The Cabletow

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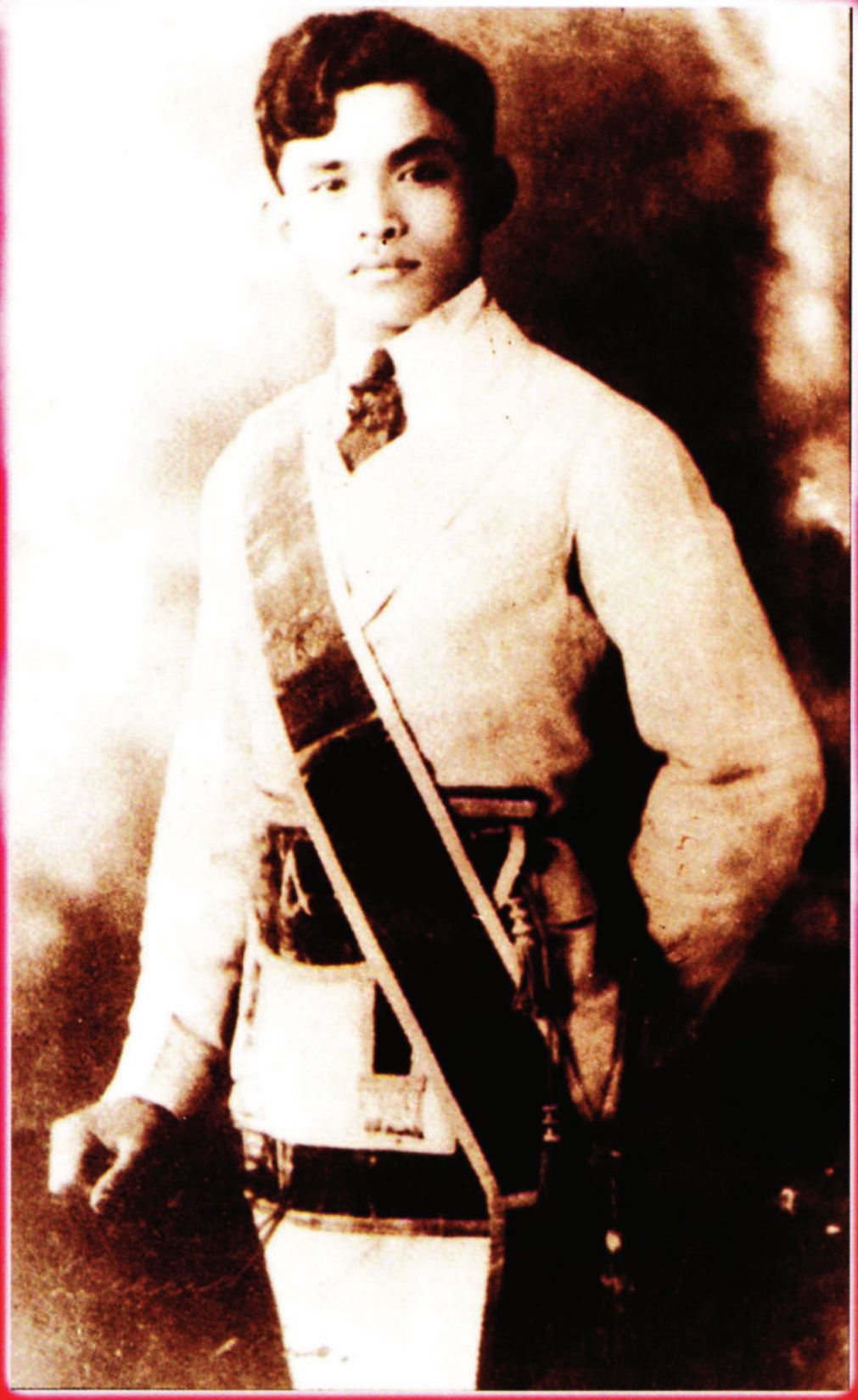
e-mail add: glp_cabletow@yahoo.com

FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION SPECIAL ISSUE

Bro./Pres. Emilio F. Aguinaldo and Bro./Judge Charles S. Lobingier in Rose Croix attire of the Scotish Rite in the Philippines, ca. 1925



DR. JOSE RIZAL

(JUNE 19, 1861 - DECEMBER 30, 1896)

Philippine National Hero

The Cabletow

SPECIAL ISSUE

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EDITORIAL STAFF

SAMUEL P. FERNANDEZ
Editor-in-Chief

J. FLOR R. NICOLAS
Editor

EMMANUEL J. DIESTA
Circulation Manager

MW REYNOLD S. FAJARDO, PGM, GMH
Editorial Consultant

UNDERSTANDING MASONRY BETTER

I would like to convey sincerest commendation to all the brethren who have stood tall for Masonry in the face of the intermittent vilification campaign which the majority church and other religious groups against it and against us, its members, thereby demonstrating that their Masonry is worth that much to them.

Clearly, the best antidote to anti-Masonry is an honest-to-goodness Masonic education, together with a well-coordinated public informational campaign designed to raise the level of the general public's awareness and understanding of Masonry and Masons. As MW Reynato S. Puno, PGM, GMH, has very aptly averred, "Unless we immerse ourselves in our landmarks, laws, ancient rules, traditions and practices, we will never be able to defend the Craft... More than any time, we should seek more light in Masonry."

To stimulate the brethren to seek more light in Masonry, I gave more teeth to the Institute of Masonic Education and Studies (IMES), which is responsible for the continuing education of, as well as the enhanced quality of instruction for, the Craft in our grand jurisdiction, so that there will be more Masonry among us.

I also created, along with the IMES, the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Relations, the main task of which is to project the good image of Masonry in the eyes of our internal and external publics.

Besides, I directed the leaders of all our Masonic Districts to regularly conduct the Masonic Information Forum (MIF), the aim of which is to make members of the community more aware of Masonry and understand it better.

Let's face it! There will always be groups that oppose us because they would be happier if Masonry did not exist. But we need not despair; for, as MW Puno once more has fearlessly stated:

> *... Freemasonry in the Philippines is here to stay. The foundation of this country was built by Masons, and the mightiest of men cannot obliterate the goodness of Masonry. Masonry has survived and will succeed; for no institution that rests on the pillars of brotherly love, relief and truth will ever fall. There is only one thing that Masonry will not survive and that is the lack of Masonry among Masons. The future of Masonry lies on our hands and not on the hands of others.*

It is, therefore, a duty incumbent upon all of us to renew our commitment to learn and live Masonry's simple lessons of practical morality and sublime teachings of religious philosophy, as well as to practice tolerance, promote the ecumenical spirit, and build the bridge of understanding between those who understand Masonry and those who don't.

Hence, let us take the following statement of RW and Rev. Cannon Richard Tydeman, a Past Senior Grand Warden of the United Grand Lodge of England, into serious consideration and act accordingly:

> *We find it difficult to communicate with people who seem to speak a totally different language and have somehow conceived a fear, a dislike, or even a hatred of Masonry. To change their minds will be a difficult task and will take time. But if we cannot yet build a complete bridge across the river of ignorant prejudice, we can at least help by providing what one might call stepping stones.*

The "stepping stones" RW and Rev. Tydeman referred to are clear and concise statements which we will find invaluable when friend and foe alike ask us why Masonry is important to us.

These include the following:

· Freemasonry is a reliable foundation for building; and reliable foundation for life is Freemasonry.

· Freemasonry aims at building bridges between men of goodwill and upholding the highest standards of life.

· Freemasonry is one of the last unchanging treasures in a rapidly changing world. Those who appreciate its value will ever strive to be worthy of it.

· Freemasonry doesn't proselytse. It doesn't have to the right sort of man will always find it.

· No man is ever pressed to become a Mason. In the end, the approach always has to come from the man himself.

Undoubtedly, we can come up with similar "stepping stones" toward making others, including our critics, understand Masonry better than before.

I recall, at this juncture, that MW Puno likes to think that Masonry is like tea because its best comes out in hot water. On my part, I like to think that Masonry is, to those who oppose it, like coffee. You have to taste it to appreciate it. The bitter flavor may not be to your liking but the more you take coffee the more the experience becomes addicting. No matter what others have thought, or have been told, or have told others about it, is not quite true; for, after all, coffee is deliciously delectable.

MW HERMOGENES E. EBDANE, JR.
Grand Master

FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION

The common denominator of Freemasonry and religion is God.

Freemasonry is dedicated to the search for truth whereas, religions are based on faith and beliefs. The only relationship that can exist between Freemasonry and religion, past, present or future, is that which can be derived from established truths. Freemasonry does not concern itself with the various beliefs which constitute the basis of the different religions of the world. It concerns itself with religion only insofar as religion recognizes and distinguishes truth from belief.

The foundation of Freemasonry is laid upon the acceptance of a Divine Creator. Whether the title of respect and reverence be that of God is secondary to the fundamental aspect that the Source and Origin of All that Is, is divine, infinite, and omnipotent. In this respect, Freemasonry is solidly joined with religion in a common stand against atheism.

Accepting the infinity of God as an established truth, it is a short logical step to the acceptance of the finiteness of man in his earthly existence. But as the essence of God is not material, it is obvious that His infiniteness is akin to the spiritual and not restricted to the limits of material existence. Therefore, Freemasonry accepts with religion that when the spirit of mortal man is freed from the bounds of its earthly existence, it will enjoy the infiniteness of eternal life.

Through the acceptance of God and the eternal existence of the soul, Freemasonry and the religions of the world are united into a society which is bonded by the cement of brotherly love and affection. This is Freemasonry itself.

Freemasonry encourages its members to be religious, but it is not a religion itself. It urges attendance at church, recognizes the medium of prayer, and advocates all to be true followers of the religion of their respective choice, but it neither sponsors nor opposes any religious ritual, belief, or dogma. It acknowledges the Volume of Sacred Law to be the Law of the Brotherhood and the Holy Scriptures to be the guide and rule of one's faith, but it does not prescribe what that faith shall be.

Freemasonry is a way of life, a philosophy for living. It deals only with the material matters of earthly existence, prescribing through its tenets and demanding through its obligations that Freemasons conduct themselves with such brotherly love, morality, and virtue as will ensure their ascension to the Grand Lodge above where the Great Architect of the Universe lives and reigns forever.

Is not the objective of Freemasonry the same as that of religion? How can Freemasonry be at odds with any religion or any religion be at odds with Freemasonry, if all serve the same God and have the same ultimate goal? – R. E. W.

Masonry and Religion

Taken from a pamphlet entitled
"What Is Freemasonry"
Published by Masonic
Service Association of the United States

Religion has been defined as "a certain kind of systematic effort to secure the conservation and enhancement of values." Although this definition is not at all incompatible with the aims and purposes of the Order, as outlined earlier, Masonry does not profess to be a religion, even though it is religious in character. Neither does it pretend to take the place of religion, nor serve as a substitute for the religious beliefs of its members.

Freemasonry opens its doors to all men, regardless of religious conviction, the essential requirements in this regard being an avowed belief in God and in immortality. Since the doctrines of most religions include these tenets, the victual impossibility of conflict in this respect is obvious. It is therefore understandable why so many religious faiths, including the clergymen who represent them, are found among the members of the Fraternity.

The relationship between Freemasonry and religion was summarized well by Ralph J. Pollard, Past Grand Master (Maine), in an address given before the Third Annual Northeast Conference on Masonic Libraries and Education, Boston, June 13-14, 1958:

"Every Mason should understand that Freemasonry, as practiced in the British Empire and the United States, is entirely non-sectarian; that all theological discussion is prohibited in its lodges; and that its membership includes men belonging to many different religious denominations. He must clearly understand that Freemasonry is not a church, nor a substitute for the Church, and that it makes no claim to save souls, to reform sinners, or to discharge any of the proper functions of a Church. Yet every Mason should also be helped to realize that Freemasonry is essentially religious; that it requires of all of its members a positive, wholehearted and unequivocal belief in Almighty God, and Author, Creator and Ruler of the Universe; that it demands a rigid observance of the moral law; that it stresses the value and importance of prayer; that it teaches the immortality of the soul; and that the Holy Bible, or similar Volume of the Sacred Law, which lies open upon every Masonic altar, is revered as the Great Light in Freemasonry, and is accepted as the rule and guide of every Mason's faith."

By way of explanation, Lodges exist and function in all parts of the world. In Christian Lodges, the Holy Bible reposes on the Altar; in non-Christians areas, however, the book held sacred to the faith representative of the membership be so placed.

Another statement, comprehensive in its scope, clarifies the position of the Craft in this way:

"Why is it that Freemasonry, which is not a religion and not a church, can bring to men the fundamental principles of religion which every man needs? What does Freemasonry offer that attracts the man who has no creed as well as the man who has one? It is because Freemasonry is religious in that it is a plan of life a trestleboard – whereon are written the laws and edicts of the Grand Architect of the Universe in accordance with which men must live if they are to be happy. It is because in our lodges we teach the Brotherhood of Man based on the Fatherhood of God and advance no other dogma. Not only do we leave to every brother the choice of his creed but we draw to sword to compel others to adopt our belief. Nay, we go further than this, for within the tiled precincts of the lodge every Mason is taught to revere and respect and be tolerant of that which is sacred to his brother, be he Christian, Mohammedan, or Jew. This is the strength of Masonry's appeal."

Although Masonry excludes no one because of religious belief, certain denominations, for reasons peculiar to their doctrines, will not permit their parishioners to be affiliated with the Masonic Fraternity. Unfortunately, such prohibitions have been interpreted to mean that Freemasonry does not accept the members of certain sects and denominations, a statement which conflicts with Freemasonry's insistence on the solidarity of humanity.

To summarize, the beliefs in a Supreme Being and immortality is common to most religions. Differences exist among them, however, with respect to dogma, interpretation and ritual, often creating a breach which separates them regardless of their similar goals. Masonry embraces the common factors, uniting men by not advocating one particular theological approach above the others, thus permitting the individual to choose for himself that avenue which seems best to him for his approach to God, for the building of his moral code, and for his preparation for that which is to come.

WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

(Extracted from the book of that title by Robert J. Lewinski, Ph D., published by the Masonic Service Association, Washington, D.C., USA.)

Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols. This is the classic definition of the Craft – one in such general use that it has virtually become the accepted definition. There are others, however, amplifying the above, which are worthy of note. Albert Gallatin Mackey contends that Freemasonry "is a science which is engaged in the search after divine truth." Joseph Fort Newton offers a very comprehensive definition taken from the German Handbuch, characterizing it as the best description given so far:

"Masonry is the activity of closely united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others, and thereby to bring about a universal league of Mankind, they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."

No useful purpose would be served by presenting the many other existing definitions of Freemasonry, the majority of which contain common elements. At best, any definition can give only a meagre description of the philosophy of the organization, and amplification is not only helpful, but necessary. This is provided by the Masonic Creed, embracing the Masonic Belief and the Masonic Teaching, which may be found in the Masonic edition of the Holy Bible published by the A.J. Holman Company of Philadelphia:

The Masonic Belief

There is one God, the Father of all men.

The Holy Bible is the Great Light in Masonry, and the Rule and Guide for faith and practice.

Man is immortal.

Character determines destiny.

Love of man is, next to love of God, man's first duty.

Prayer, communion of man with God, is helpful.

The Masonic Teaching

Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the downtrodden, shelter the orphan, guard the altar, support the government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy and hope for happiness."

Some authorities have differentiated between Freemasonry as a system and Freemasonry as an organization. While this is essential in understanding its historical background, one must take the logical position that today the two are inseparable. This being so, the following seems to be an acceptable descriptive conclusion: Freemasonry is an organization, membership in which is contingent upon a professed belief in God and immortality, subscribing to a moral philosophy founded on the principle of the Brotherhood of Man, taught by means of allegory and symbols.

An allegory is a narrative, frequently illustrating a moral truth, in which the true meaning is concealed, thereby requiring interpretation and permitting the meaning to be deduced from the story which is told. That Freemasonry teaches by allegory is neither new nor unique. Allegory creates in abstract subjects by presenting them in an attractive form; it stimulates independent thinking to discover the veiled context. The use of allegory is common in Greek and Roman mythology, in the Bible, and in early as well as contemporary literature.

In discussing the use of allegory in Freemasonry, J.O. Ball asserts that:

"In seeking why Masonry is taught in allegories, instead of by logical statements of truth in direct form, we may answer that in many ages truth has been taught by allegories and parables, in order that the mind may conceive great and fundamental truths by comparison with simple things. Some think that Masonry is taught by types, emblems, and allegorical figures in order to conceal the thought... On the contrary, the parable or allegory makes the thought clear to the thinking mind, but only after a certain effort in thinking the thing through."

The use of symbols is of ancient origin, being particularly evident among the religious antiquity as a method of communication. Symbols are signs, — usually objects which instantaneously bring to the mind of the observer an idea or concept which would otherwise take thousands of words to express. Thus the triangle, a familiar religious symbol, represents the Trinity, or the three attributes of the Deity. In law, a common symbol is the balanced scales, representing the idea of justice and impartiality. The red

cross is a well-known symbol of mercy, charity, and medicine. The regality. The owl symbolically crown has been for centuries a symbol of authority, supremacy, and brings to mind wisdom, scholarship, and learning. Colors have adopted meaning and have become symbols, - white indicating peace and purity; black, death and depression; blue, tranquillity and benevolence; red, zeal and aggression.

The symbols used in Freemasonry are those taken from the craft of the early Masons, each having its own meaning and each conveying a moral precept when perceived. Hence, the square and compasses, the traditional emblem of Freemasonry, have a particular significance for the Master Mason, as do the other working tools of the Craft, such as the plumb, level, common gavel, and trowel. Incidentally, there is no "secret" concerning the symbols of Freemasonry, their meanings having been described in numerous publications, like A Pocket Encyclopaedia of Masonic Symbols published by the Masonic Service Association of the United States.

Within the structure of Freemasonry itself, there have developed particular system of Masonic philosophy, each varying somewhat in its point of view as to the purpose of the Order, its relation to other human activities, and the method and principles involved in achieving its purpose. Roscoe. Pound has considered the philosophies of four eminent Masonic authorities, Preston, Krause, Olivier, and Pike, and has classified them under two separate categories: Intellectual Systems, and Spiritual Systems.

The concepts of these four Masonic writers regarding the emphasis and purpose of the Craft may be outlined as follows:

I. Intellectual Systems
A. William Preston (1742-1818)
1. Emphasis: Knowledge
2. Purpose: To diffuse light; i.e., to spread knowledge among men.
B. Karl Krause (1781-1832)
1. Emphasis: Morals
2. Purpose: The perfection of humanity; to organize the universal moral sentiments of mankind.
II. Spiritual Systems
A. George Oliver (1782-1866)
1. Emphasis: Tradition
2. Purpose: With religion and science, to bring men into relation with the absolute.
B. Albert Pike (1809-1891)
1. Emphasis: Symbolism
2. Purpose: The attainment of the fundamental principle of the Universe and bringing man into the harmony of the ultimate unity which alone is real.

These were philosophical systems which originated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and whose principles were influenced and determined by conditions of the time. In keeping with our modern era, Pound gives these answers to problems of Masonic philosophy: the purpose of Freemasonry is common to that of the other social institutions – to preserve, develop, and transmit to posterity the civilization developed by our ancestors and passed on to us. Its relation to other human activities is as follows: what other human organizations do along lines of caste or creed or within political feeling or local prejudice, Masonry seeks to achieve by universality – by organizing the universal elements in man that make for culture and civilization. To achieve its ends, Masonry makes for civilization by its insistence on the solidarity of humanity, by its insistence on universality, and by the preservation and transmission of the tradition of human solidarity and of universality.

Freemasonry today is organized by means of Lodges, each having its own officers, by-laws and regulations, none of which may conflict with the accepted standards of the Craft. In rural communities, there may be one Lodge; in metropolitan areas, dozens may be represented. Masonic Lodge Methods is an instructive text by L.B. Blakemore, which contains, incidentally, a comprehensive section on Masonic literature and an extensive bibliography. The duties and responsibilities of Lodge officers have been covered by H.L. Haywood, along with such subjects as Masonic jurisprudence, parliamentary law, Lodge finances, and fraternal etiquette, in his Masonic Lodge Officers.

In this country, each state has its own Grand Lodge which has jurisdiction over all Lodges and Masonic activity within its territorial limits. The authority of the Grand Lodge is absolute, there being no General Grand Lodge or national organization with administrative precedence. A wealth of information covering the origin and history of each Grand Lodge in the United States can be found in Ray V. Denslow's Freemasonry in the Western Hemisphere, which also contains many interesting photographs of Masonic buildings throughout the Americas.

Membership in a Lodge of Freemasons is limited to adult males who can meet the recognized qualifications and standard of character and reputation. No one is asked to join its ranks; when a man seeks admission to a Lodge, it is of his own free will and accord. The choice is his. As anyone who truly comprehends and appreciates the meaning of the Craft well knows, this as it should be.

MASONRY BEFORE 1717

by Eugene Stansky, M.D.
P.M. Dalisay Lodge No. 14, F. & A.M.

The establishment of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717 is the beginning of organized and coordinated Masonic activity all over the world. Other Grand Lodges followed soon in the 18th century with the expansion of Masonry beyond the borders of the United Kingdom. Before this date all existing Lodges in the United Kingdom were individual lodges and there was hardly any cooperation or regular contact between the Lodges. This does not mean, however, that Lodges did not exist. On the contrary, we have plenty of evidence of Lodges activities before 1717.

All Lodges before 1717 had the so-called "Old Charges," containing the duties of the Brethren to God, their respective religion, country and Brethren. They were written on parchment, however, and at that time, not printed. This explains why there were some, although rather slight differences between the "Old Charges" of the different existing Lodges. This may be the reason when Rev. Anderson compiled the "Old Charges" in 1723 and then again in 1738, there were some differences between the two editions, which was emphasized recently by W.B. Aurelio L. Concuera. While we rely too much on the writing of Rev. Anderson, one of the first Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of England, I personally am inclined to attribute it to the fact that Rev. Anderson cannot be considered as a reliable historian. He wrote for instance in the introduction to the first book of constitutions among others: "Grand Master Moses then marshalled the Israelite into a regular and general Lodge, while in the wilderness." This is very nice, but we may ask where are the evidences for it. It may be wishful thinking, which has to be avoided by an objective historian. In the second edition, he adds (not contained in the first edition): "King Solomon was Grand Master of the Lodge in Jerusalem..." While we are quoting in our ceremonies King Solomon frequently (see the ceremonies of the third degree; and even the perambulation of the second degree) we are aware of the fact that this is Masonic tradition. In the presentation of the lambskin apron we are told: "Masonic tradition informs us..." however, tradition and history are two different matters. Another interesting point of the wishful thinking of Rev. Anderson likewise in the second edition is: "Cyrus constituted Zerubbabel Provincial Grandmaster in Judah ..." This, not taught even by Masonic tradition, like another statement of his: "Charles Martel was the Right Worshipful Grand Master of France, and "King Edward being deeply engaged in wars left the Craft to the care of several successive Grandmasters." (They are duly enumerated.) Well there is no evidence whatsoever for these statements. King Edward lived from 1239 to 1307, or after the Magna Charta (1215) which is well preserved and accessible to all visitors of the British Museum in London.

I discussed these in order to furnish the evidence that we cannot rely on the statements of Rev. Anderson, although his Constitution is a landmark in Masonic history. Therefore, we have to look for other evidence, for documents, well preserved, which can be quoted as evidence of true and reliable Masonic history. There is no doubt that the traditions of Masonry are very old, many centuries old. However, these traditions may have been taken over from other and older organizations and if not taken over, eventually influenced by them. Therefore, we have to rely exclusively on old written, or printed documents. Well, fortunately, there are plenty of them. There are documents from the 11th century and of course from later centuries furnishing the evidence that the Fraternity existed already at that time. The documents of the Lodge in Edinbourgh, Scotland, go back to 1599.

However, the oldest charges have been approximately fixed by Casley and other reliable Masonic historians around 1390. The Cooke manuscript from the first part of the XVth century contains already a copy of the constitution, respectively of the Old Charges. However, there are no further documents of this kind until 1687, discovered in 1890. The latter gives an excellent account regarding the traditions and customs of the Fraternity. Apprentices (the term is used frequently) had to study before being admitted into the Craft, the "Old Charges."

We would like to quote here from the scrolls of the Lodge in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1670, likewise conserved up to our times: "First Charge is that you shall be a true man to God and the Holy Church." From this we can see as W.B. Corcuera emphasized recently that Masonry in the eighteenth century and even more earlier, has been Christian, although not sectarian. In the scrolls of the Lodge in York, England, we are informed that the members of the Fraternity ought to pray at every meeting or assembly for "all Christians." Again, an evidence that the Craft was not sectarian even at that time. We know from a scroll of the Lodge Kilawining No. 53 the text of the obligation of a Brother in 1696. The Harleyan manuscript (around 1650) contains in a handwriting of Brother Randle Holme a member of a Lodge in Cheshire (England) likewise parts of the obligation. Another very important information is the document on the incorporation of the "Masons Company" by King Charles II (reigned 1660-1685) (the son of the King Charles I, beheaded in 1649). In this document labelled as "Corporation Records at Guildhall," there is a sentence stating that the "Masons Company" existed already in 1376 and was represented in the court of Common Council. Of course we do not know we have to deal here historically

back to the fourteenth century with Operative or Speculative Masons. I personally believe, that, the Masons in the fourteenth century were rather operative Masons, although there is no doubt that the Masons of the seventeenth century were almost exclusively speculative Masons. At any rate, it has been discovered in 1871, that the Company obtained a grant of arms in 1472 (in the 12th year of the reign of King Edward IV).

As to the term "Free Mason," it is more than probable that this term has been used already in medieval ages by operative Masons; the term seems to indicate that while the members of other guilds have been constricted to the place where they were entered. Masons had the liberty to move from one place to another and remained members of their guild. This is, however, not definitely sure.

As to the terms "Accepted" we have to quote with records from 1620-1621 that "making a Mason" has been accompanied by a fee of one to two pound sterlings, which has been a rather large sum at that time. If a candidate has been accepted by the Brethren to be an active member of the respective Lodge, he was an "Accepted Mason." At any rate, there is documentary evidence from 1682 that the terms "Free and Accepted Mason" as well as "Apprentice and Fellowcraft" were already used. As we know from an account by Nicolas Stone who embraced Masonry in 1628-29, at acceptance of a Brother a banquet had to be given to the Craft and as the bill was respectable we have to assume that the number of Free and Accepted Masons at that time has been probably large. By the way, the report refers to the city of London.

In this short survey I tried to furnish the evidence that there has been Masonic activity long before the Grand Lodge of England has been established in 1717, June 24, St. John's day. I believe that there are definite evidences that Masonry flourished even before the seventeenth century and has been wide spread in all parts of the United Kingdom. On the other hand, there is no doubt that in the European continent as well as in the thirteen colonies, later the nucleus of the United States, Masonry started in the eighteenth century. The establishment of the Grand Lodge of England does not mean therefore the beginning of Masonry but just the starting point of an organization which embraced subsequently the individual Lodges and coordinated their activities. The consequence of this has been the establishment of Lodges outside of the United Kingdom and the spread of Masonry all over the Free World.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FREEMASONRY

by Robert J. Lewinski
Member, York Lodge No. 410
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A

(From "What is Freemasonry" published by the Masonic Service Association of the United States)

If the question is asked, "When did science begin? Art? Religion? Literature?" most replies would have a common core, which would indicate that they did not begin; rather, they evolved – developed coincidentally with the intelligence and creative thinking of man, with the more recent and refined aspects being dependent upon the more primitive expressions which had appeared before. So it is with Freemasonry. It did not begin, but over an extended period of time emerged from the rudimentary philosophy of early man to the structural organization which exists today.

The history of Freemasonry has led to some interesting theories by Masonic writers, and differences of opinion have developed over the antiquity of the Craft. One of the most elaborate and comprehensive is that propounded by Mackey, who, combining logic with Biblical data and historical facts, chronologically traces the evolution of Freemasonry from its earliest form to its present state by means of nineteen propositions. Taking a practical position, D.D. Darrah discounts those theories stressing the extreme antiquity of the Order, asserting that many contentions in this regard are not subject to factual verification.

That differences of opinion do exist is the result of the scarcity of written records and documentary evidence concerning many phases of Masonic history. Be that as it may, many seemingly opposite points of view could be reconciled if differentiation were made between Freemasonry as a philosophy and Freemasonry as an organization. Accepting the fact that the basic tenets of Masonic philosophy are belief in a Supreme Being and immortality, we may conclude that the roots of Freemasonry can be traced to the dawn of human thought, since these two concepts are recognized as characteristics of the earliest spiritual experiences of man. They existed in some form or other even in primitive times. As an organization, Freemasonry is of much more recent origin, a point which will be covered in more detail subsequently.

In days gone by, craftsmen organized themselves into groups, much as workers do today. Among others, a principal reason for such organization was to protect the trade from intrusion by those who were unqualified. Stonemasons, ranking high in importance among artisan groups of the day, guarded the skills of their craft from imposters, so that

the structures built by them would be perfect in every detail and not blemished by those improperly or inadequately trained.

That such precautionary measures are taken even in modern times among organized groups is shown by the rigid standards legally established for doctors, teachers, and lawyers, to mention but three examples of many. No one can practice medicine, teach school, or be admitted to the bar without being lawfully recognized as a qualified physician, instructor, or attorney. And members of these groups are first to insist on high standards of admission and quick to expose quackery and malpractice among their ranks. Thus, as the "secrets" of medicine, school teaching, and law may be obtained only after completing a prescribe course of study and training, so the "secrets" or early masonry were imparted only to those serving an apprenticeship under the master masons who were competent to teach them. Young men who wished to become stone-masons underwent careful scrutiny as to character, reputation, and ability before being entered as apprentices, and completed a training period of some seven years before being admitted as fellows of the craft.

Today we have diplomas, certificates, and licenses which testify to the bearer's educational background or technical skill in his profession or trade. In early times, such printed means of recognition were lacking, and reliance was placed on certain signs, grips, and passwords as a means of identification, remnants of this ancient custom still existing in symbolical form in Freemasonry today.

There is evidence of the existence of an elementary type of craft association as early as the time of the construction of King Solomon's Temple (about 1012 B.C.), where we find the Dionysian Artificers, men banded together as a trade group specializing in architecture. Some authorities contend that the Dionysian Artificers were sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to assist King Solomon in the construction of the Temple.

Mackey states in the fifteenth proposition of his theory cited previously, that it was here that a union occurred between the philosophy of the Israelites or Noachites (the patriarchial descendants of Noah) and the ritual and dogma of the Tyrians, with the resultant of their respective doctrines and ceremonies forming a foundation for our present institution. While this is admittedly theoretical, we do know that the erection of this Temple was the architectural masterpiece of its day; and because of the leadership between the early masons and the building of this spiritual edifice, Masonic tradition is rich in references to its construction.

In addition to the bond established by reason of their vocation, the Dionysian Artificers were united even more closely by the rites and ceremonies of the Dionsian Mysteries, one of the many primitive religious sects which flourished in the pre-Christian era in Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Persia. There were many of these Ancient or Classic Mysteries, as they are called, among which were the Mysteries of Eleusis from Greece; those of Mithras from Persia; of Osiris from Egypt; and the Celtic Mysteries of the Druids from Britain and Gaul. Seemingly common to all these Mysteries was the purpose of imparting to their members a moral code to be followed during life and the inspirational emphasis on hope for life after death. The subject of the Ancient Mysteries is a fascinating study in itself, of particular interest to those who are curious about the nature of the customs, ceremonies, and rites of the religious organizations of antiquity. The interested reader will find an absorbing treatment of the Ancient Mysteries and their relationship to Freemasonry in Chapter I of C.A. Snodgrass' Light From the Sanctuary of the Royal Arch.

It is during the domination of the Roman empire that we find more highly organized groups of tradesmen and artisans designated as the Roman Collegia. These were societies of men with common purpose or goal, some associated by reason of a craft or trade, and others because of similar political or religious views. Each had its own leader, called the Magister, or, freely translated, Master. Each also had its own peculiar rites on initiation, customs, and regulations. Among these collegia was the College of Architects, members of which had great prestige and possessed privileges and freedoms denied to others, because of the great importance placed on building at the time. Darrah points out that:

"The collegia were the fore-runners of societies of workmen and artisans which organizations, through various period of rise and decline, finally after eighteen hundred years of constant evolution have culminated in Freemasonry."

Some authorities contend that with the decline of the Roman Empire resulting from repeated invasions by the barbarian hordes, members of these societies of skilled architects took refuge in the area of Lake Como in northern Italy. These artisans, to whom the development of Lombard architecture is attributed, came to be known as the Comacine Masters, and it is here that we encounter a theory of significant importance to Freemasonry – the Comacine Theory as advanced by Scott and supported by Ravens Craft and others. Briefly, the Comacine Theory attempts to bridge the gap between the Roman College of Architects and the celebrated builders of the Middle Ages in Europe. The proponents of this theory contend that the building skills of the Comacine Masters, who were the descendants of the members of the Roman College of Architects, were passed on from generation to generation, and eventually spread northward into Germany, France, Spain, and England, ultimately being represented in the construction of the great

cathedrals so characteristic of medieval Europe. It is interesting to note in Haywood's Symbolical Masonry that the Comacine Masters were organized into lodges, with officers, rites, ceremonies, signs, passwords, ritual, and trade secrets.

The period in history designated as the Middle Ages extends from about the beginning of the sixth century through the fifteenth. The first six hundred years have been called the Dark Ages, because of the absence of cultural progress. During the remaining four hundred years, however, political, economic, and artistic progress was very much in evidence. It was then that there occurred a significant social development in the formation of guilds, associations of men with corresponding interests and occupational pursuits. Two of the most important were the merchant guilds, composed of tradesmen engaged in selling, and the craft guilds, members of which were artisans employed principally in manufacture and production. Characteristic of the craft guilds were three classes of members: masters, journeymen, and apprentices. Like the Comacine Masters and the Roman College of Architects, they had an organizational structure with masters, wardens, meeting places, and social functions. Each guild limited the number of apprentices accepted into the craft, determined the hours of labor, regulated methods of construction, and set up quality standards for its work. Charity was practiced; members attended the funerals of deceased brothers; and each guild was represented by a patron saint.

The art of building embodied several such guilds, the most important to us being the stonemasons. To understand fully the prominence of the masons' status during this era, one must realize that constructional skills became more and more vital because of the growth of Christianity and the subsequently emphasis placed on the erection of churches, abbeys, and cathedrals. Gothic architecture emerged about the middle of the twelfth century; and while its origin is obscure, some writers believe that its underlying principles were a product of the Comacine Masters.

Be that as it may, the accelerated pace of building activity had a definite influence on the growth and development of the stonemasons' guilds. Sometime during this period – no one knows exactly when – the word Free became prefixed to the term mason, and the expression Free Mason, Free-Mason, or Freemasons came into being. Although references to it have been found as early as the fourteenth century, precisely how and why this term originated is not at all clear. A reasonable assumption is that it came about because of the privileges and freedom of travel which were granted to the mason by the feudal lords. These were denied the members of other guilds, but were enjoyed by the stonemasons because of the importance placed on their skills and the necessity for them to be free to move about from one locality to the next when their services so required.

As mentioned earlier, such freedom was likewise allowed the Roman College of Architects, during a time when movement from one place to another by individuals was generally restricted, pointing up even more emphatically the importance of the building trades during this entire period. Regardless of origin, the term Freemason came into use and still exists, most Lodges in this country today being referred to as Free & Accepted Masons (F. & A.M.), or Ancient Free & Accepted Masons (A.F.& A.M.), depending on the jurisdiction under which they happen to be functioning. An explanation of these differences may be found in Carl H. Claudy's Introduction to Freemasonry, p.121.

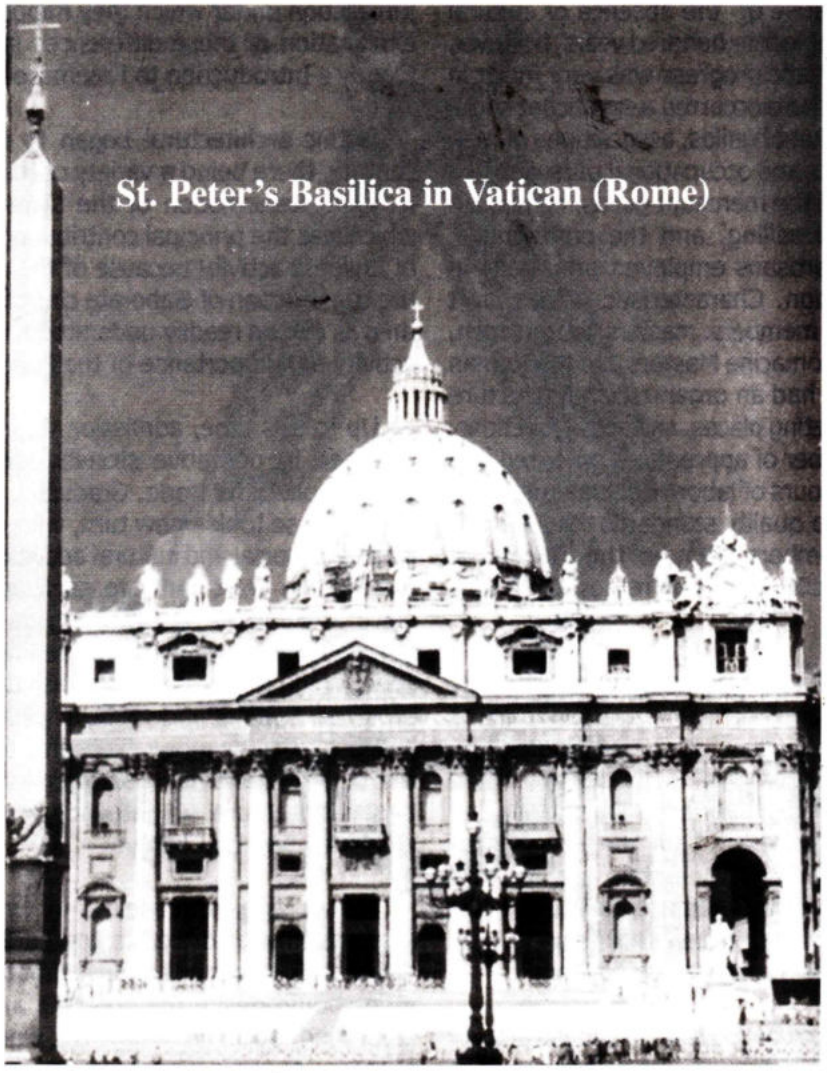
Gothic architectural began to decline in the fifteenth century, there being a variety of reasons underlying this. It was the Reformation of the sixteenth century, however, which was the principal contributing factor to the lessening of building activity because of the decreased emphasis on the construction of elaborate churches and cathedrals. With this, as can be readily understood, came a reduction in the activity and importance of the builders' guilds.

Up to this time, admission into the masons guilds was confined to operative stonemasons, that is, those who actually plied the trade. Gradually, however, their function and purpose took a new turn, with greater emphasis being placed on social and cultural activities. Because of this, men outside the craft came to seek admission. Among them were individuals representing various occupations and stations in life, who came to be known as accepted (later, speculative) masons to distinguish them from their operative brethren. It is not known exactly when these speculative or non-operative members first came to be admitted; however, the date is generally accepted as somewhere about the beginning of the seventeenth century. This transition is explained well by Claudy:

"In an age when learning was difficult to get and association with the educated hardly to be had outside of the church, it was but natural that thoughtful and scholarly men should desire membership among the Freemasons. Such men, however, would not want to practice operative masonry, or serve a seven years' apprenticeship. Therefore a place was made for them by taking them in as accepted Masons; that is, accepted as members having something to offer and desiring to receive something from the lodge, but distinguished from the operative Freemasons by the title Accepted."

The derivation of the word Free in the title, Free & Accepted Masons, has already been discussed; the description of how speculative members came to be accepted completes the explanation of it. Freemasonry today is termed speculative because of its concentrated emphasis on the moral philosophy which has come to be its foundation.

The uniting of four lodges at London, England, on June 24, 1717, led to the formation of the first Grand Lodge, which has been called the Premier Grand Lodge of England. This date marks the beginning of Freemasonry – structured and functioning as it does – as we know it today. A rival Grand Lodge, known as "The Grand Lodge of England According to the Ancient Institutions" was formed in London in 1751, these two bodies merging and constituting the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemasons of England in 1813. Grand Lodges were established in Ireland in 1729 and in Scotland in 1736; it is from the English, Irish, or Scottish Grand Lodges that all legitimate lodges throughout the world can trace their origin.


St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican (Rome)

The first regular and duly constituted Lodge in America is said to have been the St. John's Lodge of Boston, which dates from 1733; however, Masonic activity in the Colonies existed before that time and the claim to primacy has become a controversial issue. The growth and development of Freemasonry in the United States in colorful story involving such members of the Craft as Benjamin Franklin George Washington, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones, many generals of the Revolutionary Army and a considerable number of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence. A most complete and comprehensive review of Freemasonry during the Revolutionary War has been presented by Morse in Freemasonry in the American Revolution. The Masonic Service Association has published two of a projected six Digests on the Masonic membership of famous Revolutionary patriots and soldiers. Haywood has given an excellent review of the history of Freemasonry in America and in other lands.

The development of Masonic activity in the Western Hemisphere is given in the book by Denslow cited previously; a companion volume presents data relative to Masonry in the Eastern Hemisphere. Some of the legal ramification of Freemasonry, with particular references to clandestine and spurious Masonic bodies have been discussed by W. Irvine West in Freemasonry in American Courts. He cites a considerable number of actual cases which have been brought before the bar in this country. The serious student of the Craft should not overlook a very interesting but little known development in American Freemasonry, identified as the "Conservator Movement", initiated and propagated by Robert Morris demise of this attempt to establish ritualistic uniformity has been most impressively related by Ray V. Denslow in The Masonic Conservators.

While the compilation of an authentic history of early Freemasonry has been made difficult by the scarcity of written records, there exists a number of old documents of interest to the Masonic historian. The oldest written reference to Freemasonry is contained in the Regius Poem or Halliwell Manuscript, which is thought to have been written in 1390. it is really an early version of the "Ancient Charges." Those records prior to the year 1717pertain, of course, to the operative masonry of the guilds. Of those after that year, one of the earliest and most significant is Anderson's Constitutions of Freemasonry, published in 1723. this book is important because it is an attempt to present systematically the old charges and ancient landmarks – these being the fundamental customs, laws, principles, rules, and regulations of the craft organizations which were the forerunners of modern Freemasonry as it exists today. A later attempt at such standardization is Mackey's Landmarks of 1858, a list of twenty-five "unwritten laws," which may be found in his Jurisprudence of Freemasonry. While there is no set of rules and regulations common to all jurisdictions, Mackey's landmarks have been adopted and are followed by a number of Grand Lodges.

FREEMASONRY IS NOT ANTI-RELIGION!

Recently we have been barraged with tracts, leaflets and pamphlets alleging that Freemasonry is a religion, that it is consistently hostile to the Catholic Church and even to many forms of non-Catholic Christianity, and that therefore Christians, particularly Catholics, cannot and should not join Freemasonry.

In response to our critics and detractors, we quote Ill. Albert Pike, in his Morals and Dogma: "Those who are invested with the power of judgment should judge the causes of all persons uprightly and impartially, without any personal consideration of the power of the mighty, or the bribe of the rich, or the needs of the poor... They must divest themselves of prejudice and preconception. They must hear patiently, remember accurately, and weigh carefully the facts..." (p. 126). Later in his classic work, Pike writes, "...let the true Mason never forget the solemn injunction (in Matt. 7:1-2), necessary to be observed at almost every moment of a busy life: JUDGE NOT, LEST YE YOURSELVES BE JUDGED: FOR WHATSOEVER JUDGMENT YE MEASURE UNTO OTHERS, THE SAME SHALL IN TURN BE MEASURED UNTO YOU." (p. 135). We call on our critics and detractors to do likewise, and to embark with us on the exciting common endeavour of evolving a better mankind in a better world – a world where all men live with understanding and tolerance and respect toward one another, as well as aid, support and protect one another as children of one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet.

Through a succession of ages, men of high moral and intellectual attainments, mostly belonging to the Judeo-Christian tradition and not a few to Islam, have demonstrated their pride in their Masonic affiliation and did not withdraw their approbation from it since, as Bro. George Washington stated, "So far as I am acquainted with the principles of Freemasonry, I perceive them to be founded upon benevolence and to be exercised only for the good of mankind."

Wor. and Ill. Bro. Emilio Aguinaldo likewise perceived Freemasonry as "the world fraternity that stands for God and country, freedom and democracy, service and charity, honesty and integrity."

Clearly, Freemasonry is not a religion nor is it a church. It offers no plan for salvation and points out no particular road to heaven. But it demands of its candidates a profession of belief in God and in the brotherhood of all men. It does not discriminate any person who in faith believes in God.

Freemasonry, to our British brethren, is "a particular system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

Says the German Hand bunch der Freimaurerei (1900): "Masonry is the activity of closely united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from masons' trade and architectural work for the welfare of mankind, are striving morally to ennoble themselves and others and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."

Freemasonry is, indeed, a fraternity that admonishes its members not to engage in religious and political diatribe. Religion and politics can be divisive. But, of course, we Masons are taught to respect other religious beliefs than our own. Wrote the eminent Masonic scholar, Dr. Rev Joseph Fort Newton: "Freemasonry lays down no dogma about God; it speaks His name rarely, using instead that august phrase 'The Grand Architect of the Universe.'"

Freemasonry accepts to her bosom all men who believe in the existence of God. In the Philippines, it has as members Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews. In fact, not a few its members are Roman Catholic priests, Protestant pastors, and Muslim imams.

Wisely wrote Ill. Albert Pike once more: "To every Mason there is a God – one Supreme Being, infinite in goodness, in wisdom, in foresight in justice, and in benevolence; a Creator, Disposer and Preserver of all things. How or by what powers or emanations He creates and acts and in what way He unfolds and manifests Himself, Masonry leaves to creeds and religions to inquire."

In the face of renewed attacks against the Craft, as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, I formally declare that Freemasonry is a universal fraternity of men of diverse religious persuasions who believe in the existence of God and in the brotherhood of all men. Creed, or doctrine, is the personal commitment of any member of Freemasonry. The fraternity will not interfere as to how a member will express his faith in God. I want to invite those who consider themselves our adversaries, as did my worthy predecessors, to embark with us on a journey of mutual understanding of, as well as respect and tolerance for, each other's beliefs and convictions.

I urge the brethren, as well as members of their families and those of our appendant bodies, to consider seriously and weigh carefully the articles printed in this issue of The Cabletow so that they will the better be able to defend the Craft against anti-Masons.

MW Oscar V. Bunyi, PGM
Grand Master 2000-2001

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND FREEMASONRY

by Rev. Fr. Jimmy Tesoro Giron, OFM

When you invited me to share my thoughts on the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church and the Freemasons in the light of today's concept of ecumenism, I decided to wear my traditional Franciscan habit, because I still believe that it bears the true spirit that one should have, when one enters into genuine ecumenical dialogue.

The brown habit is made of brown sack cloth originally worn by those in the lowest social class when St. Francis, the Poverello of Assisi, founded the Franciscan movement to rebuild the church which was falling into ruins because of rampant corruption, scandal and misadministration. This habit is the symbol of total humility and obedience to God's will which your fraternity and my fraternity held dear for centuries. The three knots in my cord carry the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience which makes us true witness for the dawn of the earthly universal fraternity and the heavenly banquet offered by God the Father, for you and us to partake in the eschatological future.

But I say, that there is always the gap between what is and what should be, the gap between the ideal and the real, and I lament the fact that the same habit was also the garb of the lustful Padre Damaso, in the multi-awarded film "Jose Rizal" to satirically portray that the Filipino society is the fruit of an adulterous relationship of the power-hungry friar and a submissive Indio.

Turning the pages of secular history and the history of the universal and the local church may only open fresh wounds which have temporarily healed by time. But, we cannot just ignore the profound lessons which it offers, much more the veracity of events and historical truths which you and I have learned, to liberate us from the quagmire of ignorance, which might be the cause of fear to enter into dialogue and of intolerance to change, due to unfounded accusations.

In the history of the universal church, the period of enlightenment was not a good news to ecclesiastical hierarchy who for centuries had enjoyed their role as the sole dispenser of truth and knowledge. New discoveries and inventions, though supported by facts, were considered diabolic when they threatened changes in any of those old doctrines which the church held dear and sacred. The church at that time rested on the model of triumphalism which would never stoop and accept what rationalism and science could offer.

The origins of Freemasonry started with the desire to have liberal exchange of intelligent ideas, a desire of those who quest for truth. But this noble desire was just like a lighted candle in the midst of total darkness to be extinguished by those who enjoy the benefits of darkness and ignorance. It is for this very reason, then, that we find an interplay of the Freemasons' tolerance and the rigidity of the church hierarchy, when we scan the history of dialogue. In the local scene, the Christianization of Las Islas de Filipinas went hand in hand with colonization. Through the "Patronato Real" an agreement was forged that the King of Spain would finance the christianization of the entire archipelago in exchange for the freedom to colonize. With this agreement with the Holy See, the early missionaries sent to our shores were qualified evangelizers, being the recipients of well-financed training and education.

However, the Patronato Real did not last and the change in the Hispanic governance resulted into total abandonment of the missionaries' education and formation. Hence, ill-trained and non-qualified missionaries were sent to continue the task of christianization. This episode produced the typical opportunistic friar who took every advantage to satiate his desires because of the vast powers as a consequence of the unity of the church and the state.

May these historical facts not push us to desert the negotiating table. Rather, may they challenge us to search for other venues where our predecessors did not dare venture. We ask your support for those in the church who

braved to go against the tide – the few who dared speak-up.

In the light of the conciliar and the post-conciliar documents and declarations of Vatican II, may I now share with you the Roman Catholic principle and ecumenism.

1. Vatican II declaration on decree on Ecumenism contained in Unitatis Redintegratio tells us that Christ summons the church, in its pilgrim journey, to be in continuous reformation which she basically needs as a human and earthly institution. Ecclesia Semper Reformanda!

The first challenge to the church is to be a pilgrim on journey. It should not remain static and permanent. She must be able to read the signs of the times and to update the recent trends and discoveries if she is to address the multi-faceted problems of today and confront the issues that affect life of man at present. It is inherent in her nature as human and earthly institution to have the need for transformation to rid herself of error and misguided information.

2. In her declaration Nostra Aetate, dated October 28, 1965, dialogue in the spirit of Ecumenism presupposes that each side wishes to know the other and wishes to increase and deepen its knowledge of the other. It constitutes a particular suitable means of favoring a better mutual knowledge and of probing the riches of one's own tradition. Dialogue demands respect for the other as he is; and above all, respect for his faith and religious conviction while it is true that a widespread air of suspicions, inspired by an unfortunate past, is still dominant in this particular area, Church leaders for their part will be able to see to what extent the responsibility is theirs and reduce practical conclusions for the future.

3. Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae, December 7, 1965.

The declaration of Vatican Council on man's right to religious freedom is based on the dignity of the person, the demands of which have become more fully known to human reason through centuries of existence. Furthermore, this doctrine of freedom is rooted in divine revelation and for this reason, Christians are bound to respect it all the more conscienciously.

One of the key truths in Catholic teaching, a truth that is contained in the word of God, is that man's response to God by faith ought to be free. Therefore, nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. It is fully in accordance with the nature of faith that in religious matters every form of coercion should be excluded. Consequently, the principle of religious liberty provides the atmosphere where men, without hindrance, be invited to the faith, embrace it in their own free will and give it practical expression in every sphere of their lives.

4. Gaudium et Spes: Church in the Modern World. There also have a claim on our respect and charity who think and act differently from us in social, political and religious matters. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through kindness and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them.

Love and courtesy of this kind should not, of course, make us indifferent to truth and goodness. Love, in fact, impels the followers of Christ to proclaim to all men the truth which saves. But we must distinguish between error and the person in error, who never loses his dignity as a person even though he flounders amid false or inadequate religious ideas. God alone is the judge and the searcher of heart. He forbids us to pass judgment on the inner guilt of others.

5. Unitatis Reintegratio: Decree on Ecumenism.

In declaration no. 2 where we find the kernel of Vatican II as a conciliar document in declaration no. 2 we read:

God's love was revealed in our midst in this: This father sent his only begotten son into the world in order that having become man, he would, by his redemptive act, give a new birth to the whole human race and gather it together as one. Christ prayed for those who believe... "that they all may be one even as you Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me"; vis-à-vis the guiding principle on ecumenism, we confront the experiences in our long process of dialogue. I told you earlier, there is a wide gap between the real and the ideal, between what is and what should be. So much has been said and written. But when a few would join hands and light candles together, the power of darkness can never win.

Last July 6, 1965, I was too young to witness how the church refused the Catholic burial of my late father. I had lots of questions that lingered on my mind. Yet, I never desired vindication nor did I harbor ill-feelings. I had only one strong determination – that someday I will be an agent of change and reformation within the four walls of the very institution that refused my father.

Brothers, the Roman Catholic Church is not a monopoly of intolerance and refusal to transformation. For centuries, modern day prophets were always sent, one of whom was St. Francis of Assisi. As we close our ranks and join our hands, may I end my sharing with the prayer which is in the heart of every Mason and in every Franciscan.

Note: The foregoing is the address delivered by Fr. Giron, Asst. Formator, Franciscan Noviatiate, Liliw, Laguna, during the Multi-Orient Convention of Scottish Rite Masons held at the New Golden Star Restaurant in Brgy. San Francisco, San Pablo City, on Aug. 14, 1999.

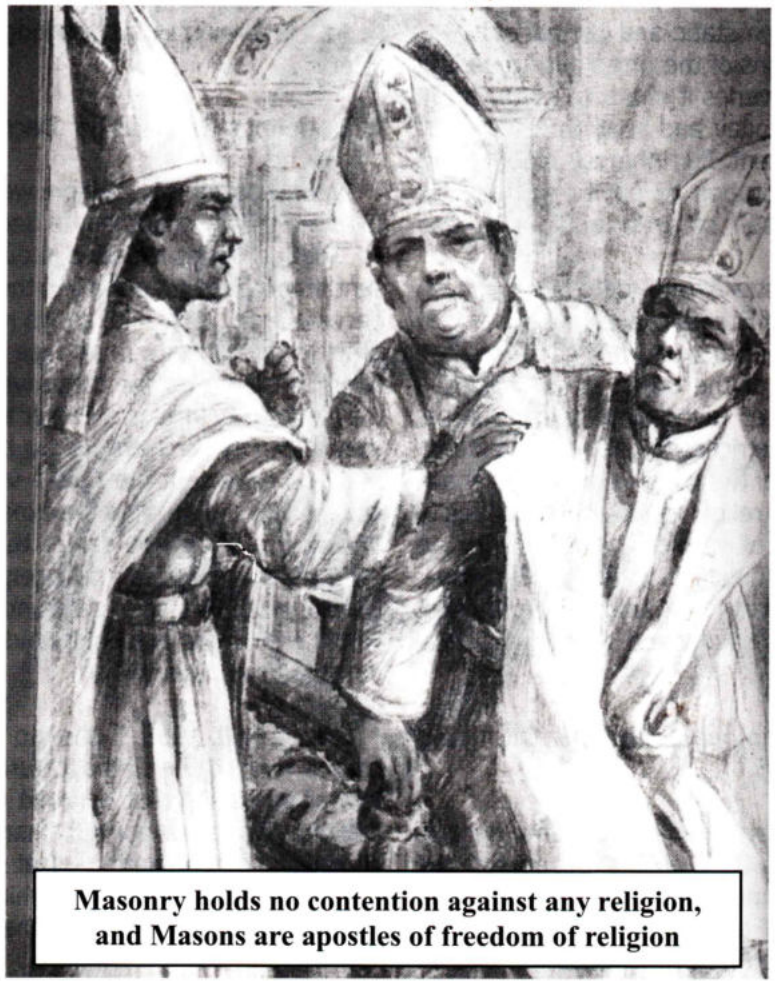
FREEMASONRY AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

by Samuel P. Fernandez and Flor R. Nicolas

Introduction

It is clear that there have been adverse reactions continuously, side by side with evidence of the existence of non-operative Masonry, from the 1600s to the recent day. Anti-Masonry has been a happy hunting ground repeatedly for journalists with nothing else to write about; but, far more seriously, has been the basis of attacks on Freemasonry by important religious bodies that have felt impelled to adopt this attitude in the belief that people or groups do not need secrets unless they have something to hide. These attacks have been taken to the extremes of persecutions by the Inquisitions of the Church of Rome, and by absolutist monarchies and fascist and communist dictatorships."

Thus Bro. A.G. Markham states in his paper, titled "Some Problems of English Masonic History," which he presented in November 1996 to Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 under the jurisdiction of the United Grand Lodge of England.



Masonry holds no contention against any religion, and Masons are apostles of freedom of religion

We can infer from Bro. Markham's statement that those who oppose us are interrelated. The conspiracists, or those who fear secret conspiracies, have woven theories falsely accusing Freemasonry as one of the groups plotting to destroy democracy, all governments and all religions, particularly Christianity, in order to rule over what is left after this destruction. Such theories, in turn, have served as basis of criticisms and condemnation of Freemasonry from some sectors of the Roman Catholic Church, some mainline Protestant religions and born-again preachers.

Admittedly, we cannot altogether stop conspiracists from continuing their false accusations against us because they will take any evidence we present in our defense as part of the proof of the deviousness of Freemasonry. Nor can we altogether stop important religious bodies from persisting to criticize and condemn us because they believe they have a monopoly of truth and therefore would be happier if Freemasonry, which champions freedom of religion, did not exist.

But, certainly, there are things we can do to keep those who always oppose us to a small number.

Taking a Closer Look at MW and Ill. Puno's address

We should, first of all, take a close look at the points propounded by MW and Ill. Reynato S. Puno, 33rd degree, PGM and PSGC, in his speech of acceptance of the award of the Grand Cross. (See The Cabletow, March-April 1998 pp. 6-15.) In his speech of acceptance. MW and Ill. Puno offered this wise counsel:

"We should deal with them (renewed attacks against the Craft) with the lesson taught us in our 32nd degree – with love and with an understanding of the greatest latitude. Masonry holds no contention against any religion, and Masons are apostles of freedom of religion. Indeed, the strength of Masonry lies in its teachings taken mainly from the universal teachings of the major religions of the world. We are also committed to the dispersal of harmony among all men and this objective will elude us if we do not build bridges with our fellowmen, including our critics and detractors.

"Let us not be shackled by the fear that Philippine Masonry will suffer an irriversible setback because of these recycled criticisms. These criticisms are not new. They are

premised on age-old misconceptions about Masonry, which arose when organized ignorance ruled the hearts and minds of men. Superstitions and ignorance no longer hold sway over our people. In this age of exploding knowledge, our people can easily discriminate truth and falsehood. The CBCP (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines) has cleared Masonry from these misconceptions after thorough examination of our philosophy and practices." (Ibid., p.14).

Doing a Raymond Green, a George Washington

We know, as we said earlier, that not a few individuals and groups would be happier if Freemasonry did not exist. Apparently, such individuals and groups believe they have a monopoly of truth. Instead of just satisfying their narrow worldview, let us, like the Rev. and MW Bro. Raymond Green, Past Grand Master of New South Wales Masons, further our resolve to show the community that we are an organization of excellence, that what we do counts for something, and if those individuals and groups have a problem with our existence, then the problems lies with them, not with us. Let us, moreover, seek more Masonic light, consistently live our Masonry in daily life, and increase the valuable good works we have been doing for years for the benefit of our fellowmen and for God's greater glory. Our mission is, after all, caring for the values and principles embodied in the Masonic fraternity and caring for our fellow humans, particularly the disadvantaged.

If we really care for the values and principles embodied our Craft, we will readily do a George Washington. When asked to resign from Masonry, our illustrious Brother George Washington wrote a letter to the Rev. G.W. Snyder, in which he said, "So far as I am, acquainted with the principles of Freemasonry, I perceive them to be founded upon benevolence and to be exercised only for the good of mankind. I do not, therefore, upon this ground, withdraw my approbation from it." He was, indeed, a true Masons because he clung to his conviction, which he saw as the truth or the nearest approximation thereof.

Like him, we must stand tall for the Craft when subjected to anti-Masonic influences or personally harassed anti-Masons in our respective churches or religious organizations. But we can do so only if and when we are adequately armed with confident knowledge of Masonry. We must remember that, as the late Ill. Albert Pike pointed out, the real value of the Masonic degrees conferred upon us depends upon our capacity to understand them, and upon the amount of study and the degree of reflection we have bestowed upon them. More than anytime, then, we must seek more light in Masonry.

Emulating Our Masonic Forebears' Example

Let us, furthermore, emulate the example set by the leading members of Logia Solidaridad No. 53, the first all-Filipino Lodge founded in Madrid, Spain, in 1889. Those brethren conducted a series of lectures designed to increase member and public awareness and understanding of the interrelationship of Freemasonry and religion. (Some of the lectures delivered in that Lodge were reprinted in the March-April 1993 issue of The Cabletow.)

One of the leading members of the said Lodge was Ill. Marcelo "Plaridel" H. del Pilar, the acknowledged Father of Filipino Freemasonry. In one of his lectures, he said in part:

"Masonry... is not a religion, but this does not mean it is impious. On the contrary, it is deeply religious; it acknowledges the existence of the Great Architect of the Universe, but without the arrogance of determining His attributes, or regulating His inscrutable designs, or of disputing His exclusive representation on earth. It is for this reason that Masonry admits to its bosom all men, whatever may be their religious belief.

"In every human intelligence and in the manifestations of every religious conscience, a Mason respects the reflection of divine light without discussing it or desecrating it with disturbing interference.

Masonry could have extended its fraternal grip to the subjects of the Roman Pontiff, but the worldly interests of the Pontificate necessitated the distortion of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, raising instead insurmountable barriers between the sectarian papists and the lovers of humanity. Without this exclusive interest, the Roman Catholic would not find anything incompatible in Masonry, which only asks for liberty, equality and fraternity for every individual of mankind. We leave to each, to his conscience and education, his personal ideas regarding his God and his duties towards Him.

"Thanks to this attitude, our august Order has joined with no religious sect. the wars, the massacres and the stakes that have devastated the world in the name of religion, the blood spilled over different beliefs, and creeds, and different attributes of divinity – all this has never stained the apron of the working Mason but had enhanced the whiteness of its purity, making it a banner of peace to calm the fierce struggles of religious intolerance."

Bro. Tomas Arejola, another leading member of Logia Solidaridad No. 53, on his part, eloquently enunciated:

"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 itself in all its splendor.

"If there is still any doubt left in your minds regarding the character and intentions of this Fraternity, I must tell

you, my dear brethren, that Masonry was not created to destroy religious or profane institutions, or to corrupt consciences, deflecting them from their own conviction. On the contrary, it was founded with the aim of harmonizing all thought and all endeavor towards an ideal of universal welfare, with due respect for the ideals and beliefs of everyone. This, precisely, is the foundation of Masonry's wise and wholesome doctrines. I wish to say clearly that Masonry, far from being opposed to (Roman) Catholicism, is in accord with all its maxims for good. It is regretful that its visible head known as the Roman Pontiff, boasting of newly assumed infallibility, has declared that an individual cannot be a Catholic and a Mason at the same time.

"Masonry, like any other institution given to the regeneration of mankind, has had its dark days. Attacked since its birth, it has gone through relentless and bloody persecutions but has continued to live, at times almost forgotten, hidden in the cavern of men's minds, doing good without expecting any recompense dispensing charity without ostentation, teaching its doctrines to its suppliants secretly, without display of vulgar popularity.

"Time has sanctioned the efficacy of its wise teachings; and there Masonry stands, justly proud of its record and the wonderful results of its work."

Emulating the Example of the Southern Jurisdiction, USA

Let us, additionally, emulate the example set by the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Freemasonry, for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States. When the Baptists in the southern part of the USA launched their attack against the Craft, that Supreme Council printed a special edition of its Scottish Rite Journal. Let us take a close look at excerpts of some articles printed in that special edition.

Ill. John and Manly. Both 33rd-degree, Scottish Rite Masons, Ill. John E. Johns, Ph.D., President of Furham University, and Ill. Basil Manly IV, M.D., pointed out that Freemasonry is not a religion, but rather, a fraternity of men who must, first and foremost, believe in a Supreme Being and next in the brotherhood of all men. They added:

"Freemasonry is a religious organization in that it encourages members to support each individual's faith, whether he is a Christian, Muslim, Hebrew, or any other monotheistic believer. Masonic teachings are based largely on Old and New Testament principles, but also on other religious teachings – all honorable.

"One of the first instructions given to a member being received into a Masonic Lodge is that Freemasonry will not interfere with his religious or political opinions. Freemasonry teaches toleration of other's beliefs. This lesson is one all Baptists would do well to learn. Nothing in Freemasonry is incompatible with a man's religious, civil, or political duties.

"Freemasonry accepts good men into its membership and hopes to make them better. In encourages the individual to think for himself and determine what his own religious faith will be. It teaches the Jew to be a better Jew; the Christian to be a better Christian; and the Muslim to be a better Muslim. The good of an organization is not determined by the number of good men who are members or by the good deeds they do, but how that organization squares with the Scripture. Freemasonry, like the Bible, teaches men to practice Charity above all and to love one another."

MW Egleston. Is Freemasonry satanic, demonic, occultic and therefore anti-Christ? To dispel this age-old misconception, MW Tom Egleston, Past Grand Master of Masons in Iowa, USA, suggested that we must let our friends know that "we have neither horns nor tails nor halos nor wings," and that "we are just their friends and neighbors joined together in a fraternity which tries to help men become better people as it tries to help the world become a better place through its charities. Freemasonry is a support group, so to speak, for men who are trying to practice ethics and morality in a world that does not always encourage those ideals."

Ill. Sanders. A retired Bishop of the United Methodist Church, long associated with the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, for the Southern Jurisdiction, USA, and a recipient of the Grand Cross, Ill. Charles J. Sanders, 33rd degree, averred that "Freemasonry is not and has never been a religion, but rather, has always been a friend and an ally to religion." In the following paragraphs he explained that Masonic tenets do not contradict Christian principles:

"In the more than 50 years as a minister and as a Mason, I have not found and do not now find that Freemasonry is incompatible with Christian faith and practice.

"Freemasonry has never asked me to choose between my Lodge and my Church, and it has never usurped the place of God. Never has anyone dared say that I should love Masonry with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind. There can be only one ultimate loyalty, and the Living God us the only worthy object of such loyalty... Possibly there are those who have made a god of Masonry. You can make a God anything – good business, your labor union, your civic club, your Lodge, and even your Church... My Masonic activities have never interfered with my faith. Quite the contrary, my loyalty to the Methodist church has been strengthened by my Masonic ties. Good Masons are good churchmen."

The foregoing statement of Ill. Sanders is, we believe, sufficient argument against the preposterous claim that "Adhesion to Masonry tends to weaken its members' strong conviction in their own faith, to revitalize all beliefs, and it undermines the deep motivations of their personal and special lives as they slowly lose their Christian faith."

Rev./Dr. Peale. Another outstanding Mason and Methodist minister, the author of the world-renowned book titled the Power of Positive Thinking, the Rev./Dr. Norman Peale, likewise said. "A good Mason is made even more faithful to the tenets of his faith by his membership in the Lodge."

He found out from a Grand Master why Masons give so much time to their Fraternity. The Grand Master explained, "I enjoy my involvement because it gives me another dimension of living."

Rev./Dr. Peale later discovered that the same explanation was echoed by the brethren as they met in Lodge rooms throughout the United States and around the world.

The Reverend Doctor declared, "Many of my best friends are good Freemasons and good churchmen as well!" Let's listen to him further:

"In my travels at home and abroad, a goodly number of Freemasons notice my Masonic ring, which I always wear. With much pride they say they are Freemasons, too.

"To me, Freemasonry is one form of dedication to God and service to humanity. I, too, was a Freemason in my heart and so I will remain. I am proud of my involvement. I am proud to walk in fraternal fellowship with my Brethren. Why am I a Freemason? Simply because I am proud to be a man who wants to keep the moral standards of life at high level and leave something behind so others will benefit. Only as I, personally, become better, can I help others to do the same."

Rabbi Ruthman. Let us recall, at this juncture, the following statement of the author of the celebrated Morals and Dogma, Ill. Albert Pike:

"Masonry is not a religion. He who makes of it a religious belief falsifies and denaturalizes it. The Brahmin, the Jew, the Mahometan, the Catholic, the Protestant, each professing his peculiar religion, sanctioned by the laws by time, and by climate, must needs retain it, and cannot have two religions; for the social and sacred laws, adapted to the usages, manners, and prejudices of particular countries, are the work of men.... But Masonry teaches, and has preserved in their purity, the cardinal tenets of the old primitive faith, which underline and are the foundation of all religions... Masonry is the universal morality, which is suitable to the inhabitants of every clime, to the man of every creed. It has taught no doctrine, except those truths that tend directly to the well-being of man." (MD, p. 161).

Rabbi Sidney S. Ruthman, Chaplain of the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Long Beach, California, a member of the Civil Service Commission of the same place, co-author of Sabbath Eve Service Hymns, and a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason with the rank and decoration of Knight Commander of the Court of Honor (KCCH), clarified Ill. Pike's statement by stressing the non-exclusiveness and non-divisiveness of Freemasonry. Said he:

"First, Freemasonry is not exclusive. A Jew, for instance, cannot be a Christian, or a Christian a Jew, without forsaking his religious origin and background. But in Freemasonry anyone can belong if he believes in God and in the immortality of the soul and earns the approval of his fellows. Consider, for example, the usual communication breakfast. Earlier, our Christian Brethren gathered in a church, and our Jewish Brethren in a synagogue. Later, after separate services, we all gather together about a common breaking of bread as Freemasons and as Brothers. This simple fact gives concrete, emphatic focus on the phrase we have so often heard and, perhaps, not fully comprehend: 'The brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.'

"And by the way of corollary, in addition to not being exclusive, Freemasonry is not divisive. The word religion comes from the Latin word religion, which means an act of binding together. In spite of this, however, history has dishearteningly far too many instances of religion acting as a divisive force – too many instances of discrimination against man, of persecution, of ultimate blasphemy, of bloodshed because of religion.

"Freemasonry, by contrast, not only does not bar men of various religions, it brings them together in their Masonic activities by which men of all faiths are helped in their hours of distress, of physical affliction, of weakness and loneliness in old age. Though synagogue and church may continue to divide us, the spirit of our Masonic Brotherhood unites us; and though our prayer books may be many, our prayers as Freemasons are one."

MW Roy. The Pastor of various Baptist Churches in Massachusetts for almost half a century and a Past Grand Master of Masons of State, MW Thomas S. Roy refuted the accusation that we place all religions on an equality since we say that a man may be obligated on the Scripture of his own religion, He said:

"Freemasonry does not assert and does not teach that one religion is as good as another. We do not say that all religions are equal because we admit men of all religions. We refuse to apply a theological test to a candidate. We

apply a religious test only. If we asked him if he believed in Christ, or Buddha, or Allah, that would be a theological test involving a particular interpretation of God. Belief in God is faith; belief about God is theology. We are interested in faith only, not in theology. We do not set ourselves up as judges of the qualitative values of the theological interpretations of God. When Freemasonry accepts a Christian, or a Jew, or a Mohammedan, it does not accept him as such, but as a man, worthy to be received into the Order. We ask him to pledge himself by the highest and holiest loyalty in his life to be true to his vows. To ask him to vow on a book in which he did not believe would be the kind of hypocrisy condemned by the highest teachings of the Christian religion."

James Dunn. The Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee, a religious liberty agency composed of 10 national Baptist bodies, which in turn consist of more than 20 million members, defended Freemasonry thus:

"Missionary stories could be multiplied, but those so focused on the spread of their religion and so dedicated to missions ought to read a little history before opposing Freemasons, who have for so long worked so hard and sacrificed so much for the freedom of all religions.

"Freemasonry is one of the staunchest allies of all real believers in a free church in a free state.

"How, then, can any religious group ostensibly dedicated to free and moral agency, personal faith, the priesthood of all believers and basic American values challenge the right of the church members to be active Masons and church leaders?

"Could it be that the assaults on Freemasonry are really a smoke screen for those who denigrate the ... doctrine of church-state separation?

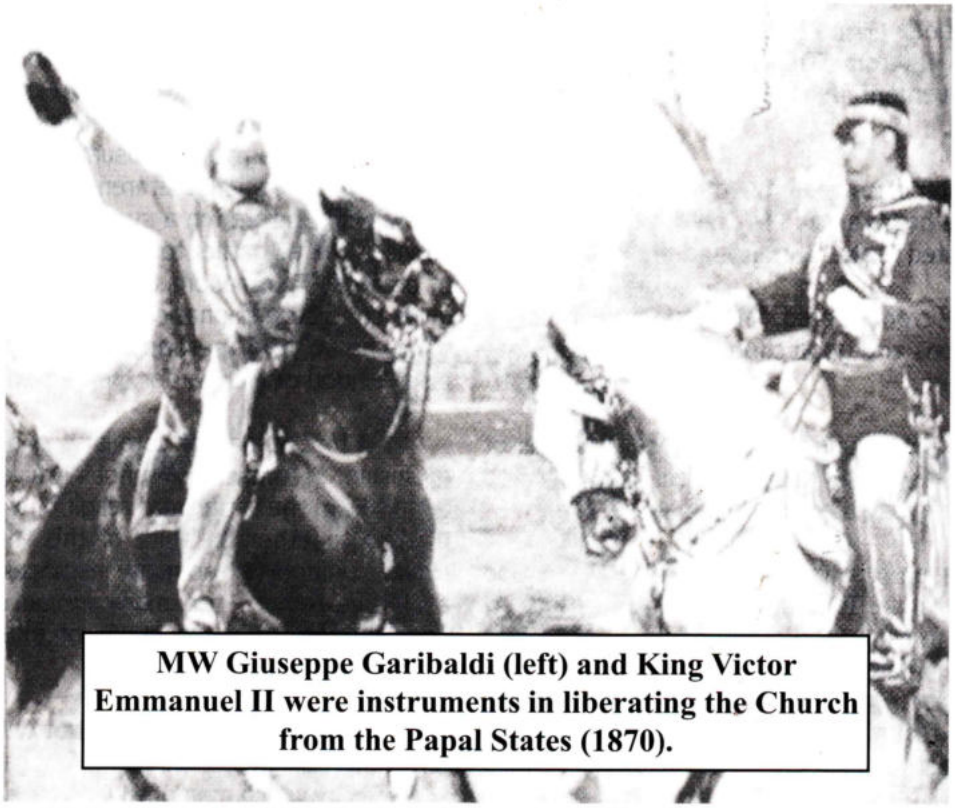
"Is it possible that some extremists are using the very freedom of expression, the self-same opportunity to open debate, the precise privilege of public challenge won for them in part by Mason heroes, to accuse and abuse those in that great tradition?

"Or, worse, have we fallen upon a day in which a climate of suspicion, distrust and ignorance allows heresy hunts and thinly veiled bigotry to hold sway?

"If, yes' is the answer to any of the four questions above, it is time for all who leave liberty to rise up and say, 'Enough of this silliness!'

"The Scottish Rite Creed reads in part: '...liberty of thought our supreme wish, freedom of conscience our mission'.

"I am not a Mason, yet, but I'm certainly glad Freemasons are around!"



MW Giuseppe Garibaldi (left) and King Victor Emmanuel II were instruments in liberating the Church from the Papal States (1870).

In emulation of the example of the said Supreme Council, our Grand Lodge should compile into one volume the various articles on Freemasonry and Religion printed in various issues of The Cabletow, have the compilation printed, and make copies thereof available not only to the brethren but also to non-Masons, including our critics detractors.

The proposed compilation should, certainly, include the statement of Freemasonry and Religion which the Masonic Information Center (MIC), a branch of the Masonic Service Association (MSA) of North America, prepared in December 1993 and which it revised in September 1998. the MIC's

statement, which is quite similar to that which the Board of General Purposes of the United Grand Lodge of England issued on June 12, 1985, may as well be adopted by our Grand Lodge as its official statement on the same subject. The MIC's statement reads as follows:

Basic Principles

Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. It requires of its members belief in God as part of the obligation of every responsible adult, but advocates no sectarian faith or practice. Masonic ceremonies include prayers, both traditional and extempore, to reaffirm each individual's dependence on God and to seek divine guidance. Freemasonry is open to men of any faith, but religion may not be discussed in Masonic meetings.

The Supreme Being

Masons believe that there is one God and that people employ many different ways to seek, and to express what they know of, God. Masonry primarily uses the appellation "Grand Architect of the Universe" and other non-sectarian titles to address Deity. In this way, persons of different faiths may join together in prayer, concentrating on God, rather than differences among themselves. Masonry believes in religious freedom and that the relationship between the individual and God is personal, private, and sacred.

Volume of the Sacred Law

An open Volume of the Sacred Law, "the rule and guide of life," is an essential part of every Masonic meeting. The Volume of the Sacred Law in the Judeo-Christian tradition is the Bible; to Freemasons of other faiths, it is the book held holy by them.

The Oaths of Freemasonry

The obligations taken by Freemasons are sworn on the Volume of the Sacred Law. They are undertakings to follow the principles of Freemasonry and to keep confidential a Freemason's means to recognition. The much discussed "penalties," judicial remnants from an earlier era, are symbolic, not literal, They refer only to the pain any honest man should feel at the thought of violating his word.

Freemasonry Compared with Religion

Freemasonry lacks the basic elements of religion:

a. It has no dogma or theology, no wish or means to enforce religious orthodoxy.
b. It offers no sacraments.
c. It does not claim to lead to salvation by works, by secret knowledge, or by any other means. The secrets of Freemasonry are concerned with modes of recognition, not with the means of salvation.

Freemasonry Supports Religion

Freemasonry is far from indifferent toward religion. Without interfering in religious practice, its expects each member to follow his own faith and to place his duty to God above all other duties. Its moral teachings are acceptable to all religions.

Waging an Awareness Campaign

Another important project is the waging of an awareness campaign about Freemasonry and religious extremism, including the Catholic Church's current pastoral practice regarding Freemasons, which "...shall be in accord with the declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued on 26 November, 1983, entitled Quaesitum est (It has been asked)." This job properly belongs to lecturers at all levels of the Craft. If our leaders and we do not speak up and know exactly what those who oppose us have said, and exactly what facts can and should be cited to prove to fair-minded people that the allegations against us are untrue, the people may believe that there is truth in what those who oppose us are saying and, therefore, our critics and detractors will grow in number and in strength.

Other Initiatives

Let us, meanwhile, keep open channels of communication with anti-Masonic elements with the end in view to dialoguing with them. In his address before an assembly of Masons in 1975, His Eminence, Julio Cardinal Rosales stressed, among other things, the importance of observing the principles of Ecumenism and conducting dialogues that are marked by a mutuality of inner action. Hopefully, through dialogues with anti-Masonic elements, the mist that has long blanketed the beauty of our Craft will soon be dissipated.

Let us also dissipate criticism on our secrecy by continuing to give more visible profile to Freemasonry.

Let us at the same time be active in our respective churches and in the process stand tall for Freemasonry, proudly demonstrating to all and sundry that the flame of Masonic values and principles can brighten our homes, illumine our communities, and light up our world. On the basis of the relative success of the Masonic-Catholic dialogue in the late '60s, our Grand Lodge and/or the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, of the Scottish Rite would do well to adapt to the Philippine context Bro. A.G. Markham's suggestion that professional historians be employed in

tracing back early features of Masonic history against general historical background "because a reasoned interpretation of such features may have relevance to its essential meaning."

Bro. Markham adduces that an authoritative sympathetic understanding of Masonic history may be a useful answer to anti-Masonry.

What functions would the professional general historians have? They would according to Bro. Markham, (1) interpret, as well as confirm or resolve the interpretation of, fragmentary early Masonic history against general background; and (2) interpret the broad perspectives of early and later Masonic history so as to integrate them as part of general history.

And, what functions would Masonic historians have? They would according to Bro. Markham once more, (1) furnish, in an accurate, complete and unbiased manner, details of Masonic history to form the basis of the work of non-Masonic historians; and (2) bear in mind that areas of Masonic history that are fragmentary must have explanations based somehow on fact and reason, and that pursuit of truth with strict objectivity does not justify supposed anomalies without attempting sensibly to resolve them by research into background history with the assistance of professional historians.

In the end, Bro. Markham firmly believes, the dialogue between the professional and the Masonic historians will result in a proper recognition of Freemasonry as the remarkable historic institution, beneficial to humanity, which it is. Freemasonry will then have a better image in the eyes of the public because it will have been reasonably accepted by non-Masonic historians of high professional standing.

This is, clearly, a difficult task. But since it may be useful answer to anti-Masonry, our Grand Lodge and/or the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, of the Scottish Rite would do well to undertake it. We have the resources to accomplish it. We have an adequate number of Masonic historians, foremost of whom is our Grand Secretary. MW and Ill. Reynold S. Fajardo, PGM, GMH, who would work with the professional historians whom our Grand Lodge and/or the Supreme Council, 33rd degree, of the Scottish Rite would employ. We must exert all-out effort to keep those who always oppose us to a small number.

To demonstrate that Masonry is not against the Catholic Church, to which the majority, including the best, of our members belong, MW William H. Quasha initiated dialogue with the Vatican in 1959 for the purpose of getting the latter to reconsider its condemnation of Freemasonry in the Philippines.

In 1968, he was much gladdened by a UPI report, which said in part, "The Vatican has virtually scrapped an old church law excommunicating Catholics who join the Order of Freemasons... Catholics now are free to join the Masons in the United States, Britain and most other countries of the world. But the European Grand Orient Lodge form of Masonry, established primarily in Italy and France, is still considered anti-Catholic or atheistic..." Hence, in his letter to His Eminence, Agustin Cardinal Bea dated March 13, 1968, MW Quasha wrote, "This action on the part of His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, I sincerely believe will herald an entirely new era of harmony and of ecumenicity amongst those who believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men..."

MW Raymond E. Wilmarth, who used to teach in the UST Graduate School, followed up MW Quasha's initiative. Besides creating a committee that would coordinate our activities with the Catholic Church, he wrote articles on Catholic-Masonic interrelationship. In one article, he stressed this point: "From where I stand, I cannot find anything in Masonry that would disqualify a Catholic from becoming a member of the Craft. Once a Catholic becomes a Mason, we only ask that, in addition to being a good Mason, he be a better 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 these. The error comes when the leaders twist these to their own purposes, proclaiming them to be the only worthwhile religious truths. In this way, Freemasonry becomes either naturalistic, believing only in those truths that can be known by natural reason, or indifferentist, 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 had 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 toward 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." (Ibid.)

The foregoing report of the panel of Catholic experts was referred by the CBCP to the Episcopal Commission of the Doctrine of the Faith, which in turn expressed in writing its conformity with the panel of Catholic experts. Hence, in 1970, the CBCP formally petitioned the Holy See that "all Catholics who in the judgment of their Local Ordinaries are members in good faith of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines be exempt from the provision of Canon 2335 of the Code of Canon Law." (Ibid., p.14).

In 1974, the Vatican at long last replied that "...the excommunication applies only to the persons who are members of associations that militate against the Church. It is on the basis of this principle that the position of the members of the different groups must be judged in each particular case." (Ibid.).

The Masonic-Catholic interrelationships subsequently warmed up, so that church leaders like Cardinal Rosales graced Masonic gatherings.

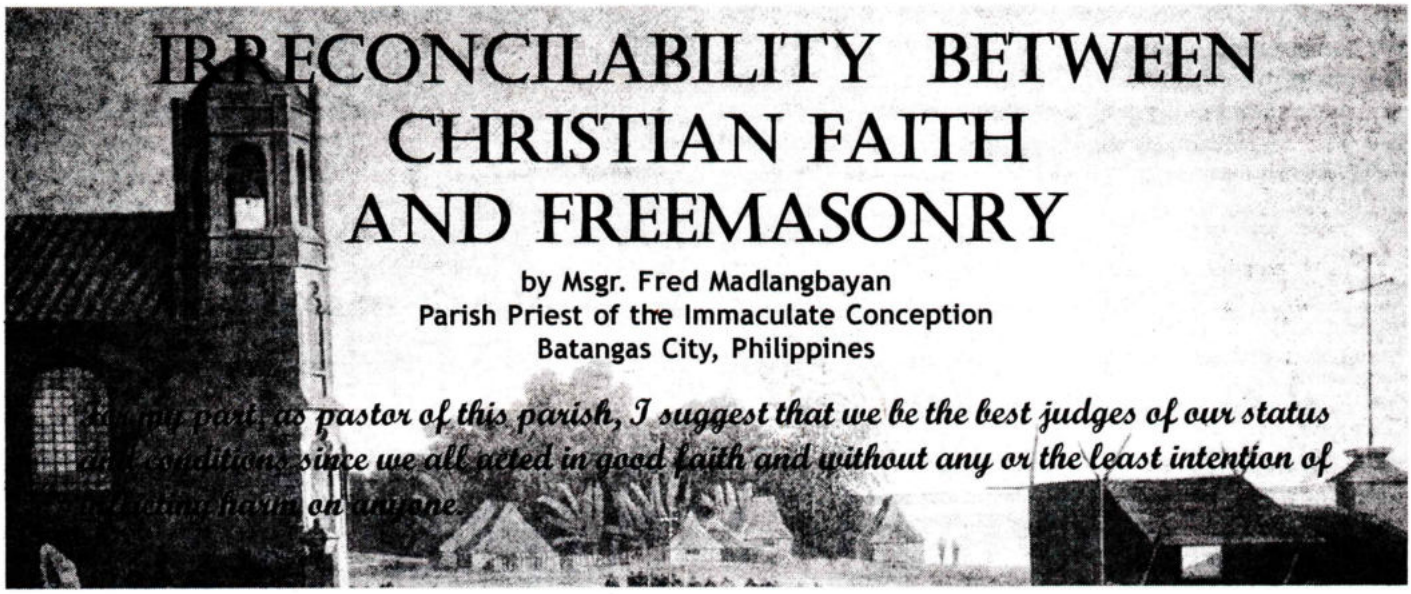
In 1983, a new Code of Canon Law was promulgated. The previous Canon Law was promulgated. The previous Canon No. 2335, which provided that "those who join Masonic or other sects and conspire against the Church and lawful civil authority are subjected to the major canonical penalty," was deleted and Canon No. 1374 has taken its place. The later provides that "whoever accepts membership in an association hostile to the Church shall be liable to a just penalty; he who promotes or directs such an association shall be liable to an interdict." (Ibid.)

Starting in the same year, however, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has declared that Catholics who join Masonry commit "serious sin." On the basis of that declaration, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II), which was held in 1991, decreed that "...Bishops and priests will exercise great pastoral prudence and charity in this regard (i.e., canonical penalty), so that with God's grace they may 'Unite all in Christ.'"

From then on, certain sectors of the Catholic Church have waged their off-and-on criticism and attack against the Craft. Abroad, especially in the Southern United States, the criticism has been echoed by some mainline Protestant religions and born-again preachers.

But the fact remains that the CBCP has cleared Filipino Freemasonry from the age-old misconceptions "after two years of microscopic examination of our landmarks, laws, rules and rituals." (Ibid., p14). Pronounced MW and Ill. Puno: "There is no reason to change that well-considered judgment." (Ibid.). with utmost confidence, the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines stated, "...Masonry can withstand the strictest of scrutiny of the unbelievers. All that Masonry needs to fight falsehoods is a fair hearing for truth is our side. Given a fair hearing, Freemasonry will acquit itself from every false charge in any forum..." (Ibid.).

Aye, a fair hearing is all we ask. Would that our critics also observe this precept in Matthew 7:1-2: "Judge not, lest ye your selves be judged; for whatever judgment ye measure unto others, the same shall in turn be measured unto you." We seek no more... it is enough.



IRRECONCILABILITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FAITH AND FREEMASONRY

by Msgr. Fred Madlangbayan
Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception
Batangas City, Philippines

In my part as pastor of this parish, I suggest that we be the best judges of our status and conditions since we all acted in good faith and without any or the least intention of causing harm on anyone.

The topic assigned to me "Irreconcilability between Christian Faith and Freemasonry," a reprint from Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas, July-August 1985 issue, which appeared in The Far Eastern Freemason January-March 1987 issue, is at once sensitive and significant. Sensitive, because it must have caused not a little feeling of anxiety on many of your members especially the Catholics and significant because it may help us resolve some if not all our questions and difficulties. My task is to comment and elaborate on the article.

There are two approaches to the subject on hand: first, what the higher authorities of the church specifically the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith based at the Vatican has to say about it; and secondly, on the local ecclesiastical authorities' attitude on the matter.

As far as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith is concerned, its stand seems to be firm and irrevocable as could be glimpsed from several portions of the article. To quote for a few:

"The declaration of the Sacred Congregation appears that membership in Masonic associations remains forbidden by the Church, and the faithful who enrol in them are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion" (p.5)

"Now more thorough study has led the S.C.D.F. to confirm its conviction of the basic irreconcilability between the principles of Freemasonry and those of the Christian Faith" (p.3)

"Let us remember that Christianity and Freemasonry are essentially irreconcilable, so that enrolments in one means separation from the other" (Letter of Leo XIII to the Italian People CUSTODI December 8, 1892 – p. 3)

The bases for the Sacred Congregation's stand on the matter as stated in the article are several:

a.) "In the Encyclical Humanum Genus by Leo XIII (20 April 1884), the Magisterium of the church has denounced in Freemasonry philosophical ideas and moral conceptions opposed to Catholic doctrine. For Leo XIII, they essentially led back to a rationalistic naturalism, the inspiration of its plans and activities against the Church." (p. 3)

b.) "...essential to Freemasonry would be precisely the fact that it does not impose any principle', in the sense of a philosophical or religious position which is binding for all of its members, but rather that it gathers together, beyond the limits of the various religious and world views, men and good will on the basis of humanistic values comprehensible and acceptable to everyone... (p. 4)

c.) "Above all, it must be remembered that community of 'Freemasons' and its moral obligations are presented as a progressive system of symbols of an extremely binding nature. The rigid rule of secrecy which prevails there further strengthens the weight of the interaction of signs and ideas. For the members, this climate of secrecy entails above all the risk of becoming an instrument of strategies unknown to them." (p. 4)

d.) "In any case, for a Catholic Christian, it is not possible to live his relation with God in a twofold mode, that is dividing it into a supraconfessional humanitarian form and interior Christian form. He cannot cultivate relations of two types with God, nor express his relation with the Creator through symbolic forms of two types." (pp. 4-5)

e.) "Even when, as stated earlier, there were no explicit obligations to profess relativism as doctrine, nevertheless, the relativizing force of such a brotherhood, by its very intrinsic logic, has the capacity to transform the structure of the act of faith in such a radical way as to become unacceptable to a Christian, to whom his faith is dear" (Leo XIII – p. 5)

The Sacred Congregation in making such a statement does not only admonish but experts the local ecclesiastical authorities to abide by it. Thus we read: "Finally, the Sacred Congregation declares that "it is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgement on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided above." (p. 5) "In the same way, the new document issued by the S.C.D.F. in November 1983 express identical intentions of reserve concerning pronouncements which would differ from the judgement expressed here on the irreconcilability of Masonic principles with the Catholic faith, on the gravity of the act of joining a lodge and on the consequences which arise from it for receiving Holy Communion." (p. 6)

At the end of the article, this final statement we read: "In making this declaration, the S.C.D.F. has not intended to disown the efforts made by those who, with the due authorization of this Congregation, have sought to establish a dialogue with representatives of Freemasonry. But since there was the possibility of spreading among the faithful the erroneous opinion that membership in a Masonic lodge was lawful, it felt that it was its duty to make known to them the authentic thought of the church in this regard and to warn them about a membership incompatible with the Catholic Faith. Only Jesus Christ is, in fact, the Teacher of Truth, and only in Him can Christians find the light and the strength to live according to God's plan, working for the true good of their brethren." (p. 6)

Now, let us look at the local ecclesiastical authorities' attitude on the matter. As far as the local Ordinary, the Archbishop is concerned, he respectfully begged that he be given some more time to study the document because he was not sure whether there were new pronouncements made on the matter or not. He further suggests that we open or keep the doors open for deeper study and honest evaluation on the kind of Freemasonry existing in the Philippines.

For my part, as pastor of this parish, I suggest that we be the best judges of our status and conditions since we all acted in good faith and without any or the least intention of inflicting harm on anyone. I also think it is wise that every effort should be made to clarify the precise nature of the Masonic associations in different parts of the world. Because I have a feeling, based on the external behaviour of some Masons-Catholics in this parish, that not all Masonic associations are the same. And I hope I am right.

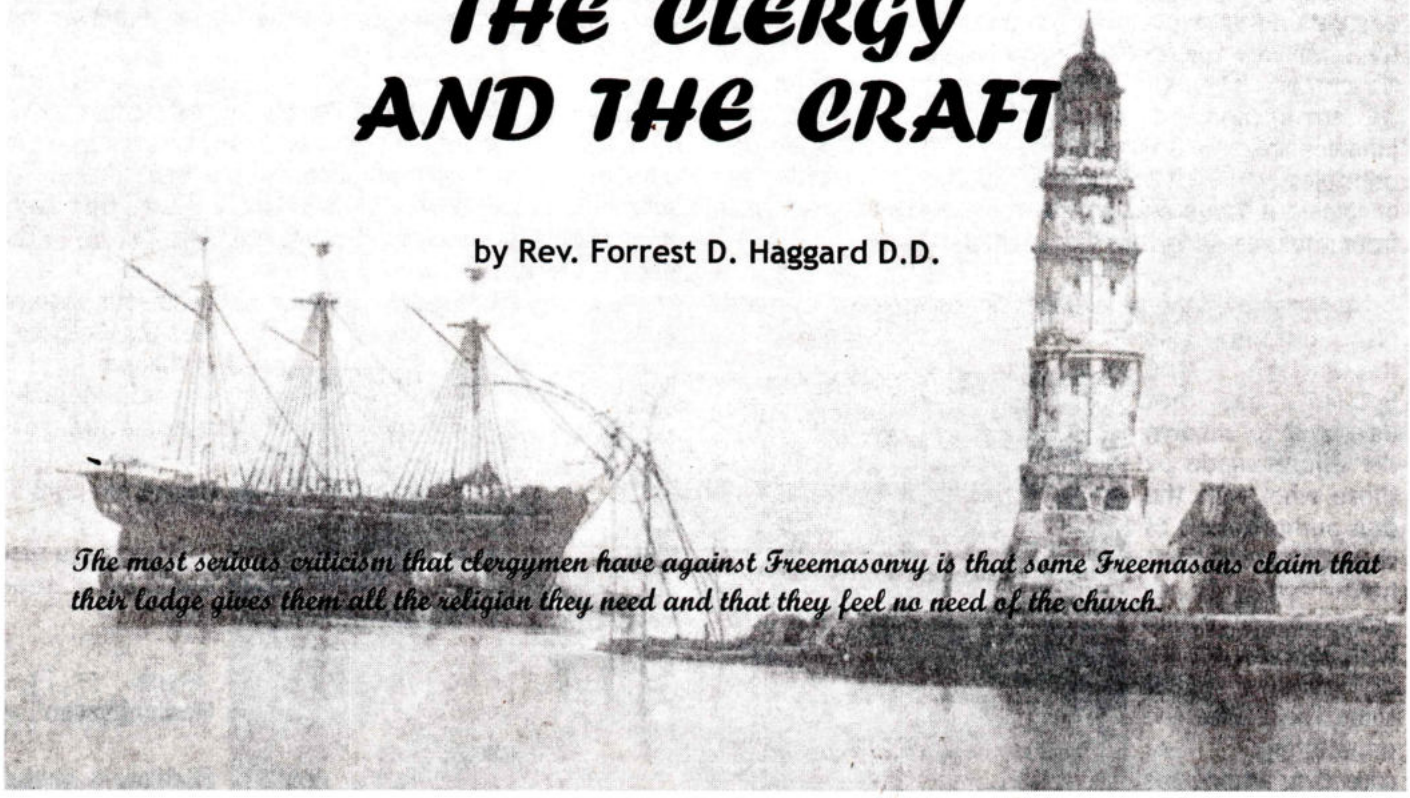
Thank you very much and good day!

Msgr. Fred Madlangbayan

(Editor's Note: The foregoing is a speech read for Msgr. Fred Madlangbayan, Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City, on the occasion of the Sated Meeting of Batangas Lodge No. 35 F.&A.M., on August 6, 1987. The very good Right Reverend sent his regrets for his inability to attend the meeting due to an unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances.)

THE CLERGY AND THE CRAFT

by Rev. Forrest D. Haggard D.D.



The most serious criticism that clergymen have against Freemasonry is that some Freemasons claim that their lodge gives them all the religion they need and that they feel no need of the church.

From time to time Freemasonry has come under criticism from the Christian Church, both the Roman Catholic and Protestant branches. The Roman Catholic opposition dates back to the Eighteenth Century when Papal Bulls were issued by Clement XII in 1738 and Benedict XIV in 1751 denouncing Freemasonry and instructing the Roman Catholics to withdraw from the Craft. Originally Freemasonry had both Roman Catholic clergy and laymen in its membership in almost every country where it had been established. The first laymen in its membership in almost every country where it had been established. The first Freemasons' Hall in London was erected in 1776 when Lord Petre, who was looked upon at the leading layman in the Roman Catholic Community in England, was the Grand Master of Masons. Earlier than that in 1730, Thomas Howard, the Eighth Duke of Norfolk, a Roman Catholic, was Grand Master and during his term presented to the Grand Lodge its Sword of State, which is still in use. After the Papal Bulls has been issued Roman Catholics gradually withdrew from membership in Freemasonry. This process was accelerated when a number of edicts were issued starting in the year 1821 and the result was almost a complete separation of the Roman Catholic Church from the Freemason Lodge.

The opposition of the Roman Catholic Church does not differ greatly from the criticism that arises from time to time in the Protestant. In 1935 the Catholic Truth Society issued a pamphlet which sets forth quite clearly the basic of the differences. The pamphlet admits that Freemasonry is "beneficial to the country or, at any rate, quite harmless" but that the great objection is that Freemasons are placed under a solemn oath of secrecy. Even more serious than this that Freemasonry "tends to undermine belief in Catholic Christianity by substituting for it what is practically a rival religion based on deistic or naturalistic principles."

Through the years there have been criticisms of Freemasonry by Protestant groups. At a Methodist Conference in Great Britain in 1927, Rev. C. Penney Hunt criticized the Craft in much the same manner as did the Catholic Truth Society. While the Methodist church refused to pass a motion unfavourable to Freemasonry yet there were many indications of support for Mr. Hunt. In January, 1951, the magazine Theology, a publication of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, carried an article by a Church of England clergyman, Rev. Walton Hannah, entitled: "Should a Christian Be a Freemason?" the question, of course, is answered in the negative mainly because Mr. Hannah claims that the oaths of secrecy and the penalties associated with the oaths are pagan. He claims, in addition, that the Masonic Order is a Gnostic Heresy. The article

demands an inquiry into Freemasonry by the Church of England especially since both the Methodist and the Roman Catholic Churches questioned the validity of the Order.

As a Church Assembly in June 1951, Rev. C. Creed Meridith moved that a commission be established to study the Hannah article and a long debate ensued. Freemasonry found supporters in many of the high dignitaries of the church including Dr. Garbett, the Archbishop of York Rev. C.E. Douglas made the following very penetrating statement: "You cannot understand Freemasonry except in a lodge. Its real secret is fellowship." The motion was ultimately defeated.

In Scotland in 1754 the Associated Synod of Stirling considered the propriety of the Masonic oath and in 1755 the Kirk Sessions were requested to make enquiries into Masonic practices. In some places in Scotland any person who admitted to being a member of a Freemason's Lodge was required to do public penance and subjected to a rebuke from the Kirk Session. The reasons for the opposition were the objections to the oath of secrecy and the penalties associated with obligations.

From the above account it may be concluded that the historic objections to Freemasonry are:

(1) Theological
(2) Ethical

The theological objections are based on the charges that Freemasonry is:

(1) Deistic – The Deist relies on reason to prove the existence of God. They come to this position by conclusions drawn from the observation of nature. The revelation God through a person, such as Jesus, is not necessary.

(2) Naturalistic – Naturalistic theology believes that the world can get along all right by itself by obedience to the natural law. God may have created the world but once it was set in motion there is no further need for Divine intervention. Hence there is no need to acknowledge that God once intervened in the natural order by sending his Son as the Saviour of the World.

(3) Gnostic – The Gnostic heresy claims that truth is revealed by God to specially selected individuals by means of special secret rites and ceremonies. The mystic ceremony of initiation confers on the initiate a special type of knowledge. Again the appearance of Jesus in human form is not necessary in the Gnostic view.

The Christian Church finds error in these three theologies because they exclude the need of Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world. This accusation against the Masonic lodges is not correct. A man before he is admitted to the Masonic Order must profess a belief in God and in Life Eternal. It follows, then, that the Christian who applies for admission to the Masonic Lodge must confess a belief in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Hence, Freemasonry cannot be Deistic, Naturalistic, or Gnostic. It is true that the Freemason's lodge endeavours to enrich a member's belief in God by instructing him in the moral law and the hidden secrets of nature and science. For the Christian this is a further understanding of the nature of the God as revealed in Jesus Christ in whom he has already admitted a belief.

The matter of secrecy has been greatly overrated as far as the Freemason's lodge is concerned. There are no mystic initiatory rites which purport to give secret knowledge. There was a time in the early Christian Church that the Christians were accused of cannibalism because in their sacred meal they were reported to have eaten human flesh. This was, of course, a complete misunderstanding of the Lord's supper and arose because the Christian were forced to meet for worship in secret. The meeting of the Freemason's lodge is limited to members and their proceedings are in secret. It does necessarily follow that secrecy procedures theological error or special knowledge. What it does indicate is that very close and warm fellowship is developed amongst the members.

The ethical accusations against Freemasonry in relation to the oaths of secrecy and the penalty of the obligations are more difficult to explain to those who are not members of the Order. The penalties when considered with an historical imagination and with an understanding of their origins are not as pagan as they may at first appear. Recently, however, some Grand Lodges have undertaken to revise the penalties. In Canada, the Grand Lodge of Quebec, has led the way in this matter. It should be sufficient to note that the Masonic Order is conscious of the need to study a revision of the penalties. This, in itself, should indicate to the critics of this aspect of Freemasonry that the penalties are not basic to the purpose of the Order.

Secrecy will have to remain because this is a fundamental concept but it should be noted that secrecy implies a fellowship and not immorality, irreligion, or sedition.

Far more important than the issues discussed above is what may be described as the practical situations which cause individual clergymen to oppose Freemasonry. This practical conflict appears when the Freemason's lodge appears to compete with the church for the time, energy and talent of the men in any community. The validity of such criticism is borne out when the Mason prefers to attend his lodge rather than go to a church meeting. It is further aggravated when a Freemason's lodge plans events which conflict with church activities. Very regrettably some lodges arrange practices on Sundays when the members should be in church. Such inconsiderate action rightly brings the lodge into disrepute.

Another very valid point of criticism is when the Freemason's Lodge presumes to usurp some of the historical prerogatives of the church, for example the so-called Masonic funeral. The church, as is its right, commits the body to the ground and concludes the burial service with the benediction. Then the Masonic lodge takes over and conducts the committal service again, often inexpertly and in a painfully long and theologically unsound manner. It should be noted that the Freemason's lodges are themselves examining the validity of this practice and many are substituting a memorial service for the funeral service. The following is a quotation from the proceedings of the United Grand Lodge of England dated September 12, 1962:

(1) That Masonic Rites, Prayers and Ceremonies be confined to the Lodge Room and that dispensation to wear regalia (which term includes white gloves) be granted only in exceptional cases;

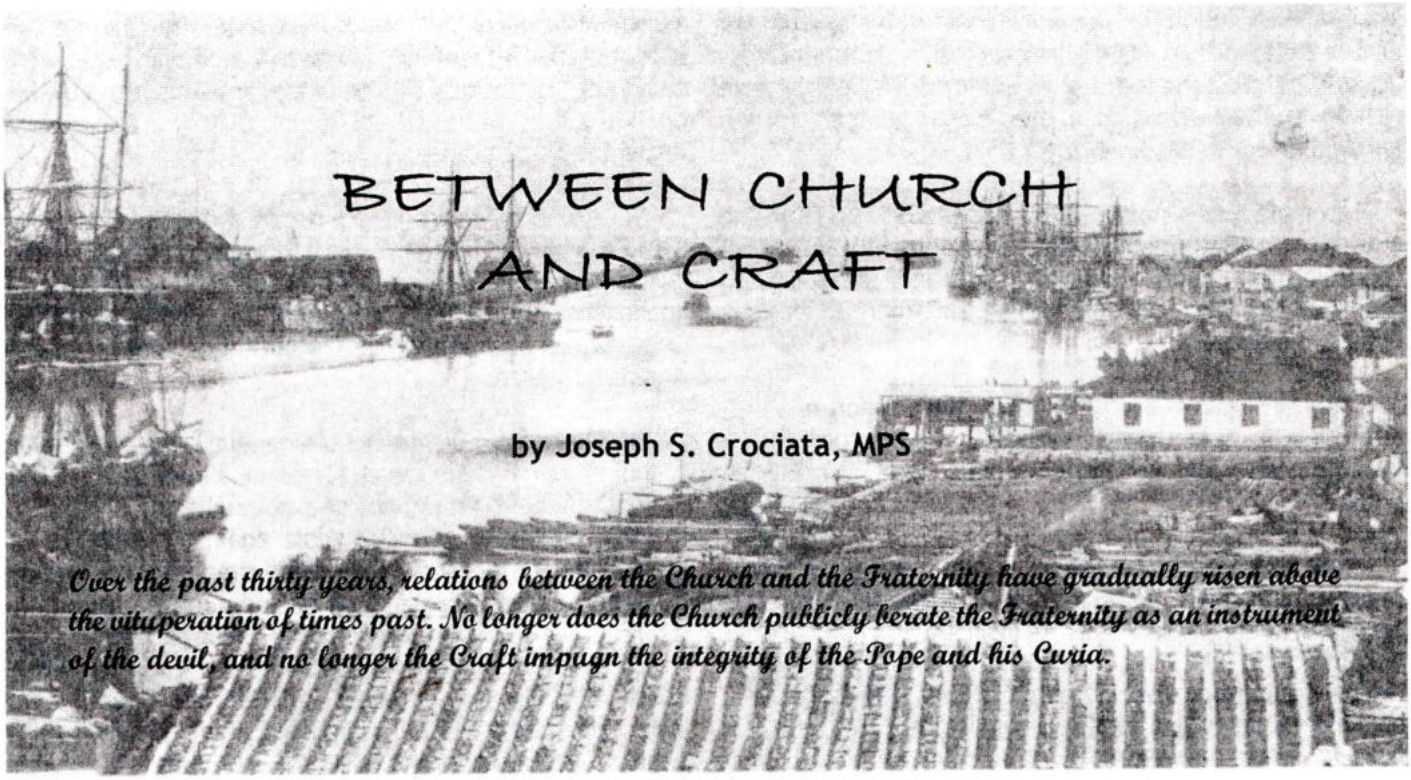
(2) That there be no active participation by Masons, as such, in any part of the burial service or cremation of a brother and that there be no Masonic prayers, readings or exhortations either then or at the graveside subsequent to the interment, since the final obsequies of any human being, Mason or not, are complete in themselves and do not call, in the case of a Freemason, for any additional ministrations. That if it is wished to recall and allude to his Masonic life and actions this can appropriately be done at the next lodge meeting in the presence of his brethren, or at a specially arranged memorial service;

(3) But that while no obstacle should be put in the way of Masons wishing to take part in an act of corporate worship, only in rare and exceptional cases should they be granted dispensation to do so wearing regalia; moreover, that the order of service should in all cases be such as the officiating minister, or his superior, consider to be appropriate to the occasion.

The most serious criticism that clergymen have against Freemasonry is that some Freemasons claim that their lodge gives them all the religion they need and that they feel no need of the church. Any Freemason that makes such a claim has completely misunderstood the teachings of the Craft and is doing a serious disservice both to the church and the lodge. Freemasonry is a science of morality "founded on the purest principles of piety and virtue" and can never claim to be a substitute for the church. Although its teachings are based on deeply spiritual concepts based on a belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and although it looks forward to the ultimate unity of mankind in the spirit of love, it can never aspire to supplant the church as the militant body of Christ manifest in the world. Nor can a Freemason's lodge hope to satisfy the spiritual life of man which is expressed in the Christian Church. The Freemason's lodge has no message of redemption for the sinner and no hope of salvation to offer to those who have lost their foothold on life. No message of forgiveness and atonement is offered to those who are battered and broken by sin and wrongdoing. There is no ministry of healing for whose who, in life's struggle, have lost courage and hope. Forgiveness, atonement, redemption, and hope are all the prerogatives of the Christian Gospel as expressed in the church and it is presumptuous for a Freemason to assert that they can be found elsewhere. A well instructed Freemason will never treat lightly the divine ministries of the church nor will he absent himself from attendance at the house of God. Indeed, if he lives as a Freemason should, he will be eager to be a valued aid to the church life of his community.

Religion, morality and noble living find themselves seriously challenged in this age of materialism and all the forces of high and noble living must be rallied to meet the crisis' both the church and the Freemason's lodge are dedicated to such a cause and it would be to their eternal shame if they dissipated their energies in a non-productive criticism of each other. For the Mason it is essential that he demonstrate to the church his goodwill and support. This task will be made easier if the Masonic lodge takes steps to remove those areas in which there has been misunderstanding especially by a critical re-examination of its public ceremonies and re-interpretation of the image of being a secret society bound by obligations to which are attached pagan penalties. The Craft has in its membership many clergymen of differing faiths who should accept the responsibility of representing the Freemason's lodge amongst their brother clergymen. Then it may be possible for more of them to subscribe to the following statement made by the late Dr. Daniel A. Poling, an outstanding minister, former president of World Christian Endeavor Union, and editor of Christian Herald and Christian Endeavor World:

"I arrived at the decision that Masonry is a vital and dynamic force in America, and in the world, for everything high and worthy to which my life has long been committed. And there is something more, Masonry occupies, in my opinion, a unique position of opportunity and obligation in the human order today."



BETWEEN CHURCH AND CRAFT

by Joseph S. Crociata, MPS

Over the past thirty years, relations between the Church and the Fraternity have gradually risen above the vituperation of times past. No longer does the Church publicly berate the Fraternity as an instrument of the devil, and no longer the Craft impugn the integrity of the Pope and his Curia.

Whether couched in the vitriolic exchanges of earlier centuries or the more polite rhetoric of recent history, relations between the Craft and the Church of Rome have long exhibited the (oftentimes sole) virtue of stability. The passing of centuries has yet to make an end to the chill winter of intolerance, especially regarding the issue of common membership – the status of the "Catholic Mason." Historically, the Craft's quiet but consistent policy of religious toleration did little to dispel common misconceptions that Masons prohibited Catholic membership. In contrast, the Roman Church's stern threats of excommunication to any of its members who became a Mason left little room for confusion.

Code of Canon Law, Canon 2335 1917

Those who enlist in Masonic sects or other associations of the same kind, which plot against the Church or against lawful civil authority, ipso facto incur the excommunication simply reserved to the Apostolic See. Ironically, the public's misconceptions and the Vatican's policies yielded an important, albeit unintended, benefit to the Craft. They provided ample assurance that any Catholic who petitioned a lodge (and there were many such Petitioners) had full notice of the religious and philosophical problems with which he might be faced. Consequently, lodges receiving such petitions had no need to address the issue, and our Catholic brethren became valued and often prominent workers in the Temple.

More recent signals from Rome, if not entirely encouraging, have been considerably more confusing to Masons, Catholics and Catholic Masons. The following brief review of some of the more important documents of the past decade is presented in hopes of assisting each Lodge in crafting appropriate policies regarding Roman Catholics who seek Light in Masonry.

The Seper Letter

The year 1974 saw a remarkable change in the official complexion of Church/Craft relations. His Eminence, Franjo, Cardinal Seper was then Prefer of the Roman Curia's primary doctrinal body, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (herein-after, "SCDF"). Seper sent a letter to his Eminence, John, Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, who was then president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The letter addressed the applicability of Canon 2335 of the church's Canon Law (set forth hereinabove) to Masonic lodges in America.

Canon 2335 was promulgated by Pope X on the Pentecost of 1918, as part of the Church's Penal Code. As translated above, the Canon consisted of a simple sentence of excommunication of Catholic laymen who join Masonic lodges, or "other associations... which plot against the church or against lawful civil authority..." Excommunication, virtual exile from the Church's most serious sanction, since the time that it ceased to exercise juridical power as a secular authority. According to authoritative commentaries of the time, the sentence was incurred ipso facto upon joining a Masonic association, without the necessity of a formal sentence by ecclesiastical authorities. Significantly, the determination of whether particular associations "plot

against the Church" allows for considerable latitude of interpretation. In contrast, authoritative commentators accepted a presumption that Masonic bodies, by the sole reason of their adoption of traditional Masonic forms, engaged in such machinations.

Cardinal Seper's interpretation appeared to diminish the authority on that presumption. In response to an inquiry regarding the applicability of traditional sanctions to Catholics who might seek membership in American Masonic Lodges, he wrote:

One may safely teach and apply the opinion of those authors who hold that Canon 2335 regards only those Catholics who join associations which plot against the Church.

From this letter arose the opinion that a Catholic could become a member of a lodge of Masons which neither engaged in nor aided plot against the Roman Church. According to this view, while the Church continued to discourage Masonic membership, Catholic men could avoid the imposition of the severest penalty of the Church for participation in the fellowship of the lodge. This view point became widely accepted among Catholic churchmen. As a practical matter, the determination that a lodge did or did not "plot against the Church" was left to the individual layman. Many Roman Catholics found their way to Masonic Light during this period.

The Declaration of 1981

In Italy, 1981 began in the midst of a banking scandal which involved an organization of men who styled themselves a lodge of Masons (called Propaganda Due, or "P-2"). The officers of "P-2" reportedly inducted members in the back seats of automobiles and without degree, in exchange for payments in cash and information. That such a collection of men could accurately be called a lodge, much less Masonic, is open to considerable question. Nonetheless, "P-2" was recognized as such throughout the world press. The activities of certain men alleged to be members of "P-2" gave birth to an international banking scandal which brought down an Italian government, and allegedly embroiled the Vatican's "Institute of Religious Works" (that is, the Vatican Bank) in its intricate schemes. Amid growing public charges of pervasive "masonic" influence in the Vatican, a review of Rome's position on Masonic membership was inevitable.

This review would be undertaken on an official basis by the SCDF. Although primarily procedural in operation, the resulting Declaration not only closed the door on Masonic membership, it denied that the door was ever open. Seper's letter, the SCDF maintained, had been misinterpreted. Although a Catholic could become a member of a Masonic association which did not plot against the Church, the determination of whether the association was acceptable could not be made by the individual or by his bishop. Only on petition to the SCDF in Rome could the appropriate dispensation be granted.

Nonetheless, in correspondence with the Executive Secretary of the Masonic Service Association of the United States. The Most Reverend Thomas Kelly, Archbishop of Louiseville and General Secretary of the American Bishops' Conference, questioned the Declaration's applicability to American lodges.

The Declaration states that the general law of the Roman Catholic Church issued in 1917 remains in effect, namely, that a Catholic under penalty of excommunication, is not to join any organization which plots against the church or legitimate civil powers. At the same time, the Declaration reminds us that to incur the excommunication, certain requirements must be met. Among these, it seems clear, would be the fact that the association in question is one which actually plots against the Catholic Church or a legitimate government. I understand that this would not appear to be the case with Masonic Fraternities in the United States.

Despite the liberal tone of the Archbishop's letter, such neat distinction would be of little practical import to an American Catholic, who could only obtain his Church's judgment by petition to Rome – a petition which, according to one source in the offices of the Archdiocese of Chicago would properly be made in Latin! In addition, the position of those Rome Catholics who joined the Fraternity in good faith during the seven years of Episcopal "misinterpretation" of the Seper document was not addressed. Many Catholics and Masons adopted a "wait and see" attitude, and many Catholics who did not learn of the "clarification" continued to join and participate in the fellowship of the lodge.

Canon Law Revised

In preparation for the Second Ecumenical Counsel of the early 1960's, Pope John XXIII announced his intention to move the Church toward the monumental task of revising the entire body of its Canon Law. A special commission was appointed in 1963, which was subsequently enlarged, and labored for almost twenty years on the task. As proposed drafts were published, Canon 2335 underwent interesting (and provocative) changes. Now Canon 1374, the purpose of the new Canon remained the proscription of Catholic membership in certain organizations, but the explicit reference to "Masonic associations was deleted.

Can. 1374 – One who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty;

one who promotes or moderates such an association, however, is to be punished with an interdict.

The omission of a direct reference to Masonry was encouraging, albeit in keeping with the Church' more recent policy of publicly opposing the Craft more on the grounds of Masonic precepts which allegedly conflict with Church dogma, rather than on allegations of an evil, Masonic "conspiracy." In addition, the sanction imposed by the Canon for membership is left to the discretion of the disciplining party, and therefore not clearly a diminution in the sanction. Indeed, subsequent interpretations have favored a denial of the Eucharist (which is the major element in the "interdict" and supposedly reserved for the "promoters" of a proscribed society) as the "just penalty" for Masonic membership. Clearly, only careful study and the passage of time would determine whether the canonical change presaged a corresponding change in the Church's policy toward Freemasonry.

Unfortunately, certain Masonic writers hailed this change as the codification of the conciliatory position adopted in the Seper document of 1972. Whether unaware or simply unmindful of the SCDF Declaration which intervened between the Seper letter and the promulgation of Canon 1374, these writers hailed John Paul II (arguably the most conservative prelate since Pius XII) as the "liberator" of his Church from its long prejudices against the Craft. Future developments would demonstrate that these sentiments, however laudatory, are at least premature and probably incorrect.

Based upon the Church's published interpretations to date, Canon 1374 reflects a change in the prominence given by the Church to its self-declared differences with the Craft. It does not reflect any change in the Roman Church's policy regarding such differences, and does not currently reflect a change in the Roman church's prohibition against the membership of Catholics in Masonic associations. And the Church openly declared this position even before the revision was in place.

The Declaration of 1983

After an unbroken decade of steadily improving relations between the Craft and the Church in America, the impending change in the Canon Law appeared to be another step toward final reconciliation. Nonetheless, as witnessed by the SCDF's Declaration of 1981and the fiscal/political crises which may have contributed to its general tone, the prospects for reconciliation of any kind in the European sphere could hardly have been worse.

On the eve of the new Code's promulgation, the SCDF published a Declaration which denied that the revised Code would have any substantive effect on the issue of Catholics' participation in the Fraternity. Masonic organizations, while not specifically mentioned in the new Code, are included in broader categories of proscribed activities:

The Church's negative position on Masonic associations therefore remains unaltered, since their principles have always been regarded as irreconcilable with the church's doctrine. Hence joining them remains prohibited by the church. Catholics enrolled in Masonic associations are involved in serious sin and may not approach Holy Communion.

Local ecclesiastical authorities (i.e., local bishops) do not have the faculty to pronounce a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which might include a diminution of the above-mentioned judgment, in accordance with the intention of this congregation's declaration delivered on Feb. 17, 1981, (citation omitted).

The supreme pontiff John Paul II approved this declaration, deliberated at an ordinary meeting of this sacred congregation, and ordered it to become part of public law.

The Declaration was signed by His Eminence, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the SCDF, and The Reverend Jerome Hamer, Archbishop of Loria and Secrecy of the SCDF. In keeping with the definitive tone of Declaration (and with the Declaration's specific reference to its pontifical authority), headlines of the National Catholic Membership in Masons is "Serious Sin," Vatican Says, "The NC News Service's article cites an unnamed source at the SCDF who acknowledged that while the Code "lifted the penalty of automatic excommunication of any Catholic who joins the Masons," the purpose of the Declaration was to alert Catholics to the problems which the Church anticipates for Roman Catholics who become Masons – namely, that "some Masonic groups include anti-Catholic activity," and that Catholic brethren may be "manipulated into support of a hidden agenda, which could include anti-Catholic activities."

The Declaration was not greeted with enthusiasm by some American Catholic clergy. Many emphasized the more liberal commentaries while neglecting to cite the text of the Declaration itself. Most ignored the issue, while other registered reservations regarding the basis for the Declaration's universal applicability. The Boston Archdiocese's chief ecumenical officer had called the position set forth by the Vatican a "pastoral confusion," and in an article soon after its publication, urged the establishment of a dialogue which could lead to clarification of the applicability of the Code's prohibition to American Masonic groups.

Despite the Declaration's reservation to the Vatican of all rights to make judgments regarding Masonic associations which may become exempt from Canon 1374, the prerogatives of local bishops to grant dispensations under the present code and Declaration may be viewed somewhat

more broadly. A consultor to the committee which revised the Code states that while the Declaration appears to prohibit a bishop from making a judgment on a particular Masonic group, it did not take away his faculty to dispense individuals in particular cases from observance of a specific church law. By this interesting theory, one assumes that the individual Catholic may receive a dispensation to belong to an organization presumed by the Pope to plot against the Church, even if an association that does not, (such as a Masonic lodge) cannot obtain an appropriate judgement from the Vatican.

Notwithstanding the discomfort of some American Catholic clergymen over the stridency of the Declaration, the current position of the Vatican (and more especially of His Holiness John Paul II) favors denial of the Eucharist to Catholics who have or will join the Fraternity. Following the initial impact of the SCDF's Declaration, Americans of the Craft and the Church settled back for an extended examination of the problems created by the church's posture – problems not only affecting those Catholics desiring to join the Fraternity, but more immediately those who had done so in good faith since 1974.

The "Reflection" of 1985

Whatever the final resolution of the apparent conflict between the church old and new world viewpoints, there are apparently those in the Vatican who are loathe to see the issue remain dormant. On February 22, 1985, an article entitled "Irreconcilability Between Christian Faith and Freemasonry" appeared in L'Osservatore Romani, the Vatican's newspaper. The article is primarily a restatement of the Church's traditional objections to the Fraternity-naturalism, religious indifferentism, secrecy (in the context of "unknown strategies," or conspiracies), and the denigration of the Christian's relationship with God, through cultivation of a "supraconfessional humanitarian form." The article emphasizes, with approval, the SCDF's election to discourage Masonic involvement and discounts the value of the personal experiences of those Catholics who have joined the Fraternity and discovered no evidence in support of the Curia's charges of anti-Catholic and anti-Christian in belief.

The article retains little of the verbal restraint of the Declaration, utilizing language more in keeping with inflammatory rhetoric of earlier times. For example, the author supports a charge of "relativism" with the erroneous claim that the Craft's universal dedication to the principle of religious toleration is based upon a positive belief that truth about the G.A.O.T.U cannot be known (as opposed to a more accurate rendering for the vast majority of Grand Jurisdictions, that differences in belief regarding the precise nature of such truth is not a fit cause for man to reject the brotherhood of his fellow man). Based upon this view, the author condemns the Fraternity and its ritual as a "distortion of the fundamental structure of the act of faith."

In contrast to such inflammatory (and inaccurate) statements regarding the Craft, the author differentiates between the Church's attitude toward Masonic membership by Roman Catholics, and "Arm's length" dialogue between the church and the Fraternity:

In making this Declaration, the SCDF had not intended to disown the efforts made by those who, with the due authorization of this Congregation, have sought to establish a dialogue with representatives of Freemasonry. But since there was the possibility of spreading among the faithful the erroneous opinion that membership in a Masonic lodge was lawful, it felt that it was its duty to make known to them the authentic thought of the Church...

All attempts by the religious press to discover the identity of the author (and so determine his authority) were rebuffed by the Vatican.

Conclusion

For the present, and to the distress of our Catholic brethren, it appears that the Church of Rome has decreed that a Catholic may not be Mason and receive Communion, unless the Vatican has determined that the Masonic "association" to which he belongs is an exception to those included in the rule set forth by Canon 1374 (an eventuality which appears to be unlikely at the present time). Unofficial speculation indicates that it may be possible for a Catholic brother to continue in the full exercise of his religion under an individual dispensation granted him by his local bishop, although the ecclesiastical propriety of this method is not as yet affirmed by officials of the Vatican or any local diocese.

The foregoing letters, Declarations and codifications become vitally important to the Craft in the context of its treatment of the Roman Catholic petitioners. Such a petitioner may be assured by well-meaning but uninformed persons that the Roman Church no longer prohibits its members for Masonic affiliation. This is absolutely untrue. If such a petitioner is initiated on this basis, a lodge may inadvertently expose the Craft to charges that it induces Roman Catholic membership by means of false misleading statements. More importantly, a lodge that neglects to inform the petitioner of the potential or conflict fails in its duty to give him due and timely notice, that he may avoid conflict with his chosen religion"

Certainly, the manner in which notice is given must receive careful consideration, so that the petitioner is not given to believe his Roman Catholicism, is any Masonic impediments to his initiation. Nor should the lodge (or the investigating committee) presume to advise him regarding his relationship to the Roman Church. It appears prudent that he should simply be informed that the Vatican has prohibited membership in the Masonic Fraternity under certain conditions, and that he should consult his Pastor in

order to fully inform himself of the consequences of his membership, before he assumes the obligations of the Fraternity. Once informed in this simple manner, the petitioner's relations with his Church become a private matter of conscience, and no further inquiry on the part of the lodge is warranted, or desirable.

Finally, it is important to note that the foregoing does not signal any major change in the external relations between the Roman Church and Freemasonry. Over the past thirty years, relations between the Church and the Fraternity have gradually risen above the vituperation of times past. No longer does the Craft impugn the integrity of the Pope and his Curia. Nothing in even the most provocative of the writings referenced herein heralds a return of the regrettable confrontations of times past. The Roman Church's position on Masonry is the logical extension of its view of the Universe, and of the Church's unique place within it. The Craft should continue to extend the hand of respect and tolerance to the Church, and perhaps this exercise of the important Masonic virtue of tolerance may some day elicit a hand of fellowship in return.

I am not a prophet, but if I may venture a guess, I would say that perhaps in the near future when the new Code of Canon Law shall comeout – which for some years now is being prepared in Rome – we will not read in it those provisions which Freemasons find so hurting.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HIS EMINENCE JULIO CARDINAL ROSALES

Perhaps it can be said with truth that my presence with you today constitutes a sort of hallmark in Freemason and Catholic relationship in the Philippines. For who indeed could have imagined in years past that a Cardinal of the Catholic Church would one day be the principal speaker in an important Masonic celebration? As for myself, I never dreamed that someday I would be called upon to render this service to a Masonic gathering such as this. And the Freemasons of old, like those of the beginning of this century, would probably turn in their graves, were they to know that their own brother Masons were the ones responsible for my presence, a high-ranking member of the Church that fulminated censures against them in the past.

For of course, it is true that the Catholic Church had on several occasions denounced Freemasonry, culminating with the laws that we find embodied in the Code of Canon Law.

I am not going to discuss here, however, whether the Catholic Church was right in promulgating these laws, laws which I must confess hurt very much the sensibilities of Freemasons. It is against the principles of Ecumenism and common sense as well to keep harping on matters that do nothing but hurt the feelings of those we want to dialogue with.

Neither am I so presumptuous as to state that in the conflict and antagonism between Catholic Church and Freemasonry the latter was always at fault, and the former totally free of blame. Vatican II no less, in its decree on Ecumenism, frankly states that in the scandalous division of the Churches – fault lies not on one Church alone, but at times on both. "In subsequent centuries more widespread disagreements appeared and quite large Communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic

Church – development for which, at times men of both sides were to blame." (Decree on Ecumenism, No. 3).

And the reason for this I believe can be gleaned from the same decree, when it clearly distinguishes between the divine and the human element in the Church. "Although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, her members fail to live by them with all the fervor they should," said Vatican II. (Decree on Ecumenism, No. 4). In its divine aspect the Church may not err, but in the human, abuses and failings do come. Thus is becomes indeed possible that in the past, abuses cropped up in the Church, which drove Masonic organization to attack the Catholic Church as a whole, without distinguishing any longer between what was human and what was divine in it.

But whatever the past may be, let us rather look towards the future. Whatever the differences there may have been let us solve them that again we may be one in love. Our Lord said: "Love one another, such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other." (Jn 13, 34).

It is praiseworthy of Philippine Masonry that if exerted efforts towards the achievement of this most worthy ideal. We have heard of the efforts of some Freemasons who went to Rome in their desire of at least initiating the rapprochement between Catholicism and Freemasonry.

There was the effort too of Philippine Freemasonry in making contacts with the local Church. A group of Filipino Freemasons approached the then Archbishop of Manila, Rufino Cardinal Santos, proposing to him the idea of a dialogue between Freemasonry and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines subsequently approved the idea, and officially initiated the dialogue between the two bodies.

The dialogue has been going on for some years now, and I can say with truth that much headway has been achieved through their efforts. In fact, if I am here with you today, it is due to a large extent to both the Masonic and Catholic panels who have previously paved the way. Especially in the first two years of the dialogue, both panels met regularly, about once or twice a month I think, discussing the irritants between Catholic and Masons, studying how both organizations can be reconciled, making suggestions on how to promote cooperation in practical matters. To both panels, and above all to the Grand Masters for the encouragement they have always given to this dialogue, I wish to convey my heartfelt congratulations. (applause)

But if you ask me now, wherein lies the basis for cordial relations and reconciliation, I believe it can be found in the changed attitudes and conditions in both Freemasonry and the Catholic Church in many parts of the world. For one thing, the irritants in olden times that accounted so much for the antagonism between the two groups do not seem to exist at least these last years in our country. For as we know, the Holy Fathers denounced Freemasonry on three principal grounds: its attacks on the Catholic Church, its subversive activities against legitimate civil authority, and its naturalism on religious beliefs. Permit me to cite some words from Pope Leo XIII Encyclical on Freemasonry.

Humanum Genus:

"Now the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savor. For, from what we have above most clearly shown, that which is their ultimate purpose forces itself into view – namely, the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the World which the Christian teachings has produced, and the substitution of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which the foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere "Naturalism" (No. 10).

"No do they think it enough to disregard the Church – the best of guides – unless they also injure it by their hostility. Indeed, with them it is lawful to attack with impunity the very foundations of the Catholic religion, in speech, in writing, and in teaching; and even the rights of the Church are not spared, and the offices with which it is divinely invested are not safe" (No. 14).

"Having, by these artifices, insured their own safety and audacity, they have begun to exercise great weight in the government of States; but nevertheless, they are prepared to shake the foundations of empires, to harass the rulers of the State, to accuse, and to cast them out, as often as they appear to govern otherwise than they themselves could have wished" (No. 28). Leo XIII was talking about continental Freemasonry.

Now are the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines the same as the Freemasonry of the earlier century denounced by the Humanus Genus? Is there no hope for rapport between Catholicism and Philippine Freemasonry, i.e. the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines?

Frankly speaking, I would not be here today, had I believed that cordial relations with the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines were impossible. The Catholic panel has assured us that much of those things that aroused so much Pope Leo's indignation are, to a large extent at least, non-existent today in our country.

To say, for example, that the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines are subversives and seditious is of course absurd. The members of this association are distinguished Filipinos who have always been known for their law-abiding spirit. They have never been run after-by the Philippine government for trying to overthrow the Republic. In fact,

very many – hold high government positions, bolstering and strengthening the solidity of the nation.

To say likewise that the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines have no aim but that of attacking and annihilating, if possible, the Catholic Church, - a thing bewailed by Pope Leo in the Freemasonry of his time – is, I believe, neither true now. For indeed who is the Mason today maliciously attacking the Catholic Church? What one sees instead is the effort of Freemasonry towards friendship, initiating Masonic-Catholic dialogue, creating joint social projects, inviting even highest Catholic leaders to its celebrations.

Again Leo XIII censured Freemasonry for naturalism in its religious beliefs, Is this valid, too, for the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines?

There are religious truths which every Mason is bound to believe, namely the existence of God, the necessity for a good moral life, the immortality of the soul, and reward for the good and punishment for the bad in an after-life.

Interpreted in one way, these truths can indeed form that naturalism in religion which Pope Leo lamented in his Encyclical. For there have in fact Freemason in the past who said that if all religious beliefs the above-mentioned truths are the only truths in which all men agree. Freemasonry is to be esteemed and praised, for whereas there are religions which are quarrelling among themselves about their particular beliefs, Freemasonry holds those beliefs of which there is no dispute. Why respect religions when what they do is simply to propose truths over which everybody quarrels and disputes? This kind of interpretation is of course unacceptable to Catholicism, for among other things it destroys revelation and the other supernatural truths that go with it.

Interpreted in another way, however, these truths could hold no obstacle for mutual understanding. For in the first place, there really is nothing wrong in believing the existence of God, good moral life, the immortality of the soul, the reward of punishment after death. It is good, nay obligatory, to believe these things. The error lies in the saying that they are the only truths worth believing.

The Masonic panel informed us that the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines hold these truths with no intense of disparaging the other truths. Freemasonry simply believes that these truths are basic truths of which no religious man can prescind. They are only the beginning, but do not constitute the whole truth of religious. That there are other truths besides in facts more important truths that everyone should believe, Freemasonry accepts leaving however, to the conscience of each one to say what they are in the concrete, for Freemasonry is not a religion, nor does it pretend to be one; it bows to the decisions of the Catholic hierarchy in so far as it concerns the religious truths affecting Catholic Masons.

To be morally sure, however, that misunderstanding and conflicts do not crop up again that would destroy the intended rapport Catholicism and Freemasonry are so desirous about, I believe it is best to continue the dialogue between the two bodies. No less than Vatican II recommended dialogues (cf. Decree of Ecumenism, No. 4). For indeed it is through dialogue that people understand each other better. Through dialogue Freemasonry could only express with all sincerity its beliefs, but would have too the opportunity to point out whatever grievances it may have against the Church leaders or members. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, could call the attention of its Freemason counterparts to tenets or decisions that in its considered opinion run counter to cherished Catholic beliefs. The dialogue could focus now its attention on the higher degrees, for it seems that the panels concentrated their talks move on the Blue Lodges.

May I end this talk by saying that a future on sincere cordiality exists between us. I am not a prophet, but if I may venture a guess, would say that perhaps in the near future when the new Code of Canon Law shall come out- which for some years now is being prepared in Rome- we will not read in it those provisions which Freemasons find so hurting.

Thank you.

WORD OF APPRECIATION FROM GRAND MASTER

Your Eminence:

I know of no better way than to tell you, Your Eminence, of our profound gratitude in your presence with us this afternoon, and the kind message which you have brought to us than two very simple words and those are "thank you, thank you."

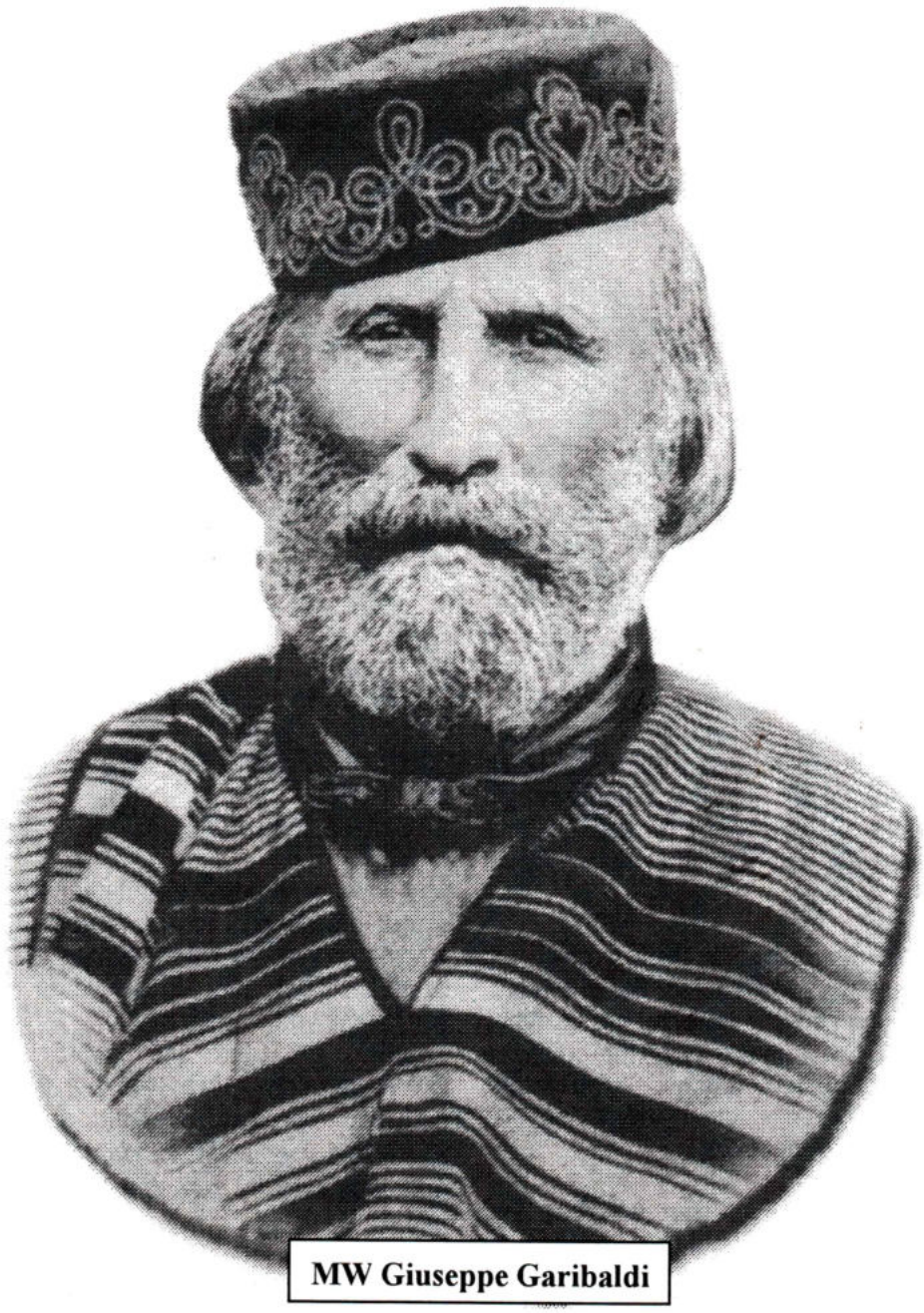
We certainly appreciate your talking your time to be with us, appreciate the kind words that said, and we appreciate your understanding of our fraternity and your understanding for our endeavours to be friends of our people.

If I may be allowed another minute of your time, Your Eminence, I would like to read from a little book of ours, entitled "What is Freemasonry" published by the Masonic Service Association of the United States, a well known association in the Masonic world. I would like to read to you from this book what we know of the teaching of Freemasonry, and we are happy to know that you are already

enlightened on our feelings, on our teaching, to very great degree:

Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the downtrodden, shelter the orphan, guard the altar, support the government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy and hope for happiness.

We tell all men and we teach all men to be better Catholics, Protestants, or whatever their religions may be. We hold nothing against the Catholic Church or to the other churches which are also striving to make better men and women of the population where they exist. These are our teachings, Your Eminence, in very short words, and as all our Brothers know, we expound and extend upon each of the words that I give under what our basic teachings are. We take hours and hours in explaining the meaning of these. We do it through symbols, we do it through pageantry, and other ways, to firmly imprint upon the minds of our Brothers what Masonry really teaches, and exhort them to go into the world, and live the life of the Masons- the life of a good men. We try to make good men better. And again let me tell, Your Eminence, and I state for everyone in this House I am sure, for every Mason here, that we consider this to be a milestone in our relationship. I firmly believe and I am sure that all our leaders agree with me that this will be the opening and turning of a new leaf in our relationship. I am sure that it will redound to the benefit and to the good of the Church, to the good of our Fraternity, to the good of men and women in this Jurisdiction.

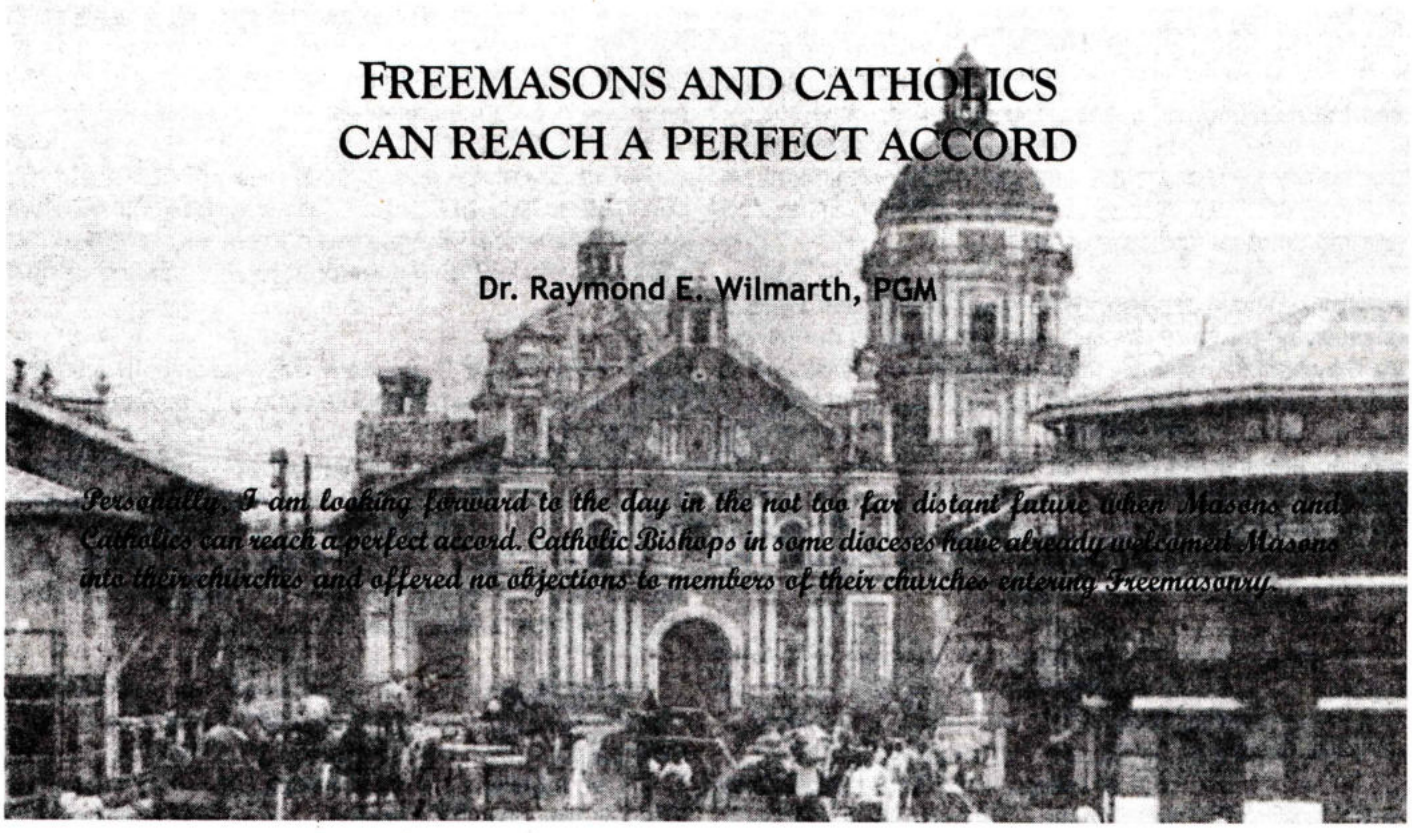


MW Giuseppe Garibaldi

So in closing, let me say, and we hope, that this will not be the last time that we will see you in our presence, and in our convocations. We hope to see more of you, and we wish you God speed and the blessings of God and all of the fine works that you are doing. Thank you, Sir.

FREEMASONS AND CATHOLICS CAN REACH A PERFECT ACCORD

Dr. Raymond E. Wilmarth, PGM



Personally, I am looking forward to the day in the not too far distant future when Masons and Catholics can reach a perfect accord. Catholic Bishops in some dioceses have already welcomed Masons into their churches and offered no objections to members of their churches entering Freemasonry.

(Editor's note: the following article was first published in the December 1968 issue of **The Cabletow** and reproduced in full in the **Boletin Ecleciastico de Filipinas**, official organ of the Catholic Hierarchy in the Philippines. We are reprinting this article for the benefit of the new brethren and for those who may not have read the article as published in the past since it essentially defines the position of the Philippine Freemasons and provided a healthy perspective for an Ecumenical Dialogue aimed at promoting and maintaining harmonious relations between Freemasonry and the Church. After a series of dialogues between Masonic and Church leaders, two eminent Church leaders – Bishops Mariano Gaviola and Leonardo Legaspi made public pronouncements that since Philippine Freemasons are not again the Church, there can be no reason why Masons and Catholics cannot happily co-exist. During the first Papal visit to Manila in 1970 (Pope Paul VI), the Pontiff stated that Philippine Mason are not subversive in the context of the Canon Law and cannot, therefore, be subject to the penalties thereof, in fact, he favored the lifting of the ban against Freemasonry in those areas where the Catholic Bishops so recommend. The cordial relations here between Freemasons and the Church could have resulted in a Church decree that would, in effect, clear Philippine Freemasons of baseless indictments of being anti-Church. The impasse, however, has been occasioned by existence of a clandestine Grand Lodge and a Supreme Council whose actuations run counter to the principles adhered to by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines and the Supreme Council of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Masons. For the Church to issue an edict at this point in time when two other "Masonic bodies" that have maintained antagonistic attitude towards the Church still exist would create situations where the activities of the clandestine Lodges that are inimical to the interests of the Church may be erroneously attributed to the sector recognized by the Church. While it is true that the aforementioned clandestine lodges have made attempts to join the Grand Lodge, they must satisfy certain conditions before they can be taken into the folds. And such conditions are not onerous because our brothers and fellows before us accepted such professional of faith.)

The picture appearing on the front cover of this issue of our Cabletow is evidence that what once seemed to be barriers that would keep the Roman Catholic Church at a perpetual distance from Freemasonry have in a few short years become, in the new light of Ecumenical Dialogue, bridges of approach to a complete reevaluation and through understanding of the relationship of Freemasonry and the Church. Neither Freemasonry nor the Church has essentially changed. What has changed are the people in Freemasonry and in the Church. In turn this change has resulted in a change in church leadership and in Masonic leadership. We now find Masonic leaders who openly welcome Roman Catholic into Freemasonry and Catholic Church leaders who, finding nothing objectionable to Freemasonry in their respective areas, have opened their Churches for Freemasons.

Someday a history of the relationship of Freemasonry

and the Roman Catholic Church may be compiled. It will be a most interesting work to read. In it will be all of the issues that drove the wedge between the Church and Freemasonry and the resolution of those issues which restored mutual understanding. At this very moment each of us is making that history. Each day in our daily relationship with members of the Church, we Masons are resolving those issues and restoring mutual understanding.

Occasionally our relationship may be such that instead of resolving an issue, by lack of understanding ourselves, we may act in a manner which we feel is truly Masonic but which is actually perpetuating an issue or heightening a barrier. Although well intended, these acts of Masons only tend to prolong the time that will have to pass before a perfect accord can be reached. How can we know what to say or what to do? The best answer is to practice the Golden Rule. Masons should act and speak to Catholic as we want Catholics to act and speak to Masons.

But there is a great deal more each of us can do to help quicken the time for a perfect accord. This will, of course require some time, some effort, and much study. Most of all it will require an understanding within each of us as to what the ultimate goal of Freemasonry is, in its effort to reach an understanding with the Church. Briefly but precisely put, Freemasonry being a Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of God must make every effort to remove any obstacle preventing men who believe in God and the immortality of the soul from entering our Fraternity with a clear conscience.

Entering Masonry must be of each man's own free will and accord. No man will be invited or induced to join our Order. However, once a man has chosen to apply for the degrees of Freemasonry, we must make sure there is nothing in our ritual that will react adversely to his conscience, such as a conflict with the teachings of his religion. If such a conflict does exist, he can not take our Masonic obligations "without equivocation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind." To practice the truth it professes, Freemasonry must make the first act of a Mason – an act that can be done with a clear conscience.

During the past few years a tremendous effort both in the Church and Freemasonry has been accelerating all over the world toward reaching a perfect accord. One of the most difficult problems to overcome is to get acceptance of the new idea by old members of both the Church and Freemasonry. Many have said that it can't be done! They say that there will always be Catholics who will hate Masons and Masons who will hate Catholics.

Neither the Church nor Freemasonry is founded on hate. Both stand solidly on a foundation of brotherly love. Therefore, if some retain hatred in their hearts, they are neither good Catholics nor good Masons. These are the men we must reach. These are the men God wants both the Church and Freemasonry to show the way to truth through brotherly love and understanding. These are the men who need a helping hand.

Not much can be done if such men will not meet each other face to face, and without fear, but with humility before God, in Ecumenical Dialogue to discuss those matters which, because of lack of understanding, remain barriers to final accord.

In every Lodge throughout this Masonic Jurisdiction, there should be Ecumenical Dialogue with members of the Catholic church and Ecumenical Fraternization with the Knights of Columbus and other organizations of the Church. If we don't see the other man's problem, how can we ever appreciate his point of view? Perhaps a few hours of dialogue will reveal the fact that there are no real issues, just suspicions predicated on misunderstanding. What one does not know, one cannot understand.

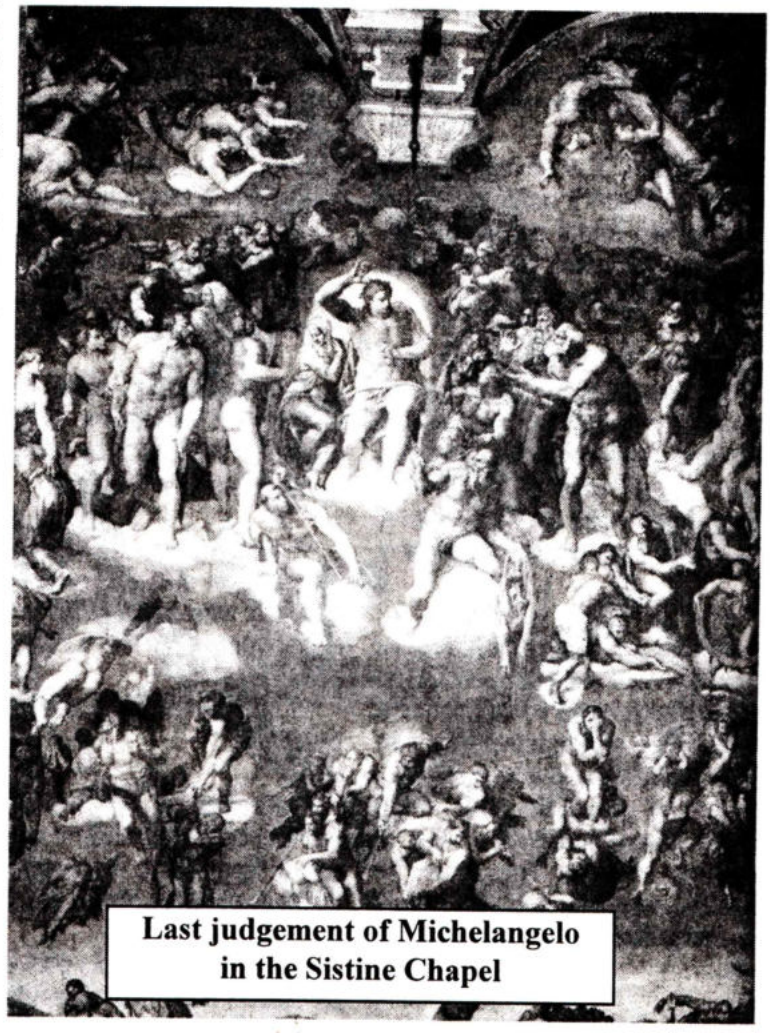
How does misunderstanding arise? In Freemasonry, where every Mason interprets for himself that Freemasonry means to him in his own choice of words. But the meaning of the words to the Mason speaking them may not be the same as the meaning implanted in the mind of the person hearing. Such misunderstanding is what has caused many issues to arise between the Church and Freemasonry. Masons speaking for themselves as individuals have been misunderstood by Catholics who thought they were speaking for Freemasonry as a Fraternity.

One great misunderstanding by Catholics has been that Freemasonry is a religion. How this misconception started, we do not know. Perhaps in the distant past some Mason may have said that Freemasonry was like a religion to him. Since Freemasons must believe in God and immortality of the soul and the Craft is admitted a highly religious society where the Holy Bible is required to be open in every Lodge, it is not difficult to visualize the evolution of an idea among the profane that Freemasonry is some kind of religion. The Catholic Church has misjudged Freemasonry to be a sort of naturalistic religion. By definition, naturalism is the denial of the miraculous and supernatural in religion and the rejection of revelation as a means of attaining truth. The legend of Hiram Abiff is miraculous. Freemason consistently admits truth by revelation. Therefore, Freemasonry is not naturalistic.

The Constitution of our Grand Lodge specifically states there will be no baptismal ceremony in this Jurisdiction. Therefore, since Masons believe in immortality of the soul, who will prepare the soul for immortality? Freemasonry leaves the ceremony of baptism up to the religion of the Mason. The same is true for marriage. Although a Masonic funeral service is provided in our Jurisdiction, it is merely a memorial service at which each Brother in a Lodge may

have a last chance to pay respect to a departed Brother. Freemasonry leaves to religion the final act of committing the departed Brother's soul to God. Freemasonry neither provides for forgiveness of sins, nor communion for a Mason to prepare his soul for eternity. It is obvious then, when seriously considered, Freemasonry cannot be religion as it is not a system, or belief that provides complete salvation to man. Freemasonry leaves the essential functions of religion up to the religion of each Mason.

When you meet a Catholic, greet him as a Brother, because he is a brother. Whether he is a Mason or not does not matter. Do not dwell on past differences. Make plans for the future. If he has questions to ask about Freemasonry, don't hesitate to answer him exactly the same way you would any other person who might be interested in joining your Lodge. If you are not sure of the answer to his question, tell him you will get him the answer. If he hurls a challenge at you, always remember that your image as a Mason and the image of Freemasonry rests in your hands. How you act and what you say will determine the image you project.



Last judgement of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel

To better understand the aims and purposes of Freemasonry as expressed in some of the other Jurisdictions, the following is quoted from the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland:

"In august 1938, the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland each agreed upon and issued a statement identical in terms except that the name of the issuing Grand Lodge appeared throughout. This statement, which was entitled "Aims and relationships of the Craft," was in the following terms:

1. From time to time the Grand Lodge of Scotland has deemed it desirable to set forth in precise form the aims of Freemasonry as consistently practiced under its jurisdiction since it came into being as an organized body in 1736, and also to define the principles governing its relations with those other Grand Lodges with which it is in fraternal accord.

2. In view of representations which have been received, and of statements recently issued which have distorted or obscured the true objects of Freemasonry, it is once again considered necessary to emphasize certain fundamental principles of the Order.

3. The first condition of admission into, and membership of, the Order is a belief in the Supreme Being. This is essential and admits of no compromise.

4. The Bible, referred to by Freemasons as the Volume of the Sacred Law, is always open in the Lodges. Every candidate is required to take his obligation on that Book, or on the Volume which is held by his particular Creed to impart sanctity to an oath or promise taken upon it.

5. Everyone who enters Freemasonry is, at the outer, strictly forbidden to countenance any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, he must pay due obedience to the law of any State in which he resides or which may afford him protection, and he must never be remiss in the allegiance due to the sovereign of his native land.

6. While Scottish Freemasonry thus inculcates in each of its members the duties of loyalty and citizenship, it reserves to the individual the right to hold his own opinion with regard to public affairs. But neither in any Lodge nor at any time in his capacity as Freemason is he permitted to discuss or to advance his views on theological or political questions.

7. The Grand Lodge has always consistently refused to express any opinion on questions of foreign or domestic state policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however, humanitarian it may appear to be, which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between one Government and another, or between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government.

8. The Grand Lodge is aware that there do exist bodies styling themselves Freemasons, which do not adhere to these principles, and while that attitude exists the Grand Lodge of Scotland refuses absolutely to have any relations with such bodies or to regard them as Freemasons.

9. The Grand Lodge of Scotland is a sovereign and independent body practising Freemasonry only within the three Degrees and only within the limits defined in its Constitution. It does not recognize or admit the existence of any superior Masonic authority however styled.

10. On more than one occasion the Grand Lodge has refused to participate in conferences with so-called International Associations claiming to represent Freemasonry, which admit to membership bodies failing to conform strictly to the principles upon which the Grand Lodge of Scotland if founded. The Grand Lodge does not admit any such claim, nor can its views be represented by any such Association.

11. There is no secret with regard to any of the basic principles of Freemasonry some of which have been stated above. The Grand Lodge will always consider the recognition of those Grand Lodges which profess and practice, and can show that they have consistently professed and practiced, those established and unaltered principles, but in no circumstances will it enter into discussion with a view to any new or varies interpretation of them. They must be accepted and practiced whole-hearted and in their entirely by those who desire to be recognized as Freemasons by the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Within the Philippines, the Supreme Council of the 33rd and Last Degree of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite announced its DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES in the Proceedings for 1951 as follows:

"In view of the many allegations that Freemasonry concerns itself in controversies, both of a religious and a political nature, this Supreme Council hereby declares to the world of the following statement of principles:

This Supreme Council affirms its unswerving loyalty to the fundamental purpose and principles of Freemasonry.

It understands that purpose to be the charter of the individual man, and through the individual, of the community.

It believes that this purpose is to be attained by laying a broad basis of principle upon which men of every race, country, sect and opinion may unite, rather than by setting up a restricted platform upon which only those of certain races, creeds and opinions can assemble.

Believing that good and wise men can be trusted to act well and wisely, it considers in the duty of the Fraternity to impress upon its members the principles of personal righteousness and personal responsibility, to enlighten them as to those things which make our human welfare, and to inspire them with that feeling of charity, or well-wishing toward all mankind which all move them to translate principle and conviction into action.

To that end, it reaches and stands for the worship of God, for truth and justice, liberty and enlightenment, fraternity and philanthropy.

It believes in principles rather then programs. Principles unite men; programs divide them. Man may agree on principles without agreeing upon their particular application to some specific problem.

Nothing can be more important than the preservation of the essential and permanent sympathy and unity of purpose of those who are unable to agree as to the wisest action under special and temporary conditions.

It is the essence of Freemasonry that this unity to preserve.

Believing this, this Supreme Council affirms its continued adherence to that ancient and approved rule of Freemasonry which forbids the discussion within tyled doors of creeds, politics, or other topics apt to excite personal animosities.

It further affirms its conviction that it is not only contrary to the fundamental principles of Freemasonry, but exceedingly dangerous to its unity, strength, usefulness and welfare for Masonic Bodies in their official capacity to take formal action or attempt to exercise pressure or influence for or against any particular legislative project or proposal, or in any way to attempt to procure the election or appointment of governmental officials, whether executive, legislative or judicial, or to influence them, whether or not members of the Fraternity, in the performance of their official duties. The true Freemason should act in civil life according to his individual judgment and the dictates of his conscience."

The Catholic Church has alleged that Freemasonry is anti-catholic and subversive in character. Whatever may be

said of Freemasonry elsewhere, the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines have never been subversive of the Philippine government. The promise of every Master of a Lodge to support government is contained in Charges II, III and IV of the Installation Service. As Filipinos all know, many of the Masonic brethren have been famous patriots. As for Freemasonry being anti-catholic, to our knowledge there is nothing essentially anti-catholic in our constitutions. In the past there may have been differences and even quarrels between the Catholic Church and the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. But the past is past. Today we are fully committed to a cooperation with the Catholic Church. Such antagonism in the past must have been more due to subjective reasons, to the resentment mainly which Masons felt at being excommunicated by the Catholic Church.

We have time and again insisted that the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines do not hold communion with some Masonic groups and are not in amity with some of the Grand Orient Lodges. Our Grand Lodge was founded on Dec. 19, 1912, by the three American Lodges holding charters from the Grand Lodge of California, and therefore could not have had relationship with anti-catholic Masonic Lodges existing during the Spanish times.

The Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines believe in God and the immortality of the soul. It admits people of any faith who believe in God and the soul's immortality. It has no intention, however, of separating them from the religion of their respective consciences. On the contrary, it promises to encourage each to follow the religion of his choice. Freemasonry does not pretend to be a religion.

Some of the profane have objected to the Masonic oaths saying they seem immoral, both by reason of the terrible punishments the candidate invokes on himself as well as the object whose nature the candidate does not know about upon taking the oath. Our answer to questions of this sort is that the ancient oaths are symbolic in character, and are not enforced by the terrible punishments mentioned. Neither would the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines command things that are immoral, subversive or against the official teachings of the Roman Catholic or any other Church. In some Masonic Jurisdictions on alternative penalty is prescribed as follow: "or the equally effective punishment of being branded as a wilfully perjured individual, void of all moral worth, and unfit to be received in this or any other Lodge, or society of men who prize honour and virtue above the merely external advantages of rank and fortune.

Freemasonry is a worldwide voluntary association of closely united men who, employing symbolic forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others. It is a unique institution in that it does not invite anyone to join it; it accepts only men of good character and reputation in the community in which they live, and who believe in the existence of God, in a life after death and in the Brotherhood of Man irrespective of race, language, nationally, color, or creed.

While our Grand Lodge has never made any formal proclamation of the aims, principles, and purposes of Freemasonry, the following summary may be taken as a guide to aid our Masonic Brethren who may be called upon from time to time to answer questions which may be asked of them by persons outside the Fraternity.

1. The jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines wherein it is the Supreme Masonic power and Authority is defined by the territorial boundaries of the Philippines, and in addition thereto extends to its Lodges in Guam, Saipan, Kwajalein, Okinawa, Japan, South Korea, South Vietnam, and whosesoever other Lodges may be constituted under its authority.

2. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines as the Supreme Masonic power and authority is sovereign in its jurisdiction and is not beholden to subject to review by, or dependent on any other Grand Lodge, Jurisdiction. Masonic Authority or Masonic entity. Its pronouncements are absolute within its Jurisdiction.

3. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines administers directly the Subordinate Lodges within its Jurisdiction generally known as Symbolic Lodges, its administrative concern being the first degrees of Masonry viz: the first degree or Entered Apprentice; the second degree, or Fellowcraft and the third degree or Master Mason.

4. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines manifests Freemasonry is not a religion, has no pretense of being a religion has no aspiration toward being a religion; has no sacraments or pretenses thereto; and has no rituals that could be construed, however remotely, as being part of any religion. It does not provide for the salvation of men.

5. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines declares Freemasonry does not, can/not, and will not favour, in any manner in which the words can be construed, a member or members belonging to any specific religion, political party or group. Neither does it, can it, nor will it disfavour, in any manner in which the worlds can be construed, any member or members belonging to any specific religion, political party or group. In the implementation of its traditional teaching of harmony among men, it does not permit the discussion, debate, argument or reference to, or about religion, or politics at any Lodge meeting. However, it does not interfere with the Human Rights of Men, and Masons are completely free to enter into any such discussions as any private citizen may, outside the Lodge.

6. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines asserts Freemasonry consistently urges its members to greater devotion to the religion of their choice, and never has or will try to influence any member in his choice of the manner or place of his devotions, being fully content that its members improve their moral character through their own religious preferences.

7. In the Grand Lodge of the Philippines no atheist can become a Mason, since belief in one Supreme Being is the first prerequisite and belief in the immortality of the soul is the second but equally essential prerequisite to acceptance into the Fraternity. Yet Freemasonry does not provide a baptismal ceremony, but leaves such to be provided by the religion of the individual Mason.

8. In the Grand Lodge of the Philippines no woman can become a Mason, nor a youth in his nonage; nor a man in his dotage.

9. In the Grand Lodge of the Philippines Freemasonry, although not a religion, is practiced as a highly religious Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

10. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines is for unsectarian religious education in our Public Schools must be open to all religious on an equal basis with no religion having any advantage over any other and in accordance with the wishes of the parents of the children concerned.

11. In the Grand Lodge of the Philippines the Masonic Funeral Service is a ritual of Freemasonry, giving surviving Brethren a means of paying public homage to their departed, is not designed to supersede any Church Service, nor superimpose itself as such. It is performed at the request of the dying Brother with consent of his family, or at the request of the family alone, if he, the departed had been unable to express such a wish before death.

12. In the Grand Lodge of the Philippines no ritual appertaining to any degree in Masonry, Symbolic or otherwise, has any intended reference or allusion, derogatory or otherwise to any specific religion, political party, or group Freemasonry in this Jurisdiction is always willing to re-examine its rituals in the light of the many changing attitudes in this modern world and make changes therein for a better understanding of the fundamental concepts of Freemasonry. However, no changes can be made in the Ancient Landmarks or the tenets of Freemasonry. These are best known to us as the ancient charges and regulations which are the following duties of the Master of a Lodge that on no account are ever to be neglected or departed from:

I. You agree to be a good man and true, and strictly to obey the moral law.

II. You agree to be a peaceable citizen, and cheerfully to conform to the laws of the country in which you reside.

III. You promise not to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against government, but patiently to submit to the decision of the Supreme Legislature.

IV. You agree to pay a proper respect to the civil magistrate, to work diligently, live creditably, and act honourably by all men.

V. You agree to hold in veneration the original rulers and patrons of the Order of Masonry, and their regular successors, supreme subordinate, according to their stations; and to submit to the awards and resolutions of your Brethren, when convened, in every case consistent with the Constitution of the Order.

VI. You agree to avoid private piques and quarrels, and to guard against intemperance and excess.

VII. You agree to be cautions in carriage and behaviour courteous to your Brethren, and faithful to your Lodge.

VIII. You promise to respect genuine Brethren, and to discountenance impostors or dissenters from the original plan of Masonry.

IX. You agree to promote the general welfare of society, to cultivate the social virtues, and to propagate the knowledge of the Art.

X. You promise to pay homage to the Grand Master for the time being, and to his officers when duly installed, and strictly to conform to every edict of the Grand Lodge or General Assembly of Masons, that is not subversive of the principles and groundwork of Masonry.

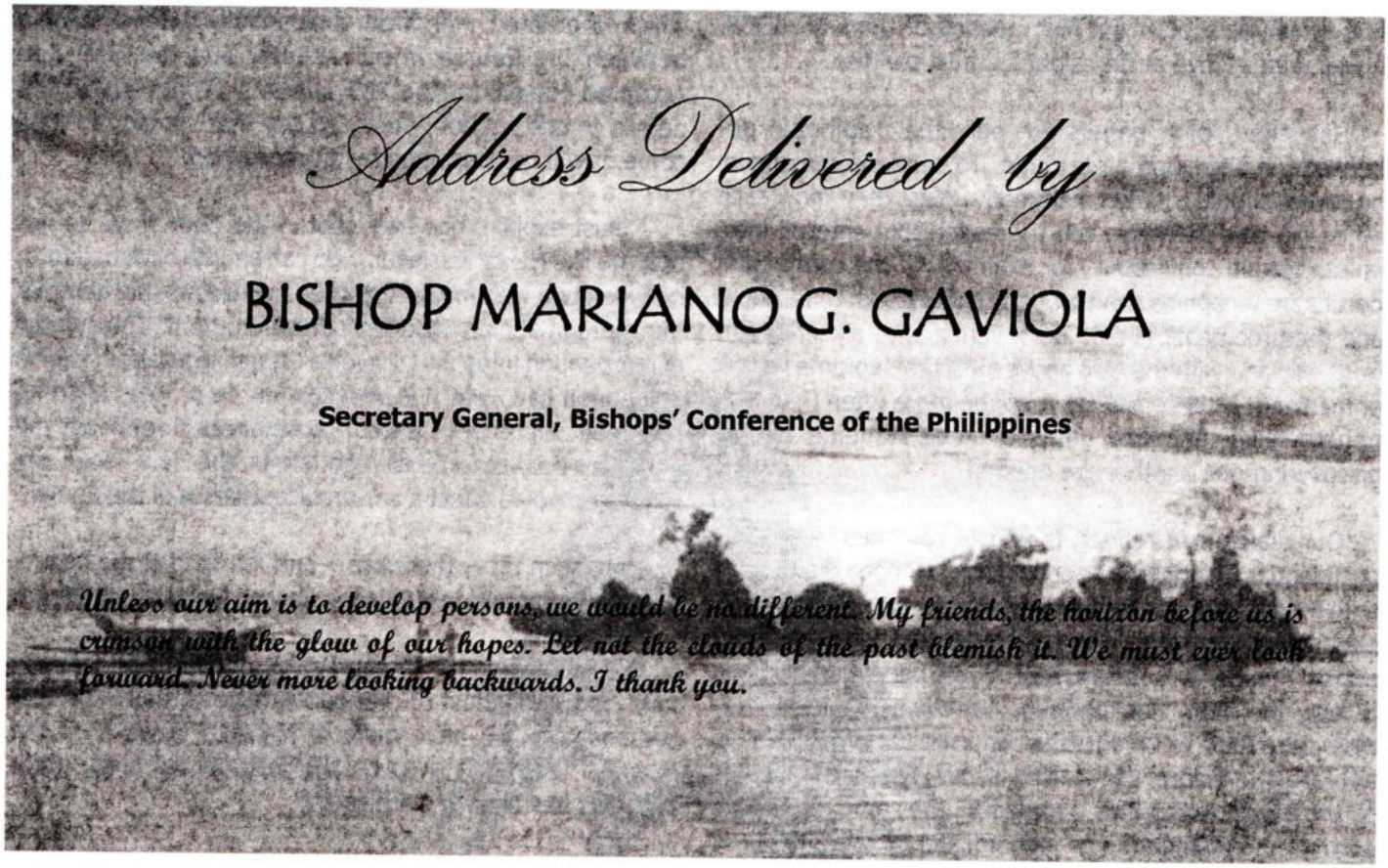
XI. You promise a regular attendance in the committees and communications of the Grand Lodge, on receiving proper notice, and to pay attention at all duties of Masonry on convenient occasions.

XIII. You admit that no new Lodge should be formed without permission of the Grand Lodge; and that no countenance should be given to any irregular Lodge, or to any person clandestinely initiated therein – being contrary to the ancient charges of the Order.

XIV. You admit that no person can be regularly made a Mason in, or admitted a member of any regular Lodge, without previous notice and due inquiry into his character.

XV. You agree that no visitors shall be received into your Lodge without due examination, and producing proper vouchers of their having been initiated in a regular Lodge."

Personally, I am looking forward to the day in the not too far distant future when Masons and Catholics can reach a perfect accord. Catholics Bishops in some dioceses have already welcomed Masons into their churches and offered no objections to members of their churches entering Freemasonry. In this Christmas season I ask all Masons and Catholics to join in prayer that once again, and soon, there will be Peace on Earth among Men of Good Will.



Titular Bishop of Girba, at the Fraternal Banquet Dinner, 24th Annual Meeting of the Supreme Council 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of the Republic of the Philippines, Scottish Rite Temple, Manila, Philippines, on February 16, 1974.

Fellow countrymen, dear brothers and sisters:

One must feel honoured and grateful in being invited to address you this evening on the silver jubilee, no less, of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third and Last Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Philippines. The feelings of presumption that accompanied my acceptance of your kind invitation should help convey – I hope the sincerity of my prayers that God reward you for the good of your past, and that He continue to bless you in the future.

Indeed, the future already augurs bright hopes in so far as the basic tenet that we all hold dear is concerned, namely, the brotherhood of men under the fatherhood of God. The path seems clear now that leads to our becoming genuine brothers and sisters.

I will not bother you now with the history of the relationship between the Church and Freemasonry in our country. It is a sad past, a past that had been rendered black by extreme personal prejudices, and by our snipings of each other. After all, we do not live in the past, but in the present. We can look back at the former only if it serves to assuage ill-feelings, to heal wounds, and to learn from our mistakes. On our part, where we have failed in truth, justice and love, we ask for forgiveness. Where, in upholding the same principles, our faith and trust in the loving providence of the Church had been our sole guide and inspiration, we ask for forbearance, understanding and patience.

Yes, rather than look back we should look forward. We no longer can afford the luxury of isolation, much less of polarization. Together, we must engage ourselves in the task of nation-building. As our brothers' keepers we must forge such ties as would help uphold the human dignity of every citizen and promote total human self-development. Together, we must help build a "ladder of Jacob" to Paradise; never more, a "tower of Babel."

By the grace of God, we have not been totally wanting in this regard. The fact is that, over the past five years, a formal but quiet dialogue has been going on between official representatives of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and of your fraternity. Both groups have been meeting regularly almost every month, particularly in the

first three years, after our first meeting on June 25, 1968. it was then a "love at first sight," I must confess.

But, then, both panels are only the traditional go-between in arranging a marriage. To continue the simile, no parties should contract matrimony unless they know each other. No true marriage can be responsibly entered into, unless certain convictions, for example, of the contracting parties are recognized and properly understood. Differences and disagreements should be weighed with sincerity and good will, and with the help above all of the Supreme Arbiter of mankind. If these persist, it will be more often than not, nonetheless, that new paths of understanding and of discovering one another are opened.

Our dialogue, I repeat, is official but quiet, and even confidential. The otherwise could have laid open our humble endeavors to the possible exuberances or excesses of some extraneous elements, who might want to jump the gun, hoping thereby to force an issue. Some people are inclined to play the hero, not realizing, however, that what they may claim later to be a feather on their hats, had been in all reality the fruits of painstaking labour long before initiated by the proper authorities. Worse still, the same histrionics, aside from endangering or jeopardizing certain studies or negotiations, could also lead the undiscerning to believe that the decisions that eventually might be arrived at are the outcome of external pressure, and not of conscientious deliberation and prayers.

I am not at liberty to issue a communiqué, or to discuss in public the details of these encounters. I can say, however, since I am a member of the Church panel in this dialogue, that the talks have been very sincere and cordial – and at the same time very frank – because both sides are aware that problems and misunderstandings that have deep roots in history, cannot be ironed out overnight.

But, the panel representing your fraternity has allowed me to reveal that your highest authorities have gone so far as to show us the gallery proofs of your proposed revised ritual for admission into the fraternity, and have offered to delete any word or phrase that may be offensive to Catholics or, for that matter, to Christians in general. They have even agreed that such an admission be preceded, for the benefit of Catholics and Christians believers, with the instruction that as such they are bound to observed and practice the teachings of their faiths.

For our part, I can also reveal now that three years ago, as a result of this dialogue, the Catholics Bishops Conference of the Philippines presented to the Holy See a formal petition which, if granted, will affect substantially the relationship between the Church in our country and the Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. I cannot reveal the details of this petition, but I can say that should the time come, it will be welcomed by all concerned.

I must explain, however, that in the Church we do not operate like Henry Kissinger, who can shuttle back and forth between two warning groups over a weekend, and hammer our a pragmatic arrangement between them. The subject of our petition happens to involve Church legislation, known as Cannon Law, which is also now in the process of being reformed. All other Episcopal conferences throughout the world are neither to be disregarded by the Holy See in any reform as would affect a universal legislation of the Church.

Until such time, therefore – and let us face the facts – the existing provisions of Canon Law on Masonry still stand.

But this should not discourage us. Institutions normally take longer to adjust to changed situations than individual persons can. We have made a big leap forward on the personal level. But even on the institutional level, great progress has already been made.

It is curious how history changes our perspective. My reading of the history of Masonry, not even exhaustive, I must admit, seems to indicate what the origins of your fraternity – at least in the very beginning – were closely related to the Church. There is for example the remark of Dugdale, the seventeenth century antiquary and herald, recorded by John Aubrey, to the effect that "about Henry the Third's time, the Pope gave a bull or diploma to a Company of Italian architects to travel up and down all over Europe to build churches. From these are derived – according to Dugdale – "the Fraternity of Freemasons."

The Pocket History of Freemasonry by Pick and Knight (Philosophical Library, New York, 1953), where I came across this theory, mentions that this theory of the origin of Freemasonry "is not impossible" – although there does not seem to be any evidence of such a bull in the papal archives. The authors actually hold the view that Freemasonry "almost certainly" originated from the Operative Masons of Britain, and the Craft is almost certainly a British product and of British origin. It would of course be ironic if it should turn out that Masonry was originated by a Pope. Moreover, in support of their theory that the Craft is British in origin, the authors note that: "it seems likely that scarcely fewer than 5,000 churches were built in England during the twenty years immediately following the Norman Conquest .... And not only is there a remarkable similarity among them as

regards size, proportions and general lay-out, but they different appreciably from which were known to have been built (earlier)..."

This is of course only so much theory as to the beginnings of Masonry as an organization and its eventual development into the fraternity as we known it today. Nevertheless, I find it an intriguing possibility that Freemasonry actually originated in the service, if not in the bosom, of the Church.

It so, then the hoped for complete reconciliation will simply be a homecoming.

Indeed, it is much the same situation in the ecumenical movement that seeks to bring together again the separate brethren of different Christian denominations.

This is not the time or the place to trace the origins of the rifts that broke out into centuries of hostility. Suffice it to say that differences on principles, which might have been reconciled, were aggravated by personalities involved as well as by historical circumstances.

You will admit that Masonry itself has developed differently, and found different expressions, in different countries, although inspired probably by the same principles. Thus is 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 hand 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 good will, the love that we do. However, much we may disagree, we fail as Christians to the extent that we fail in love and in giving due regard for the human person.

It is in fact our increased understanding and our growing insight into the dignity of the human person, based on our knowledge from contemporary social sciences as well as the developments in the theology that is responsible for the new outlook that is growing 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 fuller light. In that light also we see where we might have made mistakes in the past.

It deserves mention here the effort of the Knights of Columbus and of your fraternity in promoting brotherly ties through joint choral concerts and athletic activities. Joint effort and resources towards community development and in social action are fields quite open to us all. The time is ripe for a dialogue on the grassroots level. Our Knights of Columbus is the natural vehicle/counterpart towards this effect. This could be the engagement period for the marriage we seek to embrace.

As we forge however closer ties through human and community development endeavours, may we never lose sight of the basic truth that man whom we seek to serve is composed of body and soul. To seek only the welfare of the body of man is the business of funeral parlors. To be concerned solely with the soul of man is a vain attempt to convert man into an angel.

People who do not believe in God and in human dignity can also feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give homes to the homeless. An economic leap forward can be achieved thereby, with one big difference. Their programs could only make slaves of human beings, comfortable slaves perhaps, if they succeed, but slaves all the same. Not persons, but tools of the State, instruments to be used, things to be manipulated, chattels to be disposed of when nuisances.

Unless our aim is to develop persons, we would be no different. My friends, the horizon before us is crimson with the glow of our hopes. Let not the clouds of the past blemish it. We must never look forward. Never more looking backwards. I thank you.

Mariano G. Gaviola, D.D.
Titular Bishop of Girba
Scottish Rite Temple
February 16, 1974

THE MEANING OF SIN

by Joel P. Palacios

The Roman Catholic Church in the Philippine has decreed that Freemasons are sinners. Catholics who become Freemasons would not be allowed certain privileges such as receiving Holy Communion just like bigamists and divorcees.

According to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the tenets of Freemasonry are irreconcilable with the Christian faith. Masons call God "the great architect" and believe that Jesus Christ is a good man but is not divine. The CBCP said Masons believe that "in the end, man's perfection is not to be found in his love for a personal God, nut only in the development of his natural powers; man has an immortal soul but has no supernatural destiny."

The prelates remind Catholic that membership in Masonic associations is forbidden because Masons "are in a state of grave sin." Other than the ban on receiving communion, CBCP said Masons would "not be allowed to act as sponsors in baptisms, confirmations and weddings." It said Masons would be denied church funeral rites unless "signs of repentance before death have been shown."

Is it right to call all Masons sinners because they call God "the great architect"? The prelates seemingly want to argue Christ's divinity and man's supernatural destiny with a group that has no interest in religion and even bans the discussion of religious issues in its meetings.

There are many non-Masons who call God unprintable names. Masons would be saints compared with their blasphemy.

Sinners are people who violate any of the 10 commandments of God. To our knowledge it has not been and no commandment was added saying it is a sin to call God "the great architect."

The CBCP has unduly punished thousands of Catholics who are Masons, citing as basis non-existing Masonic tenets. Masons have been insisting but CBCP refuses to listen that Freemasonry can lead to salvation. How can it be religion?

As a brotherhood, Freemasonry accepts as members people from different religions, including Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. "It does not pretend to take the place of religion or serve as a substitute for the religious beliefs of its members," said a senior Mason who has administrative authority over hundreds of Masonic lodges all over the country.

CBCP's declaration reflects deep resentment against an organization that rebelled against the abuses of the Spanish friars during the Spanish colonial government more than 100 years ago. As organizers of the revolution against Spain, the Masons are hailed as heroes in the country today. These heroes include Jose Rizal, Apolinario Mabini, Juan Luna, Emilio Aguinaldo and Andres Bonifacio. We call them heroes; the prelates call them sinners. Somehow their intolerance smacks of bigotry.

Apparently, CBCP's declaration covers only the Freemasons in the Philippines. In other countries, many members of the clergy are Freemasons.

In fairness to thousands of Catholics who are Freemasons, did CBCP make an effort to meet with the officers of the organization to discuss the issues they had raised? Did the prelates even consider the impact of their declaration on the lives of thousands of Masons and their families, who are devout Catholics and strongly believe there is no conflict between Freemasonry and Catholicism?

Kotong cop: "The bishops say the Masons are sinners. We should not allow them to join us in receiving Holy Communion."

Tax collector who drives to church in a luxury car: "if you ask me, I do not want to be seen with you receiving Holy Communion. I see other crooks like you in my church. Maybe, it's time to go to another church."

Drug lord: "The bishops are referring to Masons, not crooks. I don't like it when you keep looking at me when you talk like that. Let's change the subject. Let's talk about what Masons do in their meetings."

Freemasons claim their brotherhood is the oldest fraternal organization in the world. Its earliest recorded proceeding dates back to the 16th century in Scotland. There are about four million members worldwide, including 16,000 in the Philippines.

Some of the principles Freemasonry promotes are obedience to the law and that honor and integrity are essential to life. It claims as its members famous personalities in various disciplines, including past presidents of the United States and the Philippines.

There are also members of the clergy as well as pastors and ministers of other religious sects who are Freemasons. They don't accept the CBCP's indictment that Freemasons are sinners.

Moments before a convicted rapist was led to the death chamber last year, he was offered Holy Communion. Weeks before the execution, priests and nuns joined him in praying, and the Church even publicly supported calls for his pardon. Are Masons more sinful than rapist?"

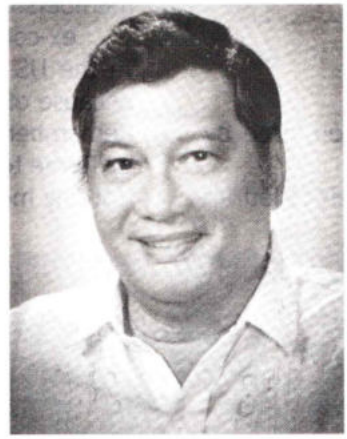
Who are the real sinners among us? The kotong cop, the thieving tax collector and the drug lord said in a chorus: "Not me." It's time to call politicians to a national convention to define the meaning of sin.

MAKE MY DAY!

Born When Men First Dreamed of God

by Larry Henares, Jr.

At the turn of the century, when the Spanish friars led by the Dominicans were the oppressors of the Filipino people, most of our heroes turned to Freemasonry as a vehicle for their fight for freedom. Most of them were excommunicated by the Church for belonging to this "secret society."



My grandfather Don Daniel Maramba was a Freemason, so was Dr. Jose Rizal, Marcelo del Pilar, Andres Bonifacio, Juan and Antonio Luna, Apolinario Mabini, Graciano Lopez-Jaena.

Four of our presidents were Freemasons: Emilio Aguinaldo, Manuel L. Quezon, Jose P. Laurel and Manuel A. Roxas.

The great liberators of the world were Freemasons: Giuseppe garibaldi of Italy; Voltaire of France; Simon Bolivar of Bolivia; Jose San Martin of Chile and Peru; Benito Juarez of Mexico; George Washington and Benjamin Franklin of the USA; our own Maximo and Teodoro Kalaw, Claro M. Recto, Conrado Benitez, Camilo Osias, Benigno and Sevillano Aquino (Ninoy's father and grandfather).

American Masons figured in our history: William McKinley, William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Paul V. McNutt, and Dug-out Dog MacArthur.

Modern Freemasonry traces its roots to the guilds of masons and other builders of Gothic Cathedrals. After the Gothic period, the Masonic guilds died out. A few survived and in 1717 four lodges established a Grand Lodge in England. From there it spread all over the world, figuring prominently in the French and American Revolutions.

As early as 1326, papal bulls were issued by the Catholic Church condemning Freemasonry. In those days, church excommunication meant more than just being denied the sacraments, it meant confiscation of property, torture, imprisonment, banishment, even death.

In the wake of the reformation, the Church launched a militant campaign against heretics and condemned Freemasonry because it was ecumenical before its time, accepting all believers as members, be they Christian, Muslim or Jew.

The first account of Freemasonry in the Philippines was in 1756 when two Irishmen were arrested and accused of being Masons. During the British Occupation in 1762, the Manila Cathedral became a lodge where British Masons held their meetings. In 1856, the first regular lodge "La Primera Luz Pilipina" was founded in Cavite by two Spanish Navy lieutenants, but Filipinos were refused entry into the lodge.

For this reason, many Filipinos sought admittance into Masonic lodges abroad where prejudice and discrimination did not exist.

When the Scottish Rite Lodge, made up mostly of Germans, was established, it initiated the first Filipino to be made a Mason in his own country – Jacobo Zobel, great grandfather of Jaime Zobel.

As the spirit of nationalism started to spread like wildfire in the colonial world, Freemasonry stood in the vanguard of the fight for freedom, here and everywhere.

Filipino Masons organized Masonic Lodges in Japan, Korea, Saipan, Vietnam, Micronesia and Guam – and mothered two new Grand Lodges in China and Japan.

Happily with the advent of ecumenism, many Catholic leaders have begun to take a softer stance towards Freemasonry, finding nothing in it contradictory Catholic teachings.

Among the Masons of today are Senators Mamintal Tamano and Joey Lina; Congressmen Rodrigo Gutang, Ali Dimaporo, Francisco Aniag, Michael Masera, Ciriaco Alfelor, Renato Dragon.

Supreme Court Justice Abraham Sarmiento, Justice Reynato S. Puno, and many of our generals: Pantaleon Dumlao, Rene Cruz, Voltaire Gazmin, the late Oscar Florendo, Alex Galillo, Mariano Adalem, Restituto Padilla.

And also Vice Governor Rolando Abadilla, and many of our putschists: Col. Alexander Noble, Capt. Danilo Lim, Col. Reynaldo Cabauatan, Col. Oscar Canlas.

JOKE ONLY

by Fr. Ben A. Carreon, OMI

December 4, 1988

We guested a Masonic convention in Q.C. recently.
Like most service clubs, they're plagued with absentecism.
A campaign for the lost sheep is in program.
Wish them luck.

December 5, 1988

Another post-script to our Masonic friends.
I once ran a fund campaign for a policemen killed by holduppers in Cotabato City.
I frontpaged it in the Mindanao Cross, then called up some religious leaders who declined to give.
The Masonic Lodge readily supported it!
It was a disconcerting experience.
The vertical relation to God should follow into the horizontal. It didn't.
Something's basically wrong with that kind of religion!

December 6, 1988

I admire the high moral tone and sincere friendship of the Masons.
Their ceremonies take the cake and are meaningful.
God is central to their strivings.
They're also such happy people, full of life and humor.
No wonder my Joke Only books ran out of supply!

December 10, 1988

Bossman of the 15,000 Free Masons, Grand Master Raymundo Beltran, aims to finish their national temple.
The P7 million is chicken feed if all pitch in.
As convention speaker I recall a Muslim Masonic judge in Cotabato City who let me off a libel
charge as editor of the Mindanao Cross.
He told the plaintiff, a henchman of a corrupt government corporation official: "You're wasting Fr. Ben's time."
He withdrew the case.
A well-loved Mason was refused a church burial. But Fr. P. Hagad and others blessed his body privately.
That's genuine ecumenism!

December 27, 1988

Some Catholics are asking why I praise the freemasons when they are condemned by the Church.
Not anymore.
While some church authorities may discourage membership by Catholics,
ex-communication has been lifted by Vatican II.
In the US even in our student days, Catholics joined because of the favorable insurance returns they get.
Remember when even the Rotary club was perceived by Rome to be some kind of religion?
Not any more.
Many of our heroes were freemasons. Of course, the Spanish authorities condemned them.
I guess there's some kind of hangover over past!
The Church dialogues with atheists and agnostics and even with communist. Why not with freemasons?
I told my Masonic friends in QC and Lucena City: If I were you I'd speak in Filipino.
That's what our nationalist heroes did!
Masons are still under an interdict. So says a document sent to me by the Cardinal's documentation group.
When I talk about their good deeds, so I do wrong?
Christ said every good deed is from the Father.
Doesn't God listen to Masons when they pray?
But look at this one:
You are hopelessly blind!
Your propaganda for Freemasons flow from devastating ignorance!
They've never given up their goal to destroy the Church.
J.R.R.
Pope John Paul II met the World's top Mason in 1983, a holy man who explained Masonry
as he personally live it.
The Pope was so impressed he ordered the whole church to lift the excommunication.
Priests may now join Masonry!
I believe the Holy Father rather than the unholy, cowardly (why not give name and address?) J.R.R.!

MASONRY IS NOT THE ENEMY OF THE CHURCH

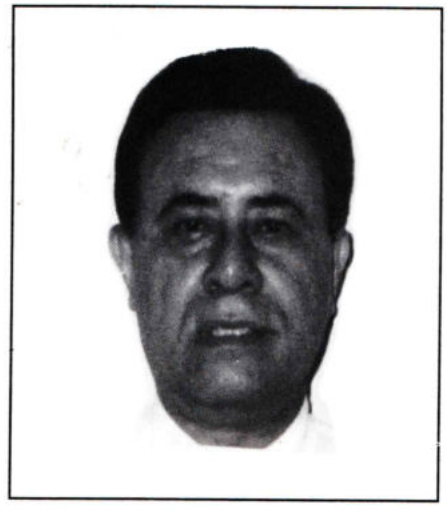
Manuel L. Morato

Many negative things have been said about the Masons by those who neither really know anything nor understand what Free Masonry is all about.

This brotherhood has been sadly misunderstood for centuries. Although I do not know everything about it, not being a member, I continue to hold this organization in high esteem.

The Masons were looked down upon during the Spanish colonization because they were against the bad friars. Rizal also dislike the bad friars. Those scoundrels in cassocks, most of them ex-convicts and criminals in Spain, were dumped in the Philippines and other Spanish colonies for lack of good priests to send. Those crooked friars who were recruited to preach the Gospel in the colonies were the first ones who did not live by what they preached.

It is true that Masonry was perceived to be some sort of a "black magic" because of some people's misconceptions, and adverse allegations to it, especially during the Dark Ages at the time of the Inquisition. Many will be surprised to know, however, that its antecedents came from the days of the Knight Templars who built all the magnificent cathedrals and churches of Europe.



The Masons have committed themselves to acts of charity, a virtue which they uphold to this day. They continue to live by the virtues of brotherhood, decency, camaraderie and honor.

Suffice it to say that one who does not believe in God cannot be a member of Masonry. Belief in God is one of Masonry's highest conditions to enable one to enter this organization.

"The Roman Catholic Church has made it a policy to keep its members from Masonic membership," says the Columbia Encyclopaedia. As a matter of fact, President Quezon and my father joined the Masonry but left it when the Catholic Church continued to oppose it.

That was years ago I kind of recall that the ban on Masonry was lifted by the Catholic Church although I do not know the exact year. It could have been during the reign of Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI or the current Pope John Paul II.

But if some say that the Catholic church continues to ban its members from joining Masonry, I think it's time to correct this mistake, among many other errors committed by bad popes during the Dark Ages and the days of the Inquisition.

Life of rectitude must be adhered to. Decency and honor are just a few of the virtues they live by.

The Masons can count among its members not only Protestants but Catholics as well.

I do not know how Masonry came to be feared and given a bad image. Several members of the many religious sects have more reasons to be ashamed of for not living up to their calling.

That Masonry is a "secret" organization does not mean that it should be tabooed. If the Masons do not flaunt the virtues they follow in life, if does not mean that they should be condemned.

True Christianity is not as we know it being practiced now. Christians who show off their good deeds to others are not true Christians in the true sense of the word.

How many so-called "Christians" do we have around who do nothing but pretend and take pride in themselves for being Catholics? The Masons can put many "Catholics" to shame if you come right down to it.

Aren't the great numbers of corrupt people in our society "Catholics"? Aren't most of our dirty politicians "Catholics"? Aren't most of our rapists, kidnappers and bank robbers "Catholics"?

And how about the prostitutes who practice their trade around? Aren't many of them, if not all of them, "Catholics"?

The bottom line is, we Catholics have more reasons to be ashamed of. And the same goes with the so-called Protestants who claim to be Christians but do not deserve to be called Christians.

We must never look down on any religion without looking inside ourselves first to know if indeed we are better human beings than the others. We Christians must learn to practice what we preach. We preach so much goodness and do

otherwise and even some priests and nuns are guilty of this.

I love my Church, the Catholic church; and I will stick by it till the end of my days. But I have always said that we, as Catholic, must learn to respect all other religions for as long as they are God-centered.

Neither the Catholics nor the Protestants have the monopoly on God or the monopoly on goodness. We have so much to change in ourselves to be worthy of our faith.

Love of God is a very sacred and private matter that it is better left off to each individual conscience to follow the best road to take to reach the Kingdom of God. The road to heaven may be bumpy and difficult to traverse, but it is the only road to take, no side streets, to witness God's glorious presence.

We must learn to coexist with anyone no matter the person's Church affiliation as long as he or she believed in a Supreme Being who created the universe and everything in it.

So much of Catholicism is imbedded in the Confucian philosophy. The same goes with Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism and what other isms there may be. One thing is clear: They all look up to a Higher Being whom they acknowledge and accept to be the source of life.

How, then, can, anyone condemn other religious denominations and claim that theirs is the best?

Yes, we claim that the Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, is the one founded by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And I have absolutely no doubt about it. Not only because I was born to it, but also because I became fully convinced as I grew up that the Catholic Church is indeed the true Church founded by Christ.

But if we, the believers, do not live up to what Christ has founded for us, then Catholicism is nothing but a myth. It rests not on solid foundation for we, as Catholics, are the ones expected to strengthen that every foundation upon which the Catholic Church stands.

Let me confess that though my faith is strong. I remain terribly bothered by priests who have not lived up to their calling; or nuns like "Sr." Christine Tan who is better off banished to a deserted island where she cannot take advantage of anyone. I have seen many of her kind before and kept quiet about it for the love of our Church.

There comes a time when, however, we should not take those things any longer. We must speak out less we lose our beloved Church to people whose character leaves so much to be desired.

It is easier to destroy a structure than to build it. Two thousand years have passed by since Christ had founded the Catholic Church. And where are we?

We should all be ashamed of what we have become. We are not only back to square one, but lower than the abyss from where we originally came from.

Yes, I am saddened by all of this. And I am sure that I am not the only one. Millions of others feel the same way and with reason.

Let this be a wake-up call, a warning call. Many tend to forget what our life on this earth is all about. We must not be concerned about the trappings but the very essence of why God has created us all equal and in His image and likeness.

Are we being like Him? You answer that question for you alone can honestly say what you were and what you have become despite God's words and teachings.

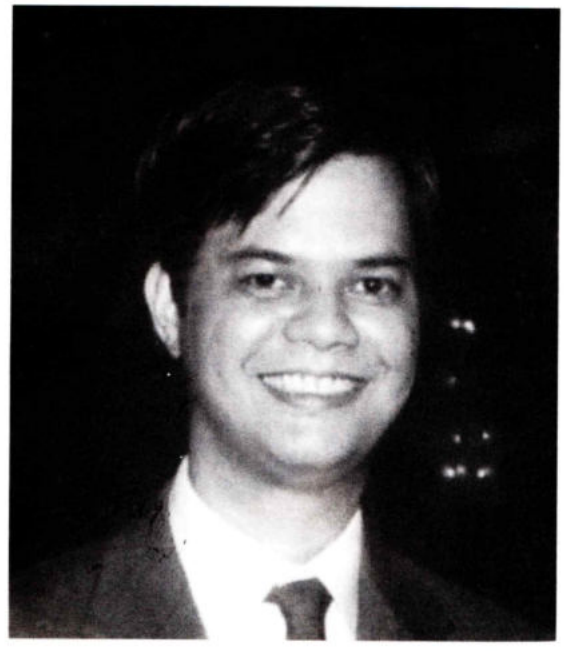
I say: Bless all religious and congregations who believe in God and profess His words because they will inherit heaven for they are the true "heirs" of God's Omnipotence.

Masonic Mystique

by Manuel L. Quezon, III

(Editor's Note: This article appeared in TODAY, July 27, 1996)

You will see them during next month's ceremonies commemorating our dead propagandists and revolutionary heroes: distinguished professionals in strange garb, wearing aprons and gilded regalia, sometimes bearing banners proclaiming their membership in something called lodge. These gentlemen are Masons.



Today, Masonry is viewed as a civic organization not very different from the Rotary Clubs and Kiwanis to which these Masons may, in fact, belong as well. And yet there was a time when Masons and Freemasonry were viewed with alarm not just in the Philippines but throughout Europe as well.

The Catholic Church, for one, has since the 18th century condemned Freemasonry and subjected Masons to the most severe ecclesiastical sanctions. The latest revision of Canon Law undertaken during the reign of Pope John Paul II retains the penalty of automatic excommunication for any Catholic who becomes a Mason. This is a relic of the acrimonious relationship between Catholicism and Freemasonry, which continues to have repercussions up to the present.

Other groups have persecuted Masons in their time: Napoleon detested them (although his brother was a Mason), Hitler loathed them. Indeed, dictators in general have displayed an aversion, if not outright hostility, to Masons.

For Freemasonry carries with it a mystique accumulated over the centuries historical baggage that has amused sceptics like Ambrose Bierce and delighted aficionados of conspiracy theory and mysticism verging on the occult. The phenomenal success of Umberto Eco's novel Foucault's Pendulum, an intricate tale of secret societies, from the Knights Templar to the Rosicrucians to the Illuminato and (naturally) Freemasonry, attests to this. The only other organization that has as strong a grip on the popular imagination are the Jesuits, the traditional nemesis of Masonry.

The traditional view is that Freemasonry is a global conspiracy that has taken on an antireligious character. It is viewed as a shadowy organization that aims to infiltrate the corridors of power to facilitate the rise into prominence of member Masons to the exclusion of all others. The governing elites of countries like France and the United Kingdom, to name just two examples, are said to be dominated by Masons. The same thing used to be said of the Philippines.

No wonder then that Freemasonry remains favorite subject for speculation, from the alleged murder of Pope John Paul I in the book In God's Name, to a journalistic expose of Masonic domination of the British police and legal system in The Brotherhood. But speculation as to whether Masonry is a "secret society" or "a society with secrets" overlooks a central fact, which should rapidly demolish any attempt to portray Masonry as a global conspiracy. Masonry is not an organized global movement. There are individual Masons who belong to autonomous Masonic lodges that may be linked to other lodges within a country, but there is no worldwide superbody that gives orders to the different national lodges.

So what is Masonry? Is it what the Masons claim it is, a fraternal society with secrets, a civic entity with benevolent aspirations? One among civic organizations

that have undertaken philanthropic tasks? You would find it impossible to convince conspiracy theorists that this is so. The truth is that the average citizen pays no more attention to it than it does to other fraternities. No one pays more particular attention to Masonic symbols, the ubiquitous compass and straight-edge, displayed on vehicles of some Masons, than, say, a Rotary International sticker or Toastmaster's sign.

This nonchalant attitude is, after centuries of hysteria, welcome. But it is as misplaced as the paranoia that used to accompany the mere mention of the word "Mason". But what sets Masonry apart from other fraternal organizations, what made it worth the while of various governments to expend energy arresting Masons, are the ideals it espouses, best summarized by the glorious motto of the French revolution: "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity."

Masonry was born in the period now known as The Enlightenment. Over the past two centuries Masons have been the proponents, and then the guardians, of Enlightenment thinking, Rationalist, deist, essentially democratic and always stressing political compromise. No surprise then that it has often been at the vanguard of resistance to absolutist regimes of the recent past. Masons were active in the French and American revolutions. They were prominent during the long process of the reduction of the governing powers of British sovereigns. They were central figures in the attempts to establish a more liberal regime in Spain, and were still persecuted during the time of Francisco Franco. They helped undertake the Risorgimento, which finally united Italy and which, ironically, forced the Catholic Church, through the elimination of its temporal powers, to reassess itself and make itself once more a potent force in world affairs because of its strictly religious prestige. And Masons were central figures in the long campaign to secure independence for the Philippines.

MANUEL L. QUEZON

(AUGUST 19, 1878 - AUGUST 1, 1944)

First Filipino Grand Master and First President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines

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