**Order of Paladins**

**Mastering Ritual:**

Unlike the initiations that precede it, the Mastering is an initiation that the candidate must ask for when they feel that they are ready for it. In order to qualify for the Mastering ritual that makes an Order of Paladins knight into a master, candidates must have met the requirements for this initiation. Presumably the candidate would not even be here seeking this initiation if they had not already met the requirements by demonstrating the mastery that they wish to be recognized for. Specifically, before applying to be initiated as masters, they must be able to write and perform Sabbat rituals, teach classes in the subjects that are part of the magickal curriculum of the Order of Paladins, and prove that they have engaged in charitable work or service of some sort for their community. They must also have chosen a quest to use to serve the community.

Candidates for the Mastering initiation should bring the Magickal Weapons that they were dedicated to in the Arming ritual that made them knights.

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

Order of Paladins members will dress in their gis and paint their faces with their personal designs, if desired.

**Things Needed**:

Altar table with God statues.

Five hand mirrors.

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

The initiates will be carrying the Magical Weapons that they were dedicated to in the Arming 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

The Grand Master, Marshall, Under Marshall, Quartermaster and Standard Bearer carry hand mirrors for the Challenge portion of the ritual.

**Posting the Guardians:**

The Knights who are candidates for Mastering gather outside of the ritual area. The Marshall, Standard Bearer, Quartermaster and Under Marshall form up around them, the Marshall positioning himself in the east, Standard Bearer in the south, Quartermaster in the west and Under Marshall in the north. The Seneschal stands in the middle and addresses the candidates for initiation:

**Seneschal:**

*“You have all chosen Guardians to represent what you have overcome to arrive at this point. We will now take a moment to take an astral journey to the gates of Caer Paladin to post these Guardians outside our gates as an example to those who will follow you in the future.”*

Seneschal uses whatever technique she is most familiar with to initiate the psychic journey. Then tells them:

*“You are now standing in the Perilous Glen outside the gates of Caer Paladin. The mountains tower around the lake and the glen, sloping upwards and eastward between the peaks. A cool wind stirs the branches of the mighty, ancient evergreens bordering the path down the glen, crowding the feet of the peaks. The walls of Caer Paladin loom to the west. The endless thrum of the falls south of the Dûn fills your ears. There is a sense of quiet expectation in the air. Go forth now and find a place to station your Guardian. It might be right in front of the gates to the Dûn. It might be in amongst the oaks and rowans and willows that border the lake to either side. It may be in the shadows of the evergreens that lean over the path to the Dûn. (Pause to give candidates time to do this). Once you have found the appropriate place, bring your Guardian into being at that place. Bind them to that place, so that they may now act as an example to those that follow: An example of what you have overcome, and can now command.”*

Seneschal then brings the candidates back to the present.

**Processional**:

The participants form up outside of the ritual area. The Constable invites the Knights seeking initiation:

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

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

**Battle of Proof**:

The initiates form up in front of the Commandery. The Constable and Sergeant at Arms bar the 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 the Mastering unless you have made your purpose clear. Why do you believe yourself ready to be recognized as a master of the Order of Paladins?”*

The candidate answers as best they can.

**Seneschal**: *“How will you serve the Order of Paladins as a master knight?”*

The candidate answers as best they can.

**Seneschal**: *“How will you demonstrate your mastery?”*

The candidate answers, doing a demonstration of whatever skill they have chosen as their Battle of Proof.

Seneschal: *“What manner of quest will you undertake to live our precepts and code of chivalry?”*

The candidate responds, describing the quest he has chosen.

The Grand Master announces to the assembled masters:

*“Masters of the Order of Paladins, these candidates seek admission to the Mastering. What say you?”*

Upon hearing this, any masters present may show approval of the candidate by extending an open left palm, or disapproval by extending a closed right fist.

If all the candidates have been accepted, the Seneschal anoints the candidate’s forehead with the sign of Order of Paladins (circle, vertical line through middle, one dot to left of line, two to the right) and then the Seneschal directs the Sergeants to admit the Mastering candidate to the Circle. The Seneschal deals with each candidate for Mastering one by one.

As the candidates enter, each is shown a mirror by the Marshall, who says:

*“Behold the ultimate weapon. You are the shining blade that both harms and heals. Look into the depths of your will. Let your will harm none.”*

The Under Marshall shows them the mirror and says:

*“Behold the source of your magick. You are the stone that forms the foundation. Look into the depths of your inner energy. Let your resolution encourage others.”*

The Standard Bearer then shows them a mirror and says:

*“Behold the God/dess (God for male candidates, Goddess for female). You are the flame that enlightens and inspires. Look into the depths of your inspiration. Let your creativity inspire others.”*

The Quartermaster shows them a mirror and says:

*“Behold the Holy Grail. You are the grail that reveals the hidden path. Look into the depths of your vision. Let your sight guide others. ”*

The Grand Master then shows the candidate a mirror and says:

*“Behold the source of your spirit. You are the link that binds the elements as one. You are the key that unlocks the way. You are the bond that endures. You are the wave that overcomes. Look into the depths of your inner spirit. Let your spirit inspire others.”*

The Constable then directs the Mastering candidates as they enter to take up a place in the Circle.

Once everyone is in position, the Commandery members will then take up stations around the altar (same stations as in the Arming ritual). The mirrors are returned to the altar area.

**Standard Bearer**:

Standard Bearer raises the Order of Paladins banner and says:

*“In hoc signo vinces!”*

**Constable**:

The Constable makes a warding gesture and says:

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

**Seneschal**:

*“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 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 chalice 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” casting method used in the Armoring and the Arming. The Marshall places his left palm onto the upraised right palm of the person on his 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 out the warrior Gods in their own words.

**Ancestors/The Fallen**:

The Constable announces a moment of silence for fallen ancestors, using her 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 moment has been observed she announces:

*“They are remembered.”*

**Mastering**:

The Grand Master has the candidates for Mastering repeat this dedication:

*“Today I declare myself, (name Lord/Lady)*

*I am (personal “I am” line)*

*Dedicated to the Gods;*

*Friend of the Sidhe;*

*Beloved of my Ancestors.*

*Today I commit myself, with Magickal Weapon in hand.*

*Blade of air, to clear the way for my companions;*

*Wand of fire, to light the way for my companions;*

*Chalice of water, to see the way for my companions;*

*Shield of earth, to ward my companions;*

*Mind like water, mind like the moon.*

*Comrades in arms behind me;*

*My mother’s kin around me;*

*Ancestors behind me;*

*Sidhe above me.*

*Today I declare myself an example to my companions in arms.*

*Sincerity I present to them*

*Courtesy I show to them*

*Compassion I bestow on them*

*Perseverance I exercise for them*

*Industriousness I demonstrate to them*

*Justice I seek for them*

*Loyalty I offer to them*

*Courage I epitomize to them*

*Self-Discipline I reveal to them*

*Humility I exemplify to them*

*Largesse I donate to them*

*Truth I give to them*

*Honor I epitomize for them.*

*Today I encompass the five and the five.*

*I am the singing sword of justice;*

*I am the flaming spear of truth;*

*I am the bottomless grail of passion;*

*I am the shining shield of valour*

*I am the numinous spirit of honor*

*Today I commit myself,*

*To 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 become the five fold power.*

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

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

*And the Power behind reality.*

*Today I declare myself*

*Master of the sword of will;*

*Master of the spear of creativity;*

*Master of the cauldron of renewal;*

*Master of the shield of awareness;*

*With the spirit of the Aes Sidhe to embolden me.*

*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 to comfort me.*

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

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

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

*My experience to guide them to dance along the knife edge and maintain the inner balance.*

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

*Know me. O Mighty Ones, for my name is Lord/Lady*... (candidate states their name here)

*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 Mastery is established.*

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

*I am the weapon.*

*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!”*

**Paladins Ceremony of Mastering**:

The Mastering candidate now proceeds alone to the central altar and stands before it. The Grand Master hands the sword to the candidate and says:

*“Wield the sword of our will.”*

The candidate does so and then returns it to the Seneschal.

The Grand Master then hands the Initiate the wand and says:

*“Wield the staff of our inspiration.”*

The candidate does so and then returns it to the Seneschal.

The Grand Master then hands the Initiate the grail and says:

*“Bear the chalice of our vision.”*

The candidate does so and then returns it to the Seneschal.

The Grand Master then hands the Initiate the stone and says:

*“Bear the shield of our defense.”*

The candidate does so and then returns it to the Seneschal.

**Oath of Mastery**:

**Grand Master**: The Grand Master then leads the candidates in the Oath of Mastery:

*“By the power of earth, water, air, fire, and spirit, before the Gods, the Sidhe and the Ancestors, I do affirm 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 exemplify 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 master 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!”*

The Grand Master then hands the candidate black ribbons to attach to the new master’s banner to mark the banner as belonging to a master of the Order and says: “Carry the mark of spirit on your new quest. Carry the weight of responsibility.”

The Mastering candidate then says:

*“I am one in Word, Thought, and Deed.”*

The Grand Master then says:

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

The Grand Master ties a black belt around the new master.

**Credo**:

**Grand Master**:

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

*“He that would govern others, first should be the master of himself. Master yourself and you can master anything. Master yourself and be master of your fate and the captain of your soul. With mastery comes responsibility. Be wise; Soar not too high to fall; but stoop to rise. ”*

The participants clash weapons or slap thighs and cry:

*“Biodh Se!”*

NOTE: The line that starts "He that would govern others…" is a quotation from the play "The Bondsman" (1624) by Philip Massinger. The line which starts "Soar not too high…" is from Massinger's play "The Duke of Milan". The line "Master yourself and be master of your fate and the captain of your soul" is a quotation from William Ernest Henly's "Ballade of Dead Actors" (1888). Henly struggled with tuberculosis of the bone, which resulted in him having one leg amputated. He was a good friend of Robert Louis Stevenson and it was Henly that Stevenson modelled his character Long John Silver after in his novel Treasure Island.

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

**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 South.*

*We thank you for your attendance.*

*We bid you hail and farewell.”*

The Commandery members 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 masters. A celebratory feast for all who participated follows the ceremony.