns an Order of Paladins squire into a knight, which is our second degree. To take part in this ritual, you have to have gone through the first degree initiation (the Armoring), which makes you a squire.

Prior to this Arming ceremony, squires should carefully chose a weapon from four of the five Magickal Weapon groups (sword/athame, staff/wand, cauldron/grail, shield/stone) to dedicate themselves to in this Arming ceremony. This will be the Magickal Weapon that they have decided to master and specialize in. The fifth Magickal Weapon (spirit/mind) is reserved for the third degree in the Order of Paladins: The Mastering. This choice does not preclude the initiate from mastering other Magickal Weapons.

Those who are connected with Air energy will gravitate towards the sword/athame pair to exercise their will. Those who are at home with creative fire energy will choose the staff and wand. Those attracted to the emotional, healing and divinatory power related to the element of water will gravitate towards the cauldron/grail pair: As I said earlier, this pair related to the element of water may not seem like Magickal Weapons at first, but when you realize that they have to do with both healing magick and divination, you can see how they fit into this warrior tradition. The shield/stone pair is for those involved in the earth centered activity of warding and defensive magick or anvil magick.

Squires are also required to come up with a name for their chosen Magickal Weapon prior to the Arming ceremony. On the night before the working, the squire sleeps with this Magickal Weapon by their side. In the morning the candidate cleans and polishes the Magickal Weapon, focusing their mind on the power and significance of this Magickal Weapon.

Squires of the Order of Paladins are expected to spend time prior to this Arming ritual in a vigil meditating on the significance of this step. In Western society, squires traditionally spent an all night vigil in prayer and fasting before their initiation into knighthood. Also, before the initiation squires would bathe to purify themselves. Squires of the Order of Paladins are encouraged to engage a vigil of this sort prior to the Arming.

**Commandery**: Grand Master, Seneschal, Marshall, Under Marshall, Standard bearer, Quartermaster, Constable and a Sergeant at Arms.

**Things Needed**:

Order of Paladins members will dress in their gis.

Altar table with God statues.

Censer or other aromatic source, candle, stone, small cauldron of water.

Squires seeking to be initiated will be carrying their Magical Weapons to be dedicated in the ritual. All other participants carry their chosen Magickal Weapons unless they are Commandery members, in which case they carry the Magickal Weapon associated with their part:

• Marshall: sword

• Standard Bearer: wand/staff

• Quartermaster: chalice

• Under Marshall: shield

**Processional**:

Participants form up outside of the ritual area. The Constable invites the initiates:

*“Come forward, you who would become knights.”*

The Constable will then lead the participants in a procession to the ritual area, to where the knights of the Commandery have taken up their stations.

**Challenge**:

Candidates for the Arming initiation form up in front of the Commandery. The Constable and Sergeant at Arms bar their way. The Seneschal stands to one side of the Constable to challenge the candidates. The Grand Master is waiting in the ritual area by the altar behind the Commandery.

**Seneschal**: *“You cannot enter unless you have made your purpose clear. Why do you wish to become a knight of the Order of Paladins?”*

Candidate answers as best they can.

**Seneschal**: *“How will you serve the Order of Paladins?”*

Candidate answers as best they can.

Grand Master: *“Brothers and sisters in the Order of Paladins, these candidates seek admission to the knighthood. What say you?”*

Upon hearing this, any knights, masters, and paladins present may show approval of the candidate by extending an open left palm, or disapproval by extending a closed right fist. This is a majority vote.

If all the candidates have been accepted, the, the Seneschal anoints the candidate’s forehead with the sign of the Order of Paladins and then the Seneschal directs the Sergeants to admit the candidate to the Circle. Seneschal deals with each candidate for knighthood one by one.

As candidates enter, they file past the Marshall, who holds incense. The Marshall allows the candidate to breathe some in and says:

*“I give you the power of air.”*

The candidate then files past the Standard Bearer, who holds a candle. The candidate holds his hands over the flame for a moment. The Under Marshall says:

*“I give you the power of fire.”*

Then the candidate files past the Quartermaster, who holds a bowl of water. The candidate dips their fingers in the water. The Standard Bearer says:

“*I give you the power of water.”*

Then the candidate files past the Under Marshall, who holds a stone. The candidates touch the stone. The Quartermaster says: “I give you the power of earth.”

Grand Marshall then greets the candidates as they enter the Circle, saying:

“*I give you the power of spirit.”*

The Grand Master then directs the candidates as they enter to deposit their weapons on or around the altar. They then file past the altar, deposit their Magickal Weapons, bow to the altar, then take up a place in the Circle.

Once everyone is in position, the Marshall, Under Marshall, Standard Bearer and Quartermaster return their elements to the altar. The Commandery members will then take up stations around the altar to guard the weapons left by the participants: These are the same positions that are used in the Armoring Ritual.

**Standard Bearer**:

Standard Bearer raises the Order of Paladins banner and says:

*“In hoc signo vinces!”*

**Constable**:

The Constable raises her sword in warding gesture and says:

*“Avaunte! Avaunte! Maleficum defence! Honi soit qui mal y pense!”*

**Seneschal**:

The Seneschal announces:

“The field of battle is the warrior’s sacred space. Let us now link land and sky of our field of battle in the mundane world to the Otherworlds. The field of action of the warrior is the mundane world.”

**Quarters**:

**Marshall**: Raises sword and invokes:

*“Hail! Guardians of the East*

*Of the Land of Falias*

*Elementals of Air.*

*Sylphs of the dawn sky.*

*Spirits of windy mornings in spring.*

*Yours is the Sword of Justice*

*The razor edged blade that cuts through illusions*

*I do summon stir and call ye up.*

*That you may witness, protect and bless these rites.*

*Let us be happy and hospitable in the name of Brigid.*

*By the sword of Nuada Argetlamh!*

*My Law is to will*

*Breathe of me deeply*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Standard Bearer**: Raises wand or staff and invokes:

*“Hail! Guardians of the South!*

*Of the Land of Gorias*

*Elementals of Fire.*

*Salamanders of the midday sun.*

*Spirits of golden summer afternoons.*

*Yours is the Spear of Truth*

*The spear that pierces to the heart of the matter*

*I do summon, stir and call ye up,*

*That you may witness, protect and bless these rites.*

*Let us play music and share knowledge in the name of Grian.*

*By the spear of Lugh Lamfhada!*

*My law is to dream.*

*Live of me Fully*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Quartermaster**: Raises grail and invokes:

*“Hail! Guardians of the West!*

*The Land of Murias*

*Elementals of Water.*

*Undines of the sunset waters.*

*Spirits of misty Autumn evenings.*

*Yours is the Chalice of Passion*

*The Grail the strips away the veils.*

*I do summon, stir and call ye up,*

*That ye may witness, protect and bless these rites.*

*Let us teach and judge fairly in the name of Boann.*

*By the undry cauldron of the Dagdha Eochaid!*

*My Law is to dare*

*Drink of me Freely*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Under Marshall**: Raises shield and invokes:

*“Hail! Guardians of the North!*

*The Land of Finias*

*Elementals of Earth.*

*Gnomes of the midnight mountains.*

*Spirits of silent Winter nights.*

*Yours is the Stone of Kingship,*

*The sacred altar that holds power, wisdom and destiny.*

*I do summon, stir and call ye up,*

*That ye may witness, protect and bless these rites.*

*Grant us strength and confidence in the name of the Mor-Rhioghain.*

*By the stone of Lia Fail and the anvil of Goibhniu!*

*My Law is silence*

*Listen to me in stillness*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Constable**:

*“Hail! Guardians of Meath! The Center.*

*Spirits of the Wheel of the Seasons.*

*Aes Sidhe of the Timeless Astral.*

*Dreams of the eternal Summerland.*

*Yours is the power of Spirit.*

*The mind which wields the elemental powers as one.*

*I do summon, stir and call ye up,*

*That ye may bring us unity, stability and balance.*

*Grant us healing and peace in the name of Danu.*

*By the eloquence of Ogma.*

*My law is unity.*

*Know of me always.*

*Biodh Se.”*

These five Commandery members then set their weapons down behind them or tuck them away.

**Circle casting**:

This is the same “hand to hand” method used in the Armoring. The Marshall places her upraised right palm of the person on her left, saying:

*“Hand to hand I cast this circle.”*

When everyone is holding hands The Seneschal announces:

*“It is joined.”*

**Gods/Sidhe**:

The Grand Master and Seneschal call down the warrior Gods to witness the ceremony, using their own words.

**Ancestors/The Fallen**:

The Constable then announces a moment of silence for fallen ancestors, using his own words. At the conclusion the Constable will call upon the participants to direct their thoughts to Pagans now in the field serving and guarding their community. Once this is done he announces:

*“They are remembered.”*

**Arming**:

The Grand Master has the candidates for Order of Paladins knighthood repeat this Arming dedication:

*“Today I arm myself,*

*Invocation of the Gods;*

*Attunement with the Sidhe;*

*Veneration of the Ancestors.*

*Today I arm myself, with weapons of mind.*

*Blade of air, to cut away obstacles;*

*Wand of fire, to block attack;*

*Chalice of water, to divine intentions;*

*Stone of earth, to base myself;*

*Mind like water, mind like the moon.*

*Comrades in arms behind me;*

*My mother’s kin around me;*

*Ancestors behind me;*

*Sidhe above me.*

*Loyalty and love, I give to my companions.*

*Compassion and courtesy, I give to all,*

*Inspired by the innocence of children.*

*Today I arm myself, with weapons of spirit.*

*Singing sword, to sweep away opposition;*

*Soaring spear, to thrust to the heart of the matter;*

*Seething Cauldron, to refresh and renew;*

*Sturdy shield, to ward and protect.*

*Today I arm myself,*

*With the Spirit of the Noble Ones,*

*Obedience of Spirits,*

*And service of the Sidhe.*

*My ancestors behind me;*

*The Gods above me.*

*Courage and sincerity I show to the world.*

*Honor and justice, I give to all,*

*Inspired by the deeds of heroes.*

*Today I arm myself, with five fold power.*

*Radiance of the sun, brilliance of the moon, speed of lightning,*

*Power of the wind, intensity of flame, strength of the tides, endurance of stone,*

*And the Power behind reality.*

*May the Gods grant me the vision of the seer, patience of the strong, strength of the hero, and the powers of the elements.*

*Today I arm myself*

*With the sword of Nuada Argetlamh;*

*With the spear of Lugh Lamhfada;*

*With the undry cauldron of the Dagda Eochaid;*

*With the stone of Lia Fail and the anvil of Goibhniu;*

*With the spirit of the Aes Sidhe.*

*With the Goddess' Power to inspire me;*

*With the Gods' Wisdom to encourage me;*

*With the Love of my Comrades to uphold me;*

*With the loving blessing of the Dead.*

*My eyes to look after them, my ears to hear for them,*

*My voice to warn them, my hand to guard them,*

*My path open before me, my shield to ward them,*

*From danger and darkness, from all who wish them ill*

*Far or near.*

*I summon these Powers to be upon me and in me, to make me equal to any challenge:*

*To allow me to confront any power that threatens my body or spirit:*

*That I may have the wisdom of the wise, the love of the loving, the power of the powerful;*

*That I may be known in the Inner Realms and acknowledged with honor.*

*Now each Knight candidate says, in turn:*

*”Know me. O Mighty Ones, for my name is Sir/Dame*...(each candidate states their name).

*I am* (each person says their personal “I am” line.)”

The Grand Master now continues, with the knights repeating his words:

*“Power within me, power on my right hand, power behind me;*

*Power on my left hand, power before me, power above me, power beneath me.*

*In the eye of all beholders, in the ear of all who hear,*

*In the heart of all beings,*

*My knighthood is established.”*

*Honor to the Gods! Honor to the Fair Folk! Honor to the Dead!*

*And honor to the spirit,*

*That dwells in me forever*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Charging of magickal weapons**:

The knighthood candidates one by one retrieve their Magickal Weapons from the Altar. Each takes their Magickal Weapon, holds it over the incense and says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), I charge you with the element of air. Let your power sing out triumphantly on the winds.”*

The knighthood Candidate then holds their Magickal Weapon over the flame and says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), I charge you with the element of fire. Let your power burn for all to see.”*

The knighthood Candidate then dips their magickal weapon in the water and says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), I charge you with the element of water. Let the power flow from you to fill the world.”*

The knighthood Candidate then touches their magickal weapon to the stone or shield and says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), I charge you with the element of earth. Let the strength of the earth from which you are made make you ever endure.”*

The knighthood Candidate then holds their Magickal Weapon aloft and says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), I charge you with spirit. Let my spirit transform you into a living weapon. Let the Gods bring you to life.”*

The knighthood Candidate allows their energy to flow into their Magickal Weapon for a moment, until they perceive a radiance emanating from it. When this fusion of mind and matter feels complete, the knighthood candidate says:

*“(Name of Magickal Weapon), you are named, you live. Together we shall prevail.*

*Biodh Se!”*

**Order of Paladins Oath of Knighthood**:

**Grand Master**: The Grand Master then leads the Knighthood candidates in the oath of knighthood:

*“By the power of earth, water, air, fire, and spirit, before the Gods, the Sidhe and the Ancestors, I do declare before this assemblage my fealty and allegiance to the Order of Paladins, to its thirteen precepts, and to the rule of law.*

*“So shall I ever defend the values of sincerity, courtesy, compassion, perseverance, industriousness, justice, loyalty, courage, self-discipline, humility, largesse, truth, and honor, which in this modern world are so often neglected. I take these values into my heart and soul that they may manifest themselves in my words and deeds.*

*“Standing proud and free, radiating my inner truth, exultant in my power, I raise up my voice and proclaim myself to be a knight of the Order of Paladins and to dedicate myself to the mastery and defense of these values. I vow to do my will while harming none. In this I am resolved. This I declare before the Gods, the Sidhe and the Ancestors.*

*“Biodh Se!”*

Unlike Christian knighthood ceremonies where the candidate is made to kneel before the initiator for this next part of the ceremony, which is called “dubbing”, our knighthood candidates stand proud with the initiator as equals. Each knighthood candidate now comes up and stands before the Grand Master, who knights him/her by dubbing them on the shoulders with the flat side of the sword blade (right, left, right) while intoning:

*“By the power of the Gods, of the Sidhe, of the Ancestors and of the elements, I make you a knight of the Order of Paladins. Carry your weapons forward in defense of the weak and be glorious.”*

The Grand Master ties a brown belt around the new knight.

**Credo**:

Once all of the candidates have been knighted, the Grand Master addresses the new knights with the Paladins credo:

*“Soldiers march. Warriors dance. Both fight, but only a warrior fights with honor. Soldiers act. Warriors choose. An it harm none, do what thou wilt. Be vigilant. Beware of the foe in your shadow. Who dares, wins. Injustice is what gives you the right to mete justice.”*

Participants clash weapons or slap thighs and cry:

*“Biodh Se!”*

The Grand Master and Seneschal then thank the Gods and Goddesses for their attendance and bid them farewell in their own words.

**Quarter Closing:**

**Constable**:

*“Guardians of the Center.*

*Guardians of Spirit.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

**Under Marshall**:

*“Guardians of the North.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

**Quartermaster**:

*“Guardians of the West.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

**Standard Bearer**:

*“Guardians of the South.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

**Marshall**:

*“Guardians of the East.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

The Commandery members then reform the two lines at the entrance to the Circle.

**Grand Master**:

*“The Circle is open, yet unbroken. The Circle is ended, but never the trust within. Go forth now into the world and run straight for whatever you fear the most.”*

The participants are now free to leave the ritual area between the lines of Commandery members, who congratulate the new knights. A celebratory feast follows.