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MANILA - MOUNT LEBANON LODGE # 1

TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR

W JOHN CHOA

GRAND MASTER MASTERS



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CONTENTS

REGULARS

Editorial.....	1
From the Grand Oriental Chair	3
Point After.....	7
FLASH BACK • NEW	10
Harvest	12
Pamana ng Lahi	18
Research.....	20
The Pastoral Letter	25
Grand Master's Response	27
The Responses.....	30
SLICE OF LIFE.....	41

GRAND LODGE

Edicts	50
Circulars.....	56

POEM

Do You Just Belong?.....	72
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COVER

** The Grand Lodge Officers:*

MW John L. Choa, GM ; RW Jose R. Guerrero, DGM ; RW Agustin V. Mateo, SGW; RW Rizal Aportadera, JGW; MW Rudyardo Bunda, GT; and MW Rosendo C. Herrera, GS.

*** Dignitaries in the Testimonial Dinner for GM John L. Choa sponsored by the Manila – Mt. Lebanon Lodge No. 1 : MW Rosendo C. Herrera, MW William H. Quasha and MW Raymundo N. Beltran.*

EDITORIAL:**ONLY LACK OF MASONRY AMONG MASONS
WILL EXTINGUISH MASONRY**

The Guidelines of the Catholic Bishops Conference interdicting Filipino masons came at a very inopportune time in our history. Just about every Philippine watcher worth his salt predicts that our country is the next flash point in Southeast Asia due to the divisions tearing it apart from the middle. Truly, as a nation we totter as a house divided by itself: Corystas and Loyalistas are going after each other's throat, the AFP and the RAM-SFP-YOU rebels are bombing each other, the government is squaring off with the NPAs on one hand and the MUSLIM separatist movement on the other, etc. The most dominant church in the Philippines could well have been a major influence to pull in these various centrifugal forces ripping our unity. Unfortunately it has forfeited the role of a peacemaker when, without any provocation and *casus belli* whatsoever, it interdicted once more Filipino masons. The interdiction has thrown back our relationship to the darkness of the Middle Ages where organized obscurantism, not reason, was the rule.

The tectonic strength of the adverse reaction against the Guidelines of the Catholic Bishops Conference should be a food for thought for the most dominant church in the Philippines. Throughout the length and breadth of the country, commentators both of the print and broadcast media took a critical view of the Bishops' stance. Masons were surprisingly joined by non-masons in expressing indignation against the Guidelines. A check with the letters to the editor section of one major newspaper revealed the overpouring of this censorious reaction. To the credit of the Craft, these reactions revealed its high standing with the public, a standing that is the cultivated product of a heroic past and a creditable present.

We commend MW John L. Choa for his reasoned response to the Guidelines. He could have met the Guidelines with the silence of a sphinx. Or he could have burned down the Guidelines with incendiary statements and start a new schism in our society. He did not choose either extreme as he chose to be recapitulatory and reconciliatory in the tone and texture of his Comment to the Guidelines - reminding the Bishops that these issues have long been settled in the 1968-70 dialogue between the Church and the Grand Lodge and refusing to be drawn into an unnecessary conflict with the dominant church. MW Choa is confident that this new mist of misunderstanding will vanish in time just as all misconceptions against the Craft cannot survive the prying trajectory of truth.

The Guidelines appear to have galvanized the brethren. More importantly, there is now a more vigorous yearning to learn the lessons and teachings of masonry. This renaissance in masonic education will assure the Craft of a membership whose loyalty is based on reason and not on rote. That kind and quality of membership is our insurance against extinction. Let us always remember that it is only lack masonry among masons that can extinguish masonry. (RSP)

FREEMASONRY IS BROTHERHOOD

Freemasonry is brotherhood. How to be a brother indeed—how in the midst of diversities of interests, diversities of condition, diversities of opinion and belief, diversities of race and nation, to be brothers still, loving brothers in a world rent by violence, sundered by partition walls, full of intolerance and party feeling, sectarian strife and exclusiveness of caste, to be brothers amid the distinctions of common life, where wealth and poverty, obscurity and eminence jostle each other, where religious and political differences, social distinctions and the exclusiveness of wealth all conspire to set men at greater distance and to water and cultivate the obnoxious weed of selfishness, is the problem which Freemasonry undertakes to solve. It has combined the scattered elements of society, recalled men to a sense of their fraternal relations, revived the sometimes almost extinguished faith in friendship and virtue, opened a new temple and set up a new altar above all prejudice, dissensions and selfishness, above all distinctions save moral goodness - a temple dedicated to universal friendship, an altar at which all humanity may kneel, where brethren may seek refuge from the strife and storms of human passion, defence and shelter within an inviolable sanctuary of peace and love. While holding itself aloof from the separate creeds, the symbolism of Masonry, which is its peculiar mode of instruction, inculcates all the duties which we owe to God as being His children and to men as being their brethren.. But above all and before all, it has taught a principle which has permeated its every nerve, coursed through its every vein, and responded to every throbbing of its heart, that man is sovereign over his mind and must deal in charity with the opinions and judgement of his fellows. If then, anywhere, there is taught that the mind of man is subject to the control of another mind, subject to like frailties, to an equally imperfect human vision, which at the very best must be but an inadequate conception of God and His dealings with His creature, man, whether it originates in either an individual or an organised effort, freemasonry wars against that system, whatever may be its claims to infallibility—ASHLAR

From the Grand Oriental Chair

• MW John L. Choa



Masonry is alive in this Grand Jurisdiction!

Everywhere we go, we hear—and see— that our brethren have remained steadfast in their conviction, *that Freemasonry is indeed beautiful*, in the face of the recent unwanted, uncalled-for, unfair attack from some sectors of the Catholic hierarchy.

Such an attack is, definitely, to be regretted. But, as before, we will approach the problem with fraternal forgiveness, with charming charity towards the attackers, with calm circumspection.

We believe that any unkind attack against our Fraternity is born out of misconception, misunderstanding or ignorance of what Freemasonry is. We believe that one may understand the principles, doctrines and teachings of Freemasonry only by becoming a Freemason.

Let us review some facts relative to the stand of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on membership of Catholics in Freemasonic associations. On March 23, this year the CBCP issued a circular containing guidelines on membership in Freemasonic associations. The circular, which was addressed to members of the Catholic hierarchy, ended with this distinctive statement: "Kindly signify your approval/disapproval of the above by returning the slip duly accomplished." *Ergo*, the circular was issued, not as a conclusive action of the CBCP, but as a mere survey.

The said circular was lengthily discussed in the CBCP's meeting at Tagaytay City sometime in July, also this year. Many of the bishops present, we were told, were against the circular. If that is true, the CBCP failed to come up with a definitive stand in regard to membership of Catholics in Freemasonic associations. No pastoral letter, in effect, was issued. That is why the bishops we have talked to were surprised why this matter was brought up in the newspapers.

Let me stress, at this juncture, that many members of the Catholic clergy are of the enlightened breed. As such, they have empathetic understanding of Philippine Masonry and of Philippine Masons.

Many bishops in this country have had pleasant, cordial, mutually respecting personal relationships with Catholics who are members of Freemasonry. They have personally seen in their dioceses— and in their parishes— the uprightness, righteousness, decency, and charity of Catholic Masons (or, if you wish, Mason Catholics).

If, therefore, there are bishops in the CBCP who are anti-Masonry in this era of ecumenism, they must be of the intolerant, bigoted kind. Why, even

then, would some sector of the CBCP now want to drive away from the Catholic fold many good Catholics simply because they are members of our great Masonic fraternity?

Be that as it may, the Grand Lodge of the Philippines (GLP) issued a position paper, emphatically stating that the door of the GLP is open for further dialogue in the interest of better understanding with our Catholic friends.

Philippine Freemasonry is decidedly not anti-Catholic. Rather, Catholics who are members of Freemasonry are urged to be actively involved in the activities of their respective parishes. Other members of the fraternity are similarly enjoined to take active part in the projects and services of their own churches.

It is not surprising, then, that many persons, including wives of Masons, Protestant clerics and even Catholic priests, have come to the defense of our Fraternity in reaction to the news item in the August 11, 1990 edition of the *Daily Inquirer* in regard to the CBCP's position on membership in Freemasonic associations.

At any rate, I call upon every Mason in this Grand Jurisdiction to resolutely remain steadfast in the midst of such attacks against Freemasonry.

Of course, we all want our Fraternity to remain strong and alive.

That is why all of us must practice Masonry as our way of life, letting our light shine before our fellowmen day in and day out — for the glory of our Father in the Celestial Lodge.

—o O o—

Your Grand Master has kept himself busy attending district conventions. Noticeably there has been renewed activeness of members attending district conventions—most probably because of the meaningful and relevant uniform format we have designed and required.

- August 18** — We were in Angeles, Pampanga for the joint convention of Masonic District (M.D.) Nos. 7 and 29.
- August 25** — We were in Sta. Cruz, Laguna for the convention of M.D. No. 11.
- September 8** M. D. Nos. 25 and 40 had their joint convention at Marawi City. Your Grand Master was made honorary member of Marawi Lodge No. 111.
- September 15** — We flew to Gen. Santos City for M. D. No. 37's convention.
- September 16** — We were in Davao City, where M. D. No. 18, headed by VW Romeo Yu, had a special program, entitled "Enhancing Family Togetherness", which is the GLP's emphasis for September. At

- tended by a big multitude, the affair proved to all and sundry that Masons are, indeed, a closely knit family.
- September 22** — We travelled to Tabuk, Kalinga Apayao for the convention of M. D. No. 2.
- September 29** — We attended the joint convention of M. D. Nos. 15, 16 and 39 at Dumaguete City.
- October 6** — We were with our brethren in Iloilo City, whence we traveled by land to Antique. Hamtik Lodge No. 76, which turned 58, hosted the convention of M. D. No. 14. For us, the trip was historic because, to the joyful pride of our brothers and sisters there, it was the first time an incumbent Grand Master went to Antique. We performed the cornerstone-laying ceremony for Hamtik Lodge's new temple.

—o O o—

On October 13, your Grand Master met with the DDGMs, DGLs and Grand Line Officers at the Plenary Hall of our new Grand Lodge Temple (GLT). This mid-year meeting was aimed at assessing our performance and renewing our commitment to serve the Fraternity further on.

We have, to date, raised and spent 8.2 million pesos for the completion of our new GLT. But we still need some 2 million pesos.

Now, we want to inaugurate the new GLT on December 19. I call upon all dedicated Masons, therefore, to dig deep into their pockets and share a little more, so that the new GLT, the symbol of our fraternal strength, unity and harmony— which started construction 12 years ago— will soon proudly completed.

Yes, we are busy preparing for the six-in-one affair on December 19.

To date, we have been practically swarmed with placement of advertisements in our Masonic Yearbook, the publication of which will definitely become a milestone in the history of the GLP. Every Lodge should be desirous of being included in the yearbook.

Every day, too, we receive reservations for commemorative car plates for our diamond jubilee (Annual Communications) celebration in April next year at Bacolod City.

If you have not yet made your reservation, do it *now*, so that you will receive your car plate in January 1991.

On December 19, by the way, each one of the PGMs will receive a special custom-made plaque with his own picture appearing thereon— as an appreciative gesture for the PGM's distinctive and honorable service to the Fraternity during his term of office.

Also on December 19 we will award the 10 Outstanding masons. In this connection, there shall be a lauriat banquet at the new Social Hall of the GLT.

Every Mason is invited to — nay, urged to be a part of — this very important occasion of our Fraternity.

Get your tickets from your respective DDGMs — or directly from the GLP.

Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan will be our honored guest speaker. Guest from other Grand Jurisdictions will grace the occasion.

I expect to see you here at the GLP on December 19.

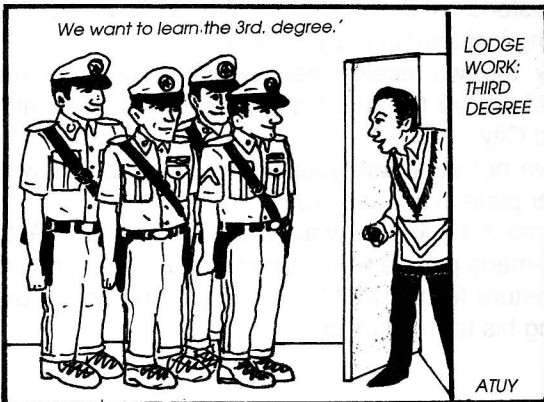
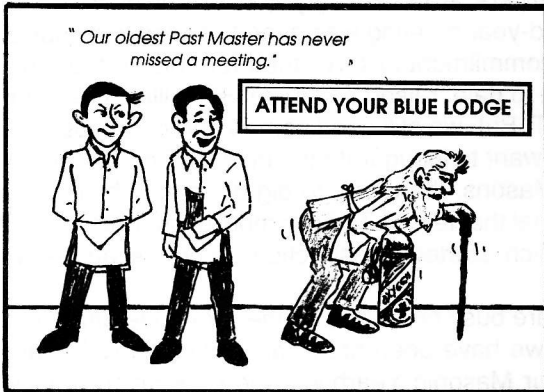
Discipline is a must among Masons if we want to maintain a well-respected, "classy", prestigious Fraternity. If need be, we will clean our Fraternity of scalawags or "rooten eggs".

In fine, let me reiterate: "Each and every Mason should be judicious, prudent, proper, honest, upright, righteous in every deed and word everywhere.

*Let us, my brethren, keep on practising Masonry as our WAY OF LIFE.
Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

ON THE LEVEL

ANTONIO T. UY, PM



POINT AFTER

Samuel P. Fernandez



GRASSROOT ECUMENISM

Before the so-called Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines Pastoral guideline which found print in Cebu City, I wrote in the January-April 1989 *Cabletow* Editorial entitled "MASONRY: NOT A RELIGION BUT A RE-SPECTER OF ALL RELIGIONS".

Prejudices have their own way of swallowing their victims.

Time was when the church thought in black and white, so that touching on gray areas seemed anathema. Why, the inquisition was then accepted as the right way of purging the impenitent!

But this is the age of ecumenism. The dividing walls of animosities have crumbled in the face of the winds of changing thoughts. Cherished old beliefs are now tested in the crucible of truth and reality.

Today Masonry stands as strong as ever. It has stood the onslaught of jaundiced people who have mistaken it as a religion.

Freemasonry, verily, is a fraternal aggrupation of men who believe in the Fatherhood of God, our Creator, and in the Brotherhood of Man, His Creation.

That, in essence, is Freemasonry. It is not a cult as it is perceived by a number of conservative followers of some religious sects.

The conservative posture of some well-meaning Ecclesiastics has not changed since Vatican II. Masonry has had its share of criticisms practically from all sectors of society be it political, religious and otherwise. The fact remains that struggles to coerce uniformity of sentiments in support of some end thought endemic to the time, to the country, to the faith, have been waged by well-intentioned men. As moderate methods to achieve unity failed, those vent on its accomplishment resorted to an ever-increasing severity as shown by Imperial Rome to wipe out Christianity as a disturber of pagan unity, the Spanish Inquisition as a means to religious and dynastic unity, and the Siberian exiles as means to Russian unity, down to futile efforts of dictatorial governments. Unfortunately, compulsory unification of institutionalized thought achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard.

I swing the pendulum of time to Fellowship '73 where the participants showed to all and sundry that despite the unchanging posture of the church no one can stop the people from changing. The article was first published in *The Cross* by a good friend of Masons, Bro. Juan C. Reyes, Jr. Grand Knight, Capitol Council No. 3695.

FELLOWSHIP '73 — NOT AN END BUT A NEW BEGINNING

“East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” This oft-quoted saying could well apply to the Knights of Columbus and the Freemasons— in the past. Today, there is a new awakening; the door has been opened; new ground has been broken. Motivated by the ecumenical spirit, which calls all men as brothers, among other things, “to dialogue according to their ability... to further common efforts... in prayer and in social action”, the Knights and Freemasons have come together in fellowship.

Friendly Golf Match

This fellowship had its start early in 1968 when two old friends and golf cronies, Pat Gonzales of the Luzon Bodies, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of the Republic of the Philippines, and Faustino F. Turla of Capitol Council No. 3695, Cubao, Quezon City, Knights of Columbus in the Philippines, thoughts of holding a friendly golf match between the two fraternal organizations. Pursuing the idea, a joint committee composed of representatives from both organizations discussed details of the project. This resulted in the holding of an annual one-day golf tournament and fellowship banquet to raise funds for charity in 1968, 1969 and 1970 participated in by members of both organizations.

In 1971, the first bowling and tennis tournament between the Knights and the Masons ushered a series of events. The Columbian Squires and the members of the Loyalty Chapter of the Order of DeMolay had their basketball tournament. Fellowship night was highlighted with the participation of the KC-DI Choir composed of members of Knights of Columbus Capitol Council No. 3695 and Daughters of Isabella Regina Mundi Circle No. 1007, and the Scottish Rite Chorale (Brothers of Harmony) together with the Ladies of Melody. It was on this occasion that the idea of having a joint choral concert was born. Alfredo S. Uy of Capitol Council No. 3695 approached Jose B. Abejo, accompanist of the Scottish Rite Chorale, about the feasibility of having such a venture. A planning and coordinating committee was organized composed of Yidefonso P.T. Yang, Lauro M. Cruz, Juan C. Reyes, Jr., Jose R. Villarico and Alfredo S. Uy of Capitol Council No. 3695, and Virgilio

Atienza, Jose B. Abejo, Guillermo Alday, Samuel P. Fernandez and Augusto Panajon of the Scottish Rite Chorale (Brothers of Harmony) — Ladies of Melody, ang Grace Turla Melendrez, choir directress of the KC - DI choir, lent their support.

Choral Concert Proceeds For Needy

Their efforts culminated in Fellowship '72, the first joint benefit choral concert of the Knights of Columbus and Freemasons, which was held at the Philamlife Auditorium on February 5, 1972. Beneficiaries of this first concert were the National Mental Hospital, Quezon City Jail, Masonic Ward for Crippled children and Home for the Aged.

Inspired by the success of their first choral venture, the group decided to hold another joint choral concert in 1973. On the eve of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Philippine Independence last June 11, 1973, the Knights and the Freemasons presented Fellowship '73 (*Alay Sa Kalayaan*) at the Philamlife Auditorium where the near-capacity audience was regaled with a rendition of Filipino songs and kundimans by the Knights of Columbus-Freemasons all-male choir, supported by the combined voices of the Daughters of Isabella and the Ladies of Melody. Recipients of the proceeds of Fellowship '73 were Ephpeta, Inc., the Home for the Aged, the Farmers' Fertilizer Assistance Program, a self-program for our rural folks recently initiated by the Knights of Columbus Community Services, Inc. in accordance with the national effort at economic development, and the Mindanao Refugees, comprising our Muslim and Christian brothers who are evacuees from the troubled areas of Mindanao.

“To bring out goodness”

Fellowship '73 is not an end but a new beginning full of hopes and promises. It manifests the sincere desire of both the Knights of Columbus and Freemasons in the Philippines to continue to join together in collective undertakings for worthy and laudable purpose, in the same way that their counterparts in the United States and Canada have banded together in various community projects. This was aptly expressed in the printed programs of Fellowship '73 distributed during the performance in the following words: “In continuing fellowship, the Knights of Columbus and the Freemasons intend to do anything and everything that expresses their deep faith and trust in an all-provident Lord, their belief in their own eternal destiny of their love of fellowmen as the children of God... To bring out goodness... To share their all with others... To care for the needs of others... To reach out for their other brothers... To stretch their arms and heart to embrace all mankind...”

By **Juan C. Reyes, Jr.**
Grand Knight, Capitol
Council No. 3695

• FLASHBACK • NEWS • FLASHBACK • NEWS •

DISTRICT NO. 17 ACTIVITIES

VW Peter Lim Lo Suy and VW Andres Aldredo S. Mendoza, DDGM and DGL, respectively, completed official visitations of the Lodges in the District. In these visitations, the DDGM stressed the GM's Program while the DGL discussed the GM's basic masonic education program.

Of the District's Lodges, Macajalar Lodge No. 184, again, was adjudged Most Outstanding Lodge. The Most Improved Lodge was Maguindanao Lodge No. 40, and the Most Outstanding Worshipful Master was WB Jun Dayon of Maguindanao Lodge.

The selection of the awards was done by a committee created by the DDGM. The Awards Committee was composed of the Advisory Board Members and the seven Grand Lodge Inspectors.

The awards were given during the 34th Regional Convention held in Cagayan de Oro. Host was L.T. Panares Lodge.

RW Jose R. Guerrero, Deputy Grand Master, gave out the awards at the Divisoria Plaza Restaurant, Cagayan de Oro.

Other newsworthy events are as follows:

- The International Order of Jobs Daughters held the installation of its new set of officers headed by Honored Queen Ma. Cristina S. Tirona.

- Cadena de Amor Chapter No. 16, Cagayan de Oro City, recently approved a new five-year development plan, the highlights of which are: Program Adah, which is focused on education/information and proficiency/professionalism; Program Martha on funds sufficiency and budgetary control; and Program Electa on youth development.

- The Honored Ladies of the De Oro Court No. 15 of the Order of the Amaranth and the brethren from Maguindanao 40, assisted by the Jobs Daughters and the Demolays, sponsored recently a free medical/dental clinic at Pagatpat, Cagayan de Oro City.

- WM Henry Ching Tiu, WM, Macajalar Lodge No. 184, was elected chairman, Advisory Council, International Order of De Molay, Wadih Saab Chapter. WB Rogelio Tirona was elected Chapter Adviser for the third time.

PRIMERA LUZ FILIPINA HONORS PAST MASTERS, SENIOR MASONS, CHARTER MEMBERS

Twenty-six Past Masters and fifty-six Senior Masons were honored by Primera Luz Filipina Lodge No. 69 (Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite) on August 18, 1990.

After the dinner party, which was graced by the families of the honorees, WM Julio G. Agana, Sr., assisted by WB Emmanuel Benjamin Gan, PM and Lodge Secretary, presented pins to the honorees as token of recognition to their dedicated service to the Craft.

WB Esteban Rodriguez, Sr., PM, is the lone living Charter Member but he is still active at the age of 97. For this, he was given a special certificate of recognition for his dedication to the Craft, which he has actively served for 71 consecutive years.

Up to now, propped up by a cane and by brother Masons, he attends stated meetings and special Lodge occasions. He is, indeed, a sight to behold—

a true a stalwart acacia tree whose shades and leaves give comfort and shield to everyone at all seasons.

VW Regalado Manimtim, District No. 10 DDGM, gave a very inspiring message to the honorees as well as to the officers and members of the Lodge and their families.

Some members of the Lodge delighted the audience with a special musical number entitled "Sina Michael at Madonna at ang mga Hagibis".

Everyone enjoyed dancing to the music of the Bonifacio Naval Station Combo, compliments of WB Edgar C. Perez, PM. — Eulogio I. Arnan, Jr., JW & Lodge Correspondent.

JULY 28: MASONIC DAY IN THE CITY OF NAGA

The Hon. Jesse M. Robredo, Mayor of the City of Naga ("Heart of Bicol"), issued Executive Proclamation No. 90-01 declaring July 28, 1990 as a Masonic Day in the City of Naga. The executive proclamation reads thus:

Whereas, the City of Naga has been the home of two Masonic Lodges, Isarog Lodge No. 33, established on February 14, 1917, and the Naga City Lodge No. 257, which was constituted on July 24, 1982;

Whereas, the Masons of both lodges, without publicity and fanfare have displayed deep involvement in various civic and charitable activities through their medical/dental civic actions, regular Christmas cheers and gift-giving to the residents of our depressed barangays, staging the biggest Ecumenical Prayer Rally for Peace in this city during the series of bombings which destroyed two bridges in Camarines Sur and have kept their assistance ready and open when called upon by the city government;

Whereas, the two Masonic lodges have continuously maintained the chapter of the International Order of De Molay, a fraternal association of young men who are engaged in leadership training, dedicated campaigners against drug abuse and are honed and shaped by their Dad Masons in physical, social and moral advancements.

Whereas, the Masons of this city are hosts to a joint convention of eight lodges in the region and the Bicol Orients and Valleys of resources, redirect their programs and address their future activities to the needs of our critical times;

Whereas, this regional forum will make the City of Naga the venue and site of the convergence of the pillars of Freemasonry in Philippine jurisdiction thereby affirming and enhancing its image as a city of peace, stability and progress;

Whereas, to lend significance and meaning to this rare occasion, it is deemed fitting and proper that this day be remembered in the hearts and minds of the citizens of Naga City thru the declaration of a Masonic Day.

Now, therefore, I, JESSE M. ROBREDO, Mayor of the City of Naga, by virtue of the powers vested in me by existing laws, do hereby declare and proclaim this day, July 28, 1990, as MASONIC DAY in the City of Naga and enjoining all concerned to observe this Day with appropriate respect and courtesy.



HARVEST

• J. Flor R. Nicolas (eF.R.eN)

OF COINCIDENCES

Having explained the term *coincidence* through definition, exclusion and illustration, the teacher asked a pupil to cite an example.

"I think it quite a coincidence," enthusiastically intoned the pupil, "that my father and my mother got married on the same day!"

But, seriously, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Commonwealth of Virginia, MW Bro. George W. Farley, and the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, MW Bro. John L. Choa, have the same theme. The Grand Lodge of California, too, stresses that Freemasonry is a way of life.

M.W. Bro. Farley's creed is as follows: "I believe in Freemasonry as a way of life from a faith born not of words but of its tenets. By it we learn to meet upon the level, act by the plumb and part upon the square. By it we learn to use the trowel to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection. By it we obligate ourselves to help, aid and assist those less fortunate. By it we learn that we are on the same level in God's eyes. By it good men become better. By it we are taught to live by the Golden Rule. Yes, I believe in Freemasonry as A Way of Life in all that phrase implies." (*The Virginia Masonic Herald*, April 1990, 3)

That may as well be the credo of every Master Mason in this Grand Jurisdiction!

-oOo-

OF DISPLAYING MASONIC EMBLEMS ON VEHICLES

Late one rainy night when many of the streets of Manila were flooded, the car of a co-teacher and brother Mason with whom I hitched a ride sputtered to a stop at the foot of the Sta. Mesa Bridge. The efforts of my companion to start the engine once more having been futile, we waited under the rain, waving to motorists to come to our rescue. At last a car stopped, its driver having seen the square and compass sticker on the glass at the rear of my co-teacher's car.

I have heard many stories of similar incidents. That is why I know the benefits of displaying a Masonic emblem on one's vehicle. I know, too, that such items may enhance public awareness of our ancient and honorable Fraternity. But those of us who display Masonic emblems on our vehicles must respect the right of all others who use the streets and highways as well as go out of our way to extend the courtesies of the road to others.

"Any act of rudeness or irresponsibility on the part of the driver of a vehicle that displays any emblem, license plate or bumper sticker identifying him as a Mason reflects most unfavorably upon our institution." (*Ibid.*, 13)

Ergo, my Fraternity Brother, if your driving etiquette does not properly entitle you to display any Masonic emblem on your vehicle, you are urged, nay obliged, to remove such emblem.

-oOo-

POSTSCRIPT TO MOST REV. TALAMAYAN'S ADDRESS

The good archbishop of the Catholic See of Tuguegarao, Cagayan accepted the invitation to give an address at the installation ceremonies of Gonzaga Lodge No. 66, F. & A. M.; for he saw that such an occasion might be "a start of sowing the seeds of peace and of healing years of indifference, if not outright distrust, with the comforting balm of pardon." How comforting for a Catholic Mason like me to know that there are archbishops/bishops like him who want to see Catholic and Masonic leaders demonstrate "fraternal cooperation and constructive collaboration with which alone we can rebuild from the shambles strewn around us!" How comforting to hear an archbishop of the church I belong to propose that together Catholic and Mason leaders can become the leaven of understanding and good-will; for, after all, members of the Catholic Church and the Masonic fraternity cherish and share such sublime values as love of God and neighbor, a concern for our country and for its future, and a burning zeal for brotherhood among men."

We thank the good archbishop for commending the Masons' scholarship program and other programs for improving the lot of the less fortunate. Readily we accept his challenge that we Masons do our share in safeguarding our democratic institutions and preserving the rule of law against adventurism of any kind. Indeed, as citizens, we Freemasons are enjoined to be exemplary in the discharge of our civil duties by never proposing or countenancing any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying due obedience to the laws under whose protection we live, and by never losing sight of the allegiance due to our country. We Freemasons cherish the democratic way of life; hence, we shall ourselves help in educating our people in the principles and practices of democracy. We will help in achieving peace and harmony in this country; for we have always believed that harmony is the strength and support of all societies, especially of ours. Surely, in our own measure, we will "... make government officials feel

that citizens, while keeping within the bounds of law, will no longer acquiesce to graft and sleep on their rights.”

We hope and pray that, like Most Rev. Diosdado A. Talamayan, D.D., other leaders in the Catholic hierarchy will be glad “that we can now put the past behind us. We assure the good archbishop that we Freemasons shall “Keep the channels of dialogue open and the welcome-mat always in place.” We hope that Catholic leaders will, like Most Rev. Talamayan, give us a similar assurance.

We are glad to know that the good archbishop welcomes Masons to the episcopal residence and to his heart as well. We assure him that he and other Catholic leaders are also welcome to Masonic buildings and to our hearts as well. We hope that other bishops— and all other religious leaders, for that matter— think and feel the way Most Rev. Talamayan does towards Freemasonry and Freemasons.

A significant number of the members of the Masonic fraternity in this country are Catholics who firmly believe that our fraternity and our Catholic religion are not in conflict; that Freemasonry has never been detrimental to our Catholic faith and doctrine; that, instead, our relationships with our fraternity brothers have strengthened and helped us in our personal lives and in our Catholic faith.

Yet...

The recent threat of “excommunication” has made us agonize over choosing between our Catholic faith and our Masonic membership.

Thus we ask:

Why should accusations that have built walls between Freemasons and Catholics be renewed? Should we not, instead, put the past behind us and “Let the things we hold dear, the faith that sustains us, the country we love, the God who is our Father bind us together in an unbreakable bond of love and peace”? Should we not, instead, cause the wall of prejudice and suspicion to come tumbling down and interrelate in fraternal cooperation and constructive collaboration”? Should we not, instead, “raise our voices together in a hymn of peace that will rise above the din of discord our nation has brought upon itself”?

If in the past we built walls of narrow-minded prejudice, long-standing antagonism, petty differences, and unreasonable suspicions, it is time we destroyed those walls and built bridges of healing forgiveness, humane compassion, empathetic understanding, and benevolent love— *ad majorem Dei gloriam....*

-oOo-

OF THE NEED TO BE MORE VISIBLE

Hacer el bien per algun motivo personaly no por el deseo de hacer el bien no es virtud. Doing good for some personal motive and not for the desire

of doing good is not a virtue. Thus wrote Emilio Jacinto in *Cartilla del Katipunán*.

When, however, the Masons in Northern Mindanao regularly have their Masonic activities featured in *Gold Star Daily*, they are not doing it out of personal motive. They are doing it for their fraternity.

In the August 1 issue of the said newspaper, for instance, we see VW Andres Alfredo Mendoza, DGL of Masonic District 17, turning over a check amounting to P43,930 to M. W. John L. Choa, as donation of the District's Masonic Lodges and Appendant Organizations to the relief funds for the earthquake victims in Luzon.

In the August 9 issue, we see Macajalar Lodge No. 184, in cooperation with Misamis Bodies, A. & A. S. R., and Cagayan de Oro Downtown Lions Club, conducting a free medical-dental clinic at Opol, Misamis Oriental. The Rainbow Girls and Appendant Bodies assisted in the project.

In the August 16 issue, we see VW Peter U. Lim Lo Suy, DDGM, WI Stephen Lim, Special Projects Chairman, and WM Henry Ching Tiu turning over to Barangay Captain Pedro Saarenas the District's donation composed of rice, canned goods and other foodstuffs to fire victims in Barangay Consolacio, Cagayan de Oro City.

We reiterate: other Masonic Districts are advised to follow the lead of District 17, so that the public will know better what we are and what we are doing.

—oOo—

KANLAON 64 IN ACTION

Kanla-on Lodge No. 64 publishes its *Trestle Board* monthly.

In the August edition we read that VW Jess Aurelio, PM, PDDGM and incumbent Kanlaon 64 Secretary, visited the resettlement site of the evacuees from the southern towns of Negros. The site is known as Chicks Area. VW Aurelio was with the staff of the Negros Relief and Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

The visiting party was guided by WM Ramon D. Borrromeo of Dalusan Lodge 281, personal representative of Mayor Rowena Guanzon of Cadiz City. The visitors not only inspected the place and looked over the evacuees' well-being, but they also planted some 2,000 seedlings of mahogany and fruit-bearing trees in consonance with the government's reforestation program.

Meanwhile, Serafin V. Aguilar Chapter, Order of DeMolay, which is sponsored by Kanla-on 64, is actively demonstrating in the area what DeMolays can do.

—oOo—

UPDATE ON ANCOM'91

Ancom 1991 will be held at the University of St. La Salle gymnasium, Bacolod City.

The Executive Committee has announced that a raffle will be drawn on February 14. Major prizes include: Mitsubishi Lancer, G1X 1.5; Mitsubishi Lancer, EI 1.3; Widescreen Television with Beta Hi-Fi; 210 consolation prizes of P5,000 each.

"A solicitor who will have sold 10 tickets will be given one free ticket," said Leo G. Cuachon, District Secretary and Raffle Chairman.

-oOo-

TIDBITS FROM MUOG 89

DDGM Raul Laman lauded Muog 89 brethren for their concern for the poor and needy, but he reminded them not to forget our worthy brothers in distress who might be in more need.

Congratulations to the Lodge for making its Community Charitable Trust Fund bigger.

Dr. Ludovice F. Mariano, Almoner of Muog, asks which kind of a Mason are you:

- A wheel borrow that is no good unless pushed?
- A canoe (or banca) that needs to be paddled?
- A kitten, contented when patted?
- A football that one doesn't know which way it bounces next?

- A balloon, full of air and ready to blow up?
- A trailer that has to be pulled?
- A neon light that keeps going on and off?
- Or a watch, with an open face, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works?

This query, of course, is not original. But it should remind each one of us to strive to become the last one mentioned: a *watch*...

Meanwhile, on the prodding of Macario R. Ramos, Sr., GM, Order of DeMolay, Muog 89 may soon organize a DeMolay Chapter. A Rainbow for Girls Chapter, too!

-oOo-

ARE WE A 'SECRET SOCIETY'?

Of course not!

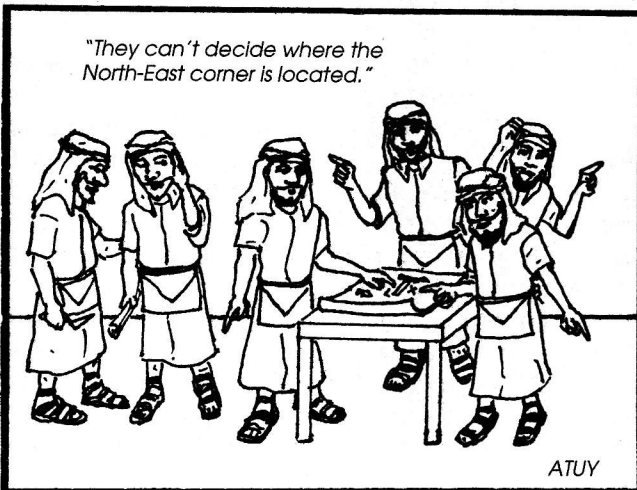
"We are not a secret society at all," remarked MW Kenneth Le Gassick, PGM, Grand Lodge of New Brunswick. "Our buildings are in plain sight... It is there, in plain sight, with the Square and Compasses, and the letter G for all to see. We go into public on many occasions wearing' our regalia..."

"We do have secrets for identification purposes, so that one brother may know another in the dark as well as at noonday, and for the purpose of keeping the Lodge free from cowards and eavesdroppers..."

Why, we do invite the public to the installation of Lodge officers and other Masonic functions!

ON THE LEVEL

ANTONIO T. UY, PM





PAMANA NG LAHI

• Ireneo P. Goce

MGA PANIMDIM SA GUNITA - II

Ako'y nalilito. Naging dalangin kong sana, sa lalong madaling panahon ay magkaroon ng unawaan at pagkakasundo ang aking mga anak, tungo sa tunay na pambansang pagkakaisa ng lahat na mga angkan ng aking lahi.

Nung sinakop ni Don Filipino ang tahanan ko paraan sa magkasanib na puwersa ng krusipihong at sandata ay sinikap niyang itago sa aking mga anak ang lahat na mga uri ng kaalaman, at katotohanan. Ayaw niyang makatuklas ng dunong ang kahi't sino sa aking angkan, sapagka't ipinangamba niyang ang may dunong ay maghahangad lumaya. Isang katibayan nito, hanggang sa nung mga huling araw ng kaniyang pananakop ay mahigpit na ibinawal sa aking mga anak na pagtunghay sa Banal na Aklat.

Kung ano na lamang ang sabihin at ituro sa aking mga kabataan na ayon sa mga prayle ay siyang nararapat ay iyon na rin ang ipinilit na paniwalaan. Salamat na lamang at nagkapalad rin ang iba kong mga anak na makapag-aral sa ibang mga lupain, at doon sila tumuklas ng dunong at maraming mga kaalaman.

Sa ilang mga bansa sa Europa nakatuklas ng dunong ang makabayan kong mga anak. Natagpuan nila ang liwanag at katotohanan sa mga pangaral ng kapatirang Masoneriya. Dito nila natalunton ang landas tungo sa tunay na paglaya hindi lamang ng kaisipan kungdi pati na rin sa larangan ng lahat na pagpupunyagi at kabuhayan.

Ang binhi ng kapatirang Masoneriya, at ang mga pangaral nito, ay inihasik nila sa aking kaparangan, kung saan ang mga ito ay nag-usbong, nanalaya at lumaganap. Ang pagkalat na iyon ng mga pangaral ng kapatiran ay pinuwersang sugpuin ng mga prayleng alagad ni Don Filipino. Buong higpit ang pagtugaygay ng mga alagad ni Don Filipino sa aking mga anak na naging Mason. Marami sa kanila ang nabilanggo, pinahirapan, pinatay o ipinatapon. At nung magsipag-aklas na ang aking mga anak sa panlulupig ni Don Filipino ang gawaing Masoneriya ay napabayaan.

Ang anak kong mga Mason na nakaligtas sa digmaan ay nagsikap na ipagbagong-tatag ang Kapatiran. Subali't isang bagong pakikidigma ang kanilang hinarap. Nung isinuko ni Don Filipino kay Tiyo Sam ang pagkaka-sakop sa aking tahanan, at lubhang pinahirapan ang aking angkan; sila'y nanawagan sa mga kapatid sa tahanan ni Tiyo Sam upang lubayan ang ganoong mga kalupitan, pang-aapi at pagpapahirap. Nakasilip ng puwang si

Tiyo Sam upang hatiin ang aking mga anak na Mason, nang sa ganoon ay maging madali ang panlulupig niya sa aking tahanan.

Higit pa, ang pamamayani ng interes ng mga prayle sa kabuhayan ng aking angkan ay pinagtibay rin sa kasunduan ni Don Filipino at Tiyo Sam na nilagdaan nila sa Paris nung Disyembre 10, 1898. Kung di sana lubhang pakialamero si Tiyo Sam, disin sana ay wala ngayong problemang agrariyan sa aking mga lupain, sapagkat sa ginawang Konstitusyon nuon sa Malolos ng aking mga anak ay ibabalik sa aking mga propyedad ang naging mga lupain ng prayle dito sa aking lugar.

Ang naging hangad ng aking mga anak na sugpuin ang malabis na impluwensiya ng mga prayle sa kabuhayan at pag-iisip ng aking angkan ay nabigo. Hanggang ngayon ay patuloy pa rin ang paniniil sa kaisipan at buhay ng mga angkan kong Mason. At ang pinakahuling pahiwatig ng mga alagad ng simbahang Katoliko ay may pananakot na ieskomulgahin ang mga Katolikong kasapi ng kapatirang Masoneriya.

Nakalulungkot! Sobra ang selos ng simbahang Katoliko sa Masoneriya; gayong sa totoo lang, mga Katolikong Mason ang higit na masusugid at matibay ang debosyon na tumupad ng mga tungkulin sa simbahan, at tumulong sa mga gawaing cleriko. Ang Masoneriya ay hindi relihiyon, at hindi isang uri ng pananampalataya. Ang kapatirang Masoneriya ay isang landas ng buhay. Sa Masoneriya ay samasamang dumadalangin sa iisang Lumikha ang mga alagad ng iba't-ibang mga relihiyon. Ang Masoneriya marahil ang pinakaunang kilusang ekumenismo sa daigdig.

Sapagkat sa kasaysayan ng daigdig, ang mga Mason ang nagsipanguna sa matagumpay na mga kilusang pambansa tungo sa makabuluhang paglala at pag-alpas sa di-makataong pagsasamantala ng ibang lahi, hindi nakapagtataka na marahil ang huling pagsira sa kapatiran ay isang pataksil na paraan, at kinakasangkapan pa ang simbahang Katoliko ng mga lihim na kaaway ng aking tahanan, upang panghinain ang kapatirang Masoneriya dito sa aking bakuran.

Hindi malayo na ganoon marahil ang maitim na tangka. Sapagkat nung ang mga anak ni Tiyo Sam ay nagmadali ring nagtatag ng Gran Lohiya dito sa aking bakuran, tila бага ang Masoneriya ay kinasangkapan din upang ang mga anak kong Mason ay paghiwahiwalayin. Nuon nagsimula ang malubhang pagkakahati ng mga Mason dito sa aking tahanan.

Mga anak, pag-isipan ninyong mabuti ang nangyayari dito sa ating tahanan. Sikapin ninyong magkaroon kayo ng pagkakaisa. Sa inyong pagsamasama nakasalalay ang maliwanag na kinabukasan ng ating bayan at lahi.

Life's battle don't always go to the strongest or fastest man; but sooner or later, the one who wins is the one who thinks he can.

– Anonymous



RESEARCH

• Eufemio dela Cruz

CANON LAW AND MASONRY

The recent disciplinary sanction handed down by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines against Masons could not be more reckless and unfortunate. The directive and ruling only sets back the mutual cordial and harmonious relations that have prevailed since the days when the brethren were looked upon early this century as conspirators against the Catholic Church.

Here in the Philippines, despite so many allegations that the Masons as a body were the ones antagonizing the Church and rejecting the Faith, there are no concrete proofs to this, except perhaps certain isolated cases of some Masons who may have opted to keep their distance from the Church owing to some unbecoming and unusual treatment they encountered on the part of certain bigoted Church authorities or pastors. On the contrary, our national history is replete with the names of heroes and men of profile who were indeed Masons.

These were people who did not antagonize or plot against the Church nor subvert civil authority. In so many ways, these Masons were responsible in the shaping of the destiny of our country and the structuring of the morality of our society and people.

Many, if not all, Masons practice their faith the way their God-given light of reason made them aware of their individual duties to and affiliation with God. Is Masonry then to blame if things go wrong in the Catholic Church, if the Buddhists and Mohammedans and Pagans hold steadfast to their individual faith and convictions? And if Masons induce others with their exemplary conduct to join groupings like our lodges to help others become aware of our religious affiliations and moral duties and responsibilities in the light of faith in which we believe in and worship God, is this wrong?

In a sense, certain Masonic endeavors in the remote past in some countries (England, France, Germany), may have been the reason behind the molding of this ecclesiastical attitude and bias towards Masonry. Very likely, a few historical events could have been the compelling factors that gave way to certain Apostolic or Papal declarations, encyclicals and penal directives which became the matrix of Canon 2335 of the old Code of Canon Law of 1917. We may count, for instance, on the following:

*I graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's Degrees CUM LAUDE in Canon Law at UST in 1957-1959, and a doctoral work which I fully completed and passed minus the printing of my dissertation at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., U.S.A., 1959-1960.

1. The ardent anti-Jacobism of C. Wren which involved several London lodges under the Grand Lodge of England, which took part in the overthrow of King James II, who was supported by the Catholics in the late 1600s.
2. The "Whig" spirit which animated the Grand Lodge of England, and which was hostile to both the Anglican and the Catholic Churches during the early 1700s.
3. The First Masonic Constitution (1723) drawn up by a Presbyterian Pastor, the Rev. James Anderson, where the members were obliged to believe in a minimum of religious opinions common to all men.
4. Most likely, the work of J. Theophile Desaguliers who examined and corrected the "Constitution of Freemasonry" of the Grand Lodge of England, giving way to the words of M. Bernard Fay, who considered Masonry as "...something much more vast than all the revealed religions, and as a superior institution which would work for the social and mental unity of mankind, precisely where the positive religions have failed."
5. Other European rationalistic and naturalistic tendencies such as those of the Rosicrucians after which certain symbolisms in Masonry have been patterned.

These and other matters, perhaps, triggered the harsh and fatal condemnation of Masonry by the Catholic Church. The Code of Canon Law of 1917, which was a compilation of many legislative directives emanating from the Holy See or those enacted by Councils and Churches in communion with the Holy See, was the body of laws that officially ruled the entire Roman Catholic Church.

Under the setting previously portrayed, Pope Clement XII issued his Apostolic Constitution "In Eminentissimi" on April 28, 1738, followed by another of Pope Benedict IV, condemning Masonry and other similar associations. In the next century, Pius VII released another document - "Cons. Ecclesiam", on September 15, 1821, while Leo XIII issued his famous Encyclical "Humanum Genus" in 1884, affirming the condemnation of the Masonic Association and other similar to it. On May 10, 1884, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (the entity behind so many fatal dispositions and mistakes of the Church in the past, like the Inquisition, etc.), issued its own directive against Masonry.

Small wonder then that during the first decade of the 20th century, when a formal codification of laws for the Roman Catholic Church was proposed and planned, these directives would play a vigorous role in establishing the penalties involving associations considered plotting against the Church and the civil powers, precisely, Masonry. Hence, upon the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, we find Canon 2335 sharply pointed against Masonry:

*"Nomen dantes DECTAE MASSONICAE aliisve eiusdem generis
associationibus quae contra Ecclesiam vel legitimis civiles potes-*

tates MACHINANTUR, contrahunt ipso facto excommunicationem Sedi Apostolicae simpliciter reservatam.” (Underscoring and caps all mine).

Meaning, “those who subscribed themselves or became members of MASONIC SECTS and other organizations having the same purpose, that is, TO PLOT/SUBVERT (=MACHINATIO) against the Church and the legitimate civil authorities, incurred the penalty of EXCOMMUNICATION IPSO FACTO (that is, by the very act itself of joining and pledging allegiance thereto), which was simply reserved to the Apostolic See (Vatican).”

Thus, from 1917, therefore, that was IT for Masonry and Masons, until 1983, when the New Code of Canon Law was promulgated with a much different provision deleting the old phrase “sectae massonicae”, (=masonic sects/lodges).

Despite this, however, because of the real and true nature of Masonry as a God-centered and morality-oriented organization or fraternity, opinions throughout the Church all over the world varied in terms of reaction. And although the happenings in England and other European countries in the 17th and 18th centuries were nowhere to be repeated, the lodges keep operating and hold steadfast to the tenets of Masonry centered around the belief in God, brotherly love, relief and truth.

After the Vatican II Ecumenical Council, the present Pope John Paul II, in promulgating the New Code of Canon Law on January 25, 1983, in his Apostolic Constitution “FOR AN EVERLASTING MEMORIAL”, stressed the spirit in which the New Code had been undertaken:

“... that the mutual relationships of Christ's faithful are RECONCILED IN JUSTICE BASED ON CHARITY, WITH THE RIGHTS OF EACH SAFEGUARDED and defined; and lastly, that the COMMON INITIATIVES WHICH ARE UNDERTAKEN SO THAT CHRISTIAN LIFE MAY BE EVER MORE PERFECTLY CARRIED OUT, are supported, strengthened and promoted....”

“... In view of all this, it is very much to be hoped that the new canonical legislation be ... ever more equal to carry out its salvific role in the world.” (all caps mine).

Thus, the new Code of Canon Law which took effect on the season of advent of 1983, in a very understandable and conciliatory manner established by law Canon 1374 in Book VI: Sanctions In The Church, Part II: Penalties for particular offences, Title II: Offences Against Church Authorities and the Freedom Of The Church, stating simply:

“Canon 1734: Qui nomen dat consociationi quae contra Ecclesiam machinatur, iusta poena puniatur.”

Which in English reads: "A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty."

No mention is made as in the previous Code about Masonry or masonic sects. And if the opinion of the old canonical commentators are still to be valid, under the terms *organization/association which plots against the Church*, are the Communists and the Nihilists. Still more, if *the Canon itself (1374) is silent in relation to Masonry*, this would only be understandable in the sense that the codifiers took into consideration the prevailing condition in most parts if not all over the world that MASONRY PRESENTLY HAS NEVER TAKEN AN OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC STAND IN PLOTTING AGAINST THE CHURCH - ANY CHURCH FOR THIS MATTER - AND THE LEGITIMATE CIVIL POWERS due to the two indispensable masonic requirements demanded of each applicant: BELIEF IN GOD and OBEDIENCE TO LAWFUL AUTHORITIES.

Mere suspicions and the continuing RUMORS and sheer ignorance of what Masonry really is, which have influenced many an ecclesiastical mind should not be reasonable basis and a justifying cause for the fulmination of a harsh condemnation by law of the association, this being diametrically opposed to the spirit of the New Code as John Paul II himself cites expressly in his Apostolic Constitution quoted above as to the purposes of reconciliation, and the Church's salvific mission.

More than this, the New Code really anchors itself on justice and charity. We have the following Canon on Penal Law and Precepts:

"Canon 1318: A legislator is not to threaten "latae sententiae" penalties (the term describing one of two forms of penalties, namely, that which is automatically incurred upon the commission or offense, without the intervention of a judge or superior), except perhaps for some outstanding and malicious offenses which may be either more grave by reason of scandal or such that they cannot be effectively punished by "ferendae sententiae" penalties (namely, that which is imposed by the judgement of a court or by the decree of a superior, when a person has been found guilty of an offence). He is not, however, to constitute censures, ESPECIALLY EX-COMMUNICATION, EXCEPT WITH GREATEST MODERATION AND ONLY FOR THE MORE GRAVE OFFENCE." (capital mine).

Even more, in Book I of the New Code, on General Norms, Chapter II, on Singular Decrees and Precepts, Canon 50 calls the attention of the legislator by expressly laying down a cardinal rule:

"Canon 50: Before issuing a singular decree, *THE PERSON IN AUTHORITY IS TO SEEK THE NECESSARY*

INFORMATION AND PROOF AND, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, IS TO CONSULT THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS COULD BE HARMED." (Underscoring and all caps mine).

In the light of the foregoing, what are really the intentions of the local legislators vis-a-vis the intention of the New Code of Canon Law? Masonry has no axe to grind; much less does it harbor anything ill against the Church. Yet the penalty was handed down WITHOUT THE NECESSARY INFORMATION AND PROOF AND, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, NO CONSULTATION WAS MADE AS TO THE VERACITY OF WHAT IS ALLEGED IN THE DIRECTIVE.

We leave the matter to history to become the judge. In our silence and good intention, we equally leave the matter to God, Who, being All-Just and All-Knowing, in His Unerring Judgement, will rectify what men have always mistaken for evil and crooked.

As a final rejoinder, the researcher of this article wishes to make it clear that the foregoing is not a bold attempt at claiming authenticity and authority in terms of interpretation. As a professor who took up studies in Canon Law.* I am very much aware of my present limitations (Canon 16 and Canon 17 of the New Code) in this area, and I am fully aware of my duties as a lay catholic in terms of respect for authority in such a way that what I have written herein should not be construed to mean a defiance and challenge of Church authority, but solely for the purpose of understanding the law in the light of fairness and logical analysis, this subject matter being purely penal and not a DE FIDE issue (=not involving a matter of Faith).

Rather, what the researcher contemplates in the law is the COMMON GOOD (bonum commune) which society and its members are to derive from it (its scholastic definition being an "ordinatio rationis ad bonum commune") and not merely as an instrument of authority. Again, if the law were to be contemplated in the light of the Church's salvific mission, pastoral economy would have to reconcile in justice based on charity, to employ Pope John Paul II's words, the subject matter discussed herein, in order to enhance and ensure the very mission of bringing back more souls into the fold rather than driving them out of the flock with utter condemnation.

For this the remarkable parable of the Lost Sheep should ideally fit into the situation: Christ entirely gave up His life significantly for the LOST ONE leaving behind the ninety-nine inside the flock. Would it be possible for the Church to find and get this ONE LOST SHEEP in Masonry which the authorities still take as a group of conspirators or plotters or a group of non-believers which WE ARE NOT?

SOCIAL CONCORD

Any Article from other Publications on Masonic Unity and Amity is Most Welcome in this Column.

THE PASTORAL LETTER

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
 General Secretarial
 470 General Luna Street
 Intramuros, Manila

Your Eminences/Excellencies:

Hereunder is the *Guidelines on Membership in Free Masonic Associations* approved by the Permanent Council in its Meeting last 14 March 1990:

Since there has been an attempt to spread among the faithful the erroneous opinion that membership in a masonic lodge was lawful, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, through its Permanent Council, felt that it was its duty to make known to the faithful the authentic thought of the Church in this regard. In its Meeting last 14 March 1990, the following Guidelines on membership in Free Masonic Associations in the Philippines were approved:

1. The Church's negative judgement in regard to Masonic Associations remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered unreconciliable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic Associations are in a state of grave sin. (Declaration of the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, 26 November 1983).
2. Therefore, any Catholic who is publicly known as mason, i.e. whose membership in any Masonic Association can be proven external forum:
 - a. may not receive Holy Communion;
 - b. may not be allowed to act as sponsor in Baptism, Confirmation, and weddings;

- c. may not be admitted as members of religious organizations;
- d. Church funeral rites may be denied unless some signs of repentance before death has been shown (cfr. Code of Canon Law #1184, par. 1);
- e. where Church funeral rites were allowed by the Ordinary, no masonic services shall be allowed in the Church or cemetery

Kindly signify your approval/disapproval of the above by returning the slip below duly accomplished.

With sentiments of esteem and warm regards, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Sgd) +LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.
Archbishop of Caceres
President, CBCP



GRAND MASTER'S RESPONSE

The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines views with regret the Guidelines issued by the Philippines views with regret the Guidelines issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference on Membership in Free Masonic Associations dated March 1990. In imposing the penalty of interdiction on Catholics in masonry, the Guidelines state that "the faithful who enroll in Masonic Associations are in a state of grave sin." It reiterates that the old "church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic Associations remain unchanged since their principles have always been considered unreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church."

The Catholic Bishops Conference Statement that the "Church's negative judgment" of masonic association "remains unchanged" is a complete surprise to Filipino Freemasons. We like to recall the result of the historic dialogue conducted between the Catholic Bishops Conference and the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines from 1968 to 1970. After two years of regular meetings where the Freemasons allowed their history, landmarks, full, ancient regulations and rituals to be examined in full, the panel of Catholic experts made the following report and recommendation to the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines:

"5.2 The Catholic Experts' View.

"From all the above mentioned discussion with the Masons, the Catholic panel was happy to report and to recommend to the catholic bishops of the Philippines the following conclusions:"

—"The Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines have in writing given in to all the demands presented by the catholic panel, v.gr. that they would not oppose religious instructions in schools as provided for by law, nor try to separate catholic members from the religion of their choice, nor teach from the religion of their choice, nor teach anything contrary to the official teaching of the Church. In fact, they said they are more than willing to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church, especially in its social endeavours."

—"It is the Catholic panel's belief that Freemasonry as such is compatible with Catholicism. It is only when the leaders interpret it badly, that Freemasonry becomes anti-religious and anti-catholic. Otherwise, it can coexist with the Catholic religion."

—"Freemasonry's intrinsic compatibility with Catholicism rests on the following fact: in religious matters, Freemasonry requires three things from its members, namely, belief in God, the immortality of the soul and the moral life. Now, there is certainly nothing wrong in this. The error comes when the leaders twist

this to their own purposes, proclaiming them to be the only worthwhile religious truths. In this way, Freemasonry becomes either naturalistic, considering all religions to be equal as long as they accept the above truths.”

—“... the Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines is not of the Grand Orient type of lodges, lodges that are known for their anti-clericalism... Much of the anti-clericalism... the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines have manifested in the past was, in our opinion, due more to the state of friction that existed between Masonry and the Catholic Church, especially with the excommunication matter, than to any other thing. These lodges are more for fraternal and social purposes.”

—“Times have altered, people have changed. The Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines want a new era of mutual cooperation. It would be unkind to accuse them of ulterior motives.”

—“The Catholic panel does believe that a change of the old condemnatory attitude towards the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines be adopted. It thinks it is good and opportune that the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines requests the Vatican for the lifting of excommunication from Filipino Catholic members of the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines.”

This favorable report and recommendation was further subjected to a rigorous review by the Episcopal Commission of the Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Bishops Conference. The Episcopal Commission of the Doctrine of the Faith similarly endorsed the report and recommendation of the panel of Catholic experts. On the basis of this careful theological study, the Catholic Bishops Conference sent a formal petition to the Holy See recommending that Canon 2335 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law specifically subjecting Free masons to major canonical penalty should not be applied to the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines (Testera, O.P. *The Catholic Church and the Philippine Masonry, Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, the official Interdiocesan Bulletin, Vol. LIX. Nos. 648-649, Nov-Dec. 1983, pp. 592-593). Parenthetically, Canon 2335 was not reenacted in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

It is evident that as a result of this ground breaking dialogue, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines ceased to entertain any “negative judgment” of Filipino Freemasonry as distinguished from other types of Masonry developed in some parts of Europe. The cause of the metamorphosis in the outlook of the Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops Conference, in a speech delivered on February 16, 1974 before the Scottish Rite Freemasons, as follows:

* * *

“You will admit that Masonry itself has developed differently, and found different expressions, in different countries, although inspired probably by the same principles. Thus in Spain – we are told – it developed under persecution, during the Inquisition, when religious and political interests were difficult if not impossible to dissociate; and there Masonry developed with a definitely anti-Catholic and even anti-religious bias. Eventually, the image of the Church became identified with what we would now call the Establishment; while Masons identified

themselves with liberalism and the struggle for freedom. The relations between the Church and Masonry in Spain were carried over to the Philippines. The rest is history, but it took both sides a long time to get rid of the hang over.

In this whole story, we must admit the fact that individual churchmen, and individual Catholics in general, who were no doubt influenced by the situation and the temper of their times, were not without fault. There were excesses on both sides; but for our part, we must admit there had been failings in charity. Differences of opinion, on principle, on ideas there may be – and some are perhaps inevitable; but persons at all times should be accorded the charity, the goodwill, the love that we Christians profess to be the overriding motivation of all that we do. However, much as we may disagree, we fail in love and in giving due regard for the human person.

It is in fact our increase understanding; and our growing insight into the dignity of the human person, based on our knowledge from contemporary social sciences as well as the development in the theology, that is responsible for the new outlook that is grow in the Church. It is not really new, but a renewal of our vision of what we have always believed in. The reality has not changed, but we now see it in a new and fuller light. In that light also we see where we might have made mistakes in the past. (Italic supplied)

Since that historic dialogue, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines has not changed a comma in its landmarks, laws, ancient rules and regulations and rituals which may offend the Catholic Church. In light of this well heralded ecumenical dialogue and the rush of events which showed the leaders and laymen of both the Church and Masonry embrace and engage in various constructive interactions, we cannot decipher any reason for the turn around in the new CBCP's Guidelines that masonic principles have always been considered unreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church."

Be that as it may, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines harbors neither any ill-thought nor any ill-will and seeks no contention against the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. We have faith that in the fullness of time, this transient mist of mis-understanding between the Catholic Church and Filipino Freemasonry will be dissolved by the virtue of charity. We shall, therefore, continue to open our temples to all seekers of Truth steadfast in the belief that only the power of unarmed truth shall set us free. We shall always await with patience any opportunity to build further bridges of understanding with the Catholic Church. Masonry has been misunderstood thru the ages but it is not for Masonry to misunderstand its critics. We consider this piece of misunderstanding as but a small part of the bigger problem of disunity that plagues our people today. Masonry stands for the harmony of men and rejects any role where it may be an instrument that will only lengthen an deepen the worsening class conflicts in our society.

Given under my hand and Seal of the Grand Lodge this 30th day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

THE RESPONSES

It's not true Masons don't believe in God

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a Pastoral in July 1990 enjoining Catholics not to join the Masonic fraternity, or if they are already members, to renounce Freemasonry or they would be prohibited from being sponsors in baptism, weddings. Such people were also warned that they would be deprived of Communion, extreme unction, funeral and other church rites.

I am a mason. But I am an Evangelical Christian. And Evangelicals are the most theistic of all religious groups in the country, including Christian fellowships.

I am amazed at the accusation against Masonry by the CBCP. The CBCP has chosen an issue that has already been buried by the "fresh air" brought about by Vatican II. There are other important issues, other than the alleged atheism of Masonry, that the CBCP should be concerned about. In the first place, it is not true that Masons do not believe in God. They do I should know; I am a Mason myself.

Secondly, to accuse Masonry as atheistic is divisive. Such accusation will not contribute to peace in the Philippines. The CBCP is one of the religious groups spearheading peaceful negotiations on solving the problems besetting the country. By picking on Masonry as an organization organized and nurtured by the devil, is to make the masons angrier than they are now. If the Roman Catholic Masons stand by their theistic Masonic covenant, the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines will have a big problem in its hands. I don't want this to happen.

Masonry, the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups could be partners in the making of a humane society in the Philippines. They could also join hands in pressing for a responsive government. United, these organizations can contribute to the humanization of Philippine society.

I do not consider helping a fraternal Mason in need, and for which each Mason is committed to do, as "living in sin." (Gal. 5:6b). I do not consider attending a meeting of a Masonic Lodge which is pened with a prayer expressed in this manner as living in sin.

Many good things have been accomplished by Masonry through the years. And Masonry is committed to a meaningful partnership with God in evolving a humane society, in empowering people so that they can defend their dignity, liberate themselves from shameful dependency so they can become self-reliant— **BISHOP ESTANISLAO Q. ABAINZA, Bishop Emeritus, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 877 EDSA, Quezon City**

Church and Masonry

“MY HUSBAND and I were married 25 years ago. We are both Catholics. We, just recently, renewed our marriage vows at a Catholic church.”

We have raised our four children the way our parents and grandparents raised us— God-fearing and God-loving people.

Our children got their education from Catholic schools since pre-school. Until one of my sons transferred two years ago.

My husband is a leader of the Masonic Fraternity. He is a Past Grand Master and the incumbent Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. He has been a Mason since 1970 and never had he renounced his faith in God and in the Catholic Church. He is a true believer, a good man, a good husband, a very loving and devoted father, and a good neighbor, always ready to extend help to anybody who needs it.

We have so many Mason friends of the same stature. Some of them are respected leaders of their respective churches. Many are lay leaders of their respective churches. Many are lay leaders of their respective parishes.

I could not believe my eyes when I read about the decision of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to excommunicate the members of the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, for allegedly being non-believers in God (PDI, 8/11/90).

I had attended so many open Masonic activities here and abroad and in these activities, we always pray, both in opening and in closing, as one of the foremost teachings of Freemasonry is to invoke the blessing of God before entering into any undertaking.

I am sure that many of the families of Masons felt the same way I did when they read the article. Especially those who had been faithfully working for the Church and the community, as well as our children who are studying in Catholic schools and even some who are preparing to become priests in various Seminaries.

The disagreement between our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal and the Catholic church was mentioned as the signal of the rift between the Church and Masonry.

Dr. Jose Rizal, together with other prominent Masons like Marcelo H. Del Pilar, Andres Bonifacio and Apolinario Mabini, had given their lives for the country and had gone to rest in peace almost a hundred years ago. Our country and our people had recognized their role in regaining our peace and lost freedom from the Spaniards. Isn't it now high time that the Church forgive them for whatever "sins" they have committed almost a century ago for the sake of unity, for those who really love the Church and the Catholic faith?

Our Good Lord had always been forgiving. He had always adhered to truth and justice.

I remember the parable of the Good Shepherd who went out of his way to look for a lost sheep from his flock. Having given homilies on this parable so many times, I could not imagine the CBCP driving a whole flock from their own church.

In behalf of my family and the other families of Masons, I would like to appeal to the CBCP to reconsider their decision.

Please give our Masons a chance. They have, for years, worked to bridge the gap. Please do not turn your backs on them, and on their families, who are now affected by the decision.— **MRS. ESPERANZA S. HERRERA, 6 E. de Leon, B. F. Homes, Paranaque, Metro Manila**

From a Mason's wife

"I AM a Freemason's wife and proud to be one."

I was therefore shocked and outraged to read a report (PDI, 8/11/90) that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has issued a "pastoral guideline" which in effect excommunicated Masons. Moreover, Masons, according to the "pastoral guideline," cannot be sponsors in baptisms, confirmations and weddings, cannot be members of Catholic religious groups and are to be denied church funeral rites. All these because Masons are considered to be as living in a "state of sin."

Although your report is not clear on the reasons behind the "pastoral guideline," it states that a priest has said that "Masonic leaders do not believe in God and that their followers are only made to think that they do."

I hope that the Masonic Fraternity and its members will in due time state their position and defend themselves against this assault from the Catholic Church.

In the meanwhile, let me just share with your readers some of my experiences as a Mason's wife.

- My children and I are witnesses to my husband's renewed commitment to the Catholic Church after he became a Mason. We can say that Masonry impelled him to take his Catholic faith more seriously. We perceived in him a more earnest striving to more fully understand and live his Catholic faith.

- He involves himself in church activities. Our neighbors can attest to his joining the Family Rosary Crusade in our village. He also enthusiastically supports Catholic lay activities for the youth and the underprivileged.

- My husband and I are active members of the Worldwide Marriage Encounter, a Catholic lay movement for married couples.

- We saw to it that our children had the benefit of a Catholic schooling. With our encouragement, the older ones have attended Catholic retreats and seminars for the youth.

- Transient priests (including foreigners) have come to our home and have lived with us for a few days. One a foreigner, even said Masses right in

our living room and in our village chapel. All these priests know that my husband is a Mason but none of them took him to task for living in a "state of sin."

- I know that Masons support a Masonic Hospital for Crippled Children in Tondo, Manila. I have joined my husband, who is also a Shriner, and other Masons in arranging orthopedic treatment and care for crippled children and in visiting children burn victims at the National Orthopedic Hospital and at the Burn Unit of the Philippine General Hospital. The doctors and nurses with the work of Masons.

- I, my children and friends have attended installations of officers of Masonic lodges. We have seen the Holy Bible displayed at their altar and we have been asked to rise several times during the ceremonies to join the Masons in prayer.

- Just recently, a former Grandmaster of Masons in the Philippines and his wife, who are known for their many and varied acts of goodness, generosity and charity, celebrated their silver wedding anniversary with a renewal of vows during a mass at the San Agustin Church in Manila. My husband and I and other families of Masons actively participated in the church ceremonies.

I know that my husband makes no claim to sinlessness but he continues to struggle to conform with and live his Catholic faith. I know, too that Masonry is not a fraternity of candidates for sainthood (I know of some black sheep in its fold) but I am told that no one can be a Mason unless he believes in God and that Masons are taught to live a more moral life and to give relief to the needy.

But having in mind his work and conduct as a Mason, does my husband deserve the painful punishment of ex-communication and denial of other Church sacraments? Is he less a Catholic simply because he is a Mason? And how can a priest conclude that he is an unbeliever?

And what does being a Mason's wife make of me? And of my children? Are we, who share bed and board with him, now to be judged as also living in a "state of sin" and cast out as heathens?

I hope the Catholic bishops, after learning more about Masons, will reconsider their condemnation of Masonry. — **RUBY C. DEL CASTILLO, Quezon City**

I" WOULD like to respond to the letters of Mrs. Esperanza S. Herrera ("Letters," PDI, 8/26/90)."

Mrs. Herrera, although I am Catholic and not a Mason, I fully sympathize with your plight and of others with the same predicament.

Your letter was beautifully written from your heart and touched my heart, and I believe that of many others.

I have no doubt that you, your husband, and your friends are good and loving people.

My father-in-law was a Mason of the 33rd degree. I have always known him to be a very good and loving person who loved and slaved for his family and helped those in great need. He did these by deeds and without any fanfare. His children, his relatives and friends, and everyone who had the privilege of knowing him will attest to this. He never talked against God or the Church.

I join my appeal with Mrs. Herrera that the CBCP reconsider its decision. Let us not go back to the Middle Ages. **JOSE FOTAMILLA, Parañaque, Metro Manila.**

ON MASONRY

“The report that the Catholic Bishops conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has excommunicated Roman Catholics who are members of the Free and Accepted Masons associations (PDI, 8/11/90), deserves a clarificatory reaction.”

The decision-action of the CBCP is unfair and cruel to the Catholic men concerned primarily because it is grounded on misinformation and misconceptions on Free Masonry. First, it is not true that masonic leaders do not believe in God and that “their followers are only made to think that they do.” At the risk of being reprimanded by my brother masons, may I inform the good bishops through your column that no man can become a member of the masonic brotherhood unless he first confesses publicly his sincere belief and complete trust in God, the creator and ruler of the universe. And all officers of freemasonry were, for several years plain members of the fraternity before they were elevated to their respective positions by democratic elections.

Secondly, free masons cannot be in “a state of sin” simply because they joined an association whose metaphysics is God-centered and its objectives person oriented. Are belief and reverence of God as the ultimate reality and the supreme end of person, and the rendering of justice and charity to one’s neighbor now considered as sins by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines?

Thirdly, the CBCP alleges that masonic principles are contrary to some doctrines of the Roman Catholic church. Which Catholic doctrine collides with the tenet of masonic principles: love, justice, relief, and truth? I refuse to believe that the CBCP’s concept of Catholic doctrine is devoid of these Christian virtues. — **BEN A JUSTO, Past Chaplain, Magat Lodge #68, F. & A. M. Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.**

“ We must look beyond men who have ‘put in their time’ and be willing to give real leaders a chance to make meaningful contributions.”

August 28, 1990

MW John L. Choa
Grand Master

Dear MW John,

This has reference to your Circular No. 14, Series of 1990. Immediately after the publication in the August 11, 1990 issue of the Inquirer, I sought an appointment with our Bishop of the Diocese of Surigao, Msgr. Miguel C. Cinches, SVD, DD, and hereunder are the results of our dialogue, viz:

1. The news items appearing in the Inquirer is erroneous. This was based on Circular No. 1990.15 of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) which I furnished you last July 23, 1990.
2. The said circular was lengthily discussed during the CBCP meeting in Tagaytay City last July, 1990. Many bishops were against the circular so that the CBCP failed to come out with a pastoral letter. Bishop Cinches was even surprised that this was published when in fact, no decision was made on the said Circular.
3. Each diocese headed by a Bishop has their own "autonomy" so that any decision made will depend entirely on the Bishop. Assuming for the sake of argument that there is indeed a pastoral letter, the implementation will entirely depend on the Bishop concerned.
4. In the meanwhile, Bishop Cinches requested not to "rock the boat" and let the status quo remain.

Our Lodge is indeed privileged to have Bishop Cinches our guest speaker during our 1982 Installation of Officers.

The brethren of Masonic District 31 are confident that Freemasonry will survive and overcome this stormy crisis.

More power to you!

Fraternally,

ANDONI T. Dumlao
District Deputy Grand Master
Masonic District No. 31

Republika ng Pilipinas
LALAWIGAN NG QUEZON
Lungsod ng Lucena

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Agosto 31, 1990

Your Excellency
Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P.D.D.
Archbishop of Caceres
President, C B C P
470 General Luna St.,
Intramuros, Manila

Mahal na Arsobispo Legaspi:

Nabasa ko ang inyong Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Circular No. 1990. 15 na may petsang Marso 23, 1990. Dito ay isinasaad na ang mga alituntunin ng Masonic Associations ay unreconciliable sa doktrina na simbahan. Alin kaya po ang mga alituntunin ng mason na unreconciliable sa doktrina ng Simbahan? Ako po ay dating pari at ngayon ay may asawa. Nag-aral po ako Teolohiya. STHB Summa Cum Laude sa Central Seminary sa Unibersidad ng Santo Tomas at nagkasama tayo doon. Sa ngayong ay mahigit na pitong taon na akong kabilang sa samahan ng mga mason subalit kailanman ay wala akong nakitang alituntuning ng aming samahan na unreconciliable sa mga doktrina ng Iglesia at ng anumang relihiyon.

Inaasahan ko ang inyong kasagutan.
Salamat po.

Sumasainyo,

CONRADO P. MONTERO
Provincial Government Dept. Head

September 13, 1990

Msgr. Fernando R. Capalla, D. D.
Bishop of Iligan and Marawi
Pala-o, Iligan City

Dear Msgr. Capalla:

Thank you very much for your letter of 6 September 1990 requesting us to comment on the accuracy and veracity of the references of Fr. Jose S. Arcilla in his article furnished you by the CBCP General Secretariat.

In connection therewith, please be informed that do not have copies locally of his references above-mentioned. However, we are forwarding a copy of your letter and its attachments to our Grand Lodge for appropriate action. We will give you any feedback later should there be any.

In the meantime, we are pleased to furnish you the following for information purposes:

1. Our Grand Master's Comment Re: CBCP's Guidelines on Membership in Free Masonic Associations; and
2. Photostat copy of Cebu columnist's views on Freemasonry.

We wish to emphasize that we Masons believe in God and certainly not Non-Believers. Like you, we are also hoping for a dialogue in the near future. With God's blessings, we will succeed.

May God be with us always.

Very truly yours,

HENRY DY

6 September 1990

Dear Friends in the Masonic Association,

From the General Secretariat of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines I received the enclosed article written by Jesuit priest, Fr. Jose S. Arcilla.

In the interest of truth and brotherhood may I request you to comment on this article. I am interested especially in the accuracy and veracity of Father Arcilla's references.

Personally I am not happy with the tone and conclusions of the author. As a whole the article does not help in furthering dialogue which started after Vatican II and in whose spirit we all must continue to pursue. For one thing, there is a glaring absence of any reference to pertinent documents of Vatican II.

As chairman of the Philippines Bishops Commission on Interreligious Dialogue and on Dialogue with Non-Believers, I am interested in knowing the mind of the local masonic lodges and in establishing some kind of contact leading to formal dialogue in the future.

With every good wish and prayer, I remain

Very truly yours,
FERNANDO R. CAPALLA, D. D.
Bishop of Iligan and Marawi

Freemasonry is compatible with religion

Last week, a small storm was created by a Catholic bishop on the issue of Freemasonry. Freemasonry came under attack when the bishop told his churchgoers that Catholics who joined the Masonic society could be excommunicated and not be given sacramental rites. The day after another bishop gave a lie to the first bishop's ex-communication threat by saying that the Catholic church does not impose "ex-communication as a penalty" but rather consider joining the Freemasonry society as a "grave sin." Is it? Only God knows.

What is this thing called Freemasonry? History tells us that Freemasonry is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternity in the world. Exactly when Freemasonry began is not known for certain, but historians trace the beginnings of masonry to the Middle Ages, when stonemasons and other craftsmen traveled throughout Europe. These men were known as free masons (they had no bosses or masters), because they were free to move where their work demanded (like the carpenters and building masons we have today). These free masons would gather in shelter houses, or lodges (lodging house), and eventually organized themselves into masonic guilds (a labor union or association), using the secret of their craft to identify themselves as masons. The square and compass (the tools of the masons trade) became the symbol of their brotherhood.

When the need for such builders declined in Europe (or when the housing boom was over), "Symbolic" Masonry evolved, using the customs and tools of the craft to convey moral truths. The organizations grew and attracted men of integrity and good will, and the masonic guilds or associations began to accept members who were not masons, calling them "accepted masons." The masonic association was more of a fraternity (like those fraternities in colleges and universities). In some places in Europe it was known as "Ancient Free and Accepted Masons," and in some European states the young organizers called their fraternity as "Free and Accepted Masons."

As the years went by, the composition of Freemasonry extended to men bound together not by trade but by their desire to be fraternal brothers. And the fraternity was opened to men of any faith and the discussion of religion during meetings were prohibited, though meetings are opened by prayers relating to the matter to be discussed and does not amount to the

practice of religion. A Freemason remains committed to the God of the religion he professes; to the God as each member see Him.

Through the improvement and strengthening of the individual's character, Masonry seeks to improve the community and to make good men better through belief in the Brotherhood of Mason and the Fatherhood of God, and the immortality of the soul. The only requirement for masonry membership is that a man must be of good moral character, profess belief in a Supreme Being (God), and be at least 21 years of age. And that he must join the fraternity of his own free will. One thing I have observed about Masonry is that they do not solicit members or conduct membership drive to supplement its membership roster.

Masonry is not a secret society. Its only secrets are its methods of recognition and symbolic construction. It does not hide its existence, and does not advertise its humanitarian works. And it is not a religion in whatever concept, though it requires its members to have a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being (Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammad, or whatever God is called in one's religion), the reason why it accepts men regardless of their religion and encourages them to participate in their respective religious services and to worship according to their faith.

One of the greatest contributions of masonic fraternities all over the world are the establishment of Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children. In the United States there are about more than 20 of such hospitals — all dedicated to providing quality medical care at no cost whatsoever to indigent children with problems of the bones joints or muscles, including severe burns. In these hospitals supported by Masons, children are provided with some of the most advances medical facilities and medical care available, absolutely free of charge. OBSERVATIONS has seen this with his own eyes when he toured the United States.

OBSERVATIONS, who is practical Catholic, would like to say that this piece is not in defense of Freemasonry. The purpose is to put the issue in its proper perspective because Freemasonry is less understood by the non-Masonic public. Much more to let the public know that Freemasonry is not a religion (as gathered from our research and investigation). Am I a freemason? I am not and do not intend to be one. (**Eddie R. Gandionco**, *The Freeman*, **Wednesday August 22, 1990**)

Mason Catholic

Of late, there has been a lot of talk about Catholicism and Masonry. It seems that the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines has announced the excommunication of Masons or words to that effect.

Yesterday, Pete Ochoa, manager of the Seafood Market Restaurant in Cubao, approached us and gave us the xeroxed copy of an Abigail Van Buren column in 1978 which had this headline: "Can a Catholic become a Mason?"

This question was posed to Abigail by a Catholic who became a Mason. What the columnist did was to ask the Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen, then titular archbishop of Newport, and one of the most brilliant writers of the Catholic hierarchy. Bishop Sheen's reply follows in full:

Dear Abby: It was a joy to hear from you and I shall try to answer the question submitted: "Can a Catholic become a Mason and maintain his standing in the Catholic church?"

That depends. According to the letter sent to the presidents of the various National Conferences Catholic Bishops, by Cardinal Seper, prefer of the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated July 18, 1974, membership by lay people in Masonic groups is acceptable, provided these groups are not actively hostile to the church.

Clerics, religious, and members of secular institutes still are forbidden in every case to join Masonic associations.

Canon 2335 of the current Code of Canon Law of the church continues to remain on the books but it is to be interpreted in the light of the above mentioned letter.

With warmest personal regards — God loves you.

Sincerely,
Fulton J. Sheen

Puzzlement

Ochoa was puzzled over the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy towards Catholic becoming Masons.

"I'm a Muslim and a Mason but I have not lost my goods standing as a Muslim," Ochoa proudly pointed out. "I'm surprised that there's so much debate in Catholic circles about Catholic becoming Masons."

To prove that Freemasonry does not have anything against the Catholic church, Ochoa cited some of the tenets on which Masonry is based.

"The three great pillars of Masonry are Faith, Hope and Charity: Faith in God, that He is good, wise and merciful, a Father and not a tyrant, whom we are as children to love, and not as slaves to fear. Faith in human nature, in the honesty of men's purpose and in man's capability for improvements; and Faith in ourselves, in the power to do good and influence others to do likewise."

We would like to hear from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines about this matter.

Before anyone says that we are not qualified to say anything on this matter, we'd like to say that we are a practising Catholic and we belong to a Catholic family. In fact, one of our sisters (Sister Esperanza or Sister Hope) is a nun in the Order of the Good Shepherd. (Joe Quirino, *Pass The Word, The Phil. Star, September 4, 1990*)

SLICE OF LIFE.....



MW John L. Choa with Masonic District No. 23 brethren.

MW John L. Choa with VW Felipe Salvador, VW Leonardo Chua, VW Peping Anes and the Ilagan-Isabela Hermanas.



MW John L. Choa, VW Leonardo Chua and Hon. Mayor and VW Peping Anes at the Rizal wreath laying ceremony.

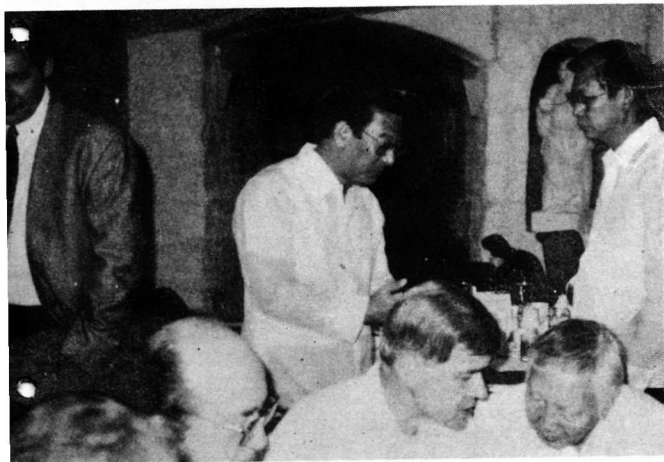


District No.4 and No. 25 District Convention pictorial highlights (Henry Dy).



WB William Webb Master of Manila-Mt. Lebanon Lodge No. 1 presenting a token to MW John L. Choa during the Testimonial Dinner given to him by his Mother Lodge.

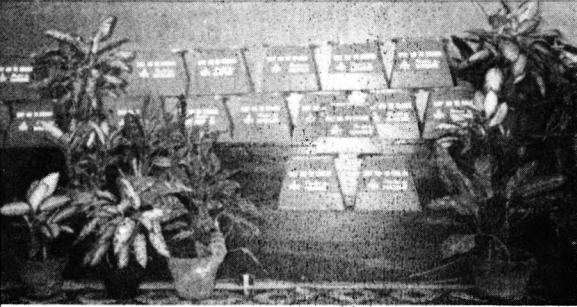
MW John L. Choa with his whole family during the Testimonial Dinner given in his honor by his mother Lodge, Manila-Mt. Lebanon Lodge No.1.



The Grand Master discussing Grand Lodge Business with MW Rosendo C. Herrera, our Grand Secretary and Past Grand Master.



Ozamis City—Mt. Malanday brethren provide street children with shoe-shine boxes, on which is printed anti-drug slogan.



Union Lodge No. 70 loading relief goods from left - right: Bros. Oscar S. Ramos, Doro-teo B. Lee, Constante P. Uy, Rodolfo Padua, Anson Sia, & PC brother, Bros. John D. Suliba, Renato M. Paredes, Hidden is Bro. Brian Le Butt.





Walana Lodge No. 13, under WB Esteban Requireme's leadership, takes a breather at Seaside Beach Resort, May 20, 1990. With the brethren and families are: MW Rosendo Herrera, PGM and incumbent Grand Secretary; and some members of Mt. Mainam Lodge No. 49, Naic, Cavite (Hampalaminine).

Brethren of Narra Lodge No. 171 distribute blankets and drinking water jars to earthquake victims.



Noli Me Tangere Lodge No. 148 family outing.



*Iloilo brethren welcoming
MW John L. Choa and Party*

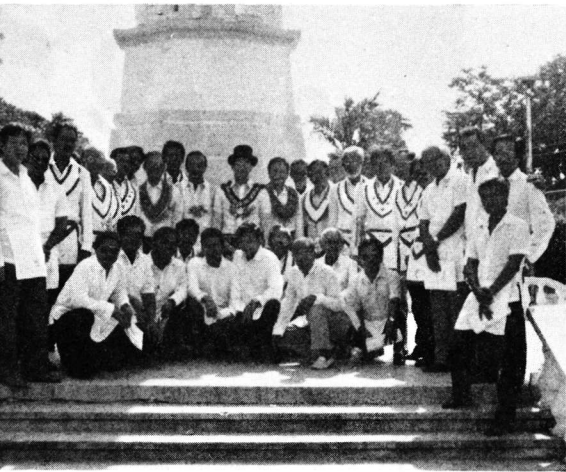


*The brethren and winners of
District Oratorical Contest.*





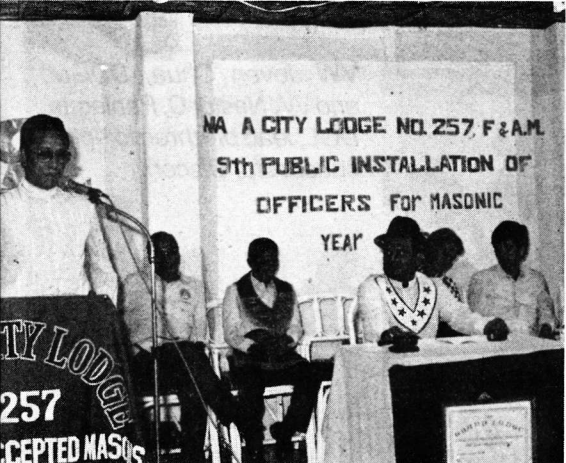
VW Joven Chua, DDGM, and VW Nestor C. Panlaque, DGL, lead brethren to hold a successful Discon.



MW John L. Choa with
Masonic District No. 23
brethren.



VW George Krause deliver-
ing the charge to Fellowcraft.



VW Samuel P. Fernandez,
Guest Speaker, Naga City
Lodge No 257 delivering his
speech on "Value Educa-
tion: Boon or Bane?" Naga
City Lodge No. 257's three
Lights are WB Hargun, K.
Ramchand (WM), Bro.
Dante C. Banaban (SW),
and Bro. Ernesto L. An (JW).



Bro. Mayor San Luis of Sta. Cruz, Laguna with MW John L. Choa and Party during the District No. 11 Convention.



Brethren of Masonic District No. 28 send-off party at the Mindoro pier.



EDICTS

EDICT NO. 129

DIVIDING MASONIC DISTRICT NO. 6 (NUEVA ECIIJA) INTO TWO (2) SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DISTRICTS NO. 6-A AND 6-B

TO: ALL DDGMs, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF LODGES UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

WHEREAS, in consequence of the abrogation of Edict No. 97 Masonic District No. 6 is presently composed of the following Lodges:

1. Memorial Lodge No. 90 located at Munoz, Nueva Ecija
2. Gen. Manuel Tinio Lodge No. 167 located at Guimba, Nueva Ecija
3. Narra Lodge No. 171 located at San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
4. Pantabangan-Bonari Lodge No. 203 located at Rizal, Nueva Ecija
5. Apolinario Mabini Lodge No. 235 located at Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija
6. Molave Lodge No. 261 located at Lupao, Nueva Ecija
7. Mt. Amurong Lodge No. 264 located at Talugtug, Nueva Ecija
8. Cabanatuan Lodge No. 53 located at Cabanatuan City
9. Nueva Ecija Lodge No. 73 located at Quezon, Nueva Ecija
10. Gen. Llanera Memorial Lodge No. 168 located at Gapan, Nueva Ecija
11. Kapatiran Lodge No. 228 located at Cabanatuan City
12. Manuel L. Quezon Memorial Lodge No. 262 located at Baler, Quezon
13. Zaragoza Lodge No. 263 located at Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija
14. Talavera Lodge No. 273 located at Talavera, Nueva Ecija

WHEREAS, to provide for efficient and effective supervision and administration and to enable the District Deputy Grand Master and District Grand Lecturer and to conduct periodic visitations of the subordinate lodges, it is desirable that the Masonic District No. 6 be divided into two (2) separate and distinct districts comprising of subordinate lodges geographically located as near to each other as possible.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN L. CHOA, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby promulgate and decree that Masonic District No. 6 is henceforth divided into Districts No. 6-A and 6-B comprising the following subordinate Lodges:

DISTRICT NO. 6-A

1. Cabanatuan Lodge No. 53
2. Nueva Ecija Lodge No. 73
3. Gen. Llanera Memorial Lodge No. 168
4. Kapatiran Lodge No. 228
5. Manuel L. Quezon Memorial Lodge No. 262
6. Zaragoza Lodge No. 263
7. Talavera Lodge No. 273

DISTRICT NO. 6-B

1. Memorial Lodge No. 90
2. Gen. Manuel Tinio Lodge No. 167
3. Narra Lodge No. 171
4. Pantabangan-Bonari Lodge No. 203
5. Apolinario Mabini Lodge No. 235
6. Molave Lodge No. 261
7. Mt. Amurong Lodge No. 264

The District Deputy Grand Masters and District Grand Lecturers appointed as such and duly installed during the installation of the Elected and Appointed Officers of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of the Philippines on April 28, 1990 at U. P. Los Baños, Laguna to the positions created under Edict No. 97 shall continue in office as such retroactive to May 22, 1990. This Edict shall take effect immediately and shall be read in open Lodge at the stated meeting following its receipt and shall be recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Grand Lodge at the City of Manila on this 5th day of July 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

“ Liberty, Equality, Fraternity! Here is the motto that defines the aspirations of our illustrious order; here is summed up the informing principles of Masonry; here is symbolized the Masonic virtues; here is, finally Masonry in all its splendour.”

**MW Teodoro M. Kalaw, PGM
Philippine Masonry (1920:23-24)**

EDICT NO. 130

**DIVIDING MASONIC DISTRICT NO. 9
INTO TWO (2) SEPARATE AND DISTINCT DISTRICTS
NO. 9-A AND 9-B**

WHEREAS, Masonic District No. 9 is presently composed of the following Lodges:

1.	Silanganan	Lodge No. 19
2.	Labong	Lodge No. 59
3.	Muog	Lodge No. 89
4.	Marikina	Lodge No. 119
5.	Quezon City	Lodge No. 122
6.	T. M. Kalaw Memorial	Lodge No. 136
7.	Rafael Palma	Lodge No. 147
8.	Juan Sumulong Memorial	Lodge No. 169
9.	Capitol City	Lodge No. 174
10.	Laong-Laan	Lodge No. 185
11.	Andres Bonifacio	Lodge No. 199
12.	Jacobo Zobel Memorial	Lodge No. 202
13.	Mandaluyong	Lodge No. 277
14.	Pagkakaisa	Lodge No. 282
15.	Kagitingan	Lodge No. 286

WHEREAS, Labong Lodge No. 59 has held its stated meetings and conducted its Masonic transactions for the last ten (10) years in the City of Manila;

WHEREAS, King Solomon Lodge No. 150 on the other hand is within the jurisdiction of Masonic District No. 1-C Manila but has been holding its stated meetings and conducting its Masonic transaction at Jacobo Zobel Memorial Lodge No. 202 in Makati, Metro-Manila and within the jurisdiction of Masonic District NO. 9;

WHEREAS the above subordinate Lodges are located in the whole of Metropolitan Manila and suburbs thereof and far from each other;

WHEREAS, to provide for efficient and effective supervision and administration and to enable the District Deputy Grand Masters and District Grand Lecturers to conduct periodic visitations, it is desirable that the Masonic Districts comprising of subordinate Lodges geographically located as near to each other as possible;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN L. CHOA, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby promulgate and decree that:

1. MASONIC DISTRICT NO. 9 is henceforth divided into District No. 9-A and 9-B comprising the following subordinate Lodges;

DISTRICT NO. 9-A

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Silanganan | Lodge No. 19 |
| 2. Marikina | Lodge No. 119 |
| 3. Quezon City | Lodge No. 122 |
| 4. T. M. Kalaw Memorial | Lodge No. 136 |
| 5. Rafael Palma | Lodge No. 147 |
| 6. Juan Sumulong Memorial | Lodge No. 169 |
| 7. Capitol City | Lodge No. 174 |
| 8. Laong-Laan | Lodge No. 185 |
| 9. Andres Bonifacio | Lodge No. 199 |
| 10. Mandaluyong | Lodge No. 277 |

DISTRICT NO. 9-B

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Muog | Lodge No. 89 |
| 2. King Solomon | Lodge No. 150 |
| 3. Jacobo Zobel Memorial | Lodge No. 202 |
| 4. Pagkakaisa | Lodge No. 282 |
| 5. Kagitingan | Lodge No. 286 |

2. Labong Lodge No. 59 by virtue of its members having held their stated meetings and conducted official Masonic transactions in the City of Manila for the last ten (10) years and in the interest of the Craft is henceforth assigned to the jurisdiction of Masonic District No. 1-C. Upon the other hand, King Solomon Lodge No. 150 having held its stated meetings and conducted official Masonic transactions in the Municipality of Makati, Metro-Manila since its constitution is henceforth assigned to the jurisdiction of Masonic District No. 9-B as above divided.

3. The District Deputy Grand Masters and District Grand Lecturers appointed as such and duly installed during the installation of the Elected and Appointed Officers of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of the Philippines on April 28, 1990 at U. P. Los Baños, Laguna to the positions created under Edict 97 shall continue in office as such retroactive from May 22, 1990.

4. This Edict shall take effect immediately and shall be read in open lodge at the stated meeting following its receipt and shall be recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge at the City of Manila this 6th day of July 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

EDICT NO. 131

PROHIBITING EXCESSIVE HANDLING AND MALTREATMENT OF CANDIDATE DURING INITIATION, PASSING AND RAISING AND SIMILAR MALPRACTICES AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFORE

WHEREAS, our Masonic rite ordains that a candidate for the three degrees in Masonry shall submit to initiation, passing and raising as all brothers who have preceded him have been required to submit to;

WHEREAS, the various forms and ceremonies made use of in the initiation, passing and raising of a candidate are begun by invoking the blessings of God so that the candidate needs fear nothing that man can do to him as he pursues the rite of passage;

WHEREAS, the ceremonies in the three degrees are allegorical and are made use of to teach moral principles explained to the candidate; hence, our Monitor admonishes: (Al M % T shd emplo ve mr thn actn to imprs Cdt, avd brtly l al cs.);

WHEREAS, it has been observed personally by responsible officers of the Grand Lodge, and brought to the attention of the Grand Master that certain officers or members of the conferring team given assignments during initiation, passing and particularly in the raising of a candidate either because they are near the candidate or in the guise of performing their duties have at times manhandled or maltreated candidates, thereby inflicting bodily injuries to his person, or have given false and unauthorized instructions to the candidate intended to elicit humor or boisterous behavior at the expense of the candidate but which behavior tends to deteriorate to comedy, thereby detracting from the solemnity of the proceedings instead of venerating the symbolism behind the rituals;

WHEREAS, in the interest of the Craft, all the above malpractices have to stop;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN L. CHOA, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution do hereby promulgate and decree.

1. A Master Mason who shall wound, beat, assault or otherwise maltreat or manhandle violently and excessively a candidate during initiation, passing or raising, whether or not as a member of the conferring team, shall be guilty of unmasonic conduct.

2. If, in consequence of the maltreatment, the candidate suffers slight or less serious physical injuries as defined in the Revised Penal Code, the offender shall suffer the penalty of suspension for not less than 6 months or more than 1 year and/or deprivation of office or title.

If, in consequence of the maltreatment, the candidate dies or suffers serious physical injuries as likewise defined in the Revised Penal Code, the penalty of expulsion shall be imposed against the offender without prejudice

to the lodge forfeiting its charter and subject to charges and trial for un-masonic conduct and violation of this Edict against the Worshipful Master and other officers of the lodge present during the incident leading to the physical injuries or death of the candidate.

3. Prior conviction for a criminal offense of the offender arising from the maltreatment shall not be necessary for purposes of applying the provisions of this Edict.

4. A Master Mason who shall give unauthorized instructions to a candidate intended to elicit humor or boisterous behavior at the expense of the candidate during initiation, passing or raising, shall be guilty of un-masonic conduct and shall be punished by suspension or reprimand.

5. This Edict shall take effect immediately and shall be read in open Lodge at the state meeting next following its receipt and shall be recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge at the City of Manila this 6th day of July 1990.

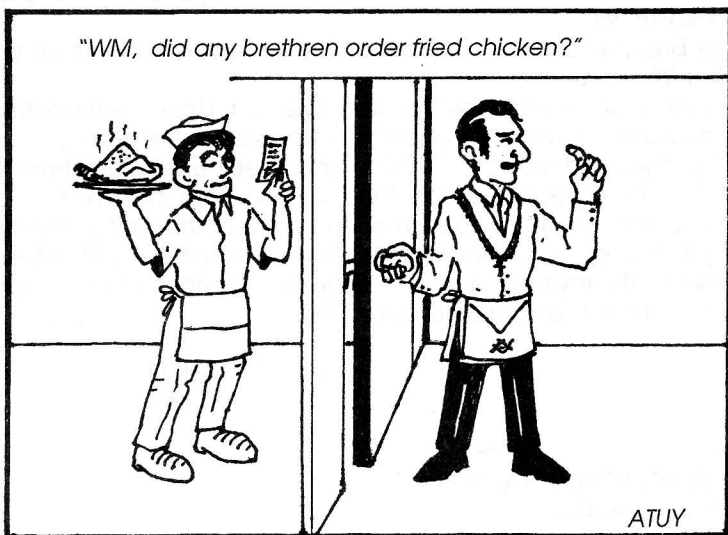
JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

ON THE LEVEL

ANTONIO T. UY, PM



CIRCULAR

**CIRCULAR NO. 9
SERIES OF 1990-CHOA**

TO: ALL DDGMS, DGLS, GRAND LINE OFFICERS,
MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF LODGES
UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: MASONIC YEAR BOOK

Among the highlights of the Six-In-One Affair calendared on December 19, 1990, is the launching of our Masonic Year Book of approximately 800 pages, covering the period 1912-1990 and shall contain valuable masonic articles and the histories of the Grand Lodge as well as the blue lodges.

Each Blue-Lodge shall be required to subscribe to a minimum of two pages advertisement: One page for the pictures of the officers and the lists of its members and another page for the brief history of the Lodge. However, solicitation of as many advertisements over and beyond the minimum requirement of two (2) pages is encouraged and will entitle the soliciting Lodge to a ten percent (10%) discount.

All DDGMS, DGLs and Grand Line Officers are likewise required to solicit a minimum of two (2) pages advertisement.

The advertising rates and specifications are as follows:

Inside Full Page	-	P 2,000.00
Inside Half Page	-	1,200.00
Page Size	-	8 1/2" x 11"
Artwork	-	For the account of the Advertiser

Payments will be on cash basis or cheques payable to the Grand Lodge Year Book Project.

The Brethren are advised to submit their advertisements on or before November 30, 1990.

For the information of the Brethren, this Year Book will be distributed to all Grand Lodges in the world and will also be sold to the public.

All Lodges and Masonic Districts are hereby urged to extend their full cooperation and support to ensure the success of this endeavor.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon, duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 8th day of July 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:
ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

ADVERTISING CONTRACT

I/We agree to advertise in the 1990 Masonic Yearbook of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, F. & A. M. in accordance with the following specifications:

Size of ad _____ Cost of Ad _____
 Enclosed is payment made in the amount of _____
 together with the enclosed layout.

Solicited by: _____
 Advertiser

 NAME SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED

 LODGE DATE

Payment in the form of _____
 ADDRESS

Payment received by: _____
 Telephone No. (s)

Official Receipt No. _____

RATES AND SPECIFICATIONS

Inside Full Page	P2,000.00
Inside Half Page	P1,200.00
Page Size	8 1/2 x 11
ARTWORK	For the account of Advertiser

Please make cheques payable to Grand Lodge Yearbook.
 For further information, please call VW Agerico V. Amagna, Jr.
 Tel.:59-35-36/59-71-85.

-oOo-

**CIRCULAR NO. 10
SERIES OF 1990-CHOA**

TO : ALL MASTERS, WARDENS AND OTHER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUBORDINATE LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL 75TH ANCOM DIAMOND JUBILEE COMMEMORATIVE CAR PLATES**

The Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. of the Philippines will be celebrating its 75th Annual Communication (Diamond Jubilee) in April 1991.

In this connection, a commemorative car plate will be issued as one of the highlights of the celebration. However, for proper control and implementation of this project, only those who have made the necessary reservations and have fully paid the corresponding price to the Grand Lodge will be presented and issued the car plates sometime in January, 1991.

For the information of the Brethren, the proceeds of this project is intended for the completion of the New Grand Lodge Temple Building and we urge all to support this worthy endeavor.

Hereunder are pertinent details on this project:

1. Plate Numbers Ordinary Plates will be numbered from 101 and will be released in accordance with the sequence when the order for the car plate was made. All these plate numbers will have "GLP" as the common identifying letters except those numbers which are all Triple Numbers such as 111, 222, 333, 444, 555, 666, 777, 888, 999 preceded by the initial letters of the buyer which are considered Special Plates.

2. Price of Car Plates:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| a) Ordinary | - | P500.00/pair |
| b) Special | - | 1,000.00/pair |

3. Submission of Reservation Forms and Payments.

All reservations for car plates should be placed with the Grand Lodge Special 75th ANCON (Diamond Jubilee) Commemorative Car Plates Project, c/o The Grand Master. Payments will be on cash basis or checks. No car plates will be released unless fully paid and properly receipted. All payments shall be issued Grand Lodge Official Receipts

For further details, please communicate with the office of the Grand Master.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the State Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon, duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila this 9th day of July, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve for me _____ pairs of the special Ancom Commemorative car plates (Diamond jubilee) to be issued on January 1991. Attached herewith, is my payment:

Payment in the form of: Cash _____ Check _____

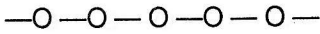
Payment received by: _____ O.R. No. _____

(Please make all checks payable to the Grand Lodge car plate)

RATES

Ordinary numbers	P500.00/pair
Special numbers	P1,000.00/pair

NAME & SIGNATURE	DATE
LODGE NO.	EXISTING CAR PLATE NO.
ADDRESS & TEL. NO.	DIAMOND JUBILEE CAR PLATE NO.



**CIRCULAR NO. 11
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA**

**TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBER
OF SUBORDINATE LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION**

**SUBJECT: POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE THAT ROCKED METRO
MANILA AND OTHER PARTS OF LUZON**

A very strong earthquake hit Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon yesterday afternoon and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology announced that the quake measured Intensity 8 on the Richter Scale.

The earthquake caused considerable damage to property and confirmed reports said that many people died during tremors described as the worst in many years.

At this time, our obligation as Masons is to lend all aid and assistance to worthy distressed brethren, their widows and orphans.

As Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of F. & A. M. in the Philippines, I am, therefore, calling upon all Brethren in this jurisdiction to respond to the effects of yesterday's earthquake and extend whatever assistance we can give to those in distress in coordination with concerned government agencies in the wake of reports on deaths, injuries and damage to property.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 17th day of July, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary



**CIRCULAR NO. 12
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA**

TO: DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTERS, DISTRICT
GRAND LECTURERS, WORSHIPFUL MASTERS AND
BRETHREN OF MASONIC DISTRICT NOS. 1-A, 1-B, 1-
C, 7, 8, 9-A, 9-B, 10, 11 & 29

SUBJECT: **MW MANUEL L. QUEZON, PGM, BIRTHDAY CELEBRA-
TION AUGUST 19, 1990**

It is our masonic duty and obligation to honor masons who have distinguished themselves specially those who are acclaimed as our National Heroes. On June 12, 1990, we participated in the Independence Day Celebration in honor of our Bro. Emilio Aguinaldo. On June 19, 1990, we participated in the Birthday Celebration of Bro. Jose P. Rizal at Calamba, Laguna.

On *August 19, 1990*, The Grand Lodge will again actively participate in the Birthday Celebration of President Manuel L. Quezon, a Past Grand Master of our fraternity, at Quezon Memorial Circle. Vice Mayor of Quezon City Hon. Tito Sotto, a brother mason, made arrangement that we be given a prominent part. I therefore enjoin all masons of the above mentioned districts to join and participate in this joyful occasion in honor and memory of a great Filipino patriot and Past Grand Master of our Grand Lodge.

Breakfast will be served courtesy of VW Rogelio Talastas, District Deputy Grand Master of Masonic District No. 9-A.

Assembly point will be at the Capitol Masonic Temple near the City Hall at *7:00 AM*.

This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the stated meeting next following its receipt and such action duly recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, in the City of Manila, this 6th day of August, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

**CIRCULAR NO. 13
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA**

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, Grand Line Officers, Masters,
Officers and Members of Lodges Under This Jurisdiction

**SUBJECT: Deadline for Submission of Advertisements
for Masonic Year Book**

Further to Circular No.9 dated July 9, 1990, on the same subject and to give ample time for the Committee preparing the Masonic Year Book, the deadline for the submission of advertisements previously set on or before November 30, 1990, is hereby advanced and therefore, must be submitted on or before October 31, 1990.

The Committee Chairman of the Special Project for Masonic Year Book, MW Reynold S. Fajardo, PGM, is particularly interested in the histories of the Blue Lodges highlighting their formative years till eventually becoming strong Lodges that now comprise the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next followings its receipt and action thereon, duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 10th day of August, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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CIRCULAR NO. 14
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS
OF SUBORDINATE LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC CHURCH STAND AGAINST FREEMASONRY

In view of the recent issuance of the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBP) against Freemasonry and the appearance of the article on the front page of the **Daily Inquirer** dated August 11, 1990 which had been misinterpreted by the reporter who mentioned that Freemasons are excommunicated and that Freemasonry does not believe in God, the following steps have been taken by the Grand Lodge to counter whatever misinformation might have been caused by the said article in the **Daily Inquirer**:

- 1) A Committee has been created headed by MW Reynold S. Fajardo and MW Reynato S. Puno to come up with a position paper of the Grand Lodge on the subject.
- 2) A series of Articles about Freemasonry will appear in the Philippines Free Press Magazine starting next week.
- 3) A panel of Past Grand Masters will be appearing before several TV stations to explain our position.
- 4) A panel of Past Grand Masters will be made available for radio interview.
- 5) A Statement of Facts about Freemasonry will be printed in a pamphlet to be distributed free to all Lodges.
- 6) Masons in their respective locality are urged to have dialogues with their respective Parish Priests.
- 7) Masons and their wives are requested to write to the editor expressing their true sentiment with regard to their knowledge about Freemasonry.

It should be emphasized, however, that nowhere in the pastoral letter of the CBCP was it mentioned that Freemasons are being excommunicated as this has been lifted long ago. Neither was there any mention of Freemasons not believing in God. Such was only the result of the misinterpretation and opinion of the writer of a local newspaper in Cebu which was in turn picked up by the **Daily Inquirer**.

Please be assured that we in the Grand Lodge are doing what we can in order to present to the public a clear picture of what Freemasonry is all about.

This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon, duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila this 15th day of August, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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CIRCULAR NO. 15
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUBORDINATE LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **INFORMATIVE ARTICLES ANENT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S GUIDELINES ON FREEMASONRY**

In next week's (August 27, 1990) issue of the Philippines Free Press, an Article on Freemasonry will be featured. This initial publication mentioned earlier in our Circular No. 14 issued last August 15, 1990 deserves a positive reaction from the Brethren in this jurisdiction in view of published reports that the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines (CBCP) have issued guidelines concerning membership in Masonic Organizations.

As Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines, I am, therefore, urging all Masons in this jurisdiction to get hold of a copy of the August 27, 1990 issue of the **Philippines Free Press** to better appreciate the tenets of our masonic principles and christian virtues.

This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 20th day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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CIRCULAR NO. 16
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTERS, DISTRICT GRAND LECTURES, GRAND LINE OFFICERS, WORSHIPFUL MATTERS AND BRETHREN OF MASONIC DISTRICT NOS. 1-A, 1-B, 1-C. 7, 8, 9-A, 9-B, 11 AND 29

SUBJECT: **WB MARCELO H. DEL PILAR'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON AUGUST 30, 1990**

One of our more significant masonic heroes who labored and launched a publicity crusade referred to as the "Propaganda" which exposed the anomalies of Spanish rule and whose important aim is the individual liberties of Filipinos, such as freedom of the press and freedom to meet and petition for redress of grievances, will be honored on his birth anniversary on August 30, 1990.

WB Marcelo H. del Pilar, a lawyer and the greatest journalist of the Propaganda Movement, was a Freemason who became Master of Lodge Solidaridad No. 53. It was he who secured authority to organize Filipino lodges in the Philippines.

It is but fitting and proper that the Grand Lodge will again take part in the Birth Anniversary Celebration of WB Marcelo H. del Pilar at Cupang, Bulacan, Bulacan on August 30, 1990.

I, therefore, enjoin all Masons of the above mentioned Districts to participate in this important occasion in honor and memory of this great patriot and hero and the Father of Philippine Masonry.

Assembly point will be at the Bocaue Exit of the North Expressway at 7:00 A. M. *sharp*, Thursday, August 30, 1990.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next

following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 20th day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

**CIRCULAR NO. 17
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA**

TO: ALL MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUBORDINATE LODGES UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISION IN EDICT NO. 60- TRIA 1971 REQUIRING CANDIDATES TO UNDERGO PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

Pursuant to Sec. 4, of Edict No. 60-Tria 1971, hereunder quoted:

“That before passing or raising, the candidate shall prove himself proficient in the required examination which shall be conducted in open lodge as specified in our Rituals; and that questions shall be propounded by a competent examiner appointed by the Master and answered by the examinee in a clear and audible tone of voice so as to be heard and understood by all the members present.”

It has been observed that some lodges ignore this provision not deliberately but most probably due to lack of information, notwithstanding the fact that violation thereof constitutes a masonic offense.

As Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, I am, therefore, directing all Masters and Secretaries of our Blue Lodges to take due notice of this requirement as provided under Sec. 4, Edict No. 60-Tria 1971, and govern themselves accordingly.

This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 22nd day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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CIRCULAR NO. 18
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUBORINATE LODGES UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

WHEREAS, Section 2, Par. i, Article IV of our Constitution provides among others, that a lodge is prohibited:

“To serve or consume alcoholic beverages in a Masonic Temple or in the premises of the building in which it meets or at a Masonic banquet.”

WHEREAS, some lodges have been observed violating this provision possibly due to lack of adequate information.

THEREFORE I, JOHN L. CHOA, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, hereby direct all Masters and Secretaries of our Blue Lodges to strictly implement this particular prohibition as prescribed under Section 2, Par. i, Article IV of our Masonic Law Book and to conduct and administer the lodge with due order and propriety.

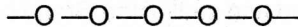
This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 23rd day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary



CIRCULAR NO. 19
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, AND GRAND LINE OFFICERS
UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **MID-YEAR MEETING OF THE GRAND MASTER**

Reference is made to Circular No.2 issued last May 4, 1990 informing all the Brethren of the time table of activities which I intend to pursue during my term.

May I, therefore, remind all concerned of the scheduled Mid-Year Meeting with all DDGMs, DGLs, and Grand Line Officers on *October 13, 1990* to be held at the Plenary Hall of the New Plaridel Masonic Temple, 1440 San Marcelino Street, Ermita, Manila.

In line with this meeting, all DDGMs and DGLs are hereby directed to submit to the Grand Lodge their comprehensive Mid-Year Report of activities and accomplishments not later than October 13, 1990.

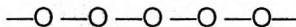
This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 24th day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary



CIRCULAR NO. 20
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF SUBORDINATE LODGES UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

As we focus our attention on our fundamental law and recognizing the need to revise and update some of its provisions and mandates for it to keep up with the changing times, I hereby encourage all Blue Lodges in this jurisdiction to be active participants in the attainment of this important undertaking.

MW Reynato S. Puno, PGM, and the incumbent Chairman of the Committee on the Revision of the Constitution, in coordination with the members of the Committee, is now in the process of undertaking the project.

Revised in 1984 by a Committee chaired by no less than MW Reynato S. Puno himself, the Committee had already recognized the need to continuously review, revise and update our masonic Law Book for purposes of improvement.

As Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, I am, therefore, instructing all Masters and Officers of our Blue Lodges to submit to MW Reynato S. Puno, PGM, Chairman of the Committee on the Revision of the Constitution, their suggestions and recommendations on any particular provision that they perceive as requiring changes, deletion or additions.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 27th day of August 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

**CIRCULAR NO. 21
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA**

TO: ALL MASTERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF LODGES
UNDER THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **ACCOUNTS OF BLUE LODGES WITH THE GRAND LODGE**

Considering the very limited funds that the Grand Lodge of the Philippines has, the subordinate Lodges are earnestly urged to pay their outstanding account/s and to remit their 1990 Annual Dues to assist in improving the financial operation of the Grand Lodge.

Likewise, Blue Lodges who executed promissory notes during the last Annual Communication held in UPLB, Los Baños, Laguna, last April 26-28, 1990, should immediately comply with the specifics contained in their promissory notes.

Attached is a Statement of Accounts which includes the tentative assessment of the 1990 Annual Dues pertaining to your individual Lodges. Any perceived discrepancy between the records of the Blue Lodge and the Grand Lodge can be cleared with and communicated to the Accounting Department.

Along with the remittance of the Annual Dues Assessments, lest it be overlooked, the attention of Blue Lodges is hereby directed to the Temple Fund Assessment per Circular No. 3 issued last May 14, 1990.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and every Stated Meeting thereafter until the accounts due the Grand Lodge shall have been fully paid by the Lodge. This shall be recorded in the Minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 28th day of August, 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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CIRCULAR NO. 22
SERIES OF 1990 - CHOA

TO: ALL DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, OFFICERS & MEMBERS OF
SUBORDINATE LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION

SUBJECT: **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ARTICLES ANENT TO THE
CATHOLIC GUIDELINES ON FREEMASONRY**

Attached hereto is additional information which I hope will further explain and strengthen your resolve and steadfastness to be strong in your conviction as a mason.

To date the Grand Lodge has already come out with our official position paper. We have likewise come out with several publications which appear in the *Free Press*, *Bulletin*, *Daily Inquirer*, *Daily Globe*, *Manila Standard* and *Tempo* on various dates. Likewise, I have appointed VW Henry Locsin, our Grand Bible Bearer, to be our official spokesman. Henceforth, nobody is authorized to speak for and on behalf of the Grand Lodge unless authority therefore is given to do so, in order to avoid confusion and statement of different positions. We have to show our harmony and unity in this time of trial.

This Circular shall be read in open lodge at the stated meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the minutes.

Given under my hand and seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila this 18th day of September 1990.

JOHN L. CHOA
Grand Master

ATTEST:

ROSENDO C. HERRERA, PGM
Grand Secretary

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**If Masonry succeeds in bringing out the
best in a man, it has served its purpose. A
man is a Mason only when he is a man.**

**— The Orange (Mas.) Masonic
Newsletter)**

DO YOU JUST BELONG?

*Are you an active member,
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?*

*Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the crowd.
Or do you stay at home
And crab both long and loud?*

*Do you take an active part
To help the Lodge along?
Or are you satisfied to be
The kind to "just belong?"*

*Do you ever go to visit
A member who is sick,
Or leave the work for just a few
And talk about the clique?*

*There is quite a programme scheduled
That means success, if done
And it can be accomplished
With the help of everyone.*

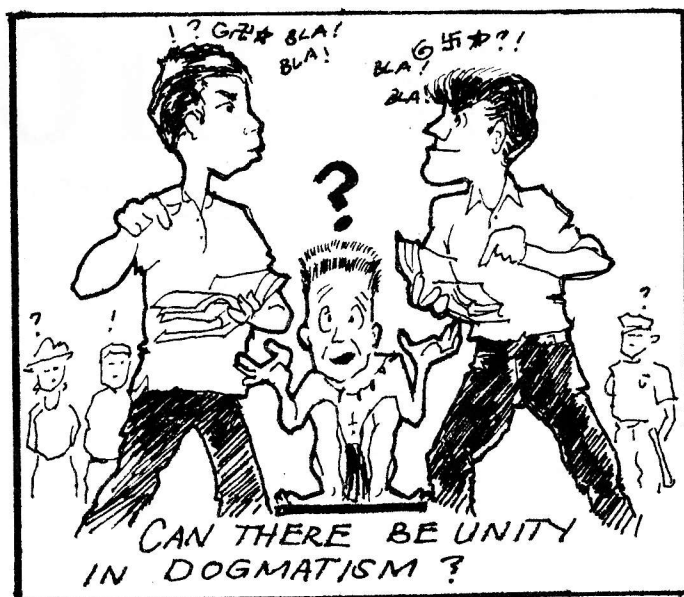
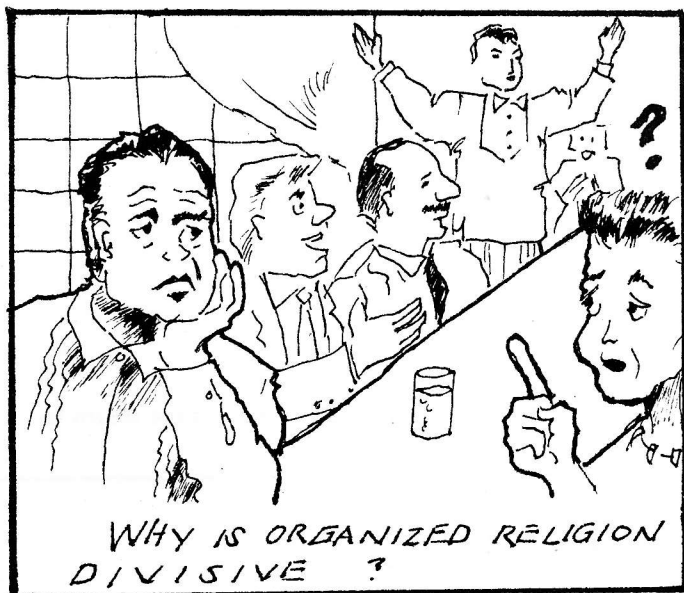
*So attend the meetings regularly,
And help with hand and heart,
Don't be just a member
But take an active part*

*Think this over, Member,
Are we right or are we wrong?
Are you an Active Member?
Or- - - Do you Just Belong?*

- **Bro. Leovigildo R. Romerosa,
Papua New Guinea
The Rabaul Lodge, No. 4468**

CURIOUS IKKO

S. FERNANDEZ
L. SAMANIEGO



TO POSTMASTER: If undelivered, please return to



The CABLETOW

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE GRAND LODGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Plaridel Masonic Temple
1440 San Marcelino, Manila D-2801

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Manila Post Office on June 16, 1962

IMPORTANT! Readers are requested to send address changes and corrections to us to insure prompt delivery of the THE CABLETOW.