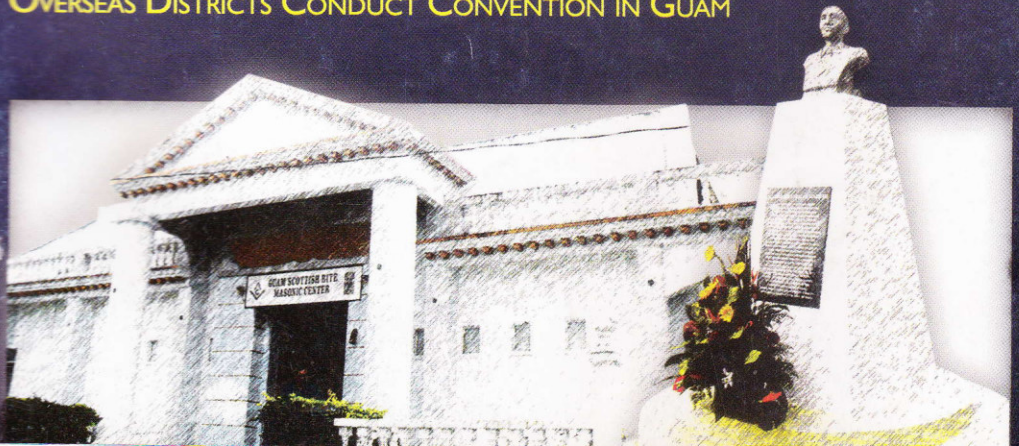
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The Cabletow



Overseas Districts Conduct Convention in Guam




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CITIMARIO CITY
DISTRICT-IV

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ON MAKING GOOD AND TRUE MASONS, OTHER CONCERNS

BY "ABILITY," THE THIRD HALLMARK of a true Mason specified in our theme for this Masonic year, we mean, among other things, the proficient, dignified and solemn execution and delivery of the Craft's ritualistic work, which is what distinguishes us from any other organization. It is but meet and proper that we give due importance to ritualistic proficiency; for the primary function of a Lodge is not to make more Masons or to enlarge its membership and therefore to augment its income, but rather to make good and true Masons by effectively and impressively communicating to its candidates the three degrees of Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry; by interpreting and explaining to them the endless lessons contained in the rituals of the three degrees; and then by inducing them, both by precept and by example, to apply those lessons in daily life, wherever they are.

Each of our subordinate Lodges must organize fully-functioning conferral teams, the members of which must find time to rehearse or practice the floor work adequately, as well as take pains to prepare for the eloquent and proficient delivery of their assigned speaking parts, so that they will communicate the degrees to the candidates in a dignified, solemn, and even outstanding manner and therefore make the proper impression on them, influence their attitude, and gain their respect.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the ritual is the fundamental tool for Masonic education and instruction. What candidates learn from the ritualistic work in the Lodge is the first and usually the determining impression which Masonry makes on them. Either they like what they see and hear or they discover that the Fraternity does not offer to them what they have expected it would offer. The brethren of our subordinate Lodges, led by the officers, therefore, should strictly observe the pointers relative to conferral of degrees found on page 83 of the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for Masonic Year 2011-2012 (subsequently referred to simply as our Manual). They must, however, bear in mind that they can

effectively and impressively communicate Masonic degrees to the candidates only if and when they create within the Lodge an atmosphere conducive to such a communication. This means, among other things, that the brethren must religiously observe dignity in Lodge and propriety in the act of communicating, so that they will make the proper impression on the candidates.

Worshipful Masters must, moreover, faithfully implement the Mentoring Program together with the Lodge System of Masonic Education explained in our Manual, pp. 26-38; for candidates normally possess very little knowledge of Masonry. They may have a vague idea that Masonry is wholly worthy of respect and that it is an ancient and honourable fraternity with a high standard of life. But they are, nevertheless, strangers to Masonry, and Masonry is a stranger to them. Masonry must, therefore, be gradually and properly introduced to them, and the wholesome lessons of every one of its degrees must be patiently and clearly explained to them. If candidates are provided with sufficient Masonic education and instruction before and after receiving each of the degrees, and if they are given the opportunity to join the brethren's fellowships and other social activities, as well as to enjoy other privileges attached to their membership in the Fraternity, they will feel a sense of belonging. If this happens, most likely Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts will be so interested in, or so concerned with, their advancement in Masonry that they will not fade away from the Masonic scene, and newly made Master Masons will become so attached to the Lodge that they will not fail to attend its stated meetings and other official functions.

But every Worshipful Master must be judicious in assigning mentors to candidates. He must assign to each candidate a well-trained and dedicated Brother, who faithfully and conscientiously discharges his assigned duty, which consists not only in helping the candidate prepare for the proficiency examination on the last degree he has received, but also in impressing more deeply in his mind and heart the dignity and high importance of Masonry, whose fundamental principles and lofty ideals he, like other members of the Craft, must exemplify earnestly in daily life.

The officers and members of each subordinate Lodge must, furthermore, give the new members the inspiring and edifying example of discharging their respective duties and responsibilities with utmost fidelity and conscientiousness. We strongly suggest, therefore, that they review their respective duties and responsibilities, which are summed up in our Manual, pp. 42- 48, as well as examine the "Lodge Officers' Guide" given on pp. 70-73.

The officers, particularly the Lights, must "best work and best agree" in order to be better able to manage the various concerns of their respective Lodges with much skill and assiduity, as well as to promote the welfare, happiness and development of the brethren, their families, and their friends. Hence, they should take into serious consideration the "Effective Lodge Management Tips" provided in the same reference material, pp. 74-84.

We hope that by now all our subordinate Lodges have complied with the Grand Lodge directive that they conduct the "Ceremonial of Re-consecration and Rededication to the Ideals, Tenets and Obligations of Masonry" printed in our Manual, pp. 53-63. This ceremonial gives us an opportunity to renew our commitment to relearn the lessons and teachings of the degrees of Symbolic Masonry and to take them out of the Lodge room into the communities where we live and into the places where we work.

We hope likewise that, as Lodges, we pursue the "Lost Sheep" or Reaching-Out-to-Inactive-Brethren Program, which is explained in our Manual, pp. 39-40; for this will enable us to grow both in number and in strength. But, of course, we must always prefer the quality over the quantity of our membership; for this is explicitly stated in our

vision and mission for this Masonic year.

The pursuit of our "OPLAN: SAGIP KALIKASAN" Program is another concern to which we must direct our special attention. On September 11, this year, in coordination with officials and employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), we simultaneously plant tree seedlings nationwide in the areas designated for the purpose. We must, of course, carry out follow-through activities to ascertain that the seedlings we have planted will grow into full-blown trees.

Clearly, we can undertake other projects than tree planting to contribute to the preservation, protection or improvement of our country's environment. We must undertake those projects because non-Masons judge Masonry not so much by the appearance of our buildings and grounds as our involvement or participation, or non-involvement or non-participation, in community-centered or civic-oriented projects.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the organizers and hosts of Multi-District or Regional Conventions which have been held so far for exerting all-out effort to make those Masonic assemblages truly exciting, enlightening and enriching experiences for all the participants therein; to express to them our most cordial appreciation of the warm hospitality and admirable accommodation they accorded to us during our brief sojourn with them; and to convey our sincerest praise to the delegates for actively participating in the proceedings of the conventions, thereby demonstrating their zeal and enthusiasm for the best interest, welfare and prosperity of our Craft. By working together in close harmony toward making our multi-district or regional conventions veritable "showcases" for Philippine Masonry, we show our great pride in the Fraternity to one another and to the general public. That pride will spur us to make wonderful things happen for the good of our Craft.

Decidedly, if we continue to labor with a high degree of cooperation and coordination to attain the noble goals we have set before us, we will also crown our other projects and activities with much success and fruition.

But, dear brethren, the task of bringing our Craft to greater heights of achievement begins with our individual selves. Masonry, after all, best serves society and the State by ministering to the individual. So, we must, each of us, exert all-out effort to become true Masons – Masons adorned with unimpeachable integrity, inflexible fidelity to our principles and obligations, and a high level of ability and proficiency in the execution and delivery of the Craft's ritualistic and ceremonial work. Besides making our own lives reflect what we profess to learn from Masonry, we must induce our new members, more by example than by precept, to do the same. Unless we do these things, we cannot, and must not, expect to regain the old glory of Philippine Masonry as an organization of excellence; as an institution of moral leadership, educational advancement and philanthropic endeavours; as a very potent force for good available to Philippine society, precisely because we, its members, exert our deciding and decisive influence on the affairs of our local communities and on the development, progress and prosperity of our nation.

Let us dedicate ourselves to attaining that noble goal.

More power to all of you, and may the GAOTU always bless you, your families, and your friends. *Mabuhay po kayong lahat! Mabuhay ang Masoneriya dito sa Pilipinas at sa buong mundo!*

Fraternally,

JUANITO P. ABERGAS
Grand Master

TOWARD BECOMING IDEAL FREEMASONS

OUR VISION, MISSION AND THEME for this Masonic year strongly suggest that we endeavour earnestly to become ideal Freemasons. Such a Freemason was described in 1876 or 135 years ago by the late M.W. Bro. Otto Klotz, an honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, in the following manner:

If you see a man who quietly and modestly moves in the sphere of his life; who, without blemish, fulfills his duty as a man, a subject, a husband and a father; who is pious without blemish or hypocrisy, benevolent without ostentation, and helpful to his fellowmen without self-interest; whose heart beats warm for friendship; whose serene mind is open for licensed pleasures; who in vicissitudes does not despair, nor in fortune will be presumptuous, and who will be resolute in the hour of danger;

A man who is free from superstition and free from infidelity; who in nature sees the finger of the Eternal Master; who feels and adores the higher destination of man; to whom faith, hope and charity are not mere words without any meaning; to whom property, nay, even life, is not too dear for the protection of innocence and virtue, and for the defense of truth;

A man who towards himself is a severe judge, but who is tolerant with the debilities of his neighbour; who endeavours to oppose errors without arrogance, and to promote intelligence without impatience; who properly understands how to estimate and employ his means; who honors virtue though it may be in the most humble garment, and who does not favour vice though it be clad in purple; and who administers justice to merit whether dwelling in palaces or cottages;

A man who, without courting applause, is loved by all noble-minded men, respected by his superiors and revered by his subordinates;

A man who never proclaims what he has done, can do, or will do, but where need is will lay hold with dispassionate courage, circumspect resolution, indefatigable exertion, and a rare power of mind; and who will not cease until he has accomplished his work, and who then, without pretension, will retire into the multitude because he did the good act, not for himself, but for the cause of good!

If you meet such a man, you will see the personification of brotherly love, relief and truth; then you will have found the ideal of a Freemason.

Many, if not most, of the brethren may say that the foregoing is a description of a "living saint." It well may be. But, is not the main aim of all of us Masons to develop ourselves from "rough" to "perfect ashlars" by dint of a virtuous education, our own endeavours and the blessing of God? Is not the principal purpose of Masonry to help us, its votaries, to transform ourselves from mere slaves of our own passions, prejudices and selfish interests to Inward Masters – men whose minds and wills have control over our sensual nature and whose influence over other men will, therefore, bring good result? Is not the mission that God has assigned to all men, but particularly to us Masons, whose badge is the lambskin apron, to cultivate the talents wherewith He has blest us by honest-to-goodness study and work in order to attain our own perfection, by means whereof we will contribute to social welfare and human progress?

To help us accomplish our God-assigned mission, Masonry urges us to develop a sound sense of values, stressing that we should always prefer the higher values over the lower ones. Thus, we should always prefer the life values (taking very good care of our health, our environment, and our very lives) over the material ones (money, material wealth or mundane possessions, physical beauty, carnal pleasure, fame, power). We should always prefer the cultural, which consist of the intellectual, moral and aesthetic, over the life values. The intellectual values include search for and defense of truth, strict adherence to principles or convictions; the moral values, pursuit of the good, possession and practice of virtue, and avoidance of vice; the aesthetic values, appreciation of what is beautiful in nature and in art. And the highest are the holy or spiritual values – striving seriously to become "perfect as your Father which art in heaven is perfect." That is why Masonry admonishes all of us to erect ourselves into magnificent spiritual temples fit for the GAOTU to dwell in, by strictly observing the rules and designs laid down by Him in the great books of nature and revelation, which constitute our Masonic, moral and spiritual trestle board.

Admittedly, in this world of increasing materialism and declining moral standards, it is not intellectually fashionable to speak of the spirit, the soul, or even of things divine. But these are what really matters in life. Hence, we must not hide our spiritual enrichment within us. Faith is, after all, not solely for comfort, but for action; intellect and faith must be part of every walk of life, particularly the Masonic. Through mind and spirit, we reach out to seek the true meaning of what we know as life. As our minds are enriched and as we are lifted up in spirit through Masonic education, reflection

and action, so do we come nearer to a perception of eternal truth.

We must, therefore, strive more vigorously than before to be personifications of brotherly love, relief and truth; we must endeavour more earnestly than before to let others find in us the ideal of a Freemason or, at least, an approximation of it.

If we become ideal Freemasons, we will be "living saints." This is not a mission impossible. It is the mission assigned to us by God to accomplish on earth. Therefore, we must accomplish it.

eF.R.eN

Guest Editorial

ON CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

by Edgar P. Borje, DGL & Richard Tan Uy, PSGD

WE HUMBLY SUBMIT THAT the Installing Officer addresses the following charge not only to the Wardens but also to the other officers, especially the Master, and to the rest of the members of the Lodge – and even to all other Master Masons present during the ceremony:

You are too well acquainted with the principles of Masonry to warrant any distrust that you will be found wanting in the discharge of your respective duties. Suffice it to say that what you have seen praiseworthy in others you should carefully imitate and what in them may have appeared defective you should yourselves avoid. You should be examples of discretion and propriety; for it is only by a due regard to our laws and regulations, as shown in your own conduct, that you can expect obedience to them from others.

A significant number of brethren, however, do not demonstrate a due regard to many of our laws and regulations, such as those on conferral of degrees.

Since the making of good and true Masons, in a great measure, depends on the effective, dignified, solemn, and impressive communication of the degrees of Symbolic or Ancient Craft

Masonry to our candidates, it is important for us to review – and then to strictly observe -- the "Pointers Relative to Conferral of Degrees" given in the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for Masonic Year 2011-2012, p. 83. These pointers are as follows:

1. The Lodge shall conduct an orientation for the candidate before he is initiated, passed, and raised to the sublime degree. (Edict No. 121).

2. The Chairman of the Committee on Rituals shall prepare the conferral team and schedule the rehearsal(s).

3. The JW shall prepare and provide the necessary refreshment after each degree work.

4. The instructor or mentor must certify that the candidate is ready to take the proficiency examination on the last degree he has received; otherwise, the candidate shall not be allowed to take the examination.

5. The WM, in coordination with the Chairman of the Committee on Rituals, shall set the date of conferral.

6. The Secretary shall send notices concerning the degree work not only to all members but also to the DDGM, the DGL, and the GLI. Edict No. 131-A-Bañez requires the presence either of the DDGM, the DGL, the GLI, or any of the incumbent Grand Line Officers during the conferral of degrees; otherwise, no conferral shall proceed.

7. A proficiency examination, conducted in open Lodge, is required before a candidate may be passed or raised.

8. A Lodge is enjoined not "to allow the reading of the ritual or monitor in the opening and closing of the Lodge, in conferring degrees or in examining candidates."

9. The Chairman of the Committee on Rituals will designate only one member, preferably a Past Master, proficient enough to do all the prompting which may be necessary.

10. The Chairman of the Committee on Rituals should also make sure that the Lodge room is properly set up and the required paraphernalia provided.

11. Punctuality is a matter which should receive due consideration from the WM.

12. Making innovations or changes in the approved ritual, or conferring of degrees not in conformity therewith, is strictly prohibited.

13. Proper handling of candidates during initiation, passing and raising must be strictly observed. (Edict No. 131-Choa).

14. All brethren present should be inside the Lodge room while the lecture is being given.

15. An EAM shall not be passed, and a FCM shall not be raised, unless at least 14 days have lapsed since his taking of the preceding degree.

16. The Lodge shall provide the candidate with the following pamphlets (Edict No. 164-Aportadera):

    a) Before initiation
       What Is Freemasonry?, The Candidate
    b) After initiation
       EAM Monitor, Instruction Pamphlet for EAM
    c) After Passing
       FCM Monitor, Instruction Pamphlet for FCM
    d) After Raising
       MM Monitor, Instruction Pamphlet for MM, Masonic Demeanor & Proper Decorum, Masonic Law Book (Constitution of the GLP), Pamphlet for Floor Works, By-Laws of the Lodge.

17. No Lodge shall confer any degree upon more than one candidate at a time without dispensation or confer degrees upon more than five (5) candidates at any one meeting.

The foregoing pointers are clearly stated and easy to comprehend; yet some, if not many, of them are not infrequently violated by individual brethren and by Lodges. We would like to mention the most common violations we have observed or witnessed. They are as follows:

1. Some Lodges sometimes neglect the required pre-degree-conferral orientation for the candidates.

2. Not a few conferral teams lack proficiency and preparation, so that they do not communicate the degrees of Masonry effectively and impressively to the candidates.

3. Many Lodges require the candidates to foot the bill for the post-degree-conferral dinner-fellowship.

4. In some instances, particularly when balloting of petitions is to be held, the Secretary does not send notices or text messages about the meeting to all the members; he does not send notices or text messages to brethren who he fears might cast the back cube.

5. A significant number of brethren, including officers, read the ritual or the Monitor during the opening and closing of the Lodge, during conferral of degrees, and/or during the conduct of proficiency examinations. Sad to say, some instructors provide Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts and newly-made Master Masons with the decoded versions of

the Obligations of the three degrees instead of teaching them to read the monitorial or coded versions.

6. Some brethren take the liberty of doing the prompting during a meeting or a degree conferral even if they are not assigned to do so, thereby adversely affecting the solemnity of the meeting or degree conferral.

7. Many, if not most, of the brethren leave the Lodge room when the lecture is being given, thereby discouraging the lecturer and setting a bad example to the candidate(s). WMs must, therefore, strictly enforce pointer no. 14.

8. Several, if not many, of the brethren obdurately violate some of the provisions of the Edicts relating to the proper handling of candidates. That is why the DDGM, the DGLs, and the GLI must be around during degree conferrals. Oftentimes, however, all of them are not in attendance.

9. Some, if not many, Lodges fail to provide the candidates with all the pamphlets mentioned in Edict No. 164.

Brethren, it is high time we exhibit a due regard to our laws and regulations, such as those on conferral of degrees, if we want our new members to pay due obedience to them. As Bro. Andres "Sinukuan" Bonifacio would say, **"Our responsibility in the performance of our duties and obligations, as well as in the observance of our laws and regulations, will be the example that our younger brethren will imitate."**

Mahirap bang intindihin 'yan, mga Kuyang?

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ONE EDICT, SEVERAL CIRCULARS

GRAND MASTER ABERGAS CREATES, CONSTITUTES CCRBIRM

MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS, Grand Master of Masons in the Jurisdiction of the Philippines, by virtue of Edict No. 247 he issued on 21 June 2011, created and constituted a Permanent Special Grand Lodge Committee to be known as the Committee on Construction, Rehabilitation, Betterment, Improvement and Revenue Management (CCRBIRM), and he designated MW Enrique L. Locsin, PGM, to be the first Chairman thereof with a tenure of three years from the date of the issuance of the Edict.

He also designated the following brethren to assist Chairman Locsin: MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., PGM, Vice Chairman; VW Fernando V Pascua, Jr., VW Ramon G. Nunez, VW Isaac F. Arribas, Jr., and VW Crispulo M. Fernandez, Jr., members. Each of these brethren shall have a 3-year tenure, too.

The general functions, duties and responsibilities of the CCRBIRM shall be as follows:

To assist in the construction of any structure or building within the premises of the GLP.

To take charge of the repairs, maintenance and rehabilitation of buildings and structures in the premises of the GLP, particularly the Plaridel Temple, the New Plaridel Temple, the GLP Hostel Bldg., and other structures inside the compound as may be considered by the Committee.

To introduce and/or approve such betterment or improvements as may be determined necessary or desirable in any of the buildings mentioned in No. 2 above.

Subject to the approval of the Grand Master or the Corporate Board, to set the policies and criteria in the selection of prospective tenants of rentable spaces in the buildings/structures stated before in No. 2, such as business and company reputation, financial capacity, credit rating, type of business including a schedule of rental rates for all rentable areas in any GLP building or structure and cause the issuance of orders of payment directly to the GLP, through its cashier, in respect of the payment of any and all amounts due to the GLP. The Order of Payment shall be signed by the Committee Chairman, the Vice Chairman, or any member of the Committee duly authorized to do so.

To recommend to the Grand Master or the Corporate Board the

appropriation and expenditure of such funds as will enable the Committee to execute and perform its functions, duties and responsibilities as herein enumerated.

Furthermore, in the performance of its functions, duties and responsibilities, the Committee shall at all times recognize the power and authority over it of the Grand Master and/or the Corporate Board. Besides, in the formulation of its policies and rules and regulations governing the use of any of the structures/buildings owned by the GLP, it shall consider the best interests of the GLP paramount over any other interest, and subject to the approval of the Corporate Board or the Grand Master. Moreover, its Chairman and members shall serve until the end of their respective tenures without prejudice to their re-appointment for the same original term of office.

The Grand Master created and constituted the CCRBIRM and designated Past Grand Master Locsin as its first Chairman for the following reasons:

> MW Enrique L. Locsin, PGM, was the Chairman of the Committee on the Reconstruction of the New Plaridel Temple (CRNPT), with MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., PGM, as Vice Chairman.
>
> The actual reconstruction of the New Plaridel Temple began on December 19, 2006 and was completed on April 10, 2006, and the newly reconstructed Temple was formally inaugurated on April 19, 2006. All this occurred during the lifetime of the CRNPT.
>
> During the Annual Communication (ANCOM) of the GLP held in Cebu City on April 27-29, 2006, CRNPT Chairman Locsin submitted his Report entitled "Temple of Dreams," which was duly approved by the ANCOM. In that report, MW Locsin recommended, among other things, that:
>
> The CRNPT shall continue with the work of its program as approved in the previous ANCOM under his overall chairmanship.
>
> In the course of its work, the CRNPT shall be independent and free from outside interference and influence, including the GLP.
>
> The CRNPT shall continue to exist until the Grand Lodge Centennial in 2012 (and beyond that time should exigency exist).
>
> In a recent meeting between him (Grand Master Abergas) and Past Grand Master Locsin, the latter expressed his desire to turn over, and did turn over, to the GLP, through the Grand Master, the administration and supervision of the New Plaridel Temple, including all current cash, assets/deposits, and time deposits, and voluntarily recognized that the existence of the CRNPT had now been terminated in accordance with the Report mentioned above.
>
> The Grand Master considered that gesture of Past Grand Master Locsin to be magnanimous, and he earnestly desired to avail of MW Locsin's expertise and further services to the end that he might provide the continuity of the services required by the GLP in the administration of its properties.

MASONS IN THIS JURISDICTION MUST STRICTLY OBSERVE THE MASONIC PROTOCOL ON COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER GRAND JURISDICTIONS, FOREIGN LODGES OR BRETHREN

In his 14th Circular, MW Abergas reminded the brethren of the proper Masonic Protocol concerning communications of Masonic Business. He said that any Mason, Lodge, District or Grand Lodge is not allowed to communicate, or is strictly prohibited from communicating, in writing or by any other available method, including email or phone calls, directly with a Grand Lodge, Foreign Lodge or Foreign Individual Mason, except through the office of the Grand Secretary of the MW Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of the Philippines, or upon the express permission of the Grand Jurisdiction concerned.

Stressed our Grand Master: *"This protocol is in force in all Grand Jurisdictions with which our Grand Lodge has amity relations, and it would be embarrassing to have our attention called for breach of this Masonic protocol."*

MASONS ENJOINED TO SUPPORT THE CRUSADE FOR A BETTER YOUTH OF TOMORROW

MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS, in his Circular No. 13, enjoined us, his brethren, to support wholeheartedly and participate actively in the "Crusade for a Better Youth of Tomorrow," a movement founded by Bro. Nestor A. Laceda, a member of Mabini Lodge No. 39 and a physician, civic leader, author and lecturer in child and elderly care. Through this movement, Bro. Laceda advocates "to help parents raise a new breed of Filipinos for generations to come in order to become better children of God and better citizens of tomorrow...." He opines that it is the concern of everybody to be engaged in the fight against corruption, which is a perennial morality problem in both public and private sectors. Said he: *"We cannot fight corruption without enlisting the help of the people, but we cannot get the help of the people without changing their culture.... If there is a culture of corruption, we can also have a culture of honesty."*

The office of the Movement is at the FEADCO building, 161 A. Shaw Blvd. cor. JB Vargas St., City of Mandaluyong. CPR 09178061936/09178021965.

Stated MW Abergas: "Let's support Bro. Laceda's advocacy ... for the good of the country."

GLP ISSUES PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO ANCOM 2012

IN HIS CIRCULAR NO. 12, MW Abergas informed the brethren that (1) the 96th Annual Communication of the MW Grand Lodge of the Philippines would be held on April 26-28, 2012 at the Camarines Sur Capitol Convention Center (CSCCC) located at Cadlan, Pili, Province of Camarines Sur; (2) the host would be Masonic District RV-A, which is composed of Lodges Isarog No. 33, Camarines Norte No. 107, Julian Ocampo Mem. No. 146, Daet No. 247, Naga City No. 257, Catanduanes No. 291, and Camarines Sur No. 382; and (3) the registration fees for delegates to the ANCOM are as follows:

Early registration fee payable on or before Dec. 31, 2011 – Php2,500.
Pre-ANCOM reg. fee payable from Jan. 01, 2012 to Feb. 28, 2012 – Php3,000.
Regular registration fee from March 01, 2012-ANCOM DAY – Php3,500.

Registration Centers are to be set up at the Isarog Masonic Temple, National Highway, Naga City and at the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, where delegates may pay their registration fees.

Programs and other details are to be accessed at www.ancom2012.com.

LODGES, DISTRICTS MUST UPDATE THEIR BY-LAWS

IN HIS CIRCULAR NO. 11, MW Abergas stressed that Lodges must up-date the By-Laws they have adopted due to various amendments made in their provisions. Because of this, the Grand Master said, *"effective immediately, all Worshipful Masters are hereby directed to transmit to the office of the Grand Secretary a duly authenticated copy of their Lodge By-Laws showing all amendments adopted and date of approval by the Grand Master."* He added:

"If it is missing its By-Laws, the Lodge is hereby enjoined to adopt one immediately in accordance with the provisions of Part III, "The Uniform Code of By-Laws for Subordinate Lodges," Arts. 1 to XIII.

"All DDGMs are hereby directed to follow up the compliance of the foregoing so that the Grand Lodge shall have copies of the By-Laws of all Lodges within 30 days from the receipt of this Circular.

"All Masonic Districts and DDGMs are also hereby directed to submit to the office of the Grand Secretary a copy of their Uniform Code of By-Laws if they have one, in compliance with the previous directive contained on page 67 of the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers (2011-2012) to submit the same not later than Jan. 15, 2012.

"If a Uniform Code of By-Laws for a District has not been adopted, one should immediately be adopted, incorporating the applicable provisions of Edict 127 and the turnover procedures and ceremony indicated on pages 67-69 of the said Manual for Grand Lodge Officers ..., to be submitted to the office of the Grand Secretary within 30 days of the receipt of this Circular."

NCR MASONS TO PARTICIPATE IN NHCP-SPONSORED FUN RUN

MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS, Grand Master, in his Circular No. 10, called upon members of Lodges in the various Districts of the NCR to participate in the RIZAL RUN to be held on September 18, 2011. The National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and the Animo Events Management Inc. spearheaded this activity as a part of the continuing celebration of Bro. Jose Rizal's 150th Birth Anniversary and History Week. Its proceeds would be used for the benefit of the three Rizal Shrines administered by the NHCP, namely, Rizal Shrine Calamba, Rizal Shrine Dapitan, and Rizal Shrine Fort Santiago.

MW Abergas urged the brethren to support the worthwhile activity because "WB Ludovico D. Badoy, PM, the Executive Director of the NHCP, has been very supportive to the GLP in preparing for the celebration of its Centennial." Thus, he encouraged them to participate either in the 3K, 5K, 10K, or 15K. He informed them further that the fun run would start at the Rizal Monument in the Luneta, wind through Roxas Blvd. and Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, and end where it started.

GM: "PLACE YOUR ORDERS FOR PM'S JEWELS, APRONS AND CERTIFICATES A.S.A.P."

IF A LODGE WANTS its order for Past Master's Jewel, Apron and Certificate to be delivered by the GLP Supply Store on time (i.e., when needed) , then it must refrain from placing its order just a few days before its Installation of Officers. Otherwise, the GLP Supply Store will have very little time to fill in the order and therefore will fail to deliver it on the desired date.

Stressed MW Abergas in his Circular No. 9: "Effective this year, the GLP Supply Store will accept such orders as early as the 6th month from the installation of the retiring Master but not later than November 30 of each year, and that it will give orders received after this date last priority with no guaranty of delivery on the date of the Installation of Officers."

He continued, "Upon receipt of each order, the GLP Supply Store shall immediately process the same and ensure delivery not later than December 31st of each year."

LODGES IN THIS JURISDICTION TO SUPPORT THE PRC MVM

MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS, in his Circular No. 8, informed Lodges and Masonic Districts in this Jurisdiction that the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) - Manila Chapter had solicited the support of the Masons for their Million Volunteer March (MVM) to be held on December 04, 2011 simultaneously in all cities and 1,494 municipalities nationwide.

Its target being more than one million volunteer runners, the MVM promises to be the biggest run ever staged in the history of the PRC. Its proceeds will fund the PRC's 143 volunteers training program. The cost of registration is Php 1000.00 per volunteer runner....

Said the Grand Master: "I believe that this project is worthy of our support. I urge all of you, therefore, to endeavor to have at least three volunteer runners register per Lodge as the contribution of the MW Grand Lodge in particular, and Masonry in general, to this PRC MVM."

Further, he enjoined each DDGM to monitor the participation in the MVM of the Lodges in his District and to report the results to the Office of the Grand Secretary on Dec. 11, 2011 or a week after the staging of this MVM run on December 04, 2011.

INCREASE OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR GLP CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IMPLEMENTED

OUR GRAND MASTER, MW Abergas, in his Circular No. 7, informed the brethren that among the matters approved in the last ANCOM held at Davao City in April 2011 is the recommendation of the Centennial Committee, which reads as follows:

x x x Your Committee respectfully requests the ANCOM to increase an additional Php 200 from each member, payable and collectible starting this year (i.e., 2011), to finance our once-in-a-lifetime centennial celebration x x x.

Therefore, every Lodge, through its Secretary, will collect from each member the amount of Php 200 for the years 2011 and 2012, or a total of Php 400 additional contribution, on top of the previously approved contribution under Circular No. 11 – Razon dated August 23, 2011.

GM ISSUES GUIDELINES ON SOLICITATION AND HANDLING OF CASH DONATIONS, RELIEF GOODS

MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS issued Circular No. 6 because the recent flooding in several barangays in Cotabato City and Maguindanao, in many areas of the Southern Luzon provinces and the Bicol Region, and in the NCR, particularly the CAMANAVA and Marikina areas, had forced many families, including those of members of Masonic Lodges and Appendant Orders, to leave their houses and go to Evacuation Centers provided by the Government, but were in need of relief goods.

Stated MW Abergas: "Since one of the purposes of the Masonic Coordinating Council (MCC), which I convened recently, is to unify and coordinate all efforts of the Masonic Family in the solicitation, storage, and distribution of cash donations and relief goods, to be distributed, first, to members of the Masonic Family and, secondly, to such families of non-Masons as may be in dire need of assistance, I hereby direct all DDGMs and Appendant Orders to exert their best efforts on a year-round basis in soliciting cash donations or relief goods in their respective Districts or areas of responsibility and to send, remit or transmit such donations and goods to the Grand Lodge of the Philippines (GLP), care of the Calamity and Disaster Relief Committee (CDRC), which is co-chaired by the Assistant Grand Treasurer (AGT) and the Assistant Grand Secretary (AGS)."

He added, "After identifying the beneficiaries of cash donations and relief goods, the CDRC shall distribute these efficiently to the beneficiaries, but of course with the Grand Master's approval. Moreover, it shall write a report on all cash donations and relief goods received, as well as the payments made or distribution thereof, as often as necessary or required by the Grand Master, and then submit the same to the Grand Master."

OPLAN SAGIP KALIKASAN (OSK) PURSUED

IN HIS CIRCULAR NO. 5, MW Abergas directed the different Masonic Districts under the MW Grand Lodge of the Philippines to conduct a simultaneous three-planting activity on September 11, 2011.

The OSK, a joint undertaking of the GLP and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) aimed at protecting the environment, started in Masonic year 2009-2910. Masons in the country planted at selected sites tree seedlings provided by the DENR.

In September 2010, the GLP and its constituent Districts returned to their designated sites and planted more tree seedlings therein, as well as replaced those that failed to survive.

To ensure the successful implementation and closure of this Masonic year's OSK, MW Abergas appointed RW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., Chairman and VW Tomas G. Rentoy III, Vice Chairman, to coordinate the efforts of the various Masonic Districts and DDGMs.

Each DDGM is expected to submit his report on the tree-planting activity in his area of responsibility to the Grand Master's Office as soon as he reasonably can.

M.D. RVI-A

HOSTS VISAYAS MULTI-DISTRICT CONVENTION

LED BY THEIR DDGM, VW Wesley A. Barayuga, the brethren of Masonic District RVI-A (Iloilo, Aklan, Antique and Capiz) hosted the Visayas Multi-District Convention held at the Provincial Capitol in Iloilo City on July 30, 2011. The other participating Districts were RVI-B (Negros Occidental & Negros Oriental), led by VW Elmer C. Balbin, DDGM; RVII (Cebu & Bohol). led VW William S. Chu, DDGM; RVIII-A (Samar), led by VW Romeo D. Atencio, DDGM; and RVIII-B (Leyte), led by VW Agerico A. Avila, DDGM. The lead Lodge was MW Ricardo Galvez Memorial No. 220.

Formally received into the convention hall were the aforementioned DDGMs; VW Tomas O. Que, Junior Grand Lecturer for Western Visayas; MW Juanito P. Abergas, Grand Master, and his party – RW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr.(Deputy Grand Master), RW Juanito G, Espino, Jr. (Senior Grand Warden), and VW Fernando V. Pascua, Jr. (Asst. Grand Secretary).

Bro. James Jabuna led the brethren in invoking God's blessing upon their assembly; WB Arnel Gellada delivered the Tribute to the Philippine Flag; VW Barayuga welcomed one and all; VW Jose Leo Contreras, Secretary of the host District, called the roll of Lodges; and the DDGMs of the participating Districts presented their respective reports.

The brethren had their lunch at the Provincial Capitol Canteen.

The Minutes of the last Visayas Regional Convention having been read and approved, several Resolutions were presented and adopted. Then VW Pascua gave a Masonic Education lecture.

In his closing remarks, MW Abergas commended the brethren of the host District for the preparations they had undertaken to ensure the success of the convention; then he reminded the participants thus: "This Multi-District Convention, as well as those scheduled to be held in other regions of the country, is part and parcel of the celebration of the Centennial of our Grand Lodge, which was launched on December 18, 2010 at Kawit, Cavite and which will reach its climax on December 19, 2012. I am optimistic that you have drawn knowledge and inspiration from the various reports, messages and lectures presented during the convention."

Fellowship at Tatoy's Seafoods and Manukan started at about 6:00 p.m. The brethren relished the sumptuous dinner. Then VW Wesley Barayuga introduced the Guest of Honor, Iloilo City Mayor Jed Patrick E. Mabilog.

In his remarks, Hon. Mabilog said in part, "I hope you found our beautiful city as a fitting venue for fostering camaraderie and strengthening the values that you, as a fraternal organization, are truly proud of. I'm confident that during your one-day convention you had an enlightening exchange of ideas as you addressed urgent issues as well as found novel approaches towards realizing your vision and accomplishing your mission. I'm sure your

convention provided a convenient venue for strengthening your solidarity for the advancement of your beloved Fraternity...."

The brethren continued enjoying one another's camaraderie and fellowship....



MASONIC DISTRICTS AND LODGES in this Jurisdiction are buzzing with worthwhile activities, particularly in the areas of personal development, social welfare, and human progress. What is reported hereunder is but a small fraction of what the Masonic Fraternity accomplishes during a quarter of a Masonic year.

Mendez-Nuñez 316 Conducts Another Community Outreach Project

Brethren of Mendez-Nuñez Lodge No. 316 conducted another successful community outreach project in Mendez, Cavite – thanks to the Philippine Navy, which provided the medical team composed of three doctors, 10 nurses, and 15 enlisted personnel from the Cavite Naval Hospital; to Sisters Bing Vidallo, Fida Landicho, Ditas Ramos, Erna Belardo, Aleli de la Pena, Lucy de Sagun, Nel Norva, and Ida Geronimo, who provided much-needed administrative support to the medical team; and to the kids of VW Allan A. Vidallo, who took photos to document the activity.

Barangay Chairman & Mendez's ABC President Renato Dimapilis expressed his sincere appreciation to MNL 316 and to the PN Medical Team, which was headed by Major Judith T. Espejo, for conducting the medical mission in his area of responsibility.

Once again, through MNL 316, the GLP inculcated in the minds of the youth that Masonry looks after the development and welfare of the community.

Pinacanauan 318 Supports Anti-Drug Campaign Launching

The brethren of Pinacanauan Lodge No. 318 joined the rally which the Municipality of Ilagan, Isabela organized in order to launch its anti-drug campaign. Officials of the municipality, other drug-concerned government officials, and approximately 500 high school students, accompanied by their teachers, also attended the rally.

Hon. Josemarie Diaz, DMD, Municipal Mayor lauded the brethren for supporting the undertaking. He pointed out that, according to a PDEA report, the Municipality of Ilagan was rated number 2 in Region II on illegal drugs cases.

To manifest their full support for the anti-drug campaign, the brethren of the Lodge, led by WM Francis L. Sibal, signed the Statement of Memorandum of Agreement.

Mabini 39 Conducts Medical Mission

by Bro. Edwin C. Guillermo, Lodge Lecturer

Led by our DDGM, VW Jose G. Chua, we brethren of Mabini Lodge No. 39 recently conducted an all-in-one medical, dental, surgical (circumcision and cyst excision), and optical outreach mission at Allapacan Vocational High School in Allapacan, Cagayan. The outreach mission, which covered all the 27 barangays of Allapacan, benefited 1669 indigent patients, broken down as follows: medical, 487; dental, 630; circumcision, 293; cyst excision, 69; and optical, 210.

Two surgeons, five medical doctors, five dentists, one optometrist, 33 nurses, 53 medical volunteers, and three pharmacists participated in the project. We brethren provided free medicines and services to all the patients, while the major sponsors of medicines were UNAHCO, Far North General Hospital, Rural Bank of Gattaran, and Colleen's Farm Supply through the efforts of this reporter, Bro. Robert H. Ogalino, WB Emilio A. Toribio II, and VW Paulino Y. Lim.

Brethren from different Lodges in Masonic District RII-C and other private organizations, as well as individuals of the Province of Cagayan and Apayao, also gave donations.

AGMWPM Gimenez 370, Pinagsabitan 26 Reach Out to Nagcarlan Folks

Despite the inclement weather brought about by the sustained winds of nearly super typhoon Chedeng," we brethren of AGMWPM Gimenez Lodge No. 370 and Pinagsabitan Lodge No. 26, led by WMs . Amante Liberato and Joevey Babago, respectively, could still feel the sustained winds of nearly super typhoon "Chedeng," pushed through with our dental and optical mission, held in a multi-purpose covered court, for the benefit of residents of the 52 barangays of Nagcarlan. But we could not have carried out our mission to a successful end without the assistance of the Municipal Government of Nagcarlan and the dentists from the Philippine Dental Association (PDA) – Sta. Cruz (Laguna) Chapter.

This charitable work, which benefited 455 dental patients and 380 recipients of reading eyeglasses, was capped by fellowship over a sumptuous lunch sponsored by Bro. Irwin R. Dacanay, who celebrated his birth anniversary that day.

Frank Reed Horton Mem. 379 Celebrates 3rd Anniversary

The brethren of Frank Horton Memorial Lodge No. 379 celebrated their 3rd anniversary, at least in part, by conducting a dental mission, which benefited some 148 residents of Brgy. North Fairview, Quezon City. They were able to give free dental services and medicines through the disinterested assistance of VW Allan Bontuyan (Andres Bonifacio Lodge No. 199), Bro. Ferdie Limchangco (Capitol City Lodge No. 174), and Bro. Cary Bryan Ong (Lodge Perla del Oriente No. 1034, S.C.).

Fellowship followed at the residence of Bro. Nestor Mendoza, where they had lunch a la boodle fight. An impromptu program followed, at the end of which WM Robert Sing said in part, "Thank you, Brethren, for participating in today's dental mission. I know that you are still tired from last night's anniversary celebration, and I know that I have stolen your time from your families today as this is a Sunday. Allow me, then, to thank you and your families for making sacrifices for the Lodge and humanity."

How We Celebrated Our Third Anniversary

by Nom Tapang, Lodge Treasurer

THE RAINY WEATHER NOTWITHSTANDING, we, the officers and members of Grandsec Reynold S. Fajardo Mem. Lodge 383, led by WM Rolando de Castro, proceeded from Timog Ave. in Quezon City in separate motor vehicles to our destination: the Valenzuela City Convention Center. With us were Sisters Margie de Castro, Ana Liza Cabreira, Rubbie Samson, Dell Lovero, and Jocelyn Vidamo together with several of the brethren's children.

Waiting at the venue were more than 200 indigent day-care-center and kindergarten pupils from Brgy. Pasolo, Valenzuela City, who were accompanied by their parents. The officials of the said barangay were also there in demonstration of their support of the Lodge's 2nd "Balik Eskwela" Outreach Program.

Upon the arrival of the priest invited for the purpose, a Mass was celebrated in the venue. After the Mass, a short program ensued. After the invocation, WM Dolandz de Castro gave the opening remarks, followed by the welcome address of Hon. Rex Gatchalian, Representative of the 1st District of Valenzuela City. Next, assisted by the Sisters, we gave away school bags containing school supplies. Patently, the parents of the recipient-pupils were overwhelmed with joy to see their children receive their "gifts"; in fact, they seemed more excited than their children.

We also treated the children to a "Jollibee" party, toy giving, and feeding program to make them feel, at least for a while, the joy and spirit of being young.

After our successful and fruitful outreach project, together with the Sisters and children who attended the activity, we motored back to Quezon City, where they had an enjoyable South.

The 2011 Shrine Parade: A Huge Success

by Noble Tomas G. Rentoy III

MABUHAY SHRINERS, TOGETHER WITH its constituent Shrine Clubs, started its observance of the Shriners International Awareness Week with a colourful, well-attended parade from the Grand Lodge premises to the Quirino Grandstand and Grounds in the Rizal Park (Luneta). The parade was participated in by more than 200 Nobles from different Shrine Clubs and Special Shrine Units, such as the Motorcycle Unit, the Clown Unit, the Shurtah (or Shrine Police) Unit, the Wrecking Crew Unit, and the Fire Brigade Unit. The marching bands of the Phil. Navy, the PNPA, and the Phil. Army, as well as the PNPA Slow Drill Platoon. also joined the parade. So did some DeMolays, who served as bearers of the streamers of the different Shrine Clubs.

The floats of Maginoo, Bamboo and Saigon Shrine Clubs made the parade all the more colourful and attractive, and the dragon dancers of the last-mentioned Shrine Club easily caught the attention of curious onlookers along the parade route.

The Nobles and other members of the Masonic Fraternity or Family in attendance were treated to a skydiving exhibition of some Shriners and to a slow drill platoon exhibition by PNPA Cadets.

During the program held at the Quirino Grandstand and Grounds, the following were given awards:

- Maginoo Shrine Club, Best Float (Php20,000 Cash Prize);
- Floats of Bamboo and Saigon Shrine Clubs, 1st and 2nd runners-up, honors, respectively;
- Manila Shrine Club, Best Marching Unit (Php10,000 Cash Prize);
- Bamboo Shrine Club, Most Number of Participants (Php10,000 Cash Prize);
- Sierra Madre Shrine Club, Farthest Shrine Club Participant (Php5,000 Cash Prize).

Duly acknowledged were the dedicated and disinterested labours of Noble John Teng, Vice-Chairman, Steering Committee, and the members thereof: Noble Nick Salvador, Noble Danny Espiritu, VW Fidel Posadas, and VW Jose Magbanua. Also commended were the following Chairmen of the various committees: Noble Nick Salvador, Permits and Invitations; Noble Jon Arayata, Promotions and Marketing; Noble HS & RW Jun Espino, Program; Noble Ben Co of Bamboo, Food and Drinks; Noble Bong Fajardo, Security; and Noble Pete Balinnang, Documentation.

After the message of Mabuhay Shriners Potentate Pablo C. Ko, Jr, PGM, the Nobles sang the Bubble Song.

GLP, MD11-A
Extend Relief to Flood Victims

Upon learning that Davao City was hit by flash floods, MW Juanito P. Abergas sent to his Deputy for Masonic District R11-A, VW Sherman Sherwood T. Suarez, a Php50,000 cash donation as the GLP's assistance to the victims of the natural calamity. Benevolent brethren of the District pitched in approximately Php29,000 as well as contributed lots of used clothes. They used the money at hand for purchasing 26 sacks of rice, 21 cartons of sardines, and 45 cartons of noodles. They themselves distributed the relief goods and used clothes to some of the flood victims.

ALSM Lodge No. 158
Holds "Dugong Mason, Dugong Bayani" Activity

by Bros. Philamer C. Celi & Nelson Manez

ALFONSO LEE SIN MEMORIAL (ALSM) Lodge No. 158, in cooperation with the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) – Pangasinan Chapter, conducted a whole-day bloodletting activity, dubbed "Dugong Mason, Dugong Bayani," on September 17, 2011 at its Temple in Dagupan City.

Close to 140 individuals representing different groups responded to the appeal for blood donation. After being blood-typed and blood-tested, 90 of them were found by the attending volunteer physicians to be healthy and fit to donate blood. Each donated 400-450 cc. (or approximately one glass) of blood.

"Donors of blood not only help save the lives of people whom they will not meet personally but also do a good turn to themselves," said Blood Donation Project Chair Nelson Manez (a.k.a. Anton Lee). He also thanked PRC Chapter Administrator Florame S. Magalong for being visibly at hand to assist and supervise her volunteers.

During the program which capped the activity, WM Dennis C. Uy first paid tribute to the blood donors. Then, for their precious participation in the noble and glorious project, he gratefully acknowledged the brethren of Lodges Pangasinan 56, Urdaneta 302, Mangaldan 354, Moises J. de Guzman Memorial 161, and Baguio 67; the officers and members of the Order of DeMolay, Pangasinan Chapter; officers and men of the Pangasinan, Dagupan City, and Binmaley PNP; officers and men of the 54th Engineer Brigade – Phil. Army at Camp Abat, Manaoag, Pangasinan; officers and memembers of Samahang Ilokano – Pozorrubio Chapter; managers and employees of the Guanzon Group of Companies, the FILCO Group, DCU Farm, Ly Guana, Metro Printers, and other business groups. He punctuated his message with this adage on volunteerism: *"What one does for the community lives long after he is gone; what one does for himself dies with him."*

Cotabato Masons at Work

When floodwaters engulfed Cotabato City and nearby provinces, and water hyacinths clogged the Rio Grande de Mindanao, which runs through several provinces, many barangays were submerged in water. Evacuation centers were crowded and crammed; hence, some of the evacuees built their own tents on the roadsides, but they also suffered from lack of food and other supplies. Some other families, however, did not evacuate because they feared burglars might take advantage of the situation or because a member of the family was sick and the other members found it difficult to take him/her to some evacuation center. Roads became impassable for vehicles, and boats were the primary means of transportation; residents found it very difficult to buy much-needed goods.

In the face of all this, the brethren of Lodges Kutang Bato 110, Bantugan 223, and Shariff Kabunsuan 266 sprang to action. VW Cherokee B. Uy, DDGM, together with VW Reynald V. Chua, DGL, and WM Noel H. Nunez (#266), formed RELIEF OPERATION. Cotabato Masons were, therefore, able to send sacks of rice, cans of sardines, and noodles to evacuation centers.

MW Juanito P. Abergas, Grand Master, supported Relief Operation by sending funds to VW Uy.

Although his own house was also submerged in water, JW Anthony Ross (#206) undertook a series of feeding projects for the flood victims. Members of Dionsio Gutierrez Sr. Chapter Order of DeMolay, and of the DeMolay Alumni Chapter Association Chapter of Cotabato City served as volunteers in packing relief goods at City Hall.

Masonic District RXI-A brethren, led by PJGL Vic Lumo and JGL Ernesto Ortonio II, sent a van load of relief goods to Relief Operation, while the DDGM of M.D. RXI-B, VW Joselito B. Caballero, and some Tagum Lodge brethren visited Cotabato City, bringing with them relief goods.

The brethren's quick and overwhelming support for the flood victims in need clearly demonstrated their spirit of charity as well as their high sense of civic duty and compassion.

Kalantiao 187 Does It Again!

by Dante A. Denate, DGL

In continuance of our commitment to supporting public education, we brethren of Kalantiao Lodge No. 187, led by WM Wilson Cua Locsin, recently turned over to Ms. Jasmine Gemorin, principal of Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School in Iloilo City, various reference books, which were donated by Bro. Peter Ching of Cabletow Lodge No. 187 MRC of Canada.

We also distributed school supplies to about a hundred pupils of the North Baluarte Day Center in Barangay North Baluarte. Ms. Julia Ann Nolasco expressed her sincere appreciation of our kind gesure. We moreover gave financial assistance to 23 elementary and secondary students of the barangay.

San Mateo 319 Carries Out Various Activities

The brethren of San Mateo Lodge No. 319, in collaboration with Kabalikat Uno Feeds, recently conducted a medical mission at their temple, thereby demonstrating to the general public that "Your Health Is Our Concern."

Besides, they paid Bro. Venancio O. Vallarta, former Mayor of San Mateo, Isabela, a "sunshine" visit at his residence; he was still in coma.

Next, together with their families, they had an outing in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. They enjoyed walking to Kabigan Falls, 1.5 kms. away from their rented cottage. They also visited the Dragon Fruit plantation in the nearby municipality of Burgos.

A few weeks later, they conducted their 6th "Operation Tuli."

Then, as part of their Lodge's community relations program, they attended the Balatong Festival Parade in San Mateo, Isabela. (Balatong is the Ilocano term for mongo.)

At present, they are occupied in improving the grounds of their temple.

Ilagan (Isabela) Masons Join Regional "Brigada Eskwela" Launching

Led by their DDGM, VW Floren Ambatali, the brethren of Pinacanauan Lodge 318 joined the launching of the Regional "Brigada Eskwela " held at the Alibagu Elementary School, which was organized by Regional Director Benito Tumamao, assisted by DepEd Region 2 and Provincial Supervisor Corazon Barrientos. They pledged their assistance to the school in the form of structural repairs and donation of books.

Meanwhile, other Lodges throughout the Jurisdiction,pursued the GLP-initiated "Adopt-a-School" Program in demonstration of their justifiable pride in the fact that Freemasons spearheaded the establishment of the public school system in the Philippines.

LODGE, DISTRICT EVENTS / DEVELOPMENTS in Photos



The Mendez-Nuñez 316 family and the Phil. Navy conduct outreach project in Mendez, Cavite



The doctors, nurses, and enlisted personnel from the Cavite Naval Hospital at work



Mabini 39's Medical Mission

The Mabini Lodge 39 would like to thank the generosity and valuable support of Allacapan Vocational High School employees and staff headed by the energetic principal, Mr. William Calabarzaron, for their selfless act and compassionate deed during the Allacapan Medical Mission 2011.



Joint Community Outreach Project of AGMWPM Gimenez 370, Pinagsabitan 26 in Photos



Frank Reed Horton Memorial Lodge No. 379 brethren, assisted by brethren of other Lodges, give free dental services and medicines to residents of Brgy. North Fairview in Quezon City.



2011 Shrine Parade

Kalantiao 187 brethren with some students of Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School



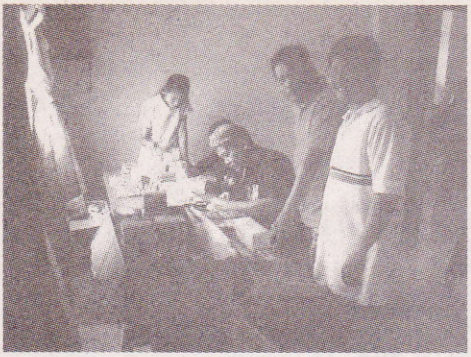
The brethren with pupils of North Balisarte Day Care Center

San Mateo 319 Activities

A photo is a fitting memento of the hard day's "labor" of the brethren, hermanas, volunteer doctors, nurses, and midwives.

Volunteer doctors, nurses, and midwives do the operation "tuli."





Bro. Melanio V. Lazaro, medical mission chair, with Lodge Treasurer Noel B. Nicolas, Petitioner Phillip Maramba, and volunteer nurses at work during medical mission.



Bro. Rogelio Apaga, assists oldest patient during the medical mission.

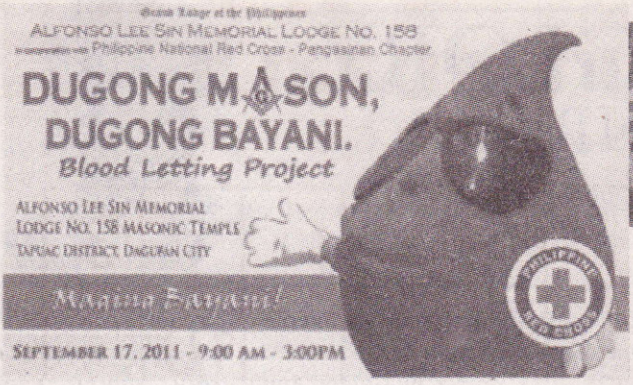


The brethren look with concern at Bro. Villarta, who is still in coma.

Reynold S. Fajardo Memorial Lodge No. 383 "Balik Eskwela Project"






Grand Lodge of the Philippines
ALFONSO LEE SIN MEMORIAL LODGE NO. 158
in coordination with Philippine National Red Cross - Pangasinan Chapter
DUGONG MASON,
DUGONG BAYANI.
Blood Letting Project
ALFONSO LEE SIN MEMORIAL
LODGE NO. 158 MASONIC TEMPLE
TAPUAC DISTRICT, DAGUPAN CITY
MAHILIG BAYANI!
SEPTEMBER 17, 2011 - 9:00 AM - 3:00PM

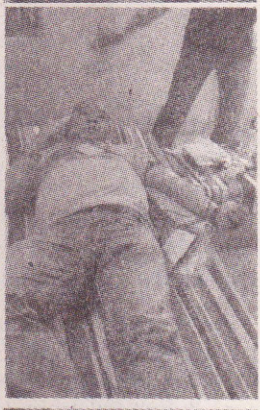








































THE TRUE GLORY OF MASONRY

by Ret. Justice Reynato S. Puno, PSGC, G.C.



(An Inspirational Speech delivered during the Visayas Multi-Orient Convention held at the Iloilo Masonic Center in Iloilo City on July 29, 2011; hosted by Golden Anniversary Celebrator Panay Bodies, A. & A.S.R.; and participated in by other Orients, namely, those of Negros, Cebu & Bohol, Leyte & Samar).

A FEW DAYS AGO, I called up Illustrious Fernando Pascua and I inquired about our Scottish Rite theme this year. He told me that our theme is "Regaining the Old Glory of Freemasonry." I asked about theme because I thought I could put in my 10 cents worth of ideas on its manifold meanings. However, when I sat down and started sorting out my thoughts, I could not help but be bewildered by its many strands. For a start, I had to ask myself the following questions:

- What is the meaning of "glory"?
- When did we have these "glory" days?
- How did we lose them?
- Can we regain these "glory" days?
- Are we talking of "glory" of Freemasonry as an institution or of Masons as individuals?

As I pondered on the theme, I felt that if I were to give it a decent discourse, I would need the dispensation of Most Puissant Juanito Abergas, first as Sovereign Grand Commander, to extend my time to speak in your Multi-Orient Convention, and his dispensation, as MW Grand Master, to allow me to continue speaking until the Multi-District Convention of Blue Lodges, which would start tomorrow. I guessed that would not be difficult because in our one-hundred-years history as a Grand Lodge, this is the first time we have a Sovereign Grand Commander who is also our MW Grand Master.

But I will refrain from requesting that dispensation because I have to catch my plane for Manila tomorrow morning. Also, I am not sure, whether I will be evicted from my hotel after breakfast since that is my scheduled check-out time.

Anyway, after my phone conversation with Illustrious Pascua, I had occasions to mingle with some brethren on and off Lodge meetings. Without them knowing my purpose, I was

able to sneak to them this question – **What do you consider the glory days of Freemasonry in the Philippines?** But for minor variations, the replies converged on the central idea that our glory days happened in two periods: first, in 1896 when Masons led the Philippine revolution against Spain, and second, in the 1900s when Masons led the Filipinos to gain their independence from the United States. They were also one in the conclusion that our glory days were brought about by individual giants in Masonry. In 1896, we had Rizal, Bonifacio, del Pilar, and many other national heroes, and in the 1900s, we had Aguinado, Quezon, Laurel, Roxas, and so forth. I gathered from their answers two things: one, that they could definitely fix the time of these glory days, and two, they considered our glory days in light of the contributions of a few of our Masonic leaders to the life of our nation.

They may be right, but with all due respect, I wish to express my reservations on the correctness of their replies. Let me relate the story of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. According to Bill Fawcett:

> *Xxx Of all the historical figures to have the identifier 'the Great' tagged into their names, Alexander the Great is one who really lived up to the title. No other leader has been able to cross cultural boundaries or capture the imagination of the world leaders like he has done. He has stood the test of time. His tactics are still taught in military academies all over the world. He has become the measuring stick by which all others have compared themselves. When Julius Caesar came across a statue of Alexander, he fell at its feet and wept, marking how the Great had accomplished more by his death at the age of thirty two than Caesar himself had at the time of viewing the statue. (100 Mistakes That Changed History, p. 27).*

We cannot fault Fawcett's estimate of Alexander the Great in history whose military skill was unequalled and whose intelligence was honed by Aristotle himself. Indeed, it was Alexander the Great who put the small country of Macedonia in the world map. He did the impossible by subduing Greece, by conquering Asia and defeating the once invincible King Darius of Persia. It is thus no wonder that the Macedonians consider the reign of Alexander the Great as their glorious years. They lost and never recovered these glorious years after Alexander the Great died. Their glorious days depended on one man.

Fawcett wrote a book entitled ***100 Mistakes That Changed History***. In his book, he included Alexander the Great as one of the giants of history who committed a great, great error. His error was in not naming who would succeed him as King of Macedonia. Again to quote Fawcett:

> *Xxx Alexander succumbed to fever. He lingered in his sickness for 11 days. His men worried: Who would take his place? Would anyone be able to hold the vast empire together? At his sickbed the men leaned over and asked the all-important question, 'To whom do you leave your empire? With his last breath, Alexander uttered words that have since become famous: 'To the strongest'.*

The empire did not go to the strongest. In just 12 years, Macedonia was divided between 20 different rulers, each with his own agenda. *Xxx Had Alexander avoided that*

error, much of the conflict over the next thousand years would have been unnecessary. A strong, unified empire, stretching across Europe and Asia, would have existed 500 years before the establishment of the Roman Empire. (Ibid., p. 32).

If I advert to this episode, it is to stress the error of the Macedonians in putting too much reliance on the achievements of one great leader and the more grievous error of Alexander the Great in thinking that the best leader is the strongest; for obviously he forgot the more significant virtues of man, virtues more important than muscular strength. He forgot that man and society rest more securely not on the biceps but on the precepts of principled men.

Let me now relate this episode to our theme: "Regaining the Old Glory of Freemasonry." Can we delineate the glory days of Freemasonry to definite and defining periods? Does it depend on the achievements of a few great men? When we talk of the glory of Freemasonry, when we think of when we gained it, who gained it for us, we must go back to the purpose of Masonry. I submit that it is only when we succeed in achieving the purpose of Masonry that we can say it has attained its glory. Contrariwise, when Masonry fails in its purpose, it is denied its glory. Stripped of its esoteric, we know that the purpose of Masonry is simply to make good men better. To borrow the words of MW Stewart Miner, PGM of Virginia, *"Our creed declares our purpose to be the achievement of nothing less than perfection, personal and institutional, and while striving for these goals, we aim to help all peoples of all races, all tongues and all nationalities obtain fair shares of God's gifts to man." (* ***Short Talk Bulletin****, Vol. 89, June 2011, No. 6).*

To my mind, the purpose of Masonry can be gleaned from its subject and its object. Its subject is man, the individual, and the immediate purpose of Masonry with respect to man is to transform him from good to better. Its object, however, is not just man but mankind; hence, its ultimate purpose is to improve mankind. Masonry therefore targets the self of the individual, but it does not stop there; for if it does, the improvement of the self for self's sake is but selfishness. Hence, the purpose of Masonry in focusing at the self of the individual is to change the selfishness in self to selflessness for others. The objective of Masonry therefore is both the improvement of the individual and the improvement of the world. This is the reason why Albert Pike emphasized that the utility of Masonry is universal, viz.:

> *Xxx Masonry is useful to all men; to the learned because it affords them opportunity of exercising their talents upon subjects worthy of their attention; to the illiterate because it affords them important instruction; to the young because it presents hem with salutary precepts and good examples xxx; to the afflicted whom it lavishes consolation; to the charitable man, whom it enables to do more good; xxx.*

Let me end with the inconvenient question: When and where do we look for the glory of Masonry? My own answer is that the glory of Masonry rests on us; it rests on every individual, on every ordinary Mason. It does not rest on just a few individuals, however great they may be. When we become as perfect as Masonry desires us to be, then that is the glory of Masonry. When we give back to mankind the good we get so generously from Masonry with equal generosity, then that is the glory of Masonry. Masonry achieves its glory *"when we do our duty as Masons, when we make life as comfortable as we can, for as*

many as we can, whenever we can, and for as long as we can." (Short Talk Bulletin, op. cit., p. 8). **Masonry becomes glorious when Masons do not make as much for themselves as they do as much for others. Masonry becomes glorious not only when it is able to produce extraordinary men who are few in number but when it is able to transform the lives of ordinary men who are more in number. And let us be comforted by the thought that Masonry will not be brought down by the evil deeds of a few for as long as it reflects the good deeds of the many. In fine, when we talk of the glory of Masonry, search not for its glory in the lives of others; rather, search for its glory in your own lives. If Masonry is able to transform you from good to better, then that is the glory of Masonry. If, as better men, you are able to influence society from bad to better, then that is the glory of Masonry. Let us then remember that each of us can make Masonry glorious and the glory of Masonry begins with us and ends in us.**

Good day to all.

Toward Serving Effectively as Masonry's Public Relations Agents

LET US ALL GAIN MASTERY of the content of the article given below, adapted from the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for Masonic Year 2011-2012, pp. 109-111, so that we will be able to share it with others clearly, confidently and convincingly.

WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?



FREEMASONRY IS A SYSTEM of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated in 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 Vol. I of the German Handbuck (1900), characterizing it as the best description so far given. The definition reads as follows:

> *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, which 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 Creed

The **Masonic Belief** is summed up in the following manner:

> *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** is summarized as follows:

> *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, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy, and hope for happiness.*

Freemasonry as a System and as an Organization?

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 conclusion:

> *Freemasonry is a system of moral philosophy structured on the principle of the Brotherhood of Man and on the belief in God and immortality, imparted symbolically and allegorically through a coordinated complex of Masonic lodges.*

Allegories 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 interest 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 the following:

> *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 certain effort in thinking the thing through.*

The use of symbols is of ancient origin, being particularly evident among the religions of 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 scale*, representing the idea of justice and impartiality. The *red cross* is a well-known symbol of mercy, charity, and medicine. The crown has been for centuries a symbol of authority, supremacy, and regality. The *owl* symbolically brings to mind wisdom, scholarship, and learning. Colors have adopted meaning and have become symbols. For instance, *white* indicates peace and purity; *black*, death and depression; *blue*, tranquillity and benevolence; and *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 received. Hence, the *square and compasses*, the traditional emblems of Freemasonry, have a particular significance for the Master Mason, as do 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 have been described in numerous publications, such as of *A Pocket Encyclopedia Masonic Symbols* published by the Masonic Service Association (MSA) of the United States.

Particular Systems of Masonic Philosophy

Within the structure of Freemasonry itself, there have developed particular systems of Masonic philosophy, each varying somewhat in its point of view to the purpose of the Order, its relations 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 and has classified them under two separate categories: Intellectual Systems and Spiritual Systems. He has placed William Preston (1842-1878) and Karl Krause (1781-1832) under **Intellectual Systems**. According to Preston, the emphasis of the Craft is knowledge and its purpose is to diffuse light, i.e., to spread knowledge among men. According to Krause, on the other hand, the emphasis of the Craft is morals, and its purpose is to perfect humanity – that is, to organize the universal moral sentiments of mankind.

Pound has placed George Oliver (1782-1866) and Albert Pike (1809-1891) under

Spiritual Systems. According to Oliver, the emphasis of the Craft is tradition, and its purpose is concerned with religion and science – that is, to bring men into relation with the absolute. According to Pike, on the other hand, the emphasis of the Craft is symbolism, and its purpose is to attain the fundamental principle of the Universe and to bring man into the harmony of the ultimate unity, which alone is real.

Concluding Statements

The foregoing philosophical systems originated in the 18th and 19th centuries, and their 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 Masonry is common to that of 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 end, Masonry makes for civilization 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.

Membership in a Lodge of Freemasons is limited to adult males who can meet the recognized qualifications and standards of character and regulation. A man becomes a Freemason through his own volition. 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 is as it should be.

- **Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated in symbols.**
- **Freemasonry is a science which is engaged in the search after divine truth.**
- **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 therby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale.**

A MASONIC LEADER'S MESSAGE TO A FELLOW MASTER MASON

(Adapted from the "Ceremonial of Re-consecration and Rededication to the Ideals, Tenets and Obligations of Masonry," in the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for Masonic Year 2011-2012, pp. 56-59).

LET US TAKE ANOTHER CLOSE LOOK at the instructions we received in the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Degrees.

Instructions Received in the EAM Degree

The EAM Degree concentrates on the theme that is symbolic of infancy, innocence, a beginning, a period of learning fundamentals. The Entered Apprentice receives those elementary instructions which are to fit him for further advancement from his present profession, just as the infant is supplied with that rudimentary education which is to prepare him for entering on the active duties of youth. Such instructions include the following:

1. Although Freemasonry pronounces other virtues, it stresses Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth since upon these tenets or principles rests its fundamental basis.

2. While it is not a religion, Freemasonry is inherently religious; for its entire philosophy, all its teachings and principles are predicated upon the existence of God in whom men can put their trust and from whom strength and wisdom abundantly flow in response to prayer.

3. There are other tenets and principles than Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth which have been accepted by men without question since they are teachings vital to learning and developing an understanding in their minds.

4. There are tremendous realities which the "learner" cannot yet fathom, but which cannot be set aside in favour of another system of concepts and precepts without breaking the life support of the Masonic fraternity as a "Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of God."

I very sincerely feel that one of the greatest gifts that Freemasons of today have

received from Freemasons of centuries past, and for that matter, from God Himself, is the mind and intellect of the great philosopher and thinker Albert Pike.

Listen to how he uncovers every umbra hidden within the interstices in the symbolism of the First Degree and how he expresses distinctly and clearly the majesty of those objects which have been constantly before our eyes, and yet, have just remained "object fixtures" all the while. Pike stated the following:

> ***The symbolism of Masonry is the soul of Masonry. Every symbol of a Lodge is a religious teacher, the mute teacher also of morals and philosophy. It is in its ancient symbols and the knowledge of their true meanings that the pre-eminence of Freemasonry over all other Orders consists. In other respects some of them may compete with it, rival it, perhaps even excel it; but by its symbols it will reign without a peer when it learns again what its symbols mean, and that each is the embodiment of some great, old, rare truth.***

While the above expression and explanation of Albert Pike belong to the three degrees of Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry, yet it is in the Entered Apprentice Degree that it suits itself comfortably. The reason is to show the learner the importance of the objects being used and the real purpose they serve in understanding the philosophy impressed in the Degree, especially to the initiates of the Craft; hence, as always, first impressions matter a lot in order to achieve interest.

Entered Apprentices possess certain rights and privileges, too, such as (1) the right to be instructed in our work; (2) the right to hope for advancement to the next higher degree; and (3) the right to use their limited possession of the modes of recognition for making themselves known to other Masons, especially to other Entered Apprentices.

Finally, my brethren, in a measure, the Entered Apprentice Degree is complete in its own area of work, and its teachings and Obligation are permanently incorporated as a part of every Mason's total Masonic life.

Instructions Received in the FCM Degree

Bro. Carl H. Claudy has appropriately mediated the interlude between the symbolism of the EAM Degree and that of the FCM Degree in the following manner:

> ***As the Entered Apprentice Degree is symbolic of infancy and youth, a period of learning fundamentals, a beginning, so the Fellow Craft Degree is emblematic of manhood.***
>
> ***But this is a manhood of continued schooling, of renewed research, of further instruction. The Fellow Craft has passed his early Masonic youth, but he lacks the wisdom of age which he can attain only by use of the teachings of the First Degree, broadened, strengthened, added to, by those experiences which come to men as distinguished from children.***
>
> ***Very obviously, the Fellow Craft Degree is a call to learning, an urge to study, a glorification of education.***

Many of you may have been passed to the Fellow Craft Degree for quite some time to the point that you may have participated already in the conferral of the same and, probably, have given lectures of this degree. Having done those things, you may have found that Masonry's character and purpose are further revealed in the Ritual and Lecture of this Degree. You may have also noticed, observed or even felt very strongly that the principal appeal of the First Degree is to the conscience and the Second Degree addresses itself to the mind – emphasizing its great teachings, its deep interest in education, knowledge and refinement.

A Fellow Craft symbolizes a man in the prime of life – experienced, strong, resourceful, and carries maximum responsibilities. It is upon him that a family depends for support. He carries on his shoulders the burdens of business and, more often than not, the destinies of state are entrusted to his care.

Our lectures contain the information that King Solomon employed eighty thousand Fellow Crafts or hewers on the mountains and in the quarries. This classification is indeed very significant; for it is men in the Fellow Craft period, men in the prime of life, strong and able to bear extreme changes of weather, who are to accomplish the work at hand. Such a man is expected "to bend his back and bear the load." To prove equal to the tasks laid upon him, he must possess the equipment necessary to meet the exigencies of the work.

The Fellow Craft Degree offers several answers, but I would like to touch only on three which I consider to be more relevant with the character and purpose of the concern or business immediately before us, which requires our utmost attention and effort.

The first equipment is possession of **personal experience** – experience with the realities of life. Remember that the five senses are represented or symbolized by the five steps of the Winding Stairs. The five senses -- seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling – enable a man to learn; to acquire personal, immediate, day-to-day experience. What a man learns in a day must be added to the next, and so forth, until, through his senses daily used, he comes to understand the world in which he lives, how to deal with it, how to master it. This experience is reaped only with the passage of time.

The second equipment is the necessity of **education**. An individual's possession of experience is limited; if he relies on it alone, he would be poorly equipped to deal with the complexities and responsibilities of life. To his hard-earned personal experience, therefore, he must add vicarious experience – the experience of others which he can make his own via many ways or avenues, such as listening, conversation or dialogue, and above all, reading. There is no question that one must expand or supplement his own knowledge by the knowledge of mankind.

During the period of Operative Masonry, or when Masons were actual builders, the Apprentice scarcely knew one tool from another, ignorant even of the secrets and arts of the builders. But after a certain number of years, he was given by the Master additional assignments or required by the same to produce some tasks not known to him. He was able to meet the Master's requirements through the instruction and guidance of wise and accomplished Masons; these Masons patiently taught him what they had themselves painstakingly learned over many years of acquiring experience and knowledge.

The process explained is education – symbolized in the Fellow Craft Degree by the seven steps, which are symbolic or emblematic of the seven liberal arts and sciences. Undoubtedly, when you were taking this Degree, you must have asked why Masonry had to explain the seven subjects, classroom subjects at that. Now the connection is clear. These subjects were not intended to be academic lectures; rather, they are symbols which signify all that is meant by education – others helping us train ourselves in skills and knowledge so as to be able to perform or to understand certain tasks.

The third equipment is **wisdom**. The word wisdom, as expressed in this short treatise, is more important, so to speak, than experience and education. Wisdom goes beyond knowledge. Knowledge gives us awareness of the world and competence for special tasks in the arts, professions, and vocations. A man's life is not confined to these considerations. It is compounded of all manner of things, a variety of experiences, a constant succession of situations, a never-ending list of problems. The world is infinitely greater than what each of us now sees, hears, or feels; it is more complex than our daily tasks.

The Middle Chamber, which is so visible in the Second Degree, has many meanings. Among others, it is a symbol of wisdom. By the experience of the five senses, through the knowledge gained of the liberal arts and sciences, the candidate is told to advance, as on winding stairs to that balanced wisdom of life in which the senses, emotions, intellect, character, work, deeds, habits, and the soul of man are knit together in unity, balance and poise.

As Fellow Craft Masons, you can sit in either a Lodge of Entered Apprentices or of Fellow Crafts, but not in a Lodge of Master Masons. Do not let this restriction, however, cause you to look upon the Fellow Craft Degree as a mere stepping stone to the Third. Freemasonry gave to you one part of its teachings in the FIRST, another in the SECOND, and in the THIRD it will give you yet another, but it is always Freemasonry.

Therefore, we urge upon all Fellow Craft Masons the same studious attention to their duties and responsibilities while even yet Fellow Craft Masons. Remember that to these duties and responsibilities you are bound by the most sacred ties.

- **Freemasonry is a system of moral philosophy structured on the principle of the Brotherhood of Man and on the belief in God and immortality, imparted symbolically and allegorically through a coordinated complex of Masonic Lodges.**

- **To be a Mason is a privilege that carries a corresponding responsibility. Every Mason must stand four-square for sound morals and good government. Every Mason must enforce and obey the law.**

WE MUST PUT A STOP TO THIS!

by VW and Ill. Jose B. Abejo

Note: VW and Ill. Jose B. Abejo is a Past Master of Dapitan Lodge No. 21 and of Lodge Perla del Oriente No. 1034, S.C. He is also the Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge, Royal Order of Scotland, based in the Philippines. A 33º Inspector General Honorary(IGH), he was invested by the Supreme Council, 33º, A.& A.S.R. of Freemasonry of the Republic of the Philippines, with a Blue Cap on March 11, 2011. Given below are the remarks he gave after the Blue Cap Ceremony.

I HAVE BEEN AN ACTIVE MEMBER of my Mother Lodge, Dapitan No. 21, and of the Craft for 55 years now. Through all those years, I have witnessed changes in Lodge practices, some of which are progressive and others retrogressive.

One of the retrogressive practices has something to do with how some Lodges admit petitioners for Masonic membership. I believe you will agree with me that to petition for Masonic membership is one of a man's most significant and memorable decisions in his life. It indicates his desire to enter a new phase of his life in order to be a better man.

Let us recall the time we ourselves first sought admission into the fellowship of the Craft. What did we do? We simply signed the petition and presented it to our proposer and seconder after having declared that we believed in God and in the immortality of the soul, and that we were of mature age and of sound morals. After a careful investigation on the sincerity of our declaration and on other qualifications of ours, the members of the investigating committee, having found us to be well-qualified, subsequently submitted their findings and recommendation. If these were favourable, our respective petitions were then balloted by the Lodge, and when they were unanimously approved by the members thereof, we were scheduled to receive the Entered Apprentice Degree, and so forth.

This simple system of processing petitions for Masonic membership conforms to the strict requirements of our Grand Lodge.

After a few decades, however, perhaps due to the dramatic increase in the number of applicants for Masonry, some Lodges have introduced additional requirements for the admission of petitioners, thereby making the entry of petitioners into Masonry more difficult.

Now some Lodges require petitioners to be present before the meeting so as to attend to the members thereof and serve merienda to them. The petitioners are even required to wait until the end of the meeting, so that they will again serve as "waiters"

during the dinner-fellowship.

This is the process which petitioners have to undergo for many months or even for one or more years.

I attended the stated meeting of a certain Lodge, and I witnessed the simultaneous balloting of some five petitioners. Lo and behold! Three of them were black-balled. I wondered then, and I still wonder now: Do the brethren of the Lodge ever weigh and consider the aspiration of the petitioners and the feelings, particularly the pride, of their proposers and seconders?

I did experience this method of initiation when I joined a fraternity in the university I studied in. Aside from looking up to our seniors as our "masters," we were caused to do odd and ridiculous chores for them. Then we were required to undergo physical hazing.

Today, it seems to me that our fraternal organization is no different from university or college fraternities; for there have been incidents where candidates are subjected to physical hazing in some Lodges, the Anti-Hazing Law notwithstanding. The brethren of Lodges who inflict physical harm on candidates seem to be oblivious, if not ignorant, of the true nature of Masonry, which is defined frequently as "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." They seem to be oblivious, if not ignorant, of the fact that Freemasonry is a "school" or an "institute," where candidates or initiates for Masonic Degrees are taught the tenets and principles of the Institution. If the ritual and ceremonies are strictly executed according to ancient Masonic usage and custom, as well as seriously, solemnly and proficiently performed, by the dramatis personae, then the teachings, precepts and principles of Masonry illustrated in the ritual and ceremonies will be deeply impressed upon the minds and hearts of the candidates, who will, in turn, keep them ever aglow in their hearts, and then practice them consistently in daily life. But that is not often the case. Many of our brethren trifle with the feelings of the candidates as the latter submit themselves to the various forms and ceremonies of their initiation and even inflict physical injury on them. Is this the way to make good men better?

Testing a candidate's physical or mental endurance or inflicting pain on him is not called for in our ritual; it is, in fact, contrary to the mild and gentle nature of our Craft. Yet it appears to be the general trend in some of our Lodges nowadays.

Two of my acquaintances knocked on the door of Freemasonry at an elderly age. One of them used to be a Prime Minister of the Philippine Republic, and the other a Vice-President thereof. The former was able to go through the three Degrees of Craft Masonry; but the other, for some unavoidable reason, could not go beyond the First Degree. Suppose equally prominent men knocked on the door of our Lodge. Would we cause them to go through the same "un-Masonic" process which petitioners and candidates are being required to undergo at present time? Would serious and prominent professionals, as well as mature and respectable businessmen, apply for membership in the Craft if the method of admitting petitioners and candidates into our fellowship is as childish and humiliating as the one being observed in some of our Lodges?

Frankly, I cannot imagine what the quality of Filipino Freemasons will be ten to twenty years from now if this system of initiation will continue. I do not even want to think of it.

Brethren, we must put an end to this malpractice!

MASONIC SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR NATIONAL HEROES' SACRIFICES

by George Co Lao, DGL, NCR-A

ABOUT NINE YEARS AGO, a newly-raised brother, an apprentice of sorts, asked his mentor, ***"I want to contribute to Freemasonry, but I see that it is already a complete organization, with its laws and regulations, rituals and ceremonies, and so forth. How can I help? What more can I do?"***

Replied his mentor: ***"My young apprentice, you cannot contribute to Freemasonry. Here you will study and learn its teachings and tenets, rituals and ceremonies, virtues and values, laws and regulations, and then take and show to your world whatever you have learned as a Mason. Even our heroes contributed little to Freemasonry; many of them, in fact, did not excel in the Fraternity, but they learned a lot from Freemasonry, and they took what they had learned out of the Lodge room into the world 'out there.'"***

The "apprentice" Master Mason thought, ***"I learned little about Mason heroes in school, and I can hardly understand the teachings and tenets of Freemasonry veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. So, how can I take them to the world 'out there'?"***

He carried that thought through the years. He diligently studied Freemasonry and its various aspects, alertly listened to the lectures of his more knowledgeable brethren, and constantly checked if his day-to-day actions were in accord with the teachings and lessons of Freemasonry; if his passions, prejudices and selfish interests were being subdued by his reason, and his desires circumscribed within due bounds toward all mankind; if he conducted himself so regularly as to help remove every aspersion against the Craft. Little did he know that he was slowly growing up and developing himself into a good and true Mason, ***"as all brothers and fellows have done, who have gone this way before."***

There is very little, or perhaps nothing at all, written about the Masonic lives of our national heroes. The Lodges to which they belonged can only provide us with particulars relative to the dates of conferral of Masonic degrees upon them and the various positions they held during the tenure of their active membership in the Craft.

At any rate, let us look into how our national heroes, Masons and non-Masons alike, lived and conducted themselves in the face of the crises of their times. Let us, like our "apprentice" fellow Master Mason, ask ourselves: ***"What is the Masonic significance of the sacrifices of our nation's heroes?"***

Our nation's foremost hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, personified the Fraternity's main tenets: Brotherly Love, Relief and **Truth**. He advocated that as children of the same Father, men of every country, sect and opinion are to aid, support and protect one another; that the more fortunate human beings are "to soothe the unhappy, sympathize with their misfortunes, compassionate their miseries, and restore peace to their troubled minds"; and that by the dictates of truth, men are

to regulate their conduct, deal honestly and sincerely with one another, promote one another's welfare, and rejoice in one another's prosperity. He used the Trowel proficiently for uniting his countrymen into a "society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

Marcelo H. Del Pilar, Galicano Apacible, Graciano Jaena Lopez, Antonio Luna, Jose Ma. Panganiban, Mariano Ponce, Jose and Rafael Palma, Fernando Ma. Guerrero, together with Frs. Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora, as well as the 13 Martyrs of Bagumbayan and those of Cavite, exemplified the search for, as well as defense of, Truth ; for they did not only courageously campaign for reforms needed by the Filipino people in order for them to attain the ends of a truly human life, but they also denounced in no uncertain terms the evil of Spanish oppression and tyranny. **They incarnated the cardinal virtue of Prudence**, which enabled them to regulate their lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason, as well as to wisely judge and prudentially determine on all things relative to their present and future happiness.

Emilio Aguinado, Apolinario Mabini, and Emilio Jacinto were personifications of the cardinal virtues of Fortitude and Justice because they had the courage to undergo any pain or peril when prudentially deemed expedient and because they adamantly advocated that men should render unto their fellows their just due without distinction of color, creed or condition.

Gregorio del Pilar personified the principle of Relief since he courageously performed his obligation to fly to the relief of a Brother in real distress or in imminent danger. Despite their vast inferiority to Gen. Funston and his men from the U.S. Army in terms of weaponry and knowledge of warfare, he and his small number of soldiers valiantly defended Tirad Pass to prevent the American adversary from advancing to the hiding place of their Commander-in-Chief, Pres. and Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, in Palanan, Isabela. Gregorio del Pilar died with his boots on, so to speak; he made the supreme sacrifice of laying down his life for the sake of his friend and for the good of his country and countrymen.

Jose Abad Santos was the "reincarnation" of the Grand Master Hiram Abif (GMHA). Like the latter, when assaulted by the "ruffians" of the Japanese forces, who wanted him to pledge allegiance to their government, he chose rather to die at the altar of freedom than forfeit his integrity.

In closing, I quote Robert Francis Kennedy, who said the following about his brother John Fitzgerald Kennedy:

> ***As he said many times, to those he touched and those who sought to touch him, 'Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not.'***

In our own little way, we can join in the "reform movement" that aims to address the contemporary oppressions of passions, ignorance, apathy, and other moral evils which have crept into the Craft. If we discharge our duties and responsibilities conscientiously and if we fulfill our obligations faithfully, not just as Masons, but also as residents of our local communities and as citizens of this country and the whole global village, then we may help arrest the deterioration of the quality of the Craft's membership, stop contributing to its problems, and instead assist in strengthening it by building enduring walls with perfect ashlars and tempered mortars. So mote it be.

A *REFLECTION* ON FIDELITY

by Paul V. Santos Estrella, PM (#100)

FIDELITY, ONE OF THE HALLMARKS of a true Mason specified in our theme for this Masonic year, may be defined as "faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support." The present Grand Lodge leadership does not give due importance to this hallmark without any reason.

During the ceremony of our initiation into Masonry, we were neither barefoot nor shod because, according to the Book of Ruth, in the area of redeeming and changing, it was customary in ancient Israel for a man to pluck off his shoe and give it to his neighbour as a testimony of his fidelity to his word or as a confirmation of his goodwill, honesty, sincerity and plain dealing. This we also do on solemn occasions like conferral of degrees to testify in the strongest manner possible to the sincerity of our intention in the business in which we are engaged. Since we were then in the process of "asking, seeking and knocking," we readily and willingly removed our shoe; but after receiving the degrees of Freemasonry, many of us somehow have forgotten the symbolic significance of ***"plucking off one's shoe and giving it to one's neighbor."***

As newly initiated Masons, we were charged, among other things, to be faithful to the trust committed to our care and to manifest our fidelity to our principles by doing certain things and by refraining from doing certain things. Subsequently, we were emphatically told that the strongest ties of fidelity and honor bind us to a due observance of all our engagements as Fellow Crafts. Then, as newly raised Master Masons, we were enjoined not only to be just and true, but also to be faithful to every trust committed to our care; to imitate that celebrated artist whom we represented during the ritual in his truly exalted and exemplary character, in his unfeigned piety to God, and in his inflexible fidelity to his trust; and to convince the world, by our acts, that, upon becoming Master Masons, we have become better men.

Later on when we were given the privilege to address the Lodge, all of us promised to be active and to support the Lodge in all its activities. If we have kept that promise, then we can confidently hold our heads up and say, ***"I am here because the brethren elected me based on their freewill and not on their paid will."*** For some reason or another, however, in the course of our travel to the East – and, possibly, to the Grand East -- not a few of us have forgotten the promise or testimony we had made. At times we tend to forget it because we think we did not receive those

things we feel were meant for us. But we should ever remember that a true Mason is a man of honor and, as such, is always faithful and true to his word, both oral and written.

During the ceremony of our initiation into Masonry, we learned, moreover, that the ancients worshiped the Deity under the name of Fides, sometimes represented by two human figures holding each other by the right hand, and at others, by two right hands joined, and that we also make use of the right hand as a place of our fidelity, thereby renouncing our own wills in all things appertaining to Masonry and becoming obedient to the rules and regulations of our ancient and honourable fraternity.

Hence, during stated meetings and other official Masonic functions, we place the right hand on the left breast to demonstrate our fidelity in loving God, as well as to manifest our sincerity in invoking His holy name. We also give the right hand to one another in such a manner that we recognize one another as members of the Craft; by doing so, we are reminded of our promise to be true and faithful brothers one to another. When two Masons give the right hand to each other, they pledge mutual or reciprocal loyalty and support.

Generally, perhaps because they are still idealistic and their minds are not yet adulterated, young men are more faithful in their relationships with their fellows than their adult counterparts. But they are at the same time impulsive.

I remember that as young members of a certain international fraternity of young men, all we wanted was accomplish the task we were assigned to do, uphold the beliefs of our fraternal order, defend its honor, and stand up for a brother even to the point of getting into altercations with members of other groups or, worse, getting involved in brawls. But when we became Master Masons, we outgrew those puerile tendencies and strove to dedicate ourselves to attaining personal perfection or self-mastery.

Yes, as Master Masons, we have earnestly endeavored to be faithful and true to what we declared we came here to do, namely, to learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry. This separates us from those who have not yet been initiated into the world of Freemasonry. Now, instead of getting into altercations or even brawls to demonstrate our continuing loyalty and support to a brother, we strive to make proficient use of the Five Points of Fellowship; we first analyze the situation our brother is in, whisper good counsel in his ear for his betterment, or assist him solve his problem.

Now we try our best to be consistently true and faithful to God; to our respective families; to our fellowmen, particularly our friends and associates, and especially our brothers in Masonry; to the Fraternity; to our country; and to our obligations and principles. We strive to wear our badge, the lambskin apron, on all occasions, wherever we are, with credit to ourselves and honor to the Fraternity; for we want that when our weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey and from our nerveless grasp shall have dropped the working tools of life, it will be our portion to hear from Him Who sits as the Judge Supreme the welcome words: ***"Well done, ye good and faithful servants; enter ye unto the joy of your Lord."***

Taking all these things into consideration, we thank God for letting us experience a good and glorious state where we all dwell together in peace, unity and harmony.

FREEMASONRY AS A SCIENCE AND AN ART OF CHARACTER BUILDING

by J. Flor R. Nicolas, PSGL

IN EVERY AGE AND COUNTRY, the Craft's earnest endeavour has always been to attract and retain members of the finest character and of the highest quality – members who are adorned with unimpeachable integrity, inflexible fidelity to their principles and obligations, and a high level of ability and proficiency in the execution and delivery of the Craft's ritualistic and ceremonial work. That is not surprising since the principal purpose of Masonry is, in the words of the late WB and Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran, *"to create in the world a band of men to whom others might look for example and inspiration – men who others will say are men of honor, virtue and charitable feelings,"* ***and its ultimate aim is, as phrased by MW and retired Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, PGM, GMH,*** *"to purge men of the sediments of selfishness in their hearts by subduing their sensual nature, by purifying their mental processes, and by losing their old imperfect lives in order to attain their own perfection...."*

To stimulate us, its votaries, to attain our own perfection or self-mastery, Masonry holds before our eyes **King Solomon's Temple** as a model of the "beautiful, perfect and complete whole." Although more than seven years were occupied in the construction of that famous fabric, yet during the whole term there was not heard therein the sound of axe, hammer or any tool of iron, it having been put together in conformity to the rules and designs laid down by the Grand Master Hiram Abif (GMHA) in his trestle board. In like manner, we should, each of us, build our respective spiritual temples noiselessly (i.e., without any fanfare) and agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Great Architect of the Universe (GAOTU) in the great books of nature and revelation, which constitute our spiritual, moral and Masonic trestle board. Besides, when King Solomon's Temple was completed, its various parts fitted with such exact nicety that it had more the appearance of the handiwork of the GAOTU than that of human hands. Similarly, we must build our respective spiritual temples into structures fit for the GAOTU to dwell in by making their physical, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual, and other aspects harmoniously complement or blend with one another.

Perforce each of us is his own architect and builder. As such, each must determine for himself the form, size, and character of his own temple, as well as select his own materials and fashion them for use in its

actual construction.

Like the GMHA, who at high twelve went into the Temple to view the work and see if any improvement could be made either for strength or for ornament, each of us must follow up the progress of the construction of his own temple, beautifying it with noble and disinterested deeds and adorning it with temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice, love, charity, tolerance, patriotism, and other virtues. Each of us must, in other words, tirelessly and relentlessly form his fixed and permanent character throughout his pilgrimage on earth – and even "through the boundless ages of eternity."

The formation of such a character entails, among other things, immersing ourselves in an honest-to-goodness study of the wisdom of the ages. Masonry admonishes us to be eclectic in our approach to such wisdom – that is, to select the best from different philosophical, ethical, and religious systems of thought and then to incorporate them into our philosophy of life. For instance, from Greek philosophy we learn to avoid extremes, to be moderate, and to know ourselves. From Roman ethics: to be strong, to be stoical, to order ourselves. From Buddhism: to be disillusioned, to forget ourselves, to live here and now. From Confucianism: to be superior, to correct ourselves, to study continuously to gain authority. From Islam: to be submissive, to bend ourselves. From Judaism: to be holy, to conform ourselves to God's will. From Materialism: to be efficient, to cultivate ourselves to our highest potential. From Dilettantism: to be broad, to enjoy ourselves. And from Christianity: to be God-like, to be "perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," to give ourselves in service of others.

Masonry best serves society and the State by ministering to the individual. It does not identify itself with any particular scheme of reform; instead, it devotes all its benign energy to refining and ennobling the souls of men – to building character. States the Rev. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton:

> *Masonry is not a political institution, nor a school house, nor yet a church. It is a way of life. In our search for its truths, as in the search for the Holy Grail, we find it on our own door step. All that is good, and kind, and charitable, it encourages; all that is vicious, and cruel, and oppressive, it probates. Its creed is brief, untangled with scholastic subtleties, unencumbered with theological difficulties.*
>
> *Masonry does not seek to unveil the hidden mysteries that lie beyond the grave, or to support a plan of redemption for fallen humanity, or to point the pathway that leads to the goal of eternal bliss. Masonry does not profess, either, to be able to reconcile God with man, or change a human heart, or save a soul from death. Rather, it leaves to the Church the high and more sacred mission of pointing to men the way to eternal life. It seeks but to find the way in this life – to build the temple of character.*

What, you may ask, is character?

The World Book Dictionary gives us the following nuances of meaning:

First, character may mean *"all qualities or features of anything."* Example: The soil on the prairie is of different character from that in the mountains.

Second, it may mean *"moral nature, moral strength or worthiness."* Example: That boy has a shallow, changeable

character.

Third, it may mean *"moral firmness, self-control, integrity."* Examples: It takes character to endure hardship for very long. That woman has no character whatever.

Fourth, the term may mean *"reputation or the estimate of a person's qualities."* Examples: She has an infamous character. That statesman's character is unimpeachable.

Fifth, it may mean *"the reputation of possessing good qualities."* Example: Manuel Luis Quezon established his character by his honesty and integrity.

Sixth and last, it may mean *"a special quality or thing that makes one person, one animal, one plant, one thing, or a group of any kind different from others."* Example: The trunk is a character found only in elephants.

Obviously, we can determine which of the foregoing meanings of the term "character" applies by carefully examining the context in which it is used.

In any case, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton defines character in the following manner:

> *Character is that tolerance, that broad-mindedness which enables a man to regard every other man as his peer, and entitled equally with himself to his individual opinions and sentiments concerning matters political, philosophical and religious. It is that spirit of unselfishness which leads him to recognize that each person sees things from his own viewpoint and to admit that it is always possible for him to be wrong and the other to be right. It is that kindness of thought which prompts him to respect the opinions of his fellows as if they might someday become his own. It is that breadth of understanding which concedes that another may be honest at heart even though wrong or mistaken in his opinions or conclusion. It is that trait which teaches him how to be both brave and gentle, faithful but firm; how to renounce superstition and yet retain faith; how to keep a poise of reason between the falsehood of extremes; how to accept the joys of life with glee and endure its ills with patient valor; how to look upon the folly of man and not forget his nobility; how to live cleanly, kindly, calmly, open-eyed, and unafraid in a troubled world, pure of heart and full of hope.*

When, you may also ask, will a man have character?

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton would give you the following answer:

> *A man will have character when he can look over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, confidence and courage; --when he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know and to forgive his fellowmen; --when he can sympathize with men in their sorrows, even in their sins, knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds; --when he feels that thrill of an old forgotten joy upon hearing the laugh of a little child; --when he can be happy and high-minded amid he drudgeries of life' –when star-crowned trees and the glint of moonlight on flowing waters subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead; --when no*

voice of distress reaches his ears in vain and no hand seeks his aid without response; --when he can see good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of higher things and to see majestic meanings in life whatever the name of that faith may be; --when he can look into a wayside puddle and see something besides mud, and into the face of the most forlorn mortal and see something beyond sin; --when he knows how to pray; --when he has kept faith with himself, with his fellow man, and with his God, in his heart a bit of song – glad to live but not afraid to die.

In fine, the Rev. Dr. Newton strongly suggests that it is, indeed, quite difficult for a man to be a Mason by name and nature, a worthy and exemplary Mason, a Mason with sterling character and unimpeachable integrity. But you and I will do well to endeavor most earnestly to become such a Mason.

Focus on the Investigation and Balloting of Petitioners

WE MUST PAY A LITTLE more attention than before to the investigative process when petitions for Masonic membership are filed with our Lodges because we must attract members of the highest quality, of the finest character, if we are to regain the old glory of Philippine Masonry. For this purpose, let us review the pointers given in the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for Masonic Year 2011-2012, pp. 100-101, and other references.

THE INVESTIGATING *COMMITTEE*

THE BRETHREN WHO ARE CHARGED with the duty of investigating the character and other qualifications of applicants for the privileges of Masonry hold positions of distinction and trust. Of all the committees appointed by the Worshipful Master, none is more important to the preservation of this great Fraternal Order's Way of Life than the Investigating Committee, whose duty is to determine the fitness of a petitioner prior to balloting on his petition.

The members of this committee are, of necessity, the inspectors to examine the material wherewith to add wisdom, strength and beauty to the Universal Masonic Temple. Carelessness, indifference or negligence in the discharge of this

responsible duty is of the nature of a misdemeanour.

Every member of the Lodge is part of the Investigating Committee, especially the voucher of the petitioner. The member who vouches for a profane should be certain of the latter's fitness for membership. Also, it is the duty of every Master Mason who is aware of one or more things which would cause a profane to be unfit for membership to inform a brother of that Lodge or the Investigating Committee, so that those things can be verified or clarified. For it is the responsibility of every member to exercise scrupulous care in guarding the door of Masonry to prevent a profane from gaining access and introducing Godless ideology. All of us Masons are bound by duty to jealously examine the fitness of a profane for membership; for on this examination rest the honor, glory and reputation of our Institution.

The members of the Investigating Committee in particular must constantly bear in mind that membership in the Craft is much too priceless to be shared without due consideration. Hence, they must always think and act for the best interest of the Craft, whose dignity, honor and reputation they are bound to preserve unsullied.

When visiting a petitioner in his home, they should first determine the family's attitude toward his desire to join the Masonic Order. If there is serious opposition to his joining the Order, which they cannot overcome, and they think that his membership in the Lodge would cause internal family problems, they should recommend that the petition be returned or rejected. They must ascertain whether the petitioner's home surroundings are such as to permit him financially to continue his membership without depriving his family of the essentials of life. While the petitioner's financial circumstances or his educational background ought not to bar him from participating in Masonic privileges or render him unwelcome in the Craft, he may feel uncomfortable in the presence of the other members of the Lodge if his standard of living is very different from theirs.

The members of the committee must make the petitioner understand that his character is subjected to the closest scrutiny, and that friendship, personal consideration, or favouritism must not control or bias Masonic action; they must inform him that he has to pass the scrutiny of the investigation and the ordeal of the ballot, as all have done who have gone this way before him. If they have a doubt in regard to his fitness to become a Mason, they must let the Lodge know and have the benefit of the doubt.

They must determine how long the petitioner has been acquainted with his proposer. If they find out that the acquaintanceship has been a brief one, they should all the more make a thorough search of the petitioner's background, by carefully checking references as well as business affiliations. They should, of course, handle this in a discreet manner, especially if they direct questions to non-Masons who may not be favourably disposed towards the Institution

They ought to ascertain the petitioner's motive for wanting to become a Mason and what his conception of the Fraternity is. Of course, being new to the Order, he may not be expected to offer a considered opinion, but he should have at least some idea of the type of organization he is expecting to join.

The members of the committee should discreetly ask the petitioner questions which will help bring out his true character, such as these: Is the petitioner charitable by nature?

Does he contribute to needy causes as his finances permit? Is he charitable in thought and in action towards his fellowmen?

To find out whether the petitioner is prompt in meeting his financial obligations, as well as honourable in his business dealings, they must investigate his references, both business and personal. To determine whether he can afford to become a Mason, they must point out to him that no man should join the Masonic Order if he must deprive his family of the necessities of life. Naturally, no Lodge wishes to cause hardship for others, nor to handicap itself by adding to its rolls members who are apt to become financial liabilities.

The members of the committee must make the petitioner realize that membership in a Lodge calls for payment of dues and that these must be met promptly. They must, moreover, ascertain whether he has made pecuniary or other provisions for his family should something happen to him.

They should, furthermore, determine whether the petitioner's occupation permits him to attend meetings regularly, and whether he believes in a Supreme Being and attends a church. They should inform him that Masonry does not require a man to adhere to any particular creed or religion, but he must believe in God and in the immortality of the soul.

They must, in addition, keep the Worshipful Master honestly and fully informed about their assigned task, and they must present a comprehensive report at a regular meeting of their Lodge.

A fearless discharge of this duty may, for a time, subject the committee to the frowns of the rejected petitioner and his friends, but faithfulness and courage will, in the end, command the plaudits of every lover of the Fraternity.

The members of the committee must not overlook any references; the last one may be the one needed. They must obtain reports on the petitioner from the courts, the police department, credit bureaus, and other places necessary.

They should conduct their investigation in such a way that, even if rejected, the applicant gains a higher respect for the Fraternity.

If investigators are inflexibly faithful to their duty to provide the Craft with first-hand information on the character, abilities, attainments and general reputation of applicants for Masonic membership, they will experience the inner happiness which comes when they truly tell themselves, "I have helped Masonry move forward by my work."

The poem below, by the late M.W. Bro. Thomas Q. Ellis (1890-1971), who was the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Mississippi in 1925, is interesting and enlightening. Let us read it analytically.

MY BALLOT

At the same sacred altar I'm standing;
It glows with the same sacred light,
With the same sense of honor demanding
As when kneeling, my vows there to plight,

And as rev'rently then I was kneeling
I now stand rev'rently there,
And all I hold dear is appealing,
That my vote stand the test of the Square.

If through friendship I know the seeker
But know him unworthy at heart,
Lest my Lodge by my ballot grow weaker,
Such favour from justice must part.

At the altar where light flooded o'er me,
I'll betray not the trust that I bear,
I'll shame not the emblems before me,
But I'll measure my vote by the Square.

Or should he not be to my liking
But merit by actions my trust,
My soul I'll not perjure by striking
A blow if a blow be unjust.

But I'll welcome his step 'cross the border,
I'll honor the trust that I bear,
I'll vote for the good of the Order
And I'll cast every vote on the Square.

Time flies and ere long my petitions
Will be filed in the Grand Lodge above;
I'll be glad then I tempered such mission
With justice and brotherly love.

"With the measure ye mete" has been spoken
By the Worshipful Master up there;
No promise e'er made has He broken,
He'll handle my case on the Square.

The next article, by Bro. Robert W. Tarbell, appeared in the April 1959 issue of the Wisconsin Freemason. Although 52 years have elapsed since its first publication, it is still very applicable to our situation today. Let us digest and assimilate its content.

THE BALLOT

THERE IS PERHAPS NOTHING more respected in a Masonic Lodge than the ballot of a member. His motives are never to be questioned. His sincerity is not to be doubted. This is one of the great democratic principles that govern the Fraternity. When the ballot box is passed, there is none mightier than the individual on the sidelines.

There can be no great trust without great power, and vice versa. The power of the ballot is fraught with great potentialities. The flip of a coin may decide the fate of an applicant. The very act of voting is a register of a man's convictions. It may indict him for an act that is purely selfish and biased, or it may reward him because he is strong enough to rise above petty objections and vote for the good of the Lodge. No man can vote as his conscience dictates unless he takes his conscience in as a trusted advisor. We grow in strength, and our conscience is a comfort, when our ballot has been cast discreetly, with full sincerity, and as we believe it should be done.

And what should be the guiding principle in this matter of the ballot? The Fraternity must depend upon the good judgment of its members for continued growth and prosperity. It is certain that a wise selection of candidates for degrees will bring new strength to Masonry. It seems safe to suggest that before any petitioner is rejected by any Mason that Brother should put himself in the place of the applicant and think it through. Likewise, unsuitable material should be rejected. The petitions of our personal friends should be dealt with as scrupulously as those of strangers.

Every true Mason is a builder. The living temple is rising, block upon block, as we individually perform our duties as members. Every noble act sets another stone in place. Every improper act tears one out. When we ballot as our conscience dictates, we are acting constructively.

How shall I know if I am voting correctly? That is a fair question and deserves an answer. The same thought can be raised about any election. There are varying viewpoints to consider. The experienced Mason has listened attentively to the lectures and admonitions, but witnessed the portrayal of integrity as it stands fast and has come to appreciate the ideals of the Fraternity. He understands that he is responsible for preserving a high quality of membership. To do this job properly, he must be well informed on the high standards set for judging the qualifications of a petitioner. He must be willing to submerge any personal feeling in the matter and he needs to be able to distinguish between appearances and worth.

It is imperative for us to strictly adhere to our laws, rules and regulations if we really want our new members to pay due obedience to them. Hence, we must faithfully and conscientiously observe the guidelines given below.

ON THE ELECTION OR REJECTION OF PETITIONERS

1. The WM, the SW, the JW, and the SD must be proficient or conversant in the ritual on balloting.

2. The WM should show proof that the names of the petitioners have been published in the GLP Circular No. 12.

3. No one should leave or enter the Lodge room during the taking of a ballot, with the exception of the Tyler, if he is a member of the Lodge.

4. While the SD is preparing the ballot box, the WM must read the petition in full, stating the recommenders, as well as read to the brethren who are about to ballot a petitioner the revised charge as decreed in Edict No. 83 – PUNO, as follows:

   One of your important privileges as a Mason is that of accepting or rejecting all who may apply for the degrees or for membership. I wish to impress upon your mind the immense power for good or evil with which you are entrusted. The white ball, secretly cast by you, signifies your approbation of any candidate who may apply, while the black one, when cast by you, signifies that the candidate is unworthy for some reason known to you, and will have the same effect as though each member of this lodge were to cast one of them. Hence, how important it is that you should be extremely careful in depositing your ballot, always remembering that white balls elect and black reject. The ballot, my brother, is inviolably secret, and you are cautioned that to discuss or to make known your ballot is one of the greatest of Masonic offenses. The ballot is never the proper place to exhibit petty spite toward any individual within or without the lodge, and the ceremony attending the casting of a ballot is equivalent to a sacred promise to cast it in accordance with your obligation.

5. The ballot box shall contain as many white balls as there are members of the Lodge present together with three or more black cubes.

6. Petitions should be balloted upon in the order that they are received by the Lodge.

7. When three or more petitioners, either for degrees or for affiliation, are to be balloted on the same meeting, the petitioners may be balloted on collectively.

8. The SD presents the ballot box first to the WM, for his inspection, then to the Wardens. The three principal officers ballot without leaving their seats. Then the other members of the Lodge in good standing ballot one at a time after a salute to the WM.

9. No member in good standing present can abstain from voting upon petitions for degrees or affiliation; everyone must vote, and the WM may oblige him to do so. A Brother who does not vote because he is too lazy or too indifferent, or for any other reason, is discourteous; for he injures the ballot, its secrecy, its importance, and its value.
10. When all have voted except the Tyler, the WM asks the Tyler to enter and vote, his place being taken by another Brother meanwhile.
11. Honorary members cannot vote, nor can they act as sponsors or recommenders.
12. No Mason is duty bound to cast a black cube for another.
13. After a ballot has been commenced, it cannot be suspended nor postponed but must be carried on to its completion.
14. The WM must never order the ballot closed until he is certain that all members present have cast their ballots. He may re-open the ballot box to allow a brother to cast his ballot at any time before the examination by the Wardens.
15. The WM may count the ballots at the conclusion of the balloting to see if the number of ballots corresponds to the number of members present, but he is not required to do so.
16. The WM should never call the Lodge from labor to refreshment when the balloting is not yet completed.
17. When the WM declares a candidate elected or rejected, such declaration is final and conclusive.
18. It is un-Masonic for a Brother to divulge how he intends to vote or has balloted or to attempt to ascertain how another will ballot or has balloted. Peace and harmony are the foundations of all Masonic meetings. For Brother A to learn that Brother B has balloted or will ballot against his friend would disrupt that peace and harmony.
19. There shall be no discussion regarding an unfavourable ballot. Rejection is a blow to the petitioner. If everyone knew who had cast the black cube, the rejected man might speedily learn, and cause of friction in the profane world would then have come out of a Masonic Lodge.
20. The only information that a petitioner is entitled to or a member of the Lodge is privileged to give is contained in the words "elected" and "rejected". The petitioner is not entitled to know who was present or the number of black cubes.

The petitioner who wants membership in order to promote his business is seeking something holy for sordid reasons. The man who desires merely to satisfy his curiosity is not worthy of the knowledge he seeks. The applicant who hopes, through influential friends to be acquired in the Lodge, to secure position and power would prostitute for selfish ends the institution he seeks to join.

REJECTED PETITIONER SEEKING RECONSIDERATION

GIVEN BELOW IS the opinion of the Committee on Jurisprudence of the MW Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of the Philippines regarding the proper interpretation of Section 5, Article VI on Ordinances, which reads as follows:

No lodge shall accept a petition from a person who within the preceding twelve (12) months has been rejected by the lodge except by dispensation of the Grand Master. The request for dispensation must be unanimously approved by the lodge at a meeting of which the members shall have due notice.

For clearer understanding, let us assume that:

. The petition of Mr. Juan de la Cruz was given due course by the Lodge but was rejected during the balloting on June 15, 2002.

. On August 10, 2002, after receiving his notice of rejection, Mr. Juan de la Cruz sought reconsideration thereof.

On the basis of the assumptions given above, the following procedures shall be observed:

. Require petitioner to fill out and file a new petition form (Circular No. 3, series of 1998 – Locsin) for him to truthfully answer No. 4:

a. Have you ever presented a petition to a Masonic Lodge? _____
When? _____

b. To what Lodge?

c. What was the action of the Lodge?

. The Secretary will then send notices of a stated meeting clearly stating that the petition of Mr. Juan de la Cruz is subject for reconsideration, but before any reconsideration may be taken by the Lodge, a request for dispensation from the Grand Master, Unanimously Approved by the members of the Lodge, is a requirement for said dispensation to be issued.

. After the request for dispensation has been unanimously approved by the members, the Secretary can then make the proper representation with the Office of the Grand Master through the DDGM. If the request for dispensation is granted, a dispensation fee will have to be paid.

. With the compliance of paragraph 2 above, the Lodge may act on Mr. De la Cruz's request for reconsideration on his rejected petition.

The rationale for requiring a UNANIMOUS APPROVAL for the request for dispensation is that, if said request for dispensation was not unanimously approved by the members of the Lodge, the inescapable conclusion is that the request for reconsideration of the rejected petitioner will suffer the same fate.

THE TRAGEDY OF HIRAM ABIF

by Nery G. Duremdes, PDDGM

(Adapted from a pamphlet published by Hamtik Lodge No. 75)

THE TRAGEDY OF HIRAM ABIF, which constitutes the second section of the ritual of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, is not a drama in the theatrical sense which is performed on stage by actors, but rather a real-life portrayal where we ourselves are the *dramatis personae.* ***It is ritualistic; for it addresses the clash of contentious forces in the realm of the imagination, where historical events and individuals, or the facts of time and place, are of no moment. The crises and fates of the human spirit alone enter into it, and they hold true for all men everywhere regardless of who they are or when and where they live and work.***

Our Monitor states, "Masonic tradition informs us that the tragedy actually took place when King Solomon's Temple was nearing its completion, and that it resulted in the death of the Grand Master Hiram Abif (GMHA)."

We should not, however, be troubled with the thought that the tragedy contains some events that could not have ever happened precisely because it is ritualistic. To be sure, the tragedy is not to be found in the Holy Bible. Therein we read the following:

. *King Hiram of Tyre told King Solomon, I am sending you a master craftsman – my famous Humarabi! He is a brilliant man, son of a Jewish woman from Dan in Israel; his father is from here in Tyre.* (2 Chronicles 2:13-14).

. *King Solomon then asked for a man named Hiram to come from Tyre, for he was a skilled craftsman in bronze work. He was half Jewish, being the son of a widow from the Tribe of Naphtali, and his father had been a foundry worker from Tyre. So he came to work for King Solomon.* (1 Kings 7:13-14).

If the Humarabi and the Hiram mentioned in the aforementioned passages were one and the same person, there is no mention whatsoever of his assassination or premeditated slaying. What is mentioned is that:

. Humarabi at last completed the work assigned to him by King Solomon. (2 Chronicles:4-11).

. The Temple was finally finished (2

Chronicles 5:1; 1 Kings:7-51).

. Hiram also made the necessary pots, shovels, and basins and at last completed the work in the Temple of the Lord which had been assigned to him by King Solomon. (1 Kings:7-40).

We can, therefore, safely conclude that while a skilled craftsman named Hiram Abif may have existed, there is no biblical or historical source which discloses that his life was taken in the Temple or elsewhere.

We repeat: **The events unfolded in the tragedy did not necessarily take place in ancient history; they are but symbols of what is happening in every man's life.**

We must also stress that **no member of the Craft should treat the ritualistic drama as a mere mock tragedy**. Admittedly, savage people use initiation rites as an ordeal to test the nerve and courage of the individual being initiated. But Masonry is not savage, nor is the exemplification of our ritualistic drama a juvenile horseplay, but rather a solemn and earnest portrayal of what is happening in every man's life. Those who take it trivially betray a shallowness of soul, which makes them unfit to become Masons.

There has been no agreement among Masonic writers as to when, exactly, was the tragedy of Hiram Abif introduced into Masonry. It is generally believed, however, that it must have been introduced during the era of Speculative Masonry, which began in 1717. The first notable account of the said tragedy was written by Dr. James Anderson, who originally published *The Constitutions of the Freemasons* in 1723. The 1738 revised edition of this document makes express reference to the *"sudden death of their dear Master Hiram Abif, whom they decently interr'd in the Lodge near the Temple, according to ancient usage."*

In any case, since this ritualistic drama is allegorical, it need not be factual. It contains the truth in its most real sense; its symbolism is profoundly rich in moral lessons.

The GMHA symbolizes the human soul – yours, mine, any other man's. The work he was hired to supervise in the building of the Temple symbolizes the work you, I and any other man have today – that of organizing, supervising, and directing our own lives from the cradle to the grave.

The ruffians he encountered symbolize error, evil, sin, ignorance, fanaticism, lusts and passions which, in our own breasts and in those of others, lay siege and make war on our characters and lives.

The fate that befell him is the same as that which befalls every man who becomes the prey and victim of those malevolent forces and who, thereby, is interrupted in his work, made an outcast from his mastery over his own self, and is, in the end, buried under all forms of rubbish, which translate to defeat, disgrace, scorn, misery.

His subsequent raising from the dead level to the living perpendicular by the strong grip of the lion's paw and the power of the Word is symbolic of the manner by which we, by dint of divine assistance, may rise from the grave of defeat, evil, or death itself, and ascend to the tier of self-mastery.

As a whole, the tragedy of the GMHA is a story which teaches us that man's soul must rise above its own internal enemies. Just as the enemies of the GMHA came, not from outside, but from his own circle, so the enemies to be feared by the soul are from within (e.g., its own ignorance, lusts, passions, sins). The Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) teaches us that we need most to

shun that which has the power to destroy the spirit, and not that which has the power to kill the body.

After the GMHA had been slain, there was confusion in the Temple. The workmen fell into chaos and anarchy since there was nobody to direct, command and supervise them. Here the Temple is the symbol of man's character, which is rendered in disarray when the soul, its architect, is immobilized. The workmen symbolize man's powers and faculties.

Ultimately, however, the GMHA was gloriously raised from the grave. His story is the story of the greatest hope of mankind which evinces the observation that truth, slain by error, will be born again. Obviously, it is an affirmation of the inspiring familiar chronicle of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Great Carpenter who died between two thieves.

No brother has ever shared with you or with me his thoughts about the GMHA's tragedy; for it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to explain to another the story's moral and spiritual implications. The most each brother can obtain from others is just such hints and scattered suggestions as those that are elucidated in this article. Each brother must, therefore, discover and learn for himself the moral and spiritual implications of the story.

We must always bear in mind, however, that we should endeavour to imitate the GMHA in his truly exalted and exemplary character, in his unfeigned piety to God, and in his inflexible fidelity to his trust. To do this, we must print his story indelibly in the pages of our memory, so that we can frequently ponder on it, recall it, and act accordingly on those times when we are at grips with our enemies. Thus our inner selves will be wiser and stronger, with the guidance and the light which the drama has given us.

"Masonry is ever a challenge, an invitation to a clearer vision, a loftier aim, a braver struggle, a kindlier and more unselfish way of living... That is what we as Masons should stand for if we would be real men."
- Statement in the Address which Ill. Joseph Earl Perry. 33⁰, delivered before Masons of Massachusetts on December 27, 1935 (or approximately 77 years ago)

ANOTHER MESSAGE OF A MASONIC LEADER TO A FELLOW MASTER MASON

(Adapted from the "Ceremonial of Re-consecration and Rededication to the Ideals, Tenets and Obligations of Masonry," in the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for 2011-2012, pp. 61-63).

WE MASTER MASONS ARE all members of the oldest and largest fraternity in the world, whose beginnings, according to all Masonic historians, authors and students, are lost in the dim uncertainties of antiquity. You, dear brother, have become a Master Mason by submitting to certain ceremonies "as all brothers and fellows have done, who have gone this way before." Masonry will only be meaningful to you for what you will make of it. Its value to you will depend, to a great measure, upon you and what you will do to the fulfillment of its great mission. Your enjoyment of this beautiful fraternity can only be measured by the devotion with which you will seek to understand its symbols and apply its teachings.

Masonry's great and ultimate mission is to bring all men to a full intimate comprehension of the Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of our everlasting God. To be able to help in accomplishing that mission, however, as a Mason, you must always bear in mind that *"it is the internal and not the external qualifications"* which tend to increase the stature of your inner self. In that manner you will be called to contribute something; in that manner you will be called to perform some great service to your fellowmen; in that manner you build your Masonic edifice, and these marks will be eternal in the heavens.

It is my own personal observation and feeling that as soon as one has found the proper motivation and value of the Fraternity in the life of an individual, he realizes that there are many ways to study Masonry. He notes that much has been written about the history, philosophy and antiquity of our fraternity and the beauty of it all is that he can seek the help of more knowledgeable brethren for guidance. He also will realize that in spite of materials and help that are made available to him, there are still matters that were never written to give the mind a well-rounded knowledge about the Craft. A keen scrutiny will reveal to the very discerning and inquisitive mind that many more have not found themselves in print. Some of these can be found in the ritual, and much can be found in the hearts and minds of your brethren.

Freemasonry presents many points of view. In the level of ritual, it is the quintessence of beauty; to the legal mind, it reveals a great field of jurisprudence in its landmarks and traditions, customs, constitutions and laws; to the student researcher, it opens avenues of investigation that would require a lifetime to pursue. The philosopher discovers here a simple yet profound solution to the problem of human relationship, while the historian finds the beginning of democratic thought and the foundations of democratic political organizations. To every man it presents unlimited opportunities for mutual help, encouragement, friendship and companionship.

The foregoing is just a necessary explanation of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in order to fully comprehend the meaning of the degree.

We must remember, at this juncture, that the third degree of Masonry could not have evolved without the participation of the first two degrees in its development. The reason for this is clear: Freemasonry is, first and foremost, a ritualistic society, and the Landmark set which could not be changed is that Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry is divided into three degrees, namely, the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason

In the light of the just explained interrelationship of the first three degrees of Masonry, I will now ask you to review with me what we all have passed, observed, and learned in the course of our travel through the degrees.

You and I have noticed that similarities exist in all the degrees of Symbolic Masonry. If you will remember, each degree has an entry, a reception, a perambulation, an obligation, a bringing to light. Each degree emphasizes certain symbols, demonstrates them in the ritual, and defines them in lectures to help them unlock the difficulty and therein find their meanings.

In the Second Section, the Sublime Degree departs from the familiar. Instead of being concerned with moral principles and exhortations as in the Entered Apprentice degree, or with architecture and learning as in the Fellow Craft degree, the Sublime Degree delves into the inner recesses of a man's nature and leads him into completing this entrance into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple or into what this symbolizes -- the Fraternity.

You will have to take one more step across that threshold into a relationship with your fellowmen before you can develop a deep understanding of life. As a whole, the third degree is symbolical of that old age by the wisdom of which *"we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality."*

But we cannot end here without touching on the relevance of the first seven verses taken from Ecclesiastes XII, which was made part of the ritual of the Sublime Degree.

There are two favourite interpretations accorded this dramatic passage of Ecclesiastes XII. According to author Carl H. Claudy, the passage is, first, "an interpretation of old age and senile decay," and second, "a reference to the seldom experienced and much feared thunderstorm in Palestine."

For our purpose, we will consider only the first interpretation inasmuch as the materials available to us on the second interpretation are so meagre that we cannot creditably explain the symbolism intended by the scriptural passage.

The interpretation describing old age and senile decay exhorts us to remember the Creator of the Universe and all that is therein, while we are still strong. Yes, we must remember our Creator before we reach old age – before our eyes begin to go blind; before our hands begin to tremble; before our legs begin to weaken; before our teeth begin to drop out; before we are frightened at every little sound, even the voice of a bird; before our voices cease to be musical; before *"the almond tree shall flourish"* – that is, before our hair whitens like the almond tree in bloom; before a very tiny weight as that of a grasshopper becomes burdensome to us; before the spinal marrow (*"the silver cord"*) gets loosed or the heart (*"the golden bowl"*) broken; and so forth.

Read this passage the way you want it and notice the majestic and awe-inspiring poetical flow that rings the solemn warning with a shake of the heart and a shiver up the back.... *"Remember now thy Creator..."* -- now, before the decay of old age or the fearsome storms of life are upon you; wait not until *"fears are in the way"* to cry for help to the Almighty. Delay not until toothless, sightless, white-haired age asks for help from on high because there is no help left on earth! *"Remember now thy Creator,"* while limbs are strong and desire is ardent, while life pulses normally and the world is all before you.

It is very seldom that a brother of the Craft thinks of his Master Mason degree in consequence with its entire symbolic meaning, except perhaps the beginning and ending of this message in poetry: *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;.... then shall dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."*

The other symbol that we must consider in Masonic Education centered in the Sublime Degree, together with the perambulation of the degree, is the Legend of Hiram Abif.

The first thing that those raised to the Sublime Degree must notice is, as depicted in the ritual, the living, the dying, and the raising of Hiram Abif. They must not, however, take this picture only as a literal drama, designed to teach the virtues of fortitude and inflexible fidelity. Those who have accepted this interpretation – or any other interpretation -- of the legend and our ceremony, which exemplifies it, have entirely missed the heart of the message.

The Legend of Hiram Abif is, to the discerning mind, at once the tragedy and the hope of man; it is virtue struck down by error, evil and sin, and raised again by truth, goodness, and mercy. Here is the essence of Masonry, the foundation of all its philosophy, the answer to all its seekings and yet it is mystery of mysteries. It is, therefore, necessary to understand its symbolism in order to understand Masonry; to miss its significance is to remain forever in outer darkness. It is at once the beginning of the even more sacred legend—of "that which was lost"—and the assurance that at long last he who seeks shall find.

The Hiramic Legend is the glory of Freemasonry. The search for "that which was lost" is the glory of life; we may never find it during our pilgrimage on earth, but the search for it is the reason for life. What the Sublime Degree teaches us is that we may find "that which was lost" in another life. **That is why the third degree is the Sublime Degree.**

May we see the unfolding of Truth before our very eyes and enlighten our perception of that search for Perfection, which is the consummate quest of every consecrated and dedicated Master Mason.

On that note I say: AMEN.

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE SUBLIME DEGREE

by Rolando F. Rocha, PSGL

THE SUBLIME DEGREE OF MASTER MASON is, undoubtedly, rich in symbolism and significance. If we seriously study its ritual and persistently practice its teachings, we will find reasons for our existence on earth, foremost of which is to attain spiritual elevation, ever earnestly endeavouring to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.

Let us take a closer and deeper look at the second section of the degree, which consists of the Tragedy of Hiram Abiff or the Hiramic Legend.

Unlike other rituals, such as those of the Indian tribe or those of the Mayan race, our ritual is not intended to make the candidate for the Sublime Degree push himself to his physical limit to be called a man. It is sincere, solemn, and earnest. Hence, the Conferral Master always reminds us to maintain silence during the exemplification of the drama and not to take the ritual lightly because if we do, we will betray a shallowness of soul which makes us unfit to be Masons. During the exemplification, then, we should direct our special attention to the allegorical meaning of the tragedy.

The Grand Master Hiram Abiff (GMHA) is the symbol of the human soul, and the work he was engaged to supervise is the symbol of the work which we are to do from birth to death.

Every time we wake up from sleep, we are given by our Creator another opportunity to improve our lives, to love our fellowmen, to serve for His greater honor and glory, and to repay all the blessings we have received from Him. From sunrise to sunset we are to labor to improve ourselves and the world we are living in.

The Ruffians who assaulted the GMHA in the Temple are the symbols of our weaknesses: lusts, passions, prejudices, selfishness, hatred, anger, and so forth.

What connotes the burial of the GMHA under the rubbish of the Temple?

Rubbish here refers to disgrace, defeat, contempt, and misery; for the enemies most feared by men are not those which kill the body, but rather those which have the power to destroy the spirit.

The GMHA's raising from his temporary resting place through the medium of prayer reminds us that in spite of our sinfulness, we

have to cling to our faith and belief that our Creator will also raise us out of the grave of defeat and even death itself.

The three Ruffians, who were inimical to the GMHA, came from the inner circle; they were not strangers from outside. After the GMHA had been slain, there was too much confusion in the Temple because the word "temple" refers to the human soul. When our soul is rendered helpless, our faculties get distorted, and we fall into the pits our enemies have dug for us.

The third Ruffian smote the GMHA on the head with a setting maul and felled him dead at his feet. This blow clearly reminds us that our freedom of thought is the greatest enemy of ignorance, and that a clear and clean conscience is a powerful tool for controlling our passions, prejudices and selfish interests. When our conscience is attuned to the will of our Divine Creator, we will lead virtuous and well-spent lives, and we will be "perfect as your Father which art in heaven is perfect."

We are living in an increasingly materialistic world, where the demand for material values is so dominating that sometimes we fail to see clearly the real purpose of our earthly existence. Sometimes the demand for power, as well as the hunger for titles and dominance over our fellowmen, corrodes our moral and spiritual fiber. We frequently forget the lessons taught us in Masonry, especially those inculcated in the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. Yes, modern man frequently forgets that he is mortal, that before long his weary feet will come to the end of their toilsome journey, and that his soul will stand naked and alone before the Great White Throne, there to receive judgment from the Judge Supreme for deeds done while it was still in the body.

Before entering the portals of Freemasonry, we were all blind, and on the night of our initiation, our most ardent desire was to see the light. Now that we have seen the light, we have to exert effort to seek more and more light. We must not be blinded again. We must always remember that the story of the GMHA is also the story of our own lives. We may be buried for some time under the rubbish of disgrace, defeat, and misery, but we have to struggle to rise up again. We have to defeat the Ruffians in us. We must realize that as Master Masons, we have to master ourselves or to attain our own perfection – or, to use terms that are familiar to all of us, to transform ourselves from "rough" to "perfect ashlars." We can be shining examples to the members of our respective families, to our comrades in the workplace, to the other residents of the communities we live in. If we are such, then we can proudly and justifiably say that honor, virtue and charitable feelings distinguish our conduct as men and as Masons.

In conclusion, let us ponder on the meaning of a pointed paragraph of an anonymous author, which, with my apologies to the author, I would paraphrase in the following manner:

> *Great achievements often require long, tortuous, bitter experiences. You have to resist ruthless persecution both physically and psychically. You have to gain complete mastery of yourself. You have to rise above disappointment, neglect and sorrow. Through loneliness of spirit you learn to understand the wisdom of the Universe. When you do all in your power to do these things, then the Divine Force will help you to your goal.*

SEKSYONG PILIPINO

ALAM NA NATIN NA sa ika-19 ng Disyembre ng 1912 ang Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands (GLPI) ay itinatag ng mga Lohiyang Amerikano na noon nagtrabaho sa ating bansa sa ilalim ng hurisdiksyon ng Grand Lodge of California.

Noong 1917, ang mga Lohiyang Amerikano sa ilalim ng GLPI at ang mga Lohiyang Pilipino sa ilalim ng Gran Consejo Regional, na nasa ilalim ng hurisdiksyon ng Gran Oriente Español, ay nagkasundo at nagkaisa na itatag nila ang Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines (GLP).

Sa panahon na iyon, ang GLP ay kaisa-isang Grand Lodge sa Asya na kinilala ng mga ibang Grand Lodge sa buong mundo. Ginanap ang GLP ang kaniyang Annual Communication sa ika-apat na lingo ng Enero.

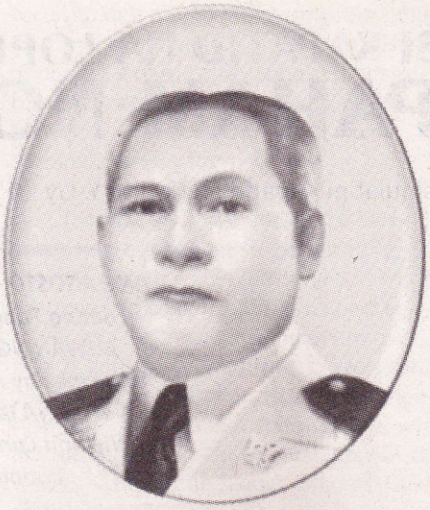
Noong 1939, mayroong isang daan at anim (106) na Lohiya na sinasakupan ng GLP; dalawangpu't tatlo (23) ng mga ito ay nasa Syudad ng Maynila. Sa taong iyon, ang mga nahalal na opisyal ng GLP ay sina Clark James, Grand Master; Jose de los Reyes, Deputy Grand Master; John Robert McFie, Jr., Senior Grand Warden; Jose P. Guido, Junior Grand Warden; Vicente Carmona, PGM, Grand Treasurer; and Teodoro M. Kalaw, PGM, Grand Secretary.

Ang buwanang oublikasyong opisyal ng GLP, The Cabletow, na nagsimula noong 1923, ay gumamit ng tatlong wika: Ingles, Espanyol at Pilipino.

Ang tula sa ibaba, na isinulat ni Deputy Grand Master Jose de los Reyes, ay nalimbag sa nasabing publikasyon, edisyong Pebrero 1939. Basahin natin ang tula at isabuhay natin ang kaniyang mensahe.

Ang buwan ng Agosto ay dapat maging "Buwan ng Masonerya sa Pilipinas" dahil punong-puno siya ng mga mahahalagang bagay na nagbigay buhay sa samahang ating kinasasaniban, ang Masonerya.

ANG MABUTING BUHAY



MW Jose delos Reyes
Grand Master
Masonic Year 1940

Totoo nga yatang ang sa tawong buhay
ay pagkakataong kay Bathalang bigay,
kundi kalayaan na Kaniang pahiram
na ating gamitin sa ma-iibigan.

Kung gugulin natin sa gawang masama,
ay ating sinayang buhay natin't laya,
na di nagbubunga nang mabuting pala,
ay ating sinayang buhay natin't laya.

At hindi ginamit sa maykabuluhang
gawaing anomang pakikinabangan
na ikabubuti ng sangkatauhan
o nang Inang Bayan, o sariling buhay.

Ang pagkakataon ay hanging maypakpak
na di tumatahan sa tuloy na lipad,
ng tangay na ginto na, inilalagak
sa tawong mayroong kabanalan't sipag.

Ang ginto't salapi, at lusawing yaman
ay di nadadala sa kabilang buhay,
karaniwa'y di man sumapit sa hukay
na ating libingan kung tayo'y mamatay.

Ang mauring yamang hindi nawawala
ay ang buhay nating naging halimbawa
sa mabuting bagay na ating ginawa,
o ipinaglingkod sa Bayan, o kapwa.

Buhay na ginugul sa maykabuluhan
at dakilang layon, hindi namamatay,
dito'y lumalaging di malilimutan
at na-iingatan hangang isang buhay.

Umayong mabuhay sa sariling palad,
maging kayamanan, sagana, o salat;
walang pinagibhan, at dito'y ang lahat
kahit anong buhay may ligaya't hirap.

Ang salaping yaman ay di nagbibigay
nang lubos na tuwa at kaligayahan;
bagkus kadalasa'y siang pagbuhatan
nang maraming sama't kapanganyayaan.

Salapi'y totoong nagbibgay lwag
magbuhog nang pita at lamaning galak;
nguni't hindi tamis o mabisang lunas
sa mga tiisin nang pusong maysindak.

Matamis na tubig ay di bumubukal
sa malabung batis at laging masukal;
gayon din ang pusong maypait na taglay
di dinadaluyan nang twang dalisay.

Ang tawong mabait at magandang loob
mapagkaawang gawa't sa kapwa'y mairog
ang puso'y payapa at puno nang lugod
at kaligayahang dalisay at lubos.

SI KAPATID NA LOPE K. SANTOS:
PAHAM NG WIKA

Isinulat ni Kapatid na Carlito Y. Uy (# 209)

ANG AGOSTO, AYON SA Proklamasyon Bilang 1042 na nilagdaan ni dating Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos, ay ating ipinagdiriwang na BUWAN NG WIKA. Kaya nararapat lamang na ating gunitain ang makulay na buhay ng isang Kapatid natin sa Masoneriya: si KAPATID NA LOPE CANSECO LOPEZ, anak nina Ladislao Santos at Victoria Canseco, taga San Mateo. Ipinanganak siya sa Pasig, dating sakop ng Rizal, noong ika-25 ng Setyembre 1879.

Si Ginoong Ladislao Lopez ay naakusahan ng mga Kastila bilang isang rebelde sa salang pangangalaga ng ilang kopya ng *Noli Me Tangere*, ang unang nobela ni Kapatid na Jose Rizal, at ng *Kalayaan*, ang pahayagan ng Katipunan. Kinaladkad siya papuntang kumbento ng Cavite at pinarusahan sa pamamagitan ng pagbubuhos ng tubig; pagkatapos doon ay tinali siya sa bangkuhan at walang habas na pinagpapalo.

Ang batang Lope ay nag-aral sa Escuela Normal Superior de Maestros at nagpatuloy sa Escuela de Derecho. Nakamit niya ang Kadalubhasaan sa Sining mula sa Colegio Filipino. Kinalaunan ay pinalitan niya ng letrang "K" ang "C" ng Canseco dahil, ayon sa kanya, *"Matuwid ang aking ginawang ito sapagkat may hilig ako sa mga letrang katutubo na talagang pam-Pilipino."* Kilala siya sa palayaw na "Mang Openg."

Noong 1896, ng nasa bingit ng kamatayan ang kanyang ina ay pinayuhan siyang hanapin si Simeona Salazar. Sabi ng ina: *"Kung buhay pa si Mona ay sa kanya ka pakasal."* Mula San Pablo, kasama ang babaeng kapatid, ay dali daling hinanap si Simeona, ang binibining taga-Pulong Mayaman, Paco, at sila ay nag-isang dibdib noong ika-10 ng Pebrero 1900 sa simbahang katoliko ng San Marcelino. Sila ay nabigyan ng limang supling.

Naging dalubhasa at nagkamit ng mga parangal sa dupluhan si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos. Ang dupluhan ay isang maikling uri ng pagtatalo na maihahambing sa *balagtasan*

Simula 1900 ay naglingkod siya bilang patnugot sa mga lathalaing tagalog kagaya ng *Ang Mithi* at *Lipang Kalabaw.* Nailathala niya ang kauna-unahang lingguhang babasahing *Sampagita*. Sa pagiging malikhain sa larangan ng pagsulat ng dula, tula, at nobela ay tinanghal siyang **"Paham ng Wika"** (Father of Pilipino Grammar).

Noong Setyembre 1903, kasama ang ilang manunulat ay nilathala ang *El Renacimiento* na naglabas ng mapanuring artikulo laban sa Amerikano noong 1906 sa ilalim ng patnugot Teodoro M. Kalaw na naging Mason noong 1914 at Gran Maestre ng 1928. Di nagtagal ay nilunsad bilang unang patnugot si Kapatid na Lope K.

Santos ng *Muling Pagsilang*. Pinasara ito na agad naming napalitan ng *El Renacimiento Filipino*.

Bagama't hindi ito ang unang nalimbag na kathang-isip na nobelang tagalog noong 1906, ang *Banaag at Sikat* ni Mang Openg ay nagsilbing "biblya" ng mga liping manggagawa na tumalakay sa sosyalismo at kapitalismo sapagkat ang pangunahing tauhang mahirap na si Delfin ay umibig at itinanan ang anak mayamang may-ari ng lupa na si Meni. Sumunod na nilathala niya mula 1907 hanggang pinasara ng 1909 ay ang *Lipang Kalabaw*, isang lingguhang babasahin na pulitika at pang-araw araw na usapin ang puntirya ay kalayaan aat may "caricature" na pamagat. Muli itong lumabas ng 1922 sa ibang pangalan na Bagong *Lipang Kalabaw*, subalit patuloy sa pag-atake mas lalo ng Kapatid at Gobernador heneral Leonard Wood na mortal na kaaway ni Kapatid at Senador Manuel L. Quezon. Dahil sa kasong libelo tungkol sa Philippine National Bank, pinasara ito. Sa huling pagkakataon, lumabas muli sa publiko ang babasahin, ngunit di nagtagal ng isang taon noong 1947.

Kasagsagan ng killusang manggagawa ng dekadang 1900 sa pamumuno ng mga Kapaid na sina Isabelo de los Reyes at Dr. Dominador Gomez ay nahikayat si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos na itatag ang Union del Trabajo del Filipinas. Layunin nitong paghiwalayin ang paggawa at pulitika upang pagbuklurin ang manggagawa at kapitalista. Nabistong ito ay pakana ni Gobernador William Howard Taft, naging Mason sa Kilwinning Lodge No. 365, at napalitan ng Asemblea Obrera noong 1913.

Naglingkod sa Lalawigan ng Rizal si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos bilang halal na Gobernador mula 1910 hanggang 1913. Nagkaroon din siya ng pagkakataon na maging Gobernador noong 1918 hanggang 1920 sa Lalawigan ng Nueva Vizcaya. Napayapa niya ang mga namumugot ulong mga di Kristyano sa pamamagitan ng diplomasya bilang paghahanda sa kanilang kakayahang manuno. Napili bilang Senador ng 1ka-12 Distrito sa ika-5 Legislatura sa ilalim ng Partido Nacionalista noong 1921. Kasama niya si Kapatid na Teofisto Guingona. Siya ang kumatha ng batas bilang paggunita taon taon sa pinuno ng himagsikan laban sa mga Kastila na si Kapatid na Andres "Sinukuan" Bonifacio tuwing kaarawan nito {ika-30 ng Nobyembre).

Taong 1922 at sumabay sa mga babasahin ang *Photo News* kung saan ay mayroong pahayag ito sa English, Esppanyol at Tagalog na di nagtagal ng isang taon. Tinawag ng patnugot si Kapatid na Severino Reyes upang tumulong at pinalitan ang pamagat na *Liwayway* kung saan inanyayahan si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos upang sumulat. Si Kapatid na Severino Reyes ay mas kilala bilang Lola Basyang na ang akala ng mambabasa ay isang matandang babae.

Kasabay ang pag-usbong ng mga illegal na Logia at mga Unyon ng Manggagawa gaya ng Legionarios del Trabajo, na tinatag ng isang Mason at kinasapian ng maraming Kapatid, na gamit gamit ang mga ritwal, ay nakabahala sa Grand Lodge. Noong 1920 ay isa si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos sa tatlo na namagitan para sa pag-ayos ng suliranin na natupad naman. Matapos sumanib ang Gran Logia Regional sa Gran Logia ng Pilipinas (GLP) noong 1917, itinatag niya ang Magat Lodge Bilang 68 sa Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, at nagsilbi siya bilang unang Marangal na Guro nito. Kasama niya si Kapatid at Gobernador Tomas Maddela.

Noong ika-13 ng Nobyembre 1937, ipinasa ng Unang Pambansang Asemblea ang panukalang Surian ng Wikang Pambansa (National Language Institute) upang pag-aralan at alamin ang magiging basehan ng

"Pambansang Wika,"at ang napili nga ay Tagalog na siyang naiproklama ni Kapatid na Manuel Luis Quezon, Pangulo ng Philippine Commonwealth, noong ika-31 ng Disyembre 1937. Si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos ay hinirang niyang maging Direktor nito noong 1941-1946.

Sa nais niyang maitalaga na ang Tagalog bilang Pambansang Wika ay nalathala niya ang *Balarila ng Wikang Pambansa*. Ito ay isang aklat ng mga guro upang maituro ng maayos ang tagalong. Nahahati ito sa apat na paksa: "Palatitikan," "Palabigkasan," "Palaugnayan," at "Palasurian," na nabigyan ng masaklaw na paglalahad. Ang "Palatitikan" nito ay ang ABAKADA na mayroong 20 titik. Dumaan ito sa mabusising pagpatibay; kabilang sa siyete si Kapatid at Senador Hadji Butu Rasul, ksapi ng Sinukuan Lodge No. 16, upang pahintulutan na maimbag noong 1939 ang mga aklat na pinagtibay ng pamahalaan noong Abril 1940. Ginamit muna ito ng mga mag-aaral sa ika-2 na antas ng mababang paaralan at sa ika-4 ng mataas na paaralan. Dahil ditto ay pinarangalansiyang **"Haligi ng Panitikang Filipino"** {Pillar of Philippine Literature). Sa hangad na mapabilis ang pag-usbong sa pagkilala ng Tagalog ay naglibot siya sa buong bansa, nagtatag ng samahang cultural, at naging pinuno sa iba't ibang departamento ng mga unibersidad o pamantasan.

Noong maoperahan si Kapatid na Lope K. Santos sa atay at batid niyang di siya magtagal ay nasambit niya:

> *Nararamdaman kong malapit na ... ang huling oras ko ... at ang aking ikinalulungkot ay papanaw ako nang hindi alam kung ano ang magiging wakas ng wikang Tagalog ... kung ito ang talagang magiging Wikang Pambansa.*

Nalagot ang kanyang hininga sa gulang na 83 noong Araw ng Paggawa (ika-1 ng Mayo) 1963, madaling araw ng 2:56 at sumama sa Kataastaasang Dakilang Guro ng Kalangitang Logia

Sa buwang Agosto, ika-tatlumpong araw nito ay ipinanganak si Gat Marcelo H. del Pilar, na kinikilalang Ama ng Masonerya sa Pilipinas. Sa ika-labing siyam na araw ng buwan na ito ay ipinanganak si MW Manuel Luis Quezon, ang kaunaunahang Pilipino ng naging Grand Master ng Grand Lodge natin at ang kinikilalang Ama ng Wikang Pambansa sa Pilipinas. At tuwing huling linggo ng Agosto, ginugunita natin ang sakripisyo ng mga bayaning Pilipino.

MD RIII-E Hosts Central Luzon Multi-District Convention



















PHOTOS TAKEN DURING LAUNCHING OF CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN THE CITY OF MALOLOS