

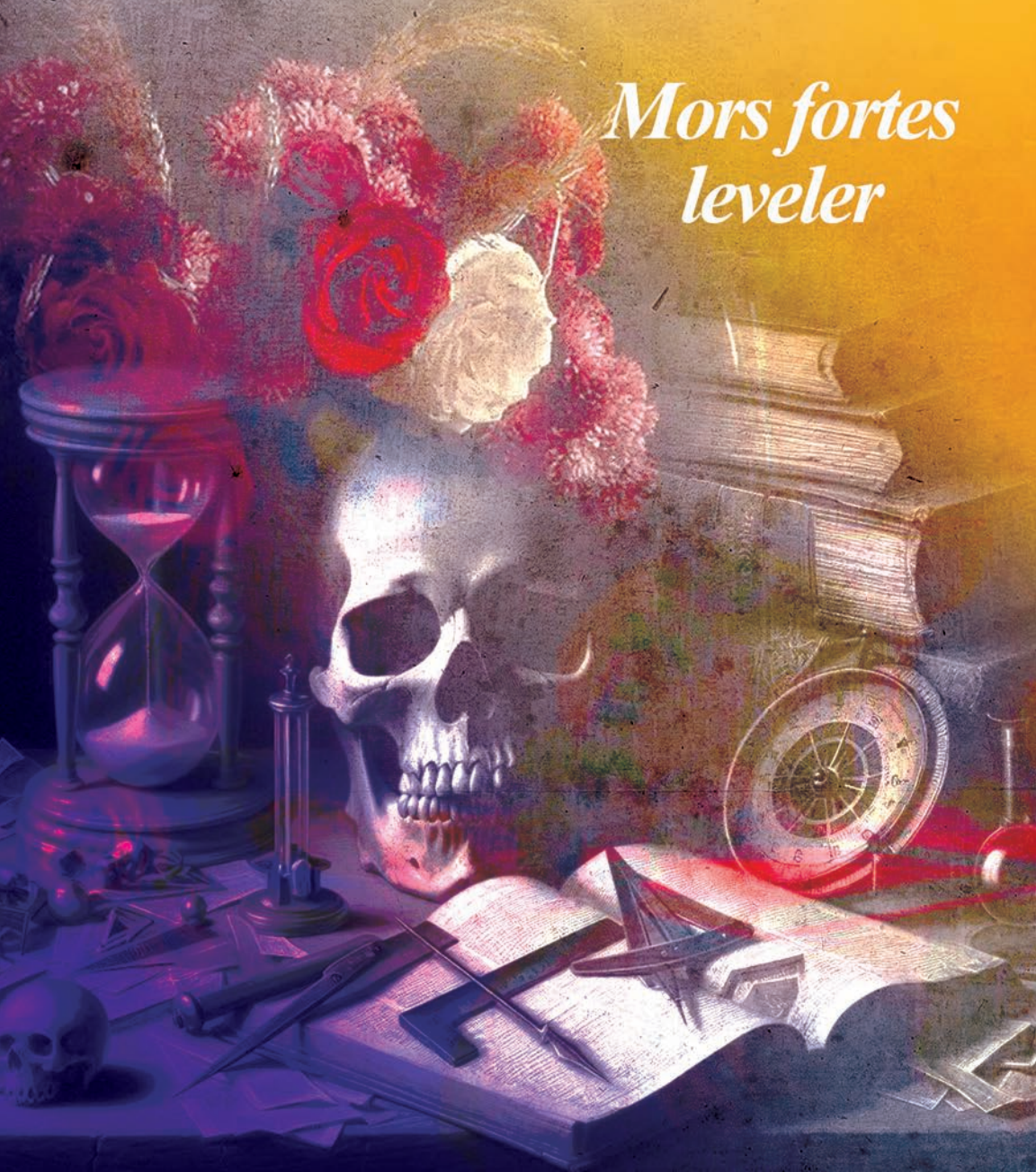


THE CABLE TOW

Volume 101, No. 3 - Memento Mori

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL
GRAND LODGE OF FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE PHILIPPINES

*Mors fortes
leveler*



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The Cable Tow

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About the Cover

The cover of The Cable Tow, Volume 101, Issue 3, invites readers into a contemplative space where symbolism meets existential reflection, embodying the theme: "Let There Be More Men in the Light, and Let There Be More Light Among Masons." At the heart of Freemasonry's ancient tradition, the compasses represent the moral limits we impose upon ourselves—boundaries that shape our integrity and guide our actions. Paired with the VSLs, the enduring symbols of divine truth, these emblems remind us that wisdom is grounded in earthly experience yet elevated by spiritual understanding. As Ecclesiastes 12 teaches, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," emphasizing the importance of nurturing our spiritual selves to walk in the light of truth.

The hourglass, silently ticking, signifies the inevitable passage of time, while the skull, a universal memento mori, serves as a stark reminder that death is the ultimate equalizer. This notion resonates with the Latin inscription "Mors Fortes Leveler"—Death, the mighty leveler. In the words of Ecclesiastes, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." No matter one's station in the lodge or in life, death remains the great leveling force, dissolving distinctions of wealth, power, and status. Yet, amidst the solemnity of these symbols, the roses stand for beauty, love, brotherhood, and the enduring power of the virtues we cultivate in life and our lodges, which, unlike time, do not perish.



EDITOR'S PAGE

by VW Gene Illenberger, GSc (379)

Death the mighty leveler

As Masons, we are constantly reminded of our mortality—not as a macabre preoccupation, but as a profound reflection on the fleeting nature of life. The Latin phrase *Memento Mori*, meaning "remember that you must die," serves as a guiding principle, urging us to live lives of integrity, honor, and virtue. In line with the Grand Master's theme, "Let There Be More Men in the Light, and Let There Be More Light Among Masons," we are called to embrace the light of knowledge and understanding, allowing it to illuminate our paths as we navigate the complexities of existence.

VW Eulogio Sabban, in his article "The Lodge of Remembrance," explores a Masonic tradition that honors our departed brethren. What began as the Lodge of Sorrow has evolved into an annual commemoration celebrated near All Saints and All Souls Days in the Philippines. This ritual recalls the virtues of fallen brethren, transforming sorrow into a celebration of lives lived in brotherly love and service. Such commemorations reflect the Masonic view that death is not an end to be feared but a reminder to live each day with purpose, knowing that our actions will echo beyond the grave.

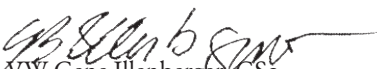
Bro. Mark Lawrence V. Banzon's article "The Significance of the Death of Hiram Abiff" offers an allegory of how death serves as a testament to a life lived with integrity. Hiram Abiff, the master architect of King Solo-



mon's Temple, exemplifies the Masonic ideal of moral steadfastness. His refusal to betray his secrets, even when faced with death, symbolizes the triumph of virtue over adversity.

Death, as the mighty leveler, spares no one. It is the final reckoning, the moment when the scales are balanced and the true value of our lives is revealed. But for those who have lived nobly, death is not something to be feared. Rather, it is the ultimate affirmation of a life well-lived, a return to the Grand Architect of the Universe, having fulfilled our obligations to ourselves, our brothers, and humanity.

In this issue of *The Cable Tow*, other equally intriguing articles await your attention, exploring various aspects of Freemasonry's rich traditions and offering unique perspectives on how we can live lives that honor the Craft's teachings. Let the lessons of *Memento Mori* guide you, reminding you that how we live and how we die are intertwined. Our time is fleeting, but the influence we leave behind can endure forever—if we choose to live with honor, selflessness, and integrity. Thus, when we drop our working tools, we may hear those precious words: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."


VW Gene Illenberger, GSc
Editor-In-Chief



Masonic District NCR-A Successfully Holds Its Biggest Balik-Eskwela Project

On September 21, 2024, Masonic District NCR-A held its largest Balik-Eskwela project at Bangkal Resettlement Elementary School in Abucay, Bataan, benefiting 200 students, mostly from the Aeta community. The project showcased the strong collaboration between Masonic Lodges and local officials, highlighting unity and service.

Project Chairperson Bro. Gerald C. Baluyot and Co-Chair Bro. Nathaniel Ramos led the initiative with support from local leaders like Abucay Mayor Robin C. Tagle and Bataan Vice Governor Ma. Cristina M. Garcia. District Deputy Grand Master VW Julius J. Barles and officers from lodges such as Manila Lodge No. 1, Corregidor Lodge No. 3, Cosmos Lodge No. 8, Palawan Masonic Lodge No. 99, Mencius Lodge 93, Jacques DeMolay Memorial Lodge No. 305, Macario Ramos Masonic Lodge No. 355, Trinity Masonic Lodge No. 367, South Palawan Masonic Lodge No. 464 and MW Jolly Bugarin Ma-

sonic Lodge No. 468 spearheaded the event.

Freemasons distributed 200 school bags, 600 T-shirts, 200 pairs of slippers, dental kits, and school supplies. They also donated A4 bond paper, a laptop, a desktop computer, and two Epson printers. Teaching and non-teaching staff received Php 2,000 in cash gifts, and students enjoyed 200 Jollibee lunch packs.

Afterward, Mayor Tagle hosted a luncheon, fostering camaraderie, followed by a tour of the Provincial Capitol grounds led by Vice Governor Garcia. VW Barles presented her with a token of appreciation and a Resolution of Thanks.

The day concluded with the District's monthly meeting and a dinner fellowship. Despite the looming Typhoon Igme, over 60 Freemasons participated, reinforcing the values of brotherhood, charity, and truth.

VW JOSELITO D. BULAWIN, HA, PDDGM (305)



Manuel A. Roxas Memorial Lodge No. 152 Celebrates Successful Visit to Han Lodge No. 8

Taipei, Taiwan — August 10, 2024

Members of Manuel A. Roxas Memorial Lodge No. 152, under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, visited Han Lodge No. 8 of the Grand Lodge of China from August 9 to 12, 2024. The highlight was the public installation of Han Lodge's officers for the 2024-2025 Masonic year.

The installation ceremony on August 10 brought together Masons and dignitaries from the region. Conducted with precision, the event showcased the values of brotherhood and leadership. Newly installed officers received gifts and congratulations from brethren worldwide, emphasizing the fraternity's global connections.

Led by Worshipful Master Homer R. Cruz, the delegation experienced exceptional hospitality, fostering camaraderie and mutual respect.

Beyond formal ceremonies, the delegation explored Taiwan's scenic beauty, including a guided tour of Shifen Waterfalls, often called the "Niagara Falls of Taiwan." This cultural exchange allowed the visiting Masons to immerse themselves in Taiwan's rich history and landscapes.

The visit strengthened fraternal ties and promoted cultural understanding between the two lodges. Members of Manuel A. Roxas Memorial Lodge No. 152 returned to the Philippines with fond memories and a renewed sense of unity, reaffirming the enduring global brotherhood of Freemasonry and its shared values of charity and respect.

WB JIMBOWEE DY (152)
AND VW MIGUEL TIALONG CHEN (152)

Obelisk Unveiling of Pacific Masonic Lodge No. 501

The obelisk, in Freemasonry, is a potent symbol rooted in Ancient Egyptian tradition, representing Enlightenment, Endurance, and Balance. For the newly constituted Pacific Masonic Lodge No. 501, located in Infanta, Quezon, the erection of an obelisk became a tangible testament to these values. This initiative began under the guidance of Grand Master MW Ariel T. Cayan, who formed the GLP Obelisk Committee to oversee the construction of such landmarks across Masonic districts. Led by VW Juel B. Roldan, the brethren of Pacific Lodge 501 sought to be the first to erect an obelisk during the Grand Master's term. With the assistance of a generous friend, Jose Ariel Lipana Evangelista, who offered a lot along the Marilaque Highway, the site for the obelisk was secured. After the official design by Bro. Jon Sta. Maria was approved by the GLP Obelisk Committee, chaired by VW Irvin Estrada, the project commenced. VW Roldan worked closely with local authorities to secure permits, while VW Walfredo A. Sumilang II led the construction efforts.

Despite funding challenges, the project moved forward with the support of brethren from other lodges and the unwavering enthusiasm of the Pacific 501 members. After three months, on the rainy August 27, 2024, the obelisk was unveiled, with Grand Master Ariel T. Cayan as the guest of honor. This monolithic pillar now stands as a symbol of the presence of Freemasonry in Infanta, a beacon of Strength, the Philippines. The obelisk serves as a model for future structures and is a testament to the dedication and perseverance of its brethren.

VW JUEL B. ROLDAN

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Annual Lodge of Remembrance at the Rizal Masonic Temple



On October 12, 2024, Ang Tipolo Masonic Lodge No. 334 hosted the annual Lodge of Remembrance at the Rizal Masonic Temple. This solemn event, a tradition of Masonic District Region IV Rizal, honored the district's departed brethren. Presided over by Acting Worshipful Master Bro. Romualdo C. Losañez, it brought together members from several lodges, including Bernardo Carpio, Montalban, Pintong Silangan, Morong, WB Gil Fernando Memorial, and Pilgrimage Masonic Lodges.

District Deputy Grand Master Ricky Tan Khoo led the ceremony, representing Grand Master MW Ariel T. Cayanan of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. The event emphasized the unity of the fraternity in upholding brotherhood, integrity, and charity while honoring those who had passed.

Guest of honor VW Leocadio SC Santiago delivered a heartfelt speech, pay-

ing tribute to the departed brothers. Miss Jermain Sitjar, daughter of the late Brother James Sitjar, represented the widows and orphans, reminding everyone of the fraternity's responsibility to the families of deceased brethren.

A vigil at the catafalque was conducted by VW Renato H. Driz, VW Paul C. Duldulao, Bro. Romluck P. Flores, and Bro. Ivan Christopher M. Loyola, symbolizing the presence of the departed. Bro. William T. Mendoza's solemn music as Musical Director enhanced the reflective atmosphere. VW Don O. Dayandayan, Director of Works, ensured the ceremony proceeded with precision and respect.

The lighting and extinguishing of candles symbolized the eternal flame of brotherhood and the transition to eternity. The event concluded with a renewed commitment to uphold Masonic principles, leaving a lasting impression of fraternity and remembrance. **VW ROMY JOY L. LASISTE, PDGL**



Di Nalupig 438 visits Graciano Lopez Jaena 194

In late September, members of Di-Nalupig Masonic Lodge No. 438 embarked on a fraternal pilgrimage to their brethren at Graciano Lopez Jaena Masonic Lodge No. 194. The rendezvous, stretching from September 27 to 28, 2024, culminated in an official visitation during the stated meeting on the afternoon of the 28th, at 3 p.m., inside the historic Iloilo Masonic Temple.

The visiting brethren were met with a reception fitting the occasion—warm handshakes, ceremonial exchanges, and that peculiar blend of reverence and camaraderie unique to Masonic

fellowship. Following the stated meeting, the event naturally eased into a more relaxed fellowship, held at the Ocean City Restaurant. There, the formality of the temple gave way to a lively scene of clinking glasses and spirited conversation, as bonds were strengthened and stories swapped.

More than a mere visit, the occasion served as a testament to the enduring unity between the two lodges re-affirming their shared values—brotherhood, integrity, and a commitment to the timeless principles of Freemasonry.

BRO. KIM JAEN (194) & VW JET BERAY (194)



Crescent Masonic Lodge No. 419 Visits Singapore Lodge

In what appears to be a season of Lodge visitations in MDR7 that saw Mactan Masonic Lodge No. 30 and Datu Lapu-lapu Masonic Lodge No. 347 recently visit Siargao Masonic Lodge No. 494 on different dates, another Lodge went further and farther.

Crescent Masonic Lodge No. 419 led by its Worshipful Master Roldan Pepito and by MDR7 DDGM Jeff Edward Pintac led more than a dozen Masons and several family members in paying a visit to The Lodge Singapore No. 7178 EC. The latter Lodge is under the United Grand Lodge of England.

The Masons' six-day visit on this island nation was highlighted by their attending the host Lodge's stated meeting on August 5 where they witnessed the conferral of the first degree to Sachin Yogarajah, the son of the Lodge's Worshipful Master Chandrayogan Yogarajah.

The host Lodge gave Crescent Lodge brethren and family members its warm hospitality by facilitating the tour of the island's various attractions and hosting dinners and fellowships.

BRO. RUFINO R. Z. SAN JUAN IV (347)



News bits from MDRXI Davao Region

Freemasonry thrives on fellowship. Hundred Islands Masonic Lodge No. 201 visited Podomo Masonic Lodge No. 294 during its Stated Meeting on August 3, 2024, at the Davao Masonic Center. On the same day, Maydayaw Masonic Lodge No. 403, Rio Grande Masonic Lodge No. 192, and Mati Aurora Masonic Lodge No. 190 attended the meeting of Maribulan Masonic Lodge No. 304 in Alabel, Sarangani Province. Sarangani Masonic Lodge No. 50 joined Kamayo Masonic Lodge No. 255 on August 10 in Bislig City. Beacon Masonic Lodge No. 213 visited Davao de Oro Masonic Lodge No. 443 on August 17, while Cagayan de Oro Masonic Lodge No. 298 enjoyed fellowship with Datu Bago Masonic Lodge No. 197.

Masonic District RXI–Davao del Sur & Davao City launched “The Masonic Hub” app to foster connections and streamline registra-

tion for the 26th Southern Mindanao Masonic Multi-District Convention on November 9, 2024.

Shangri-la Court No. 9, Order of the Amaranth, held the “Balik Eskwela” Charity Project on August 5, providing school supplies to 200 students. Teodora Alonso Chapter No. 4 and Rosal Chapter No. 27 welcomed WGM Remedios Azarcon of the Order of the Eastern Star in Mati City on August 15. Toril Masonic Lodge No. 208 conducted an outreach program on August 12, and MDRXI Davao del Sur & Davao City held a community service outreach at New Carmen Elementary School on July 26.

The District also concluded a Sportsfest on July 28, while Shangri-la Court No. 9 installed a “fish-shaped” recycling facility at the Davao Masonic Center. **VW MARK JOHN B. PRUDENCIO**



BUKIDNON SOUTH HOLDS RITES OLYMPICS: ZM Lodge 212 is Champion

MD RX-Bukidnon South recently held its first-ever proficiency contest on lodge ceremonies and rituals, marking a milestone in the Mindanao Masonic jurisdiction. Spearheaded by District Deputy Grand Master VW Ariel Leonardo L. Gregorios, the event, dubbed the 'District Ritual Olympics,' was held on October 5, 2024, at the Credo Rubio Masonic Temple, Lake Pinamaloy Masonic Lodge No. 230 in Don Carlos, Bukidnon.

Four lodges participated: Zosimo Montemayor Masonic Lodge No. 212, Lake Pinamaloy Lodge 230, Laureano S. Ledres Sr. 271, and Tani U. Telow Lodge No. 473. Zosimo Montemayor Lodge 212 emerged as champion, with Lake Pinamaloy 230 as 1st runner-up, Tani U. Telow 473 as 2nd runner-up, and Laureano S. Ledres Sr. 271 as 3rd runner-up. WM Ariel G. Tan of Lake Pinamaloy 230 was recognized as Best

Conferral Master, while Bro. Jim Michael Telow of Tani U. Telow 473 was awarded Best Conferral Senior Deacon.

The event was judged by VW Alphon R. Lagamon, JGL, VW Erwin Pepino, PDDGM, and VW Kristoffer Eric "Taptap" Abellanos, PDGL. Judging criteria included Proficiency (50%), Execution (30%), and Diction and Delivery (20%).

The contest featured four degree conferrals and ceremonies: EAM Initiation, FCM Passing, MM Raising, and the Tragedy. Each lodge selected its best cast to perform, with the order of performances determined by a draw.

This ritual contest was a first for Blue Lodges in the district, with a previous similar event held in 2015, which focused solely on lodge Opening and Closing. **VW FERDINAND R. ROQUE, PDDGM**



The Youngest National Champion in DeMolay Ritual Competition

At just 11 years old, Ioannes Ray I. Padua, known as Ray, became the youngest National Champion in the Ritual Competition during the 2024 National Conclave in Tagaytay City. His journey began at age 9, guided by his father, VW Raymond Val Padua, PDGL, of Palawan Lodge No. 99, who introduced him to the world of DeMolay and its values. Ray's passion for DeMolay grew as he learned more about its principles and brotherhood. In October 2023, with his father's support, Ray petitioned for membership in Jose Abad Santos Chapter No. 1. After receiving a special dispensation, he began his petitioning process, and on December 3, 2023, he was initiated into the brotherhood.

Ray's dedication shone when he volunteered to perform the 7th Preceptor at the Central Luzon Conclave in January 2024. His powerful delivery earned him the title of Champion and a spot in the national competition.

At the National Conclave, Ray's exceptional performance captivated the audience, securing him the title of Champion in the 7th Preceptor. For Ray and his family, this achievement symbolizes the power of dedication, mentorship, and limitless potential. **FATZ BUENAFE, IKCCH, CHEV. (SCOD)**



MW Bernie Khristianne S. Albano Installed as Grand Master of NSW & ACT

At the Quarterly Communication on March 13, 2024, RW Bernie Khristianne S. Albano, Deputy Grand Master (DGM), was elected as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (UGLNSW & ACT). Following his election, RW Albano expressed his gratitude, saying, "I am truly humbled by the result and I will serve as Grand Master for all brethren."

MW Albano's Masonic journey began in 1997 at Dalisay Lodge No. 14 under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, where he became Worshipful Master in 2007 and District Grand Lecturer in 2010. After moving to Australia, he became the Foundation Worshipful Master of Elysian Lodge No. 418 and advanced to Grand Director of Ceremonies in 2019. He also served as Assistant Grand Master in 2021 and Deputy Grand Master in 2022.

His installation on September

28, 2024, highlighted his dedication to Freemasonry. MW Bro. Les Hicks, the outgoing Grand Master, praised MW Bro. Albano's progress and presented him with his Past Deputy Grand Master jewel.

MW Ariel T. Cayan, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, attended the installation with a distinguished delegation of over 60 brethren. The delegation included:

1. MW Ariel T. Cayan, Grand Master
2. Sis. Pamela S. Cayan, wife of MW Ariel T. Cayan
3. MW Agapito S. Suan, Jr., PGM
4. RW Robert Joseph S. Moran, Senior Grand Warden
5. VW Diosdado R. Melegrito, Chief of Staff of the Grand Master
6. VW Samuel Madduma, DDGM/ Aide-de-Camp of the Grand Master
7. VW Ladeslao S. Darunday, JGL
8. VW Julius J. Barles, DDGM
9. VW David Oliver C. Kong, DDGM
10. VW Edwin C. Guillermo, DDGM

11. VW Joseph Kenneth G. Lee, DGL
12. VW Michael Feliciano, DGL
13. VW Hermeno A. Palamine, PGAud
14. VW Michael J. Villacruz, PG Pur
15. VW Joseph F. Dy, PDDGM
16. VW Gerald A. Quebral, PDDGM
17. VW Douglas Tan, PDDGM
18. VW Antonio B. Feliciano, PDGL
19. Bro. Jonathan B. Bayaua
20. Bro. Abbey Charles F. Gawaran
21. Bro. Yuseff L. Lim
22. Bro. Christopher A. Samson
23. Bro. Lesmond Raymond G. Seguin
24. VW Erick P. Roldan, PDDGM
25. VW Emmanuel Ragragio, PDDGM
26. Bro. Rey Eduard Q. Umel
27. Bro. Joel R. Morfe
28. VW Wharton Chan, PDDGM
29. WBro Edison Lim
30. Bro. Benson Tiu
31. Bro. Robbi Renzo Chua
32. Bro. John Michael Reyes
33. Bro. Andres Llagas
34. WB Marlon Doria
35. Bro. Jefferson Valencia
36. VR Gerard Ceballos
37. Bro. Ceyhun Hassan Samur
38. Bro. Kim Richard Gomez
39. Bro. Richard Buenzon Jazul
40. WB Marlon M. Calonge
41. Bro. Lester B. Francisco
42. VW Richard A. Peralta, DGL
43. VW Edgardo P. Laiz, DGL
44. Bro. Kissinger Reyes
45. Bro. Marcial Salamat
46. VW Eleuterio S. Logronio, PDDGM
47. WB Jose Dindo Marie T. Herrera
48. VW Alex R. Espinosa, PDGL
49. VW Michael Ajoc, DDGM
50. VW Romelo M. Vergara, PDGL
51. VW Arnold Roldan, PDDGM
52. VW Oliver Ombos, PDGL
53. WB Carl Ian Angeles, WM

54. WB Jonas James Lim, WI
55. WB Glenmar Dadan, WI
56. Bro. Hipolito Panoy
57. Bro. Benjamin Napigkit
58. Bro. Vicente Salaveria
59. Bro. Conrod Capitania
60. JW Bro. Malvin Malanom
61. VW Paul Santos Estrella, PDDGM
62. VW Ericson Aniban, PDDGM
63. VW Erick De Guzman, PDGL
64. VW Dave Arreglado, PDDGM
65. VW Niño A. Nemeño, PDGL
66. VW Julian Yap Jr., PDGL
67. Bro. Joseph Baluyos Jr.
68. WM Alexander Bornasal
69. Bro. Matthew Yu
70. VW Marianito Frivaldo, PDDGM
71. VW Lamech Peralta, PDGL
72. Bro. Christian Ferreras
73. VW Ronaldo Garcia, PDGL

Their presence reaffirmed the strong bonds between the Grand Lodges of the Philippines and Australia.

VW ERICK P. ROLDAN, PDDGM (33)







THE LODGE OF REMEMBRANCE

By VW Eulogio A. M. Sabban, PDGL (4)

**“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us, What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”
~ Albert Pike**

Since time immemorial, peoples of different cultures and religion have manifested their respect for their dear departed loved ones in commemorative rituals. Over time, private ceremonies of grief have evolved into public or common rituals as a manifestation of communal celebration, marking the passing of grief from mourning to celebration. It is customary that the commemoration of the life and death of a deceased family member or colleague is observed during special dates such as birth or death anniversaries. In the Philippine setting, the season of remembering is commemorated each year on All Souls and All Saints Days, which fall on November 1 and 2, respectively.

Masons observe the same traditions albeit differently, being an ancient fraternal order with a system of rituals veiled in symbolism. Once a year, we remember to renew our mystic ties with our departed brethren by celebrating the memory of their days spent in the lodge, laboring together in furtherance of the craft, and enjoying their company during masonic gatherings and fellowship.

In the days of old, masons remembered those who dropped their working tools through a ceremony called the Lodge of Sorrow. Consistent with our masonic obligation to aid and assist a worthy brother mason, his widow and orphans, the lodge invited the widows and orphans of the departed brethren to the ceremony, to honor the memory of their departed loved ones. In our jurisdiction, the Grand Lodge, thru Edict No. 162 (Aportadera, 1993), proclaimed the observance of an “Annual Widows and Orphans Day” every last Sunday of October.

In later years, both the Lodge of Sorrow and the “Widows and Orphans Day” came to be customarily known as the Lodge of Remembrance, and was to be

celebrated in all masonic districts in the jurisdiction. The date of commemoration varies but is always in close proximity to the last Sunday of October or near All Souls and All Saints Days. This tradition is performed in a uniform ritual according to the prescribed program and accompanied by solemn music. As before, the names of departed brethren are recalled during the ceremony, re-establishing the link between those who have gone to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns and those who continue laboring in the quarries. The widows and orphans are also invited to the ceremony, to show that the brethren are still bound to them by obligation to aid and assist.

In recent memory, we witnessed one of the most exemplary, solemn, and celebratory performance of the ritual during the pandemic year 2020. The corona virus felled many of our brethren during the pandemic. Officially listed were 175 brethren who dropped their working tools in the year 2020. This despite the suspension of physical lodge meetings in the jurisdiction during the pandemic years in order to comply with national health protocols. Nevertheless, then GM Agapito Suan approved the conduct of a Lodge of Remembrance at the J. Abad Santos Hall on 31 October 2020, led by Jose Rizal Lodge No. 22 (under WM Stephen Sia) of MD NCR-C. Due to the restrictive health protocols, the physical attendance of participants, widows and orphans, was limited. The Grand

Chaplain VW Joel Porlares delivered the eulogy, while Sis. Ma. Jennelyn Baylon gave the response on behalf of the Widows and Orphans. The ritual was broadcast live over Facebook. Several other video messages were given by the Widows and Orphans. At the end of the rite, then MW Suan delivered his closing address to the Lodge of Remembrance. The ceremony received more than 20,000 views by 31 December 2020.

The Lodge of Remembrance through the years has morphed from a sorrowful ritual to a commemoration of the masonic virtues of fallen brethren. It is a manifestation not only of mourning but of rejoicing as well. Rejoicing in a manner that exalts the virtues of a departed brother who has travelled ahead to the celestial abode, remembering of his time spent in the lodge as a worthy brother mason in the company of the brethren. The tradition is a testament to the virtues of Brotherly Love and Relief. It is also a reminder to us all of the duality of our sojourn. It reminds us to embody the tenets of our Order and act with virtue towards our fellow men. On the other hand, it reminds us as well of the inevitability of death, the mighty leveler of human greatness.

References:

- *Remembering...* by Sis. Josephine Carballo-Tejada, TCT v.76, No. 4, p.55
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The Significance of the Death of Hiram Abiff

by Bro. Mark Lawrence V. Banzon (4)

As we all learned in our third degree conferrals, it fell on the shoulders of King Solomon the duty to build the Temple - one that was to be erected to God and dedicated to his Holy Name. It was during this time when Hiram, King of Tyre, agreed to aid and assist King Solomon. The Holy Bible describes a specific agreement between the two kings to con-

struct monumental projects in Jerusalem that included King Solomon's Temple. The narrative detailed that King Hiram provided skilled laborers, artisans, and vast quantities of prized cedar and cypress wood from the forests of Lebanon. In return, King Solomon offered Tyre essential resources like wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine.

King Solomon likewise wanted King Hiram to furnish him a man well-skilled in the arts and sciences. The latter then brought out of Tyre a man known as Hiram Abiff, a widow's son of the tribe of Nephtali. The construction of the Temple began in the fourth year of the reign of Solomon, under

the auspices of three Grand Masters, namely: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram. King of Tyre: and Hiram Abiff, the widow's son - with the latter serving as the chief architect and master of works.

Tragedy fell upon Hiram Abiff when three ruffians, namely, Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum, tried to extort from him the secrets of a Master Mason, lest his life will be taken. At high twelve, while Hiram Abiff was going about his customary inspection of the Temple to view the work, as well as his ensuing visit of the Sanctum Sanctorum, the three ruffians each thrice demanded from him the said secrets. With the ruffians failing to obtain such, Hiram Abiff, on each of his third refusals, was smote across the throat with a Twenty-Four-Inch Gauge by Jubela, then was smote on the right breast with the angle of a Square by Jubelo, and finally, was smote upon the head with a Setting Maul by Jubelum - the last act of violence resulting in his death.

The three ruffians first buried the body of Hiram Abiff in the rubbish of the Temple. At low twelve, they then conveyed the body from the Temple and buried it at the brow of a hill near Mount Moriah, and planted an acacia at the head of the grave. Failing to gain passage for their escape to Ethiopia, they hid inside a cave near the place where they buried the body. The three ruffians were later found when the fellowcrafts heard their exclama-

tions from the clefts of adjacent rocks. When brought before King Solomon, they pleaded guilty, were taken out of the city, and there severally executed in accordance with the imprecations which had fallen from their own mouths.

The body of Hiram Abiff was later found with only the jewel of his office upon him. With his death, the Master's word was deemed lost. And this was because the three Grand Masters entered into a solemn pledge not to give the secrets of a Master Mason until the Temple has been completed, and only when all three were present and in agreement.

Kings Solomon and Hiram of Tyre went to fetch Hiram Abiff's body in order to give him a more decent interment. They tried giving the grand hailing sign and spoke the words accompanying it, but failed twice to raise the body. On the third try, the body was raised through the strong grip of a lion's paw, and upon the five points of fellowship - and the word first uttered or spoken became the substitute for the lost Master's word, until the future ages may discover the right one.

Indeed, the story and eventual tragedy of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff serves as an allegory upon which our rituals, symbolisms and traditions are based. The triumvirate of the Three Grand Masters in Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abiff alludes to

the necessity of knowledge, resourcefulness, and craftsmanship in order to achieve anything great or worthy of exaltation. We are taught that a Lodge is metaphorically supported by three great pillars - denominated as Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty - for there should be Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings. These pillars are represented in the Lodge by the Worshipful Master, the Senior and Junior Wardens.

The manner in which the three ruffians were executed allude to the penalties of our obligations, i.e., that if we are to violate them, we are likewise guilty of jealousy, greed, and selfishness. In this regard, we are reminded that we are all initiated entirely destitute - as we are taught that should we ever meet a friend, particularly a worthy brother Mason, in as destitute a condition as that in which we stood, it is our indispensable duty to relieve him, so far as we can do so, without serious injury to ourselves. As part of our ritual, we were taught to divest ourselves of earthly belongings as we seek admission into a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. In all our degree conferrals, we were advised to entrust our fate to our brothers and constantly told to await a time with patience. Our perambulations have taught us the value of unity, charity, and humility - all of which are foundational to Freemasonry.

As to the symbolism by which Hi-

ram Abiff was struck by the Ruffians, Bro. Patrick Cholka has an interesting interpretation: "The first action strikes at the throat and our freedom of speech: or our freedom to communicate, our opinions and ideas without fear of persecution or censorship. The second strikes at the heart and our freedom of conscience: our freedom of religious choice and morality, the source of that Divine Light that guides us. The third strikes at the head and our freedom of thought: our freedom to hold a thought or viewpoint independent of other's viewpoints." He added: "As our ritual teaches us, the ruffians with their actions prevented Hiram from completing his work on Solomon's temple, so too would the loss of our freedom of speech, conscience and thought cause our work on our spiritual temple to come to an untimely end." Bro. Patrick Cholka thus equated these acts to the destruction of liberties.

As for me, I humbly beg to differ. It is said that Freemasonry makes good men better. Hiram Abiff was central to the third degree of Freemasonry because he represents the best in all of us. King Solomon proclaimed the word lost, because when Hiram Abiff refused to give it despite being assaulted by the ruffians in the Temple, he chose rather to lay down his life than forfeit his integrity. The three ruffians were the perfect symbols of temptations, pressures and desires. His liberties were not destroyed, but rather, he

wisely chose not to be tempted nor be forced to think, believe and say in a manner that was contradictory to what he stood for. He persevered in the face of adversities. Hiram Abiff is thus worthy of emulation due to his truly exalted and exemplary character, his unfeigned piety to God, and his inflexible fidelity to the trust reposed in him.

Hiram Abiff represents enlightenment in the face, and certainty, of death. During his earthly life, he subdued his own passions by performing noble deeds, speaking appropriate words, remaining steadfast in his convictions, and thinking proper thoughts. When his weary feet came to the end of their toilsome journey, he undoubtedly entered into the joy of the Lord.

His death represents the end of one's carnal nature, i.e., that which is material, primal, and imperfect. His raising alludes to the elevation of man to enlightenment. All men die and that is an inescapable truth. But as we go on our daily grind, while never losing sight of the use of the Compasses (by which we are taught to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds toward all mankind, particularly to our brethren in Freemasonry), we become better prepared to welcome death, not as a grim tyrant, but as a kind messenger sent to translate us from this imperfect world to that all perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme

Grand Master of the Universe forever presides.

Having said these, by no means do I espouse that these observations are absolute. It is still my submission that each Mason may find his own interpretation of the significance of the tragic story of Hiram Abiff, and how it affects his perception of the craft.

The Worshipful Master's Path

by VW Jess Mateo (12)

In the heart of the lodge, where wisdom resides
The Worshipful Master, with honor, abides.
He stands at the helm, with a vision so clear
Yet faces the challenges, year after year.
With the gavel in hand, he calls to the floor
Maintaining decorum, traditions, and more.
He leads with a heart, both steady and grand
Balancing power with a gentle command.
To foster engagement, he strives every day
Encouraging brethren to join and to stay.
In the face of discord, he must mediate
Bringing harmony back, before it's too late.
The coffer he guards with a vigilant eye
Ensuring the lodge's finances stay high.
With budgets and ledgers, he carefully treads
Avoiding the pitfalls, when malpractice spreads.
Education he champions, with lectures and lore
Guiding the brethren to learn and explore.
Mentoring new members, with patience and grace
He helps them find their own Masonic place.
Representing the lodge in the wider domain
He balances duties, both local and main.
Adapting to changes, both modern and old
He preserves the traditions, the values of gold.
Yet through all the trials, he stands ever strong
With the brethren beside him,
he cannot go wrong.
For the Worshipful Master,
despite challenges vast
Leads with wisdom and love,
ensuring the lodge will last.

PHILIPPINE SCOUTING MOVEMENT AND FREEMASONRY

Let us define Scouting: Scouting, also known as the Scout Movement, is a worldwide youth movement with the stated aim of supporting young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development, so that they may play constructive roles in society . Since its foundation the scouting movement had made Community Leaders, Political Figures, Businessman, Officials in Uniformed Institutions and Civil Service.



This said movement has certain sets of standards that need to be memorized by its members. In addition, Scouting has three important promises: Duty to God, to Country, and to others, promoting good citizenship among its members. The Scouting movement has been a part of my life since I was 10 years old, reminding me of my younger years where duty to others is indeed a cheerful service.

Now that I am part of Freemasonry, I can't help but look at how the Craft influences the most popular youth organization in the world. As I peruse the Scouting for Boys manual and see hints, it is so obvious the influence of the Craft.

1. Scouting welcomes all people of all faiths - Evident influence that we, as people, must have high tolerance and respect for people of different faiths.

2. Non-Political Organization - As we promote the love of country, we shed off our political colors. In doing our activities with harmony, we set aside political differences.

3. Three promises - Duty to God, to Country, and to others; these promises are a creed in making good boys/girls better persons and good citizens and leaders of our future.

4. Patrol Method - From the Patrol Leader to the Cheerleader, leaders are

assigned depending on the activities the Patrol will accomplish.

5. Patrol Meeting - If you look at the structure of the Patrol meeting, there is a part of it that is so important; every meeting must have a "lecture" part.

6. Buddy System - In every Scouting activity we do, we must be with our buddy, who will help us hand to hand, shoulder to shoulder, and foot to foot.

7. The Scout Oath and Law - This Oath and law are the guide for the scouts on how they will act and interact with everyone, especially other Scouts.

8. The Scout Sign, Handshake, and Motto - These three are identifications of a Scout.

9. The Scouts Uniform - This is what we see as the clothing of a Scout and indicates the branch of Scouting he/she belongs to.

10. Ranks - These are patches, medals, and certificates that prove a Scout's proficiency in Scoutcraft and other outdoor endeavors.

Brethren, what say you about these 10 items? Again, does it sound familiar?

With this kind of structure, we might think that Lord Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell is a Freemason, but sadly he is not. Now we ponder

why he adopted that format in the foundation of the Boy Scouts. The evident indirect influence we can point to is his membership in the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, where he was dubbed a Knight of Grace. That being said, the philosophies of the Order, similar to the Craft, have been integrated into the Scouting movement. Another account states that Baden-Powell's friend, Rudyard Kipling, a Freemason, heavily influenced the formation of Cub Scouting through the *Jungle Book*.

With these similarities between Scouting and Freemasonry, let me now guide you through some important historical facts. Scouting, founded in England, was established and led by well-known names, historical figures, and members of the Craft.

Founding

Lord Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell founded Scouting in 1908. Before its foundation, Baden-Powell was a British Army Officer and later became a national hero for his defense in Mafeking. In 1907, Baden-Powell conducted the First Experimental Camp on Brownsea Island, United Kingdom. The experimental camp served as a test of his ideas and the book he wrote, "Scouting for Boys." The camp included activities in nature observation, backwoods engineering, lifesaving, chivalry, and patriotism. These timeless values and char-

acteristics of Scouting have remained relevant to this day.

Scout Spirit, Unknown Scout, and Founding of the Boy Scouts of America

William D. Boyce was lost in a foggy street in London in 1909 when an unknown lad came to help him. After the assistance, William D. Boyce offered a tip to the young lad, but he refused and told him, "I am a Scout," and that he was simply doing a "Good Turn." Impressed by this action, the next day William D. Boyce met Baden-Powell, and in February of 1910, they founded the Boy Scouts of America. Among the forerunners of the Scouting Movement in America were William D. Boyce, Daniel Carter Beard, and James West, all Freemasons.

American Occupation: Birth of Scouting in the Philippines

In 1910, the YMCA organized a Boy Scouts of America Troop in the Philippines. In 1914, the Lorillard Spencer Troop in Zamboanga was also organized, and in 1923, The Boy Scouts of America Philippine Council was established with the help of the Rotary Club of Manila and the support of individuals such as Josephus Emile Hamilton Stevenot, Tomás Confesor y Valenzuela, Edwin Elser (a Freemason and a Past Grand Master), and Manuel Luís Quezon y Molina (a Freemason and later Past Grand Master). In connection with the establishment of the

Boy Scouts of America Philippine Council, the Cabletow, in its First Issue (June 1, 1923), encouraged Master Masons to support Scouting Troops.

Boy Scout Movement

The Rotary Club of Manila has obtained the sanction of the Deputy Chief Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America to organize First Class Council in the Philippines. This Council will have the authority to grant charters to organize Americans, Filipino and other Boy Scout Troops.

This movement is non-sectarian and non-political being “to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scout Craft, to teach them patriotism, courage and self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in use by boy scouts, by placing emphasis upon Scout Oath and law for character development, citizenship training and physical fitness”

With such purposes in view, each and every Mason can well give his moral and material support to this splendid

movement. It is earnestly urging all members of subordinate lodges of the Philippines, as individual, cooperate in every way possible in making the Boy Scouts of these Islands an important factor in the development and progress of our youths. - The Cabletow in its First Issue (June 1, 1923)

The Boy Scouts of the Philippines

By virtue of Commonwealth of the Philippines Act No. 111, signed by

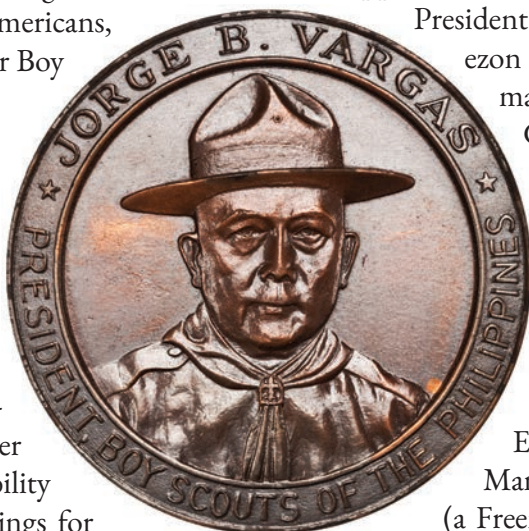
President Manuel Luís Quezon y Molina (a Freemason and a Past Grand Master),

the Boy Scouts of the Philippines was established. The founding fathers of the organization were Josephus

Emile H. Stevenot, Manuel R. Camus

(a Freemason and a Past Grand Master), Vicente P. Lim

(a Freemason), Carlos P. Romulo, Jorge B. Vargas (a Freemason), Arsenio Luz, and Gabriel A. Daza. Since then, members of the craft have continued to support the leadership of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines. Additionally, individuals such as Joseph Schmidt, Wenceslao Trinidad, and William H. Quasha (an Eagle Scout), all Past Grand Masters, have supported the Boy Scouts of the Philippines.





In Line with the Scouting Spirit

In connection with the long tradition of Scouting and its timeless values, it has inspired certain American organizations/fraternities that exist in our country.

In 1915, the Order of the Arrow was founded by E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson, both Freemasons, as a camp fraternity that bestows honors/degrees upon its members who actively serve the Scouting movement and the community. The OA is based on American Indian lore, and a group of its members is called a Lodge. Today, the Order of the Arrow still exists in the Philippines under the Achpateuny Lodge of the Far East Council.

In 1925, Alpha Phi Omega was founded by Frank Reed Horton, a Freemason. The fraternity was established to continue service in Scouting communities and uphold the principles of the Scout Oath and Law at the college level. In 1950, Ibrado I. Ureta, also a freemason together with 20 scouts, established the first Alpha Phi Omega chapter outside the United States of America.

Moving Forward

As Scouting Flourishes in all parts of the world we see the timeless values it teaches out youth, it is somehow similar to our gentle craft. In this kind of world, we live in we need beacons of light, institution tested by time be-

cause of its methods of making better citizen for a better world. As we look on the 10 samples, I have presented in the beginning of this article you'll see the hints that it is similar it is just differing in the target age group. Scouting and Freemasonry shows us a way of teaching our fellowmen in all walks of life "that we can be the catalyst of change, that we can make everyone better". No wonder why our brothers before us supported this institution, I can confidently say that they have strong belief that Scouting like Freemasonry are instrument of a better future for a better world.

As we move forward, I would like to suggest the following:

1. Formation of a Scouting Lodge in the Philippines;

almost all Grand Jurisdictions have Baden-Powell Lodges. This could be a special lodge for Scouters, Eagle Scouts, and outdoor enthusiasts who adhere to the Scout Oath and Law.

2. Forging a partnership between the Boy Scouts of the Philippines and the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

3. MW Manuel Camus Scouters Award for active Freemason Scouters directly serving the Boy Scouts of the Philippines.

4. Encouraging Lodges to support Scouting troops in attending camping trips, Jamborees, and advancement

programs of each Local Council where a Lodge is located.

Let me end this article from a quote coming from Scouting Founder Lord Robert Baden Powell "Try and leave this world a little better than you found it, and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate, you have not wasted your time but have done your best."



About the Author

VW Paolo R. Cruz is an Eagle Scout, having earned the rank in 2003. He served as the Past National President of the National Eagle Scout Association of the Philippines from 2018 to 2022. In addition to his Scouting achievements, he is a dedicated Freemason and was the Past Master of Malolos Lodge 46 in 2023. Currently, he holds the position of District Deputy Grand Master for R3 Bulacan West in 2024.

The Misuse of Masonic Symbols and Terminology on Social Media: Implications and Responses

by VW Rommel S.J. Corral (147)

The advent of social media has revolutionized communication and information dissemination, but it has also led to the misuse of various cultural and organizational symbols, including those associated with Freemasonry. This article examines the inappropriate use of Masonic symbols and terminology on social media platforms. It explores the historical context of Masonic symbols, their intended meanings, and the implications of their misuse. The article further discusses the responses of Masonic organizations to this phenomenon and offers recommendations for safeguarding the integrity of Masonic symbols in the digital age.

Introduction:

Freemasonry, a fraternal organization

with roots dating back to the late 16th and early 17th centuries, has long been associated with a set of distinctive symbols and terminologies. These symbols, such as the Square and Compasses, and terms typically reserved for use in our rituals, carry significant historical and esoteric meanings. In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has led to the widespread and often inappropriate use of these symbols and terms. This misuse can undermine the integrity of Masonic traditions and misrepresent the organization to the public.

Historical Context of Masonic Symbols:

Masonic symbols are rich in historical and esoteric significance. The Square and Compasses, for instance, represent moral and ethical guidelines central to Masonic teachings. The symbols and terms used in Freemasonry are designed to convey principles of brotherhood, moral rectitude, and personal development. Understanding the historical context of these symbols is crucial for recognizing the gravity of their misuse.

Note: Historically, Masonic symbols have evolved with variations in different Masonic rites. While the 16th century marks early mentions of operative stonemason guilds, the more structured Freemasonry as we know



it emerged from the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Therefore, the reference to the late 16th century might be adjusted to emphasize operative roots, while speculative Freemasonry began to formalize in the early 18th century.

The Rise of Social Media and Symbol Misuse:

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become arenas where Masonic symbols are often displayed out of context. These symbols are sometimes used for commercial purposes, personal branding, or as mere decorative elements. Such uses frequently occur without regard to the symbols' original meanings or their significance within Masonic traditions.

Implications of Misuse:

The inappropriate use of Masonic symbols on social media can have several adverse effects. First, it can lead to a dilution of the symbols' meanings, reducing their effectiveness in conveying Masonic principles. Second, it can foster misunderstandings or negative stereotypes about Freemasonry among the general public. Third, it may cause internal discord within Masonic communities, as members may feel that their symbols are being trivialized.

Responses from Masonic Organizations:

In response to the misuse of their sym-

bols, various Masonic organizations have taken steps to address the issue. Some lodges have issued public statements condemning inappropriate uses and clarifying the intended meanings of their symbols. Additionally, there have been efforts to increase public awareness about the proper use of Masonic symbols and to educate both members and the public about the importance of respecting these symbols.

Recommendations for Addressing Symbol Misuse:

Education and Awareness: Blue Lodges, as well as appendant bodies, should enhance educational initiatives aimed at both members and the general public to promote a better understanding of Masonic symbols and their significance.

Social Media Policies: Developing and enforcing guidelines for the use of Masonic symbols on social media can help prevent misuse. These policies should be communicated clearly to all members.

Monitoring and Response: Active monitoring of social media platforms for inappropriate use of Masonic symbols, coupled with a responsive approach to address misuse, is essential.

Practice Self-Restraint: As Master Masons, we are responsible for our ac-

SENATOR JOSE ALTAVAS

PM OF MAKAWIWILI LODGE NO. 55

by VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC (42)

Worshipful Brother Jose Altavas holds the Masonic name "Makawiwili," derived from a Visayan term that signifies a peaceful and attractive place. This name references a location in Capiz where Filipino patriots sought refuge during the insurrection against Spain. The use of Masonic names was a common practice among members of Gran Oriente Español in the past.

Early Life and Education

Don Jose was born to Jose Altavas y Aguilar of Valdegorfa, Turuel City, Aragon, Spain and Andrea Cortes y Rafols of Balete, Capiz on September 11, 1877. He obtained his Bachiller de Artes in Ateneo. He took Law at the University of Santo Tomas, but revolution broke out so he returned to Capiz. Upon the declaration of peace, Don Jose resumed his studies and passed the bar in 1901.

Politics

Don Jose started his political career as an elected member of Capiz (now Roxas City) municipal council in 1903. He served as provincial board member from 1906 until 1907.

WB Altavas was representative from 1907-1909, Governor of Capiz for two successive terms, from 1910 to 1916; elected Senator, 1916-1922, and was delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1934.

Makawiwili Lodge

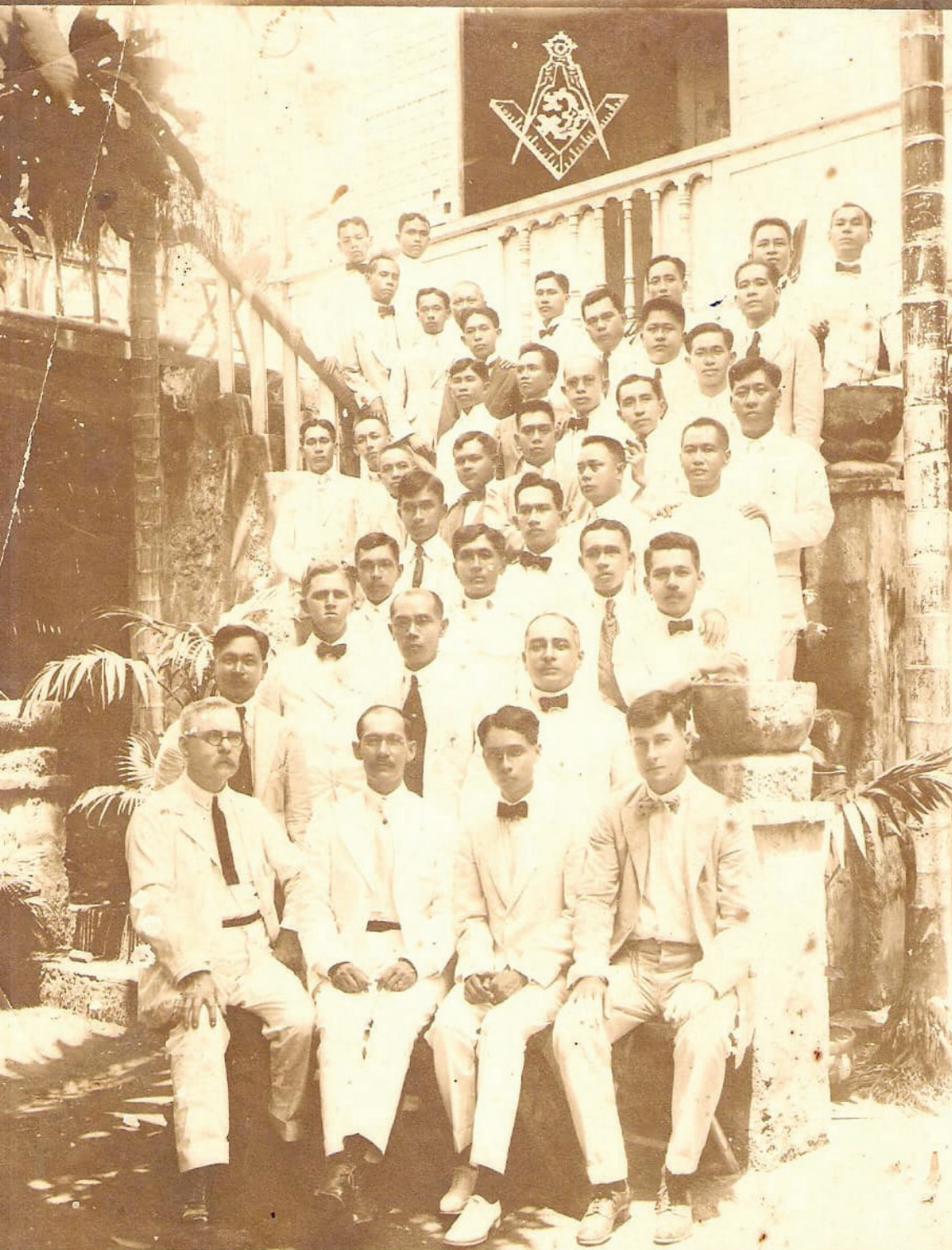
In the book authored by MW Reynold S. Fajardo and Geminiano Galarosa, Jr., we have this account. "Jose Altavas of Sinukuan Lodge No. 16 organized this lodge in Capiz, Capiz, with the assistance of Robert Clauson of Corregidor Lodge No. 3, Amando Avancena of Sinukuan Lodge and several other brethren. On Sept. 11, 1919, the founders sent a petition to Grand Master Milton Earl Springer requesting for the issuance of a dispensation to form a lodge in Capiz. The following October, Iloilo Lodge recommended the issuance of the dispensation. The organizers, however, encountered difficulties in securing demits from their lodges so the issuance of the dispensation was delayed until it was too late to open the lodge and return the dispensation in accordance with the requirements of the Masonic Law Book. The Committee on Charters, however, deemed

DELEGATE FROM CAPIZ
DELEGADO POR CAPIZ



Hon. JOSÉ ALTAVAS

LAWYER AND FARMER
ABOGADO Y AGRICULTOR



MASONES que asistieron a la ten.: magna de iniciación del Gobernador Manuel Roxas de Capiz en la Log.: Makawiwili No. 55 el día 14 de Agosto 1920.
F. Javellana's Studio.

it ‘of manifest propriety that a lodge be formed in Capiz/.’ Taking into account ‘the character and Masonic standing of the signers of the petition’ it recommended that a charter be granted. The recommendation was approved so on January 25, 1920, Makawiwili Lodge No. 55 was granted a charter even though it had not worked ‘under dispensation.’

“On April 9, 1920, Grand Master Rafael Palma, accompanied by Antonio de las Alas, Teofisto Guingona, Daniel Maramba, Lope K. Santos, Enrique Filamor, Conrado Benitez, and other Masonic dignitaries, went to Capiz and constituted Makawiwili Lodge and installed its officers in the ‘palatial residence of Brother Jose Altavas.’ After the ceremonies Palma and the newly installed Master, Jose Altavas, delivered speeches. Altavas would serve the lodge as Master for four consecutive terms (1920-1923), and then again in 1937 and 1940.

“The first meetings of the lodge were usually held at the beach house or town house of Altavas. Barely four months after the constitution of the lodge, or specifically on August 14, 1920, then Governor Manuel A. Roxas, later the President of the Philippine Republic, was honored as one of its first initiates. A year later, on September 23, 1921, the lodge raised him to the sublime degree of Master Mason in the beach house of Altavas. Incidentally, Roxas served as Mas-

ter of the Lodge in 1927. Another early initiate was Gabriel K. Hernandez who became Master in 1936, the same year that he was Governor of Capiz.” (Philippine Lodges, Fajardo and Galarosa, 2003)

Bro. Altavas was appointed Grand Lodge Inspector for four years (1930-1934)

Family

After the revolution, Bro. Jose Altavas returned to Capiz and practiced his profession. He married Socorro Barrios Laserna, daughter of a prominent family in Capiz, with whom he had seven children. The Altavas family was well known and respected. Don Jose was devoted to his wife and children.

Legacy

In the word of MW Mauro Baradi, PGM, “For forty-four years, Bro. Altavas was a Mason at heart and by conviction. The problems he tackled and obstacles he overcame served to strengthen his determination to make good, not succumb to evil. And when death came he met it without fear. The beauty of his life was the eloquent and affirmative answer to the question which men ask when one is dying or after he is dead: “Has he lived well?”

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The Allegory of "Raising from the Grave"

by VW Rommel S.J. Corral (147)

The ritual of the Third Degree in Freemasonry is imbued with profound allegorical significance. One of its central themes is the allegory of "Raising from the Grave," which symbolizes not only the journey of self-discovery and transformation but also the broader philosophical concepts of mortality, resurrection, and the quest for knowledge. Freemasonry is a fraternal organization with a rich tapestry of symbols and rituals. Among these, the Third Degree stands out for its depth of meaning and its focus on themes of life, death, and rebirth. The allegory of "Raising from the Grave" serves as a pivotal moment in the initiation of a Master Mason, offering insights into the moral and philosophical underpinnings of the Masonic tradition. The roots of Freemasonry can be traced to medieval stonemasons' guilds, evolving into a system of moral and philosophical teachings by the 18th century. The Third Degree was formalized during this period, reflecting Enlightenment ideals of individualism and the pursuit of knowledge. The allegory of resurrection draws parallels with various religious and philosophical traditions, particularly those concerning the afterlife and spiritual renewal.

Symbolic Interpretation

The Grave as a Symbol of Ignorance

In Masonic ritual, the grave represents not just physical death, but also a metaphorical state of ignorance or moral stagnation. The candidate's journey from the grave signifies a transition from this state to one of enlightenment and understanding. This process is marked by trials and the acquisition of knowledge, mirroring the transformative journey of the individual toward self-awareness.

Resurrection and Transformation

The act of being "raised" embodies the Masonic principle of rebirth. This transformation is not merely physical but spiritual and intellectual, symbolizing the aspirant's emergence from ignorance into a realm of wisdom and moral integrity. It emphasizes the idea that through trials and tribulations, one can attain a higher state of existence, akin to the philosophical concepts of regeneration found in various religious traditions.

The Role of the Master Mason

The Master Mason serves as both a guide and a model for the candidate. The allegory underscores the importance of mentorship and the collective journey toward enlightenment. The relationships formed within the Masonic lodge further reinforce the notion that knowledge is best

pursued in community, reflecting the interconnectedness of human experience.

Implications for Masonic Philosophy

The allegory of "Raising from the Grave" has profound implications for Masonic philosophy. It encourages introspection and self-improvement, promoting the idea that each member has the potential for growth and transformation. This aligns with the broader Masonic ideals of charity, brotherhood, and the pursuit of truth.

The Moral Dimension

The ritual serves as a reminder of the moral responsibilities of Masons. The journey from ignorance to enlightenment calls upon members to act justly, to seek knowledge, and to aid others in their own quests for understanding. This moral imperative is central to the Masonic identity, framing the act of raising not just as a personal transformation, but as a collective responsibility. The allegory of "Raising from the Grave" in the Third Degree of Freemasonry encapsulates essential themes of enlightenment, transformation, and moral responsibility. By exploring this allegory, Masons are invited to reflect on their own journeys of self-discovery and the impact they can have on others. As such, this ritual serves not only as a pivotal moment in Masonic initiation but also as a timeless reflection on the human condition, underscoring the enduring quest for knowledge and the promise of renewal.

ACACIA

MASONIC SYMBOL

by VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC (42)

Mistletoe to the Scandinavians, lotus to the Egyptians, myrtle to the Greeks, and acacia to Freemasons, - all symbols of immortality.

The Jews planted acacia on graves as a symbol of life, and to mark the resting place of the dead that footsteps may not desecrate it.

Definition: Acacia

- "any of a genus of leguminous trees or shrubs with round white or yellow flower clusters and often feathery leaves." (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
"A leguminous tree of the genus *Acacia*, with yellow or white flowers" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Ninth Edition)

Belief

Putting acacia at the Master's temporary grave, Masonry follows beliefs which go back to the captivity of the Jewish in Egypt. Acacia is hardy. Sprouts come often from beams and

columns made of acacia, the sittah wood of the Old Testament. In Egypt, acacia was supposed to have grown about and protected the chest into which Osiris had been tricked by his brother, Typhon. Searching for her husband Osiris, Isis discovered the tree in the home of the Phoenician king. For the service of Isis she rendered the king, he gave her the tree and thus the body of her husband.

Immortality

Association of plant and immortality is emphasized in the New Testament.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24, King James Version)

Also the familiar passages from St. Paul used so much in funeral services: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." (I Corinthians 15:36-37. KJV) Finally we find in our own state-ly prayer in the Master's degree such a



coupling up of tree and life immortal: “For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.” (Job 14:7, KJV)

“This acacia, which once marked the temporary resting place of one illustrious in Masonic history, is an emblem of our enduring faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded that we have an imperishable part within us, which shall survive the grace and which will never, never die. By it we are admonished that, though like brother we too shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death, yet, through the loving goodness of our Supreme Grand Master, we may confidently hope that like this evergreen, our soul will hereafter flourish in eternal spring.”

Masonic Funeral Service

In the GLP Manual for Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services, the Master “takes acacia in the right hand and all officers and brethren do the same”, then intones: “This acacia, which once marked the temporary resting place of one illustrious in Masonic

history, is an emblem of our enduring faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded that we have an imperishable part within us, which shall survive the grace and which will never, never die. By it we are admonished that, though like brother we too shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death, yet, through the loving goodness of our Supreme Grand Master, we may confidently hope that like this evergreen, our soul will hereafter flourish in eternal spring.”

Finally, the Master bids farewell to the brother thus: “Soft and safe to thee, my brother, be thy earthly bed! Bright and glorious be thy rising from it! Fragrant be the acacia sprig that there shall flourish! May the earliest buds of spring unfold their beauties o’er thy resting place, and there may the sweetness of the summer’s last rose linger longest! Though the cold blasts of Autumn may lay them in the dust, and for a time destroy the loveliness of their existence, yet the destruction is not final, and in the spring time they shall surely bloom again. So in the bright morning of the worlds resurrection, though they mortal frame be now laid in the dust by the chilling blast of death, thy spirit shall spring into newness of life and expand in immortal beauty, in realms beyond the skies. Until then, dear brother, until then, farewell!”

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GLP CENTENNIAL CHRONICLES

as collected by The Cable Tow Team

GRAND HISTORIAN'S NOTE:

For years, the Cable Tow Team has been tracking subordinate lodges celebrating the centenary of their Charters under the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines. This article is a continuing installment of the chronicle and will cover 1923 and 1924.

1923 - During the 11th Annual Communication held at the Masonic Temple in 90 Escolta in the City of Manila, the following Lodges under dispensation were granted their Charters on the 23rd of January. Seven were duly constituted in the same year under MW Frederick H. Stevens:

Lodge Name & No.	Location	Constituted	Charter Master
Taga-ilog No. 79	Manila	21 February	Domingo C. Torres
Mt. Lebanon No. 80	Manila	24 February	Michael Goldenberg
Liwayway No. 81	Bigaa, Bulacan	03 March	Teodoro Reyes
High Twelve No. 82	Manila	17 February	Filomeno Galang
Modestia No. 83	Manila	June 23	Pedro Rodriguez
Dagohoy No. 84	Tagbilaran, Bohol	17 March	Alfonso Lecaros
Abra No. 86	Bangued, Abra	April 27	Julio Borbon

Of these 7 Lodges, only five reached one hundred years. Two were constrained to merge with other lodges - Mount Lebanon No. 80 and Modestia No. 83.

Mount Lebanon Lodge No. 80 was founded on March 10, 1922, by Michael Goldenberg together with 20 other Master Masons. A large number of its members were of Jewish ancestry. It produced at least 3 Grand Masters – MW Jose Delos Reyes (1940), MW Michael Goldenberg (1945 - 1946), and MW William H. Quasha (1962); before merging with Manila Lodge No. 1 in 1977 becoming a part of Manila – Mount Lebanon Lodge No. 1. Had the Lodge continued on its own, it would have celebrated the centenary of its charter last January 2023. A sadder note to its poignant story is that the name Mount Lebanon was dropped in the name of the merger in 2023...

Modestia Lodge No. 83 lived on its own for just five short years. Founded on August 31, 1922, by 15 brethren in Gagalangin, Tondo – the lodge did not gain enough membership to survive. It merged with Liwayway No. 81 by 1928.

1924 - On January 23rd, eight U.D. lodges were granted their Charters during the 12th Annual Communications. They were duly constituted under MW Wenceslao Trinidad in the same year:

Lodge Name & No.	Location	Constituted	Charter Master
Luz Oceanica No. 85	Manila	09 February	Estanislao Jose
Hagdang Bato No. 87	Manila	09 July	Tomas Molina
Hiram No. 88	Manila	14 March	Filemon Cosio
Muog No. 89	Paranaque, Rizal	29 March	Sabas De Guzman
Memorial Lodge No 90	San Jose, Nueva Ecija	12 April	Marceliano Hidalgo
Mt. Kaladias No 91	Dumaguete, Negros Oriental	11April	Gregorio Almazan
Ma-Bu-Ti Lodge No. 92	Masbate	12 June	<i>Name not found</i>
Mencius No. 93	Manila	28 June	Luis Lim Bilian

In 2024 only five of these eight lodges have survived. Two have to merge with other lodges to survive, one was never revived after it closed down before the Second World War.

Luz Oceanica No. 85 was formed on February 14, 1923, upon receipt of a dispensation from MW Frederic Stevens. Its First Senior Warden Antonio Gonzalez became Grand Master in 1932 while another member Ricardo Nepomuceno was elected a delegate to the 1935 Constitutional Convention. In 1949, it was forced to consolidate with Island Lodge No. 5. A second merger was effected with another weak lodge a year later – Minerva No. 41. Whatever remains of the lodge’s essence is preserved within Island-Luz-Minerva Lodge No. 5.

Instituted on April 14, 1923, **Hagdang Bato No. 87** existed for only 12 years before merging with Modestia - Liwayway No. 81 in 1936. Later in 1948 members of Modestia - Liwayway - Hagdang Bato No. 81 decided to change the Lodge’s name to F.D. Roosevelt Memorial Lodge No. 81 in honor of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt – an American Mason.

Masonry in the island of Masbate was heralded by **Ma-Bu-Ti No. 92** which was Instituted in November 8, 1923. Despite transportation difficulties among its members, the Lodge managed to survived for 16 years when its Worshipful Master, Senior, and Junior Wardens were all reassigned to different areas of assignment in November 1939. By January 1940 during the 28th AnCom, a resolution was adopted vesting the Grand Master with the authority to open a lodge where the three Lights were absent. Unfortunately, World War II broke out in December 1941 and the Lodge was too weak to be revived...

The ten other Lodges, notwithstanding have still survived.
Five of them celebrated the centenary of their charters last 2023: **Taga-ilog No. 79** (Masonic District NCR-D); **F.D. Roosevelt No. 81** (Masonic District NCR-D); **High Twelve No. 82** (Masonic District NCR-D); **Dagohoy No. 84** (MD RVII Cebu, Bohol, & Siquijor); and **Abra No. 86** (MD RI-CAR Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, & Abra).



In 2024, five more have successfully marked their centennial - Hiram No. 88 (Masonic District NCR-D); Muog No. 89 (Masonic District NCR-H); Memorial No. 90 (MD RIII Nueva Ecija - NORTH); Mt. Kaladias No. 91 (MD RXVIII Negros Island Region); and Mencius No. 93 (Masonic District NCR-A).

Dagohoy Lodge No. 84	The Cable Tow	Vol. 099, No. 3	M.Y. 2022 - 2023
Abra Lodge No. 86	The Cable Tow	Vol. 099, No. 2	M.Y. 2022 - 2023
Hiram No. 88	The Cable Tow	Vol. 100, No. 4	M.Y. 2023 - 2024
Muog No. 89	The Cable Tow	Vol. 101, No. 3	M.Y. 2024 - 2025
Mt. Kaladias No. 91	The Cable Tow	Vol. 100, No. 4	M.Y. 2023 - 2024
Mencius No. 93	The Cable Tow	Vol. 101, No. 3	M.Y. 2024 - 2025

It has been observed that more than 100 years ago, the date recorded in individual Lodge Charters was the day the lodges were granted their charters during the AnCom Plenary. We perceived such practice by the GLP in the charters of the two-digit lodges (lodges numbered below 100). The dates of their constitution are not written in these early documents. As a result, lodges constituted in a specific year celebrate their Charter Anniversaries on the same dates. Thus the lodges granted their charters in 1923 placed their Charter Anniversaries on the first day of the 11th AnCom – January 23. For 1924 Lodges, their Charter Anniversary was fixed on the 23rd of January – day 2 of the Twelfth Annual Communication.

As a gift to the two Centennial Lodges who submitted their articles for this Cable Tow Issue, we have included the minutes of their Constitution as lifted from the Annual Proceedings of AnCom 1925. We encourage the remaining lodge centenarians to submit their equally inspiring stories to the official publication of our jurisdiction. *VW JOSEPH HAROLD W. SANTIAGO, GH*

Celebrating 100 Years of Brotherhood and Service: The Centennial Anniversary of Muog Lodge No. 89

By Bro. Enrique Antonio B. Reyes (89)

Muog Lodge No. 89 has
stone: its Centennial An-
the Lodge has served as
hood, charity, and integrity
both its members and the wid-
brate this achievement, we re-
moments, notable members,



reached a momentous mile-
niversary. For 100 years,
a stronghold of brother-
in Parañaque, supporting
er community. As we cele-
flect on the Lodge's foundation, key
and its enduring vision for the future.

The Foundation of Muog Lodge No. 89

The roots of Muog Lodge No. 89 date back to 1923 when Master Masons from Parañaque, along with members of Pintong Bato Lodge No. 51 in Bacoor, Cavite, united to form a new Lodge. They sought to create a "muog"—a fortress that symbolized strength and protection for its members and the community. The word "muog," which means citadel or stronghold in Filipino, perfectly encapsulates the resilience and enduring spirit of the Lodge over its century-long existence.

The Lodge was officially chartered on January 23, 1924, with Sabas de Guzman, Parañaque's 13th Mayor, as its first Worshipful Master. It was formally constituted



at Parañaque Elementary School, with founding members, including prominent local figures like Fausto Fronda and Eulalio Monsod. Their vision was to build a sanctuary for Masons in the region, a place where brotherhood could thrive and stand the test of time.

A Resilient Fortress

Through War and Adversity Muog Lodge No. 89 has faced significant challenges, none more daunting than the Japanese occupation during World War II. During this period, Freemasonry was driven underground, and practicing the Craft became highly dangerous. Nevertheless, the Lodge's members continued their work in secret. One notable hero of this era was Worshipful Master Eusebio Laquindanum, who disguised the Lodge's Masonic Temple as a schoolhouse, shielding it from occupying forces and allowing Masonic activities to continue in secret.

Laquindanum and other members also contributed to the war effort by aiding guerrilla fighters and supporting families affected by the conflict. Their dedication and bravery during these difficult times highlighted the Lodge's commitment to upholding Masonic values, even in the face of great adversity.

Rebuilding and Serving the Community

After World War II, Muog Lodge No. 89 emerged from the shadows,

rebuilding itself and renewing its commitment to both the Craft and the community. One of the Lodge's most significant accomplishments was the construction of its own Masonic Temple in 1927. This new building symbolized the Lodge's resilience and became a central hub for Masonic activities and charitable initiatives.

Service to the community has always been a cornerstone of Muog Lodge's mission. In its early years, the Lodge established scholarship programs to support local students, recognizing education as a crucial factor in building a better future. Over time, the Lodge expanded its efforts to include medical missions, food drives, and disaster relief projects, continually living out the Masonic principle of relief.

Notable Members and Their Contributions

Throughout its history, Muog Lodge No. 89 has been home to many notable Masons who have made significant contributions to the Craft and society. Among them was Lt. Cmdr. Wheeler B. Lipes, who gained international recognition for performing an emergency appendectomy aboard a submarine during World War II, using only improvised tools. His resourcefulness and courage under pressure embody the values of Freemasonry, and his actions serve as an inspiring example for all Masons.

Another prominent member is

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

MARCH 29, 1924

CONSTITUTION OF MUOG LODGE No. 89

A Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands was held in the Parañaque Elementary School, Parañaque, Rizal, P. I., at 6:30 p. m., March 29th, A. D. 1924, A. L. 5924, and the Grand Lodge was opened in AMPLE FORM, with the following Brethren filling the offices:

WENCESLAO TRINIDAD.....	<i>Grand Master</i>
QUINTIN PAREDES, P.G.M.....as	<i>Senior Grand Warden</i>
JOSEPH H. SCHMIDT.....	<i>Junior Grand Warden</i>
NEWTON C. COMFORT.....	<i>Grand Secretary</i>
FELIPE TEMPONGKO.....	<i>Senior Grand Lecturer</i>
CLEMENTE BERNABÉ.....as	<i>Grand Chaplain</i>
ANTONIO GONZALEZ.....as	<i>Grand Orator</i>
ANDRÉS FILOTEO.....as	<i>Grand Marshal</i>
JULIAN SAMSON.....as	<i>Senior Grand Deacon</i>
FAUSTINO MAÑAGO.....	<i>Junior Grand Deacon</i>
AURELIO D. ROSARIO.....as	<i>Senior Grand Steward</i>
MARIANO CHICO.....as	<i>Junior Grand Steward</i>
JUAN ATAYDE.....	<i>Grand Tiler</i>

The Grand Master announced that the Grand Lodge had convened for the purpose of constituting Muog Lodge No. 89, which had been granted a charter at the last annual communication of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Marshal then formed the Grand Lodge into procession and proceeded to the Assembly Hall of the School House where the new Lodge was duly constituted and its officers installed.

The ceremonies were public. The attendance was in excess of the capacity of the building.

Addresses were made by Antonio Gonzalez in Spanish, Senator Emiliano T. Tirona in Tagalog, Higinio de Gufa, Sabas de Guzman, Master of Muog Lodge, Joseph H. Schmidt, Junior Grand Warden, and the Grand Master.

The Grand Lodge returned to the hall where opened and was closed in AMPLE form at 10 p. m.

WENCESLAO TRINIDAD,
Grand Master.

Attest:

NEWTON C. COMFORT,
Grand Secretary.



VW Joel Ocop Porlares, the current Obispo Maximo XIV of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. His leadership in the religious sector exemplifies the influence of Muog Lodge members across various fields, demonstrating how they apply Masonic values in all aspects of their lives.

Additionally, VW Kristoffer James E. Purisima, who played a crucial role in national disaster management and public health, is another distinguished member. His leadership during the Marawi crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic reflected the Lodge's dedication to relief and brotherhood, not just within the Masonic community but for the nation as a whole.

Leadership in the Grand Lodge of the Philippines

Muog Lodge No. 89 has also had a profound influence on the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. Several members, including VW Peter T. Aragon, VW

Luis B. Reyes Jr., and VW Brian N. Co, have held prominent leadership positions in the organization. Their contributions have helped guide the course of Freemasonry in the country and strengthened Muog Lodge's standing within the national fraternity.

These leaders inspire future generations of Masons, encouraging them to uphold the principles of integrity, service, and unity that have long defined Muog Lodge.

Adapting to Modern Challenges
Muog Lodge No. 89 continues to adapt to the challenges of the modern era while remaining steadfast in its core values. One of the most significant tests in recent years was the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lodge rose to the occasion by organizing vaccination drives for Masons and their families, ensuring that brotherly love and relief remained guiding principles even during the global health crisis.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 93

100 YEARS OF MASONIC HARMONY

MUOG LODGE NO. 89

Celebrating 100 years of



*brotherly love,
relief,
and truth*

100
Years

www.muog89.ph

100 Years of Masonic Brotherhood: The Centennial ^{of} Mencius Lodge No. 93

by VW Joselito D. Bulawin, H.A., PDDGM (305)

Mencius Lodge No. 93, founded on June 28, 1924, marks its 100th anniversary this year—a milestone for both the Lodge and Freemasonry in the Philippines. Named after the Chinese philosopher Mencius (372-289 B.C.), the Lodge embodies a legacy rooted in wisdom, virtue, and a deep respect for knowledge, reflecting the values of its namesake.

Mencius Lodge No. 93 holds the distinction of being the first Lodge in any Grand Lodge jurisdiction composed entirely of Chinese nationals. Thirty-three Chinese Masons, united by a shared passion for Masonic principles, petitioned the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands to form their own Lodge. Their request was granted on January 15, 1924, and Mencius Lodge No. 93 was officially constituted on June 28, 1924.



Junior Warden. Notable Masons such as Past Grand Masters Fred-eric Stevens, Michael Gold-enberg, Antonio Gonzales Sr., and Teodoro M. Kalaw Sr. attended, assisting MW Francis A. Delgado in consti-tuting the Lodge. The event was reported in both English and Spanish in the July 1, 1924 issue of *The Cable Tow*.

Catalyst for Freemasonry in China

The constitution ceremony, held at the Masonic Temple on Escolta Street in Ma-nila, was attended by over 400 people. Luis Lim Bilian was installed as the first Worshipful Master, with Yu Chun Teck as Senior Warden, and O Hway Peck as

Mencius Lodge played a crucial role in spreading Freemasonry beyond the Philip-pines. Its members contributed to the for-mation of Lodges in China and the eventual establishment of the Grand Lodge of China.

In 1933, MW Stanton Youngberg, Grand Master of the Philippines, visited Mencius Lodge, where K.L. Kwong, the Consul General of China, presented a plaque from Amity Lodge on behalf of President Lin Sen. The plaque, inscribed in Chinese and translated into English, emphasized “The Spirit of Mutual Helpfulness,” reinforcing the strong bond between the Masonic fraternities of China and the Philippines.

Surviving War and Rebuilding

World War II brought significant challenges to Mencius Lodge. With foresight, the Lodge preserved its Masonic paraphernalia, furniture, and records in a warehouse, safeguarding its history throughout the war. After liberation, Mencius Lodge resumed its work, eventually relocating to the new Plaridel Masonic Temple on San Marcelino Street. Members played a vital role in rebuilding the Temple through their involvement in the Temple Builders Club, earning the Lodge recognition

as the Most Outstanding Lodge in 1982.

Legacy of Charity and Education

Mencius Lodge has remained deeply committed to philanthropy and education. It supports scholarship programs at Philippine Chiang Kai Shek College and Philippine Cultural High School for underprivileged students. More recently, the Lodge launched a medical scholarship program at Pamantasan ng Lung-sod ng Maynila for deserving students.

Since 2008, the Lodge has also been involved in constructing classrooms in underprivileged areas, spearheaded by VW George Lao in cooperation with the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (FCCCI). This initiative has seen the Lodge donate substantial funds to build public school classrooms in provinces like Pampanga, Bulacan, Romblon, Northern Samar, and Camarines Norte—demonstrating its last-







SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

JUNE 28, 1924

CONSTITUTION OF MENCIOUS LODGE No. 93

A Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands was held at the Hall of Mencius Lodge No. 93, Masonic Temple, 90 Escolta, Manila, P. I., at 8:30 p. m., June 28, A. D. 1924, A. L. 5924, and the Grand Lodge was opened in due form with the following Brethren filling the offices:

FRANCISCO A. DELGADO.....	as	Grand Master
EUGENE A. PERKINS.....	as	Deputy Grand Master
JOSEPH H. SCHMIDT.....	as	Senior Grand Warden
MICHAEL GOLDENBERG.....	as	Junior Grand Warden
JUAN MUÑOZ.....	as	Grand Treasurer
NEWTON C. COMFORT.....		Grand Secretary
JOSÉ C. VELO.....	as	Senior Grand Lecturer
ADRIANO R. RIVERA.....	as	Junior Grand Lecturer
RAMÓN MENDOZA.....	as	Grand Chaplain
TEODORO M. KALAW.....		Grand Orator
ANTONIO GONZALEZ.....	as	Grand Marshal
CRÍSPULO LAYOG.....	as	Grand Standard Bearer
SABAS DE GUZMAN.....	as	Grand Sword Bearer
TOMÁS MOLINA.....	as	Grand Bible Bearer
JOSÉ L. INTAL.....	as	Senior Grand Deacon
FAUSTINO MAÑAGO.....		Junior Grand Deacon
ANDRÉS FILOTEO.....	as	Senior Grand Steward
GELASIO VILLEGAS.....	as	Junior Grand Steward
JOSÉ ARPAL.....	as	Grand Pursuivant
ISIDORO HERNANDEZ.....	as	Grand Organist
JUAN ATAYDE.....		Grand Tiler

The acting Grand Master announced that the Grand Lodge had convened for the purpose of constituting Mencius Lodge No. 93, which had been granted a charter at the last annual communication of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Marshal then formed the Grand Lodge into procession and proceeded to the large Blue Lodge Hall where the New Lodge was duly constituted and its officers installed.

Addresses were made by Past Grand Master Frederic H. Stevens, Wor. Brother Teodoro M. Kalaw, Rt. Wor. Bro. Francisco A. Delgado, Senior Grand Warden, acting as Grand Master, and Wor. Bro. Luis Lim Billan, Wor. Master of Mencius Lodge. The ceremonies were public and the attendance was about 500 persons. The ceremonies were followed by a banquet and dance held in the Scottish Rite Auditorium.

The Grand Lodge then returned to the hall where opened and was closed in due form.

FRANCISCO A. DELGADO,
as Grand Master.

Attest:

NEWTON C. COMFORT,
Grand Secretary.

ing commitment to community service.

Notable Members

Mencius Lodge continues to be home to many accomplished members, including:

- VW Alejandro Tan – Past District Deputy Grand Master of NCR-A, recognized for his contribution to the construction of the Masonic Clock in Luneta Park.
- VW Paul C. Ibasco – Another Past District Deputy Grand Master of NCR-A, a key figure in the Lodge's leadership.
- Bro. Rafael Rodriguez – A Hiram Awardee at 94 years old and a former President of Trinity University of Asia, with a PhD in Biochemistry and a Board Member of St. Luke's Hospital.
- VW Mariano Sih – A Hiram Awardee and long-time Treasurer of the Past Masters' Guild of the Philippines, serving as Assistant Grand Treasurer of the Grand Lodge.
- Bro. Romeo D. Lumagui Jr. – Current Commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.
- VW Tommy C. Uyliapco, Past District Deputy Grand Master and Past President of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) – Pasay City Chapter, led the Lodge to achieve its second "Most Outstanding Lodge" award in 2002.
- VW Peter Phoa Yong Chip – Past District Grand Lecturer and father of WM Milton Jin-sin Phoa, the incumbent Master.

Additionally, several members have made their mark on Masonry worldwide, such

as WB Christopher Go (Past Master of Ti-trangi-Mt. Albert Lodge No. 204 in New Zealand), WB Raymond Yan (Past Master of Metropolitan Lodge No. 352 in California), and WM Anthony Gonzales (incumbent Master of Keystone-Lionsgate Lodge No. 115 in Canada).

Centennial Celebration

To commemorate its 100th anniversary, Mencius Lodge hosted a grand celebration at the historic Centennial Hall of the Manila Hotel on June 28, 2024. The Grand Master of the Philippines, MW Ariel Cayanan, served as the Guest of Honor and Speaker. In his speech, GM Cayanan reflected on the Lodge's enduring strength, stressing that true success lies not in longevity or large membership but in the harmony, education, and unity of purpose within the Lodge. He praised Mencius Lodge for maintaining its harmony over the years and encouraged its brethren to continue spreading the light of Freemasonry. VW Paul C. Ibasco, Past District Deputy Grand Master of NCR-A, expressed hope that the next century would see Mencius Lodge thrive in brotherhood and harmony. He also shared his aspiration that one day, a member of Mencius Lodge would ascend to the position of Grand Master.

Looking to the Future

As Mencius Lodge enters its second century, it stands as a beacon of Masonic values, charity, and education. With its rich history and strong foundation, Mencius Lodge No. 93 is poised to continue its journey of spreading the light of Freemasonry for generations to come.



FURTHERMORE

MASONRY BEYOND THE CRAFT



THE MASTERY OF DEATH

By

GIOVANNI A. VILLEGAS

DEATH IS A RECURRING THEME throughout Masonry – from the Petitioner’s trials before *initiation* into the Blue Lodge, to the workings of the higher degrees and orders of the appendant bodies and rites. The imagery of death within Masonry is so pervasive that even Yale University’s *Skull and Bones* society was said to have been loosely patterned after German Masonic lodges, where skulls, skeletons, and similar representations were heavily used. This persistent Masonic iconography conveys three crucial messages: (1) that we should prepare for the eventuality of death; (2) that we should overcome the fear of death; and (3) that we should honor those who have already succumbed to death.

Firstly, preparing for death is not merely a philosophical exercise but a practical one. It urges a Mason to put his affairs in order for the benefit of his would-be widow and orphans. In fact, as early as during the application process to join the Fraternity, a would-be Mason is required to attest that he has made adequate provisions for his family. Thus, even before becoming an Entered Apprentice, he is confronted with the inescapable exigency of preparing for death.

Secondly, the mental and psychological confrontation with death and overcoming the fear of it makes for another aspect of the Masonic process. The *initiations* into the degrees are designed to train the Candidate to trust in God and to “*fear not what man can do*” to him. This instills a positive and healthy attitude towards life. The Master Mason degree in particular subjects him somewhat to an experience of death, revealing that it is better to die than to abandon one’s virtues. The choice to maintain integrity, even at the expense of one’s life, serves as a powerful

method of overcoming the fear of death. Lastly, the honoring and memorializing of departed brethren adds a spiritual dimension to death. *Masonic funeral* services and *Lodge of Remembrance* ceremonies pay due reverence to worthy Masons, inspiring the living to emulate their lives, hoping to receive similar honor when their time comes. These ceremonies uplift not only the spirits of Masons but also those of the families who witness such tributes to their beloved.

These emphases on death are not just confined to the Blue Lodge. In fact, it is a regular component in many succeeding degrees practiced by other Masonic orders and bodies. We enumerate some of them below to illustrate its pervasiveness in Masonic culture, education, and enlightenment, serving as a continuous reminder of the inevitable and the virtues that must be upheld until the end.

CHAMBERS OF REFLECTION

In other jurisdictions – such as those that have Continental-style lodges, Scottish Rite Craft lodges, *European Concept* (EC) lodges, and *Traditional Observance* (TO) lodges – before a Candidate is *initiated* into the degrees, he is made to undergo the ordeal of the *Chamber of Reflection*, a solitary room where he is left alone, surrounded by objects symbolizing life's fleeting nature – an hourglass marking the relentless passage of time, a scythe representing the inevitable harvest of death, and a skull, a stark reminder of the end that awaits us all. There he is asked to reflect upon profound questions pertaining to his relationship with the world and to draft a *Last Will and Testament*, infusing his thoughts with a sense of urgency and an acceptance of the inevitable. Such intense meditations on mortality challenges the Candidate to emerge from the darkness with a deeper understanding of life, death, and the legacy he shall leave behind. Though this transformative experience is absent in the Blue Lodges under the jurisdiction of the *Grand Lodge of the*

Philippines (GLP), the spirit of this ordeal exists in the other Masonic rites practiced in the country. In the 18th degree of the Scottish Rite, for example, Candidates are placed in different apartments that serve as sanctuaries for deep contemplation and reflection. These chambers hold images that may even be more unsettling than those in the *Chamber of Reflection*. Thus, only those truly prepared, who understand the profound meaning behind such symbols, are advised to proceed.

The purpose of these chambers is not to instill fear, although fear is often an unavoidable companion. Instead, they compel the individual to ponder on what truly matters in this world. They strip away the distractions of daily life and confront the Candidate with the most fundamental questions of existence. It is through this confrontation that one begins to understand the weight of the commitment he is about to make, and the gravity of the path he is about to tread.

Note that some of the objects contained in the *Chamber of Reflection*, with the addition of the spade, coffin, and sprig of acacia, also exist in the *instruction* of a Candidate in the *Masonic Order of Athelstan*, together playing the same purpose of emphasizing the passage of time, the fleeting of life, and the inevitability of death, further stressing the importance of legacy.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

On the matter of legacy, local Blue Lodges under the GLP do not practice the use of a *Chamber of Reflection* that includes within it the writing of a *Last Will and Testament*. The most they have is the requirement of answering the question in the initial Petition Form, “*Have you made adequate provision for your family in case of death?*” This question, deceptively simple, carries with it practical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. It alerts the Petitioner of his earthly responsibilities to his family; it invites him to a contemplation of

future demise; and it makes him ponder on his legacy to his loved ones – whether he has lived his life worthy of emulation and immortal remembrance.

Yet, despite the absence of a *Chamber of Reflection* in local Blue Lodges, the 5th degree of the Scottish Rite offers Masons the opportunity to execute a *Last Will and Testament*, under the thought and manner as if one is expected to die. The degree itself teaches that life is uncertain, and that death, unpredictable and unbidden, may call at any time. It is a blunt reminder to prepare for the inevitable, not just for oneself, but for the loved ones he would leave behind.

Whether through a question on a Petition Form or the drafting of a *Last Will and Testament*, the message is clear: life is fragile, and its worth is measured by how well one has prepared for its end. The journey towards that understanding is at the heart of Masonic enlightenment, guiding each Mason to consider not just how he lives, but how he would like to be remembered.

MASONIC BEQUEATHMENT

As part of preparing for death, the above *Last Will and Testament* may also come with instructions on the proper disposition of one's Masonic possessions, such as ritual books and Masonic rings. These items, steeped in history and meaning for the individual, are more than personal belongings; they are vessels of a legacy that must be safeguarded, even beyond the grave. In the Scottish Rite, local ritual books come with an agreement inscribed at the back, instructing the bearer to make arrangements with his family or executor to have the said books returned to the Supreme Council of the Rite upon his death, ensuring they do not fall into the wrong hands. Such a requirement underscores the Mason's accountability – a reminder that the contents of such books must be protected, not only in life but also in death.

Similarly, the Scottish Rite also gives specific instructions on the bequeathment of Masonic rings, making sure that, upon the death of the owner, they are given to close family members or loved ones, under the stipulation that they are not to be worn, if only to prevent any misunderstanding that the holder is a member of the Rite. In some jurisdictions, these rings, like ritual books, must be returned to the Supreme Council, reinforcing the sanctity of these symbols and the importance of their proper care.

Additional instructions may be included to dispose other items such as aprons, jewels, caps, and pins – each bearing its own significance. Some may choose to auction these items, with proceeds benefiting their families, while others might donate them to lodge libraries, where they would be preserved and treasured. It would be unfortunate if they end up neglected somewhere or sold to strangers for far less than what they are truly worth. It is a fate no Mason would desire for the symbols that have accompanied him on his Masonic journey.

In these practices, we see a reflection of the deep respect Masons hold for their Craft, their customs, and the symbols that define them. The careful planning for the disposition of Masonic possessions is not merely a matter of personal preference but a final act of responsibility – a way to ensure that, even in death, a Mason's legacy is preserved with the dignity and honor it deserves. This is the final testament of a life lived in fidelity to the principles of Masonry, a life that, even in its closing chapter, remains committed to the values of accountability, stewardship, and respect for the sacred.

MASONIC RITUALS AND ALLEGORIES

In various Masonic rituals, death is seen as a relentless and ever-present guide, lighting the way of the Candidate from the first steps in the



"Old apron of the Knights Templar under the Commanderies and Grand Commanderies of the Grand Encampment in America. It fell out of usage throughout the years but was recently brought back to being officially used."

Craft to the loftiest degrees of enlightenment. The Blue Lodge itself is steeped in images of death – a broken column, a blackened lodge room, a skull with crossbones, a coffin, and a grave with a sprig of acacia. These symbolize the tragic fate that befell the main character of the allegory of the degree, teaching us not to compromise our integrity and beliefs even in the face of death. (Note that although the broken column is also used by the *Operatives* or the *Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviers, Plaisterers and Bricklayers*, it is used more as a symbol of an uncompleted work and less about life cut short as in the Blue Lodge.)

This theme of self-sacrifice is repeated in other Masonic degrees and initiatory orders such as the 32nd degree of Scottish Rite under the *Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, USA*, where its main character also died for what he believed was right.

The Royal Arch of Solomon or the 13th degree of the Scottish Rite under the *Southern Jurisdiction, USA* explores the discovery of ancient secrets, often involving deathly imagery like tombs and underground chambers.

In the rituals of the York Rite's *Commandery of Knights Templar*, the Candidate is shown earthly remains, meant to display where we all are hastening, and that we should improve the remaining span of our lives so that, when our own frail bodies succumb in like manner, cold and inanimate, our spirits may be found worthy "to dwell forever in realms of life and light eternal." The Candidate is also shown the virtue of martyrdom and sacrifice and is said to undergo symbolical death in order to be reborn into higher spiritual knowledge, reflecting the Christian focus of the order. This also prepares him for knighthood, ready to face death in defense of his faith and in upholding its virtues.

In the 30th degree of the Scottish Rite, more

images of death abound where the Candidate is likewise shown more earthly remains, a visceral reminder that death tracks him like a bloodhound and that it is ever at his side. One of the mysteries of the degree is the quote, "*He who overcomes the dread of death shall ascend above the terrestrial sphere and be entitled to initiation into the greater mysteries.*" The meaning of this enigma is reserved for those who journey further into the Rite, but its implication is clear – overcoming the fear of death is not an end, but a threshold, beyond which lies deeper wisdom and a broader understanding of existence.

As one progresses to receive the 33rd degree, he is again greeted by the specter of death, a constant companion on the Masonic path. Again, it should be noted that the persistent presence of death across these degrees is not intended to terrify, but to enlighten. It forces the Mason to confront the inevitable, to strip away the superficial fears that shackle the human spirit, and to prepare for the transcendence offered by higher Masonic teachings.

Other teachings on death across other Masonic orders include those of the York Rite's *Chapter of Royal Arch Masons* which, while not as visually focused on death, still incorporates such themes in its allegories of the rebuilding of the Temple and the discovery of lost secrets, subtly reflecting the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

The York Rite's *Cryptic Council* has a *chair degree* (i.e., degrees reserved to those who have presided over the Council), called *Thrice Illustrious Master* or *Order of the Silver Trowel*, that contains an allegory of King David's last days which emphasizes the preparation for death and the passing on of wisdom and leadership. Its symbol of the trowel, often associated with the builder's craft, serves as a reminder of legacy and the work left unfinished by death.

The degree of *St. Lawrence the Martyr* worked in the *Council of Allied Masonic Degrees* explores themes of martyrdom and death, symbolizing the Mason's duty to uphold integrity even in the middle of dying.

The Order of the Secret Monitor, while not primarily focused on themes of death, occasionally uses symbolism to reinforce the bonds of loyalty and the importance of brotherly care in times of distress, illness, or death.

The *Societas Rosicruciana*, deeply influenced by alchemical and esoteric traditions, depicts death as a transformative change not to be feared, and consoles the Candidate that “*a well-spent life ends in a peaceful and happy death*,” thus worthy of spiritual ascension.

The *Rectified Scottish Rite* has reference to symbolic death from the old self to the new, passing from ignorance and vice to a new and enlightened state, thus treating death in its symbolic and philosophical sense, hinting the impermanence of life and the importance of spiritual purification. The *Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte*, which is central to the *Rectified Scottish Rite*, also depicts death as a transition and often as a test of faith and morality, and that spiritual life is eternal even as the physical body decays.

Other Masonic orders outside the Philippines that may have incidental themes related to death include: the *Red Cross of Babylon* degree of the English *Allied Masonic Degrees* that tell of the fall of empires and civilizations as possible metaphors for the cycle of life and death and the regeneration of the soul; the *Order of St. Thomas of Acon* that tells of sacrifice and martyrdom to emphasize the lesson on faithfulness and duty even until death; the *Rite of Baldwin* that was said to include similar themes of sacrifice and martyrdom, and a contemplation of the passage from life to death; and even the *clandestine* group called the *Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-*

Misraim that draws on Egyptian mythology and alchemical symbolism to delve into the esoteric mysteries of death, resurrection, and immortality.

Surely, there are many other orders with traditions, rituals, and allegories employing motifs related to death.

FUNERAL RITES AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

While the Blue Lodge conducts its own *Masonic Funeral* or necrological service upon the remains of its recently departed members, some appendant bodies also conduct their own upon theirs, bringing their own ceremonial depth to the farewell. The Scottish Rite, for instance, has an 18th degree or *Rose Croix* funeral ceremony, usually given before that of the Blue Lodge. It is sometimes conducted with a *Lodge of Sorrow* or, if performed prior to burial, as a *Ceremony at Final Resting Place*. A 30th degree funeral rite, called *Obsequies of a Knight Kadosh*, also exists in the Scottish Rite but is not practiced in the Philippines.

Other funeral and memorial services given by the other Masonic bodies upon their respective departed members include those of the York Rite *Commandery of Knights Templar*, the *Chapter of Royal Arch Masons*, the *Council of Allied Masonic Degrees*, the *Societas Rosicruciana*, and the *Shrine Legion of Honor*. (The *Order of DeMolay* and the *Order of the Eastern Star* also have their own memorial services that are not necessarily performed during the wake.)

These funeral and memorial services usually include eulogies and a reading of the departed's Masonic life, accomplishments, and Masonic affiliations, the better to pay proper tribute to his memory and inspire those present who honor him. The ceremonies are not meant primarily for grieving, but to bridge the mortal to the eternal, ensuring that the memory of a Mason is not lost to time, but preserved,

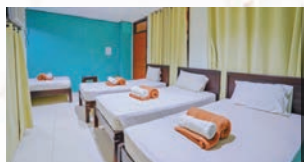
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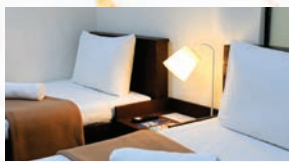
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CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND RENEWAL

While the Blue Lodge holds an annual *Lodge of Remembrance* to commemorate members who have passed away during the year, the Scottish Rite offers its own unique and deeply symbolic *Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal*. Formerly known as the *Feast of the Paschal Lamb*, this ceremony, which includes a *Mystic Banquet* and an *Extinguishing and Relighting of the Lights*, is often held during the Christian Holy Week, a time steeped in themes of death, rebirth, and eternal life. The *Remembrance and Renewal* portion is specifically intended for memorializing recently departed members. The ceremony suggests that the departed are not dead, for they continue to live on in the afterlife.

Taken together, the dramatic spectacle of the entire ceremony is a powerful blend of ritual, symbolism, and spiritual reflection, delivering a message that resonates deeply with those who witness it – a message of hope that transcends the sorrow of loss. It rekindles within the hearts of the living a renewed sense of joy and confidence in life, affirming that the bonds of Masonic brotherhood and the principles of Masonic charity endure beyond the grave. The *Ceremony of Remembrance and Renewal*, therefore, is not just a tribute to those who have passed, but a celebration of the enduring spirit that connects all Masons, past and present, in a shared journey towards enlightenment.

MASONIC TOASTS

Masonic practices, rituals, and traditions extend beyond the lodge and into the social customs that unite brethren across time and distance. Among them are the ceremonial toasts that stand as powerful gestures of remembrance and fraternity, connecting the

brethren with each other who are present and with those who are absent. During Festive Boards or Table Lodges, Masons across different rites and jurisdictions propose toasts in a specific sequence, each with its own unique meaning. One of the most poignant of these is the 9:00 toast “*to absent brethren*,” honoring those who, for various reasons, are unable to attend the gathering. This simple yet profound ritual acknowledges the bonds of brotherhood that transcend physical presence, ensuring that those who are not there in body are remembered in spirit.

The *Council of Allied Masonic Degrees* takes this tradition a step further with an additional, deeply moving response known as the *4th Toast*. It is proposed “*to the brethren absent forever*,” i.e., to their departed brethren, solemnly acclaiming: “*may our loss be the gain of the Grand Council above*.”

After this declaration, the brethren drain their glasses and place them upside down on the table, symbolizing the finality of death and the emptiness left in their lives. An empty space is reserved at the table for the departed brother, with his glass turned down – a silent yet powerful reminder of his absence. After the toast is proposed, this glass is broken, a ritualistic gesture that signifies the irrevocable nature of death and the indelible mark left by the brother’s life and passing. The ceremony concludes with a moment of silent prayer, allowing the living to reflect on the departed’s contributions and the enduring bond they shared with him. This ritualistic gesture of respect, honor, and acknowledgement signifies the love and importance we all hold in the hearts of our brethren, even after death.

Similar toasts exist within other Masonic bodies, each with its own unique customs. For instance, in the Feast Day ceremonies or *Refections* of the Scottish Rite bodies, the *7th Toast of Obligation* is proposed “*to the memory of all brethren of the degree who have passed from this realm of earthly labor*”

during the present Masonic year.”

These, like all other ceremonial toasts across various Masonic orders, are moments of collective remembrance, where the gathered brethren honor those who have transitioned from the temporal world to the eternal. They are not mere formalities; they are profound expressions of respect, love, and brotherhood. They serve as reminders that within the Masonic tradition, the bonds forged in life do not end with death. Through these ceremonial toasts, Masons ensure that the memory of their brethren remains alive, their spirits still part of the great fellowship, and their contributions are honored forever.

A MASONIC SECRET

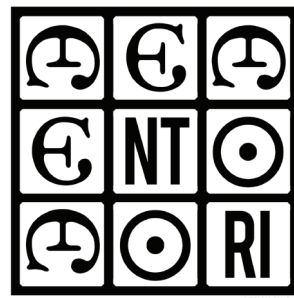
The prologue of Dan Brown’s Masonic-themed novel, *The Lost Symbol*, begins with the line, *“The secret is how to die. Since the beginning of time, the secret had always been how to die.”* Indeed, there is profound wisdom in these words. How we die should reflect the culmination of how we lived. Did we live a life of virtue, kindness and love? Did we live in the service of others rather than merely of ourselves? Did we make life better for those around us, especially our families and loved ones? Living honorably, selflessly, and with integrity, guided by the principles taught us in Masonry, is not merely the best way to live. Indeed, it is the only way to die. For death, when faced by a soul that has lived nobly, is not an end to be feared, but a final testament to a life well spent in harmony with the greater good. This is the true fixation of Masonry on death. It is not some sinister, macabre, or morbid preoccupation, as some outsiders seem to think, rather a profound exploration of our individual purposes for living, where death is undeniably a part. In contemplating death, we begin to understand life, grasping the fleeting nature of our existence, and recognizing that each moment is a precious opportunity to contribute something meaningful to the world. We are reminded

that though our time is limited, our influence is boundless if we choose to live with noble aims. As Masons, we are taught that our deeds echo beyond the grave, and that our actions in life are the true measure of our worth.

In reflecting our mortality, we are also called to consider the legacy we would leave behind – not just in the material possessions we accumulate and eventually bequeath, but also in the virtues we embody, the love we share, and the impact we have made upon the world. The Masonic journey is one of continuous self-improvement, where every lesson learned, and every ritual observed, is a step towards living a life of honor, compassion, and wisdom.

Thusly we say that Masonry’s secret is not merely how to die, but, more importantly, how to live – fully, deeply, and with an unwavering sense of integrity. The confrontation with death then becomes, paradoxically, an affirmation of life.

Let us therefore embrace our Masonic journey with the understanding that our lives are the ultimate Masonic symbols, etched into the memory of those we leave behind. In living well, we ensure that when death comes, it finds us not unprepared, but ready – having lived a life worthy of honor and emulation. We then become immortal in the hearts and minds of men. With this, we fulfill perhaps one of the greatest of Masonry’s achievements – that, by constantly being subjected to a positive and beneficial outlook on death, we ultimately discover the true meaning of life.



DESIGN BY GAV

DEATH OF STONE MASONRY TO PHILOSOPHY

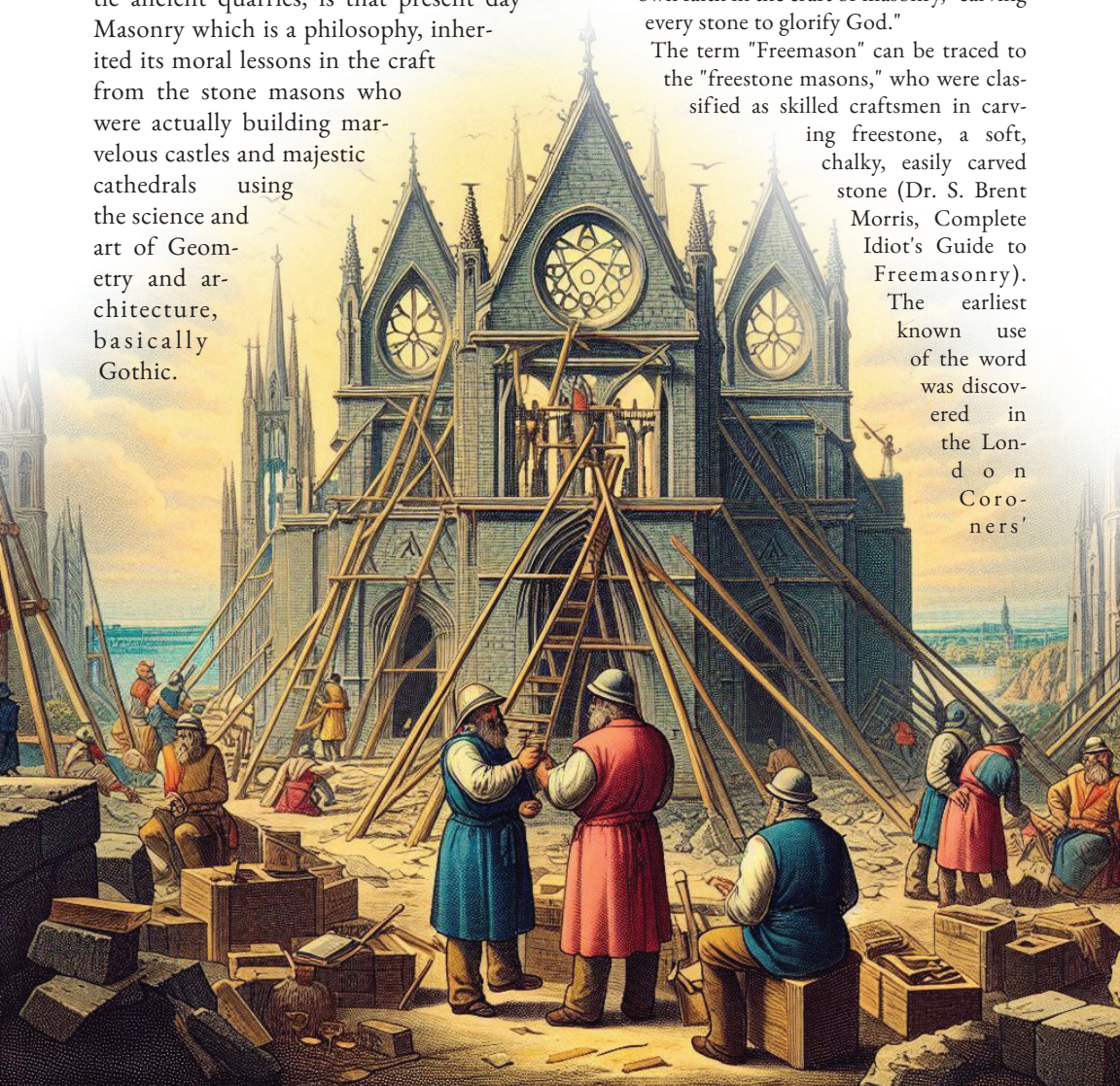
by VW Edgar S. Bentulan (253)

Most authors on Masonry agree that there are no clear records showing what exactly happened that Freemasonry became what is now as Speculative from its origin of stone masonry or Operative Masonry. What is generally accepted by authorities of the mystic ancient quarries, is that present day Masonry which is a philosophy, inherited its moral lessons in the craft from the stone masons who were actually building marvelous castles and majestic cathedrals using the science and art of Geometry and architecture, basically Gothic.

Freemasons Building Gothic Cathedrals

Gothic architecture in religious edifices proliferated in Europe because the style gave a strong appeal to the illiterate faithfuls as it was construed to raise their "devotion to greater height" expressed in the soaring, majestic form of the cathedrals -- and this was how and why Masonry significantly emerged to be a potent institution in human civilization. Using graceful designs in Gothic architecture that Masons of those days did, was accordingly meant to glorify God and at the same time "to extol the skills and artistry of the builders." In his book *Freemasons: Inside the World's Oldest Secret Society*, H. Paul Jeffers chronicles this era of the Middle Ages when men found a means of expressing their own faith in the craft of masonry, "carving every stone to glorify God."

The term "Freemason" can be traced to the "freestone masons," who were classified as skilled craftsmen in carving freestone, a soft, chalky, easily carved stone (Dr. S. Brent Morris, *Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry*). The earliest known use of the word was discovered in the London Coroner's'



Rolls for 1325-1326 by Prof. Andrew Prescott, Center for Research into Freemasonry, University of Sheffield.

Through centuries free masons enjoyed considerable economic leverage in Great Britain as their counterparts in France and Germany were also prospering on their special skills. Works were provided to masons by the monarch primarily for construction of forts and palaces. But most project offers came from bishops and deans of congregations who loved to see marvelous ecclesiastical edifices in their town, if not from the groups of employers called trade guilds. Among the earliest cathedrals they constructed in their legacies in England were those at Canterbury in year 600, Rochester in 602, and St. Paul's Cathedral in London in 605.

Three hundred (300) years later, according to Jeffers, a group of Freemasons was in every large town in Britain excelling in the building of cathedrals, churches and even fortifications, walls and bridges. One of the greatest achievements of the Freemasons in England in 1272 was the Westminster Abbey Cathedral. Before this, an earlier masterpiece was the London Bridge, completed in 1209, constructed of stones to replace a wooden span over the River Thames which remained daring the forces of time for 623 years.

Now a trade union, stone masonry used the Gothic Constitutions or the Old Charges contained in the 1390 Regius Manuscript as its code of conduct. This set of regulations established the rules how the members conduct the trade, how Masters and Apprentices should interact and how Masons should behave.

Old Freemasonry Lies in Coffin

A powerful event in history would dramatically change the direction of Freemasonry from a "fraternity of men bound by their unique craft." On October 31, 1517 a thirty-year old Augustinian monk named Martin Luther, nailed on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany a document titled "Ninety-five Theses," exposing the Church for "buying remission of sins through 'indulgence'." This triggered the chain of events that would transform Freemasonry, Jeffers points out.

In her history succeeding, England suffered more religious, political and social upheaval following after the defiance of the Vatican by King Henry VIII. Making himself head of the Church in England, between 1535 and 1540, Henry VIII decreed to strip the church of its vast lands and transferred them in the hands of the Crown, and terminated the building of churches. This "ended with the solidification of Protestantism in England," and this all the more caused the weakening of the economic strength and support of Freemasonry.

In all this time, this spark of the Protestant Reformation and growing anticlericalism in England and Europe, did not at first affect Masons in remaining loyal to the Catholic Church. Jobs demanding for their extraordinary skills in building cathedrals and religious edifices still flourished in the Christendom. Nonetheless, actually, the Reformation was already causing the slow death of the flourishing building trade of ecclesiastical structures. Old Freemasonry in lodges eventually had to drop its working tools and slowly lie to rest in its coffin of decline.

The Gentlemen Enter

The number of Masons was diminishing. Lodge meetings and activities dwindled. But then, some years later the craft had to open up itself to overcome. From the exclusive "operative," it shifted to "speculative" as it admitted to its membership "gentlemen" or non operative masons, in which the tools of operative masonry were employed in the contemplation of the mysteries of life and its meanings. Now a fraternity of speculative nature, a new form of Masonry gradually recomposed itself, in the words of William Preston, Campbell-Everdeen, to "spiritualizing" masonic labor and its implements. (Freemasonry and It's Etiquette).

From being a trade organization transformed to Speculative Masonry, the craft was then yet divided into two Degrees of Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft. The change in purpose and character of Masonry forced some operative lodges to get rid of their records by burning in order to protect the fraternity's secrets. In resiliency the craft began to make use of allegories, metaphors and symbolical dramas which were emulated from early mystic legends, cults, rituals

and mysteries of the ancient ages.

In 1630 non-operative Masons were already being admitted in Scotland. On May 20, 1641 the Lodge of Edinburgh initiated Sir Robert Moray, the first non-operative Mason recorded in England. Then in October 16, 1646 a lodge at Warrington in Lancashire accepted gentlemen Elias Ashmole and Col. Henry Mainwaring.

But by near end of the chaotic period, London suffered "back-to-back" catastrophic disasters: in 1665 the Great Plague wiped out thousands of lives; and following year, 40,000 homes and 86 churches were consumed by the Great Fire.

Those that survived the conflagration's devastation "had lost all traces" of the ancient rituals and their symbolism. Masonic historian C. W. Leadbeater notes of this period, "that the decay of the lodges had a disastrous effect on the ancient ritual" handed by word of mouth from the days of the Roman Collegia. The oral tradition, says Leadbeater, "had become corrupted," the words accompanying the ancient rituals "degenerated into mere verbal jargon," often unintelligible to the receivers.

From the Tomb, GMHA Rises

Facing a crisis threatening the future of Masonry in its transition to a new fraternity, fired by some internal differences, in February 1717 members of the four Lodges in London formed the governing Premier Grand Lodge of England: Lodge No. 1 which met at the Goose and Gridiron alehouse near St. Paul's;

No. 2 that met at Crown alehouse in Parker's Lane, near Drury Lane; No. 3, convening at the Apple Tree tavern, Covent Garden; and, Lodge No. 4, meeting at Rummer and Grapes tavern, Channel Row, Westminster.

After four months, on June 24, 1717, feast of St. John the Baptist, patron saint of Masonry, the four Lodges met again at the Goose and Gridiron alehouse and elected as the first Grand Master, Anthony Sawyer, an operative mason and member of Lodge No. 3.

Over the centuries, rituals and ceremonies grew by "a gradual buildup" but Masonry was still in

two degrees. When sooner the gentlemen, noted mostly from intellectual elite and the nobility, became more and more dominant, "more highly refined symbolisms" in serious, profound rational thinking or philosophy were added. Symbolic tests, historical lessons, and penalties were instituted, the last one, accordingly, largely picked from British penal codes. Following Sawyer's election as grand master, John Montagu, second Duke of Montagu, was voted as next Grand Master. Succeeding grand masters, henceforth, all came from the nobility or royal family, and this entrenched the protection of Britain's Freemasonry by the aristocracy.

From the rubble of the tomb of old craft, building majesty, in metaphor GMHA in masonry after all lives! On September 29, 1721, the Grand Lodge commissioned Rev. James Anderson of Scotland to digest the Old Gothic Constitutions and as a result The Constitutions of the Free-Masons or the Anderson's Constitutions was codified. Later in October 1730, the Craft was divided into three Degrees of Masonry when the 3rd Degree of Master Mason was added. The transpiration of the three Degrees was confirmed in Samuel Prichard's expose in Masonry Dissected. Then in 1772 William Preston came up with his Illustrations of Masonry, which earned imprimatur from the Grand Lodge and became the first written guidance to be used even up to today in ceremonies of Masonic lodges.

What followed in the morrow was the spread of Freemasonry -- albeit in variation of contentions -- outside Europe as the British Empire extended its hegemony into the American colonies. In 1797 Thomas Smith Webb of Massachusetts published The Freemason's Monitor that became the basis of modern Masonic rituals.



IONIC COLUMN

BY WB LARRY CARBONEL, PM (116)

Grand Lodge Recognition and Regularity

When we attend the ANCOM, we see foreign masonic dignitaries with their distinctive regalia being received during the opening ceremonies of the said event. From time to time, we might find a foreigner brother or a balikbayan Mason visit our lodge. We also find brethren belonging to our Grand Lodge visit lodges overseas. Some of us might also become members of lodges in other countries. Locally, we can visit Lodge Perla de Oriente No. 1032, S.C. and even Mabuhay Lodge No. 59, a Prince Hall Lodge. On the other hand, our Grand Lodge forbids us to have masonic intercourse or memberships in groups it deemed as clandestine masonic organizations. These instances are all governed by the system and concept of Grand Lodge Recognition and Regularity. In theory, every Grand Lodge considers itself to be “regular” as a prerequisite of its existence. Regularity refers to the adherence to established principles, rituals, and landmarks that define a legitimate Masonic Grand Lodge. This ensures that a Grand Lodge operates within the traditional framework of Freemasonry, maintaining its historical and philosophical integrity. However, this self-appointed status needs to be validated by other regular Grand Lodges. They have a set

of criteria that explicitly state the required conditions that must be complied with for a certain Grand Lodge to be classified as “regular.” Once these are met, then the said Grand Lodge is granted “recognition.”

When mutual recognition is attained, the Grand Lodges are said to be in “amity” which means friendly relations. It is a term usually applied to friendship among nations. Recognition includes establishing and preserving fraternal relations among regular Grand Lodges, which is comparable to diplomatic relations between countries. However, when certain fundamental standards are not observed, withdrawal of recognition is the eventual manifestation of disapproval of an action taken by a Grand Lodge.

HISTORY

The history of the conceptualization of Recognition and Regularity goes as far back as the early days of Speculative Freemasonry. In the General Regulations of 1720 (as contained in the 1723 Constitutions), the term “regular lodges” was first used. Regulation VIII states that:

“If any Set or Number of Masons shall take upon themselves to form a Lodge without the Grand-Master’s Warrant, the regular Lodges are not to countenance them, nor own them as fair Brethren and duly form’d, nor approve of the Acts and Deeds; but must treat them as Rebels, until they humble themselves, as the Grand-Master shall in his Prudence direct....”

In 1751, the Ancient Grand Lodge was formed rivalling the premier Grand Lodge which was nicknamed as the “Modern” Grand Lodge. Intervisitation between these two contending grand bodies were prohibited. In 1755, the Modern Grand Lodge started issuing certificates to members of its lodges to confirm that the bearer was a legitimate Mason in good standing, which could be used for purposes of visitation both domestically and abroad. In 1813, Modern and Ancient Grand Lodges united forming the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).

Albert Mackey in 1858 published the 25 Landmarks of Freemasonry. It was consequently adopted by the Grand Lodge of the Philippines (GLP). These Landmarks form part of the bases of regularity.

In 1877, the Grand Orient de France (GODF), officially removed all mention of the ‘Grand Architect of the Universe’ in its rituals and documents and remove the requirement for Masons to have a belief in a Supreme Being. This decision led to a schism between the GODF and the UGLE. Since then, freemasonry is divided in two branches, The Anglo-American, a.k.a. Regular or Mainstream Freemasonry led by the UGLE, and the Continental, a.k.a. Liberal or Adogmatic Freemasonry led by the GODF.

The UGLE in 1929 codified the “Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition” and in 1949, the “Aims and Relationship of the Craft.”

In 1952, the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America (COGMNA) established the Commission on Information for Recognition (CIR). Its purpose is to gather, collate, and from time to time, revise information on Grand Lodges in other lands, as a service to the Grand Lodges of the Conference. The CIR is considered as the best and most reliable source for information on “regularity” in North America.

MASONIC LAW BOOK (MLB) PROVISIONS

For GLP, the relevant provisions on Recognition and Regularity are contained in Part V Masonic Sovereignty, Traditions and Forms, Section 1 Grand Lodge Recognitions and Relations of our latest MLB (2019 Edition):

(a) BASIS FOR RECOGNITION OF GRAND LODGES

RESOLVED, that the following be adopted as the fundamental requirements in establishing regularity as the basis for recognition of Grand Lodges by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines:

I. Legitimacy of the origin of constituent lodges uniting to form a Grand Lodge.

II. Sovereign and independent control of Ancient Craft Masonry in the State, province or other territorial divisions constituting the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge.

III. Belief in God, and the presence of the Bible on the Altar as the Great Light in Masonry. Inherent in this is the acceptance of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. (Proceedings 1915,62)

(b) BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR GRAND LODGE RECOGNITION

1. Regularity of origin, i.e., each Grand Lodge, shall have been established by a duly recognized Grand Lodge or by three or more regularly constituted Lodges.

2. That a belief in the Great Architect of the Universe and His revealed will shall be an essential qualification for membership.

3. That all initiates shall take their Obligation on or in full view of the open Volume of the Sacred Law, by which is meant the revelation from above, which is binding on the conscience of the particular individual

who is being initiated.

4. That the membership of the Grand Lodge and individual Lodges shall be composed exclusively of men; and that each Grand Lodge shall have no Masonic intercourse of any kind with mixed Lodges or bodies which admit women to membership.

The establishment by a Grand Lodge of female Lodges either separately or in connection with Lodges for men would be unmasonic, illegal, null and void and would subject that Grand Lodge to severance of fraternal relations.

5. That the Grand Lodge shall have sovereign jurisdiction over the Lodges under its control; i.e., that it shall be responsible, independent, self-governing organization, with sole and undisputed authority over the Craft or Symbolic Degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason) within its own jurisdiction; and shall not in any way be subject to or divide such authority with a Supreme Council or other Power claiming any control or supervision over those degrees.

6. That the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (namely, the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square of the Compasses) shall always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or its subordinate Lodges are at work, the chief of this being the Volume of the Sacred Law.

7. That the principles of the Ancient Landmarks, customs and usage of the Craft shall be strictly observed.

(The above Standards of Recognition, which are those used by the United Grand Lodge of England, were adopted by our Grand Lodge on January 27, 1932)

The “Basis for Recognition of Grand Lodges” was presented during the 1915 GLP ANCOM by VW Amos G. Bellis, who was then the Grand Secretary.

The original 1929 Basic Principles of Grand Lodge Recognition of UGLE contains eight provisions and can be found in its latest 2024 Book of Constitutions. The same list of eight provisions can be found in the 1932 GLP Proceedings when it was approved. For some reason, what was not found any more in our latest MLB is the original 7th provision: “That the discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge shall be strictly prohibited.” Research made at the GLP Library shows that the 1962 and earlier MLBs have the eight provisions but the 1994 and later MLBs have only seven.

The Ancient Landmarks as specified in the Basic Principles above, as far as GLP is concerned, refers to the Landmarks or the Unwritten Law by Albert G. Mackey found in Part V Masonic Sovereignty, Traditions and Forms, Section 4 Masonic Tradition in our MLB (2019 Edition).

The Committee on Correspondence (also known as the Committee on Foreign Relations and Correspondence) is tasked with Grand Lodge recognition matters. Part I CONSTITUTION, Article VII Standing and Other Committees states that:

g) Committee on Correspondence. The Committee shall be composed of three (3) members including its Chairman as appointed by the Grand Master. Its functions, duties and responsibilities are as follows:

1) To review the written proceedings of other Grand Lodges as may be received by the Grand Lodge and submit a written report to the Annual Communication for appropriate action of the Grand Lodge; and

2) To study and review requests from other Grand Lodges for recognition and to submit to the Grand Master a written report of its recommendation.

DISCUSSION

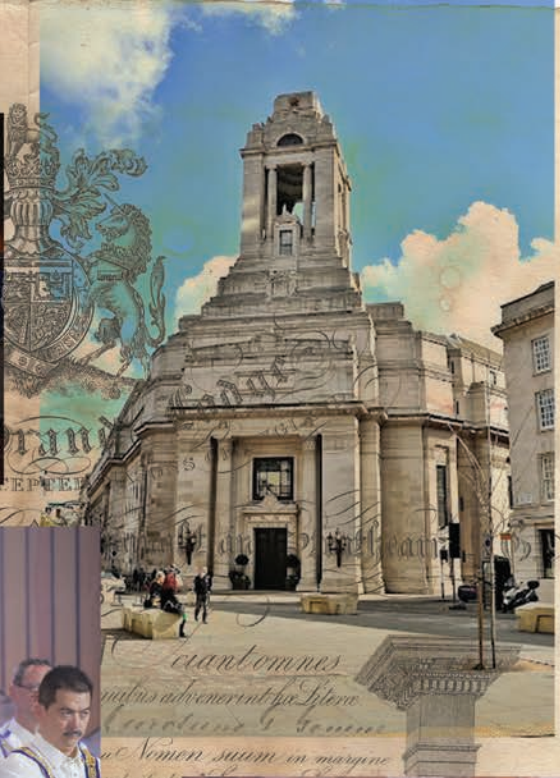
Soon after the foundation of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands (GLPI, now the GLP) in December 1912, it sent correspondences to regular Grand Lodges all over the world requesting for recognition. The first Grand Lodge to recognize the GLP is the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire on 21 May 1913. Our Mother Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of California recognized the GLP on 15 October 1913. There were 17 US Grand Lodges that recognized the GLP in 1913 alone. Other US and Canadian Grand Lodges recognized GLPI in 1914. On 2 June 1915, the UGLE, the Mother Grand Lodge of the World recognized the GLP.

As listed in its website, the GLP is in amity with a total of 121 Grand Lodges all over the World. Not in the list are the Grand Lodges of Pennsylvania and Wyoming though they recognized GLP as early as 1913. In the website of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the GLP is on its list of recognized Grand Lodges. The GLP also recognizes the Prince Hall Grand Lodges of Pennsylvania and Washington State. The latest to be recognized by the GLP is the Grand Lodge of Russia.

The annual report of the GLP Committee on Foreign Relations and Correspondence can be read in the Proceedings. In it, we find communications sent by foreign Grand Lodges seeking to be recognized by GLP. There are also notices sent by recognized Grand Lodges regarding recogni-

tion updates and issues. Historically, this Committee relies on the advice from the Grand Lodge of California, the UGLE and the CIR of COGMNA before recommending a certain Grand Lodge for recognition.

Majority of Grand Lodges that maintain amity with other Grand Lodges, participate in an old Masonic custom of exchanging Grand Representatives. Each regular Grand Lodge approves a nominee to serve as their representative at his (representative's) Grand Lodge meetings. Since the representatives are not necessarily located at the Grand Lodge, they are usually designated as being "near" the Grand Lodge. A Commission, or certificate of Appointment, is issued to the representative by the Grand Lodge he is representing. The list of Grand Representatives is usually found at the end of the GLP Proceedings publication. Grand Lodges in amity regularly exchange information about their activities and developments in their grand jurisdictions by providing each other with their Proceedings, and other publications through the Grand Representatives. There are many tangible and intangible advantages of Grand Lodge Recognition. Brethren of Grand Lodges in Amity have the privilege to visit each other's lodges and even become members by affiliation. However, it is considered a serious masonic offense to visit lodges of non-recognized or deemed clandestine masonic bodies. Dignitaries of Grand Lodges in Amity can also attend and be received at the opening of each other's Annual Communications. The courtesy conferral of degrees is another tangible benefit to many candidates and brethren.



D. Cohille Smith G.SEC.

In 1919, when MW Manuel L. Quezon led the Philippine Independence Mission in the US, he was swamped with invitations to attend masonic functions. The masonic reception he and his party experienced in this US visit is much different compared before when he was a member of Gran Oriente Espanol (GOE). At that time, he was refused admission into the lodges because the GOE was declared a clandestine masonic organization by the US Grand Lodges. After the 1917 Fusion of GLPI and the GOE Lodges in the Philippines, Quezon became Grand Master in 1918 of a regular Grand Lodge. This time he fraternized with Grand Masters and other Masonic dignitaries and they competed with each another to invite him to Masonic gatherings. Quezon's Masonic contacts in the US helped him in his official mission. Freemasonry opened wide doors which would have otherwise remained closed to his official party. His official party was given fair hearings and treated with utmost civility and courtesy when they testified in both Houses of the US Congress.

There is a certain measure of pride in knowing that GLP is "recognized" as a "regular" Grand Lodge by over one hundred regular Grand Lodges around the world. Recognition demonstrates the universal appeal of Freemasonry in which each regular Grand Lodge has a role and responsibility. It gives brethren the assurance in knowing that in these times of political, ethnic, and religious strife, we can find other brethren, with the same core values in many parts of this troubled world, that we can wholeheartedly trust.

In relation to the theme of this issue: both

regularity and memento mori call to attention to the legacy that Masons leave behind. Regular Grand Lodges ensure that the Craft's traditions are preserved for future generations while memento mori call reminds each Mason that our present actions shape their memory and influence tomorrow. They also share emphasis on introspection and moral conduct. They encourage Masons to be mindful of their actions and strive to be better individuals. By combining memento mori with masonic regularity, Freemasonry creates a powerful framework for personal growth, ethical behavior, and a deeper understanding of life's transient nature. This combination helps Masons lead lives that are not only meaningful but also aligned with the core values of the fraternity.

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MASONIC EDUCATION

VW DENNIS L. CUNANAN

SENIOR GRAND LECTURER



Our Masonic Education for October discusses the importance of our Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services. This topic for the sixth Month of Masonic Year 2024 – 2025 again places the spotlight on ENLIGHTENMENT - the second of the three Strategic Phases of the Grand Master's theme.

As discussed in the previous month, our Masonic Rituals are the heart and soul of Masonry as all our tenets, philosophies, and lessons reside there. Anthropologists divide rituals into three (3) categories: Communal Rites, Rites of Passage, and Rites of Personal Devotion. Our Masonic Rituals can also be classified into these categories and Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services – being performed by the Lodge out of respect for a departed brother are considered among the Communal Rites in Masonry.

In the GLP Manual for Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services (MMFMS) prepared by the Committee on Custodian of the Work, the following were observed:

1. The Ritual described for MASONIC FUNERAL SERVICES is intended in honor of a deceased brother whose body or ashes are lying in state (nakaburol) or on the day of his funeral (paglilibing) or cremation.
2. The Ritual of the MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE LODGE OF SORROW is intended in honor of the memory of the deceased brother or brethren long buried or cremated (pag-alala). Replacing the coffin, urn, or tomb, is a catafalque – a raised bier, box, or similar platform where the names and portraits of the departed are solemnly

placed.

3. Based on Masonic Practices, the rituals and ceremonies of a LODGE OF REMEMBRANCE are similar to the Lodge of Sorrow except that it is traditionally held in October.

Masonic Protocol dictates that the Blue Lodge will be the last to perform. Once a Funeral Rite by a Blue Lodge is concluded, no other Masonic Order may follow.

In our August Lecture “The Importance of the National Language in Masonry” – we mentioned several of our masonic rituals translated into Filipino and among them was the Version for Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services translated by WB Julian Cruz Balmaceda – Charter Master of Pintong Bato Lodge No. 51 namely: Rito ng Paglilibing ng mga Mason (Masonic Funeral Rites) and the Ritwal na Pampaglingkod Alaala (Ritual for Memorial Services).

Masonic Funerals have a long and storied history, rooted in the ancient traditions of brotherhood and fraternity. While the exact origins of the ritual are unclear, it is believed that the rites draw from the practices of medieval stonemasons who honored their fellow workers after death. With the flourishing of speculative Masonry by the 18th century, Masonic Funeral Rituals had become more formalized. These rites were based on the traditions of operative stonemasons but infused with symbolic meaning that reflected the philosophical and moral teachings of Free-



masonry. As lodges spread across Europe and the New World, the funeral ritual evolved into the solemn ceremony we recognize and revere today.

A Masonic Funeral Service is more than a simple farewell or “paying our last respects”. It is a final reiteration of the lessons we learned while progressing through the degrees of Freemasonry, building upon one of the fundamental requirements for prospective members of the Craft – the immortality of the soul. It is, as the Worshipful Master says in the ritual, “the last sad tribute of our affection; thereby demonstrating the sincerity of our past esteem for him and our steady attachment to the principles of our beloved Order.” As such, the reasons why we perform these services are varied and far ranging.

First and foremost, for the Departed Brother - it is a tribute to a Brother's life, honoring his masonic life and legacy - his “journey” as a Mason. In the Scroll of Remembrance, the brother who had dropped his working tools is recognized for “his fraternal sacrifices, devoted services and to the cause of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines.”

Secondly, for the Family of the Departed Brother, particularly his widow and orphans, the service offers solace and support, ensuring they understand that their loved one's legacy will live on, not only in their hearts but in the fraternity he was a part of. It is also an opportunity to reassure the departed Brother's widow and orphans of their continuing link with our fraternity despite the passing of their loved ones – a reiteration of one of our most basic and fundamental Masonic duties to provide them aid and assistance.

Thirdly, for Masons, the funeral service is an affirmation of our fraternity's core values, demonstrating our commitment to our principal tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. As with all Masonic rituals, it is an opportunity to learn, transmitting the time-honored lessons of our Craft. The Masonic

funeral emphasizes that while life is temporary, the virtues we embrace in Masonry are eternal. It is a reminder of our mortality and the importance of living a virtuous life.

Finally, for Non-Masons, a Masonic funeral service is often their first true exposure to the traditions, beautiful and timeless rituals, and deep meaning behind our Fraternity. At this somber service, they will likely establish their opinions and form important perceptions of our organization. Upon witnessing the ritual and ceremony, the public becomes curious as to who we are, what we stand for, and what we believe in, as an organization.

In this way, a Masonic funeral bridges the gap between life and death, providing comfort to the living while celebrating the moral and ethical principles of the deceased.

ELEMENTS & SYMBOLISM

The Masonic funeral ritual is rich in symbolism. It is conducted with dignity, respect, and solemnity, reflecting the virtues that we as Masons hold dear. The ceremony is open to all, Masons and non-Masons alike, allowing everyone to witness the fraternity's deep respect for the departed brother. Some of the key elements of the Masonic funeral include:

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

Symbolizing immortality, this sprig reminds us of the soul's eternal nature, which transcends the physical body and continues beyond death. “This acacia, which once marked the temporary resting place of one illustrious in Masonic history, is an emblem of our enduring faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded that we have an imperishable part within us, which shall survive the grave and which will never, never die. By it we are admonished that, though like brother we too shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death, yet, through the loving goodness of our Supreme Grand Master, we may confidently hope that, like this evergreen, our souls

will hereafter flourish in eternal spring.”

THE WHITE APRON

A white apron is placed on the deceased Brother, a symbol of the purity of life and conduct, and a reminder of the first gift he received upon becoming a Mason. “This lamb-skin apron is an emblem of innocence, and the peculiar badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, and, when worthily worn more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order which earthly power can confer. By this act we are reminded of the universal dominion of Death. The arm of Friendship cannot oppose the King of Terrors; the shield of Fraternal Love cannot protect his victim; nor can the charms of Innocence avert his fatal touch. All, all must die. We are continually reminded that we, too, are mortal, and that ere long our bodies, also, shall molder into dust. How important then it is for us to know that our Redeemer Liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

THE SCROLL OF REMEMBRANCE

The Masonic Funeral Service ritual prescribes that “The Secretary should prepare an “Obituary Roll”, on which should be inscribed the name, place and date of birth, date of initiation, passing and raising, or affiliation, and date of death of the deceased brother.” Only strictly Masonic matters deemed appropriate or of special interest to the Lodge should be included. There should be no reference to domestic or business relations. At the proper time this roll should be read either by the Master or Secretary and later deposited in the archives of the Lodge.”

Edict No. 145 (Mateo), instructs the presentation of the “Scroll of Remembrance” - a written document extolling the masonic virtues of the deceased Brother to his bereaved family at the time of the necrological / funeral service “in recognition of his fraternal sacrifices, devoted services and contribution to the cause of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines.”

Biblical Passages, Invocation, and Benediction - in Freemasonry we are always reminded that “No man should ever enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of God.” This underscores the importance of Prayer in our Craft. Lodges are always opened and closed with a prayer and prayer is often used in our ceremonies. In Masonic Funeral Services, the Chaplain's role is even more evident, as he gives both the Invocation to open the ceremony and the Benediction to formally close it.

INVOCATION

“Most Gracious God, Author of all good, and giver of all mercy, extend Thy blessing to us, and grant that the solemnity of this occasion may Brethren Mourners Brethren Mourners bind us yet closer in the bonds of brotherly love. /// May the present instance of mortality remind us of our approaching destiny. May our affections be weaned from the things of the world and fixed more devotedly on Thee, our only safe refuge in the hour of need. And grant that when the summons shall come for us to quit the transitory scenes of earth, the light which is from above shall dispel the encircling gloom. May we go hence with faith in Thee, in full hope of a resurrection, and with charity toward all men. May we be admitted into Celestial Lodge on high, to an everlasting reunion with the souls of our departed friends and brethren.”

BENEDICTION

“The Lord bless us and keep us! The Lord make His face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us! The Lord lift upon us the light of His countenance and give us peace! Amen.”

PASSAGES FROM THE VOLUME OF THE SACRED LAW

Masonry being religious in nature has its rituals imbued with selected verses from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. For funeral rites, emphasize the following:

“The silver cord is loosed: the golden bowl is broken; the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel is broken at the cistern. The dust has returned to the earth as it was, and the spirit has returned to God who gave it.” - Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” - Job 14:1-2

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” - Revelation 21:4

Eulogies - After the formal ceremony, a speech or piece of writing in tribute to the departed is given by volunteers or selected Brethren close to the departed Brother, citing his Masonic virtues and deeds.

Music - helps set the tone and atmosphere at a Masonic funeral service, and the ritual prescribes the playing of appropriate music at strategic portions of the ceremony. The following are the prescribed playlist:

The Lord's Prayer – to be played immediately following the Invocation. Chaplain leads the Brethren in reciting the Lord's Prayer, after which a musical rendition of the same is played.

Peyel's Hymn – a familiar tune during the second section of the Third Degree Conferral, this is played and sung while the Brethren deposit the acacia sprigs at the tomb or coffin of the departed Brother.

Nearer, my God, to Thee – another song known to masons being played during the first section of the Third Degree Conferral, it is prescribed to be sung or played at the end of the Funeral Ceremony.

Other Songs or Hymns are prescribed to be

played at the Procession and other parts of the ceremony and the Brethren performing the service are advised to choose appropriately. Highly recommended are the funeral songs and dirges from Brother Mason - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Masonic Funeral Music in C minor, K. 477 and Requiem as well as the sad pieces of Brother Mason Nicanor Abelardo. The works of other Classical composers can also be used appropriately like Adagio for Strings (Samuel Barber); Canon in D (Johann Pachelbel); Air on a G String (Johann Sebastian Bach); and many more.

Our Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services are enshrined in our Constitution and is an integral part of the Masonic Law Book (MLB) as part of LODGE PROTOCOL:

Under ARTICLE II – one of the POWERS OF THE LODGE is to conduct public or private funeral or memorial services for its deceased members (Sec. 3 / Letter O).

In ARTICLE III - among the DUTIES OF THE LODGE is to perform Masonic funeral services for a member when requested and bury him when necessary (Sec. 3 / Letter D); and To perform Masonic funeral services for any mason in good standing who dies within its jurisdiction, bury him when requested and to pay the burial expenses if his financial circumstances are insufficient, which however, shall be reimbursed by the lodge of which he was an actual member. No lodge shall fix in advance the amount to be paid for burial. A lodge may, at its discretion, perform funeral services for a brother who was suspended for non-payment of dues, if there is no other Masonic offense established against him. The Master and Wardens shall determine the propriety of burying a suicide with such honors; (Sec. 3 / Letter E)

One the several PROHIBITIONS ON A LODGE in ARTICLE IV includes meeting on a Sunday except for funeral services (Sec. 2 / Letter F)

For Article XIV, the SECRETARY shall keep the

following books of the Lodge on the prescribed form: Book of Constitution, Installation Book, Funeral & Memorial Service Book, and volume of the Sacred Law (Sec. 2 / Letter B)

Under Article XIX A / Sec. 3 – CLOTHING, the proper attire at a funeral or memorial service is that no jewels shall be worn and the Master shall wear no hat. Only white aprons shall be used and the officers shall wear white gloves. The occasion should focus on the departed brother and is not a time to display masonic ranks and titles.

CONCLUSION

The passing of a Brother Mason is a deeply solemn and sacred event for our fraternity. Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services stands among the most meaningful ceremonies in our tradition. It is a time not only for mourning but also for celebrating the life, values, and legacy of the departed. As Freemasons, we are reminded of our duty to one another, even in death, the ritual serves as a powerful symbol of our bond and beliefs. We hope that this lecture has enlightened the Brethren on the differences between the three Masonic Funeral Rites:

The MASONIC FUNERAL SERVICES, MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE LODGE OF SORROW, and the LODGE OF REMEMBRANCE.

Despite the differentiating conditions, Masonic Funeral Rites for the departed have one thing in common - they are done in public, in the presence of both masons and non-masons as it is the symbolic way for Masons to offer up a brother's memory before the world, the last sad tribute of affection: thereby demonstrating the sincerity of the brethren's esteem for the brother and their steady attachment to the principles of the beloved order of the Craft.

As a fraternity that values secrecy, there are only a handful of occasions when we as Masons perform ceremonies and services in public form.

Laying the cornerstone of our masonic edifices, installation of our elected and appointed officers for the ensuing masonic year, and our charity work, are just a few examples. However, the performance of our Masonic Funeral Rites presents a different public expression of our Craft. Masonic Funeral and Memorial Services are more solemn and somber than the installation of Lodge Officers and Laying of Cornerstones, which are festive events. More often, the Brother was a close friend and companion, and our relationship with him transcends more than just regular co membership to our Fraternity in general and to our Lodge in particular. Other times, we may know the departed Brother more by reputation and the service is our final honoring of his life and a demonstration of our respect. Recalling last month's lecture – Masonic CEREMONIES reflect the beliefs, hopes, traditions, culture, and spirituality of our Fraternity showing others that Masons are united and belong to each other. Ceremonies in tribute to our departed brethren can motivate us, stimulate our emotions, and prompt those memories of our friendship and fellowship. Masonic RITUALS reinforce these beliefs, hopes, traditions, culture, and spirituality. Our Rituals are done in commemoration of our relationship with the deceased brethren - reminding us of our mortality and that we too shall soon drop our working tools and stand naked and alone at the pearly gates.

GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR LECTURERS

Note: DGL's answers to these questions shall be among their contributions to the Lecture: 1. Have you been witness to a Masonic Funeral Service? What parts of the service made you "emotional"?

2. Reflect on how witnessing a Masonic Funeral Service has impacted your thoughts and feelings about the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul.

3. Do you wonder what your own Masonic Funeral Service would be like? How would you like it to be performed?

Daminggalan ni Kuya Dong

Ilang Kwentong Paramdam

Dahil nalalapit na ang Panahon ng Undas, ang laman ng aking pitak (column) sa ikatlong labas ng The Cable Tow ay mga kwentong may bahid ng kababalaghan sa mismong baluarte ng Masoneriya sa Pilipinas.

Una akong nakaapak sa purok ng GLP - buwan ng Marso, taong 2008 nang magpasyang kumatok sa pinto ng masonerya sa pamamagitan ng Lohiya Dapitan Blg. 21. Pagpasok pa lamang sa malaking arko at tarangkahan sa kalye Benitez, ay namangha na agad ang inyong lingkod sa maringal na kaanyuan ng Grand Lodge of the Philippines. Sa lugar kung saan naroroon ang Obelisk Café at Restaurant ngayon, ay may nakatirik na kubong pawid o nipa hut na siyang tindahan ng Pamilya Pili. Ang Bahay Kubo na nakalilim sa isang malaking puno ng acacia ay siyang tambayan ng mga kuyang matapos ang kanilang mga pagpupulong at nagpapalipas ng rush hour sa pamamagitan ng ilang timba o bucket ng San Mig Lights. Nang ako'y maging Maestro Mason noong July 20 taong 2009, aking napagalaman na matagal na palang pag-aari ng GLP ang lupaing kinatitirikan ng mga

gusaling nadatnan na natin sa compound na tumatagos mula San Marcelino St. sa gawing silangan hanggang Gen. Luna St. sa bandang kanluran. Subalit dahil malimit na nakasara ang mga daanan sa magkabilang kalsada, mapapasok lamang ang GLP sa pamamagitan ng pagtumbok sa Kalye Benitez na nasa kalagitnaan ng Escoda St. sa katimugang bahagi ng lupain.

Ang gusali na nakabungad sa San Marcelino St. na taglay ang numerong 1440 ay ang Plaridel Masonic Temple. Naipundar daw ito bago pa sumiklab ang Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig. Ayon sa ating Grand Historian at kasama sa Cable Tow na si VW Harold Santiago – ang templo masoniko ay unang ipinaayos ni MW Jose Abad Santos noong siya ang Gran Maestre taong 1938. Ang malaking gusali naman na may mata ay pinangalanang New GLP Temple at pinasinayanan taong 1990 sa panunungkulan ni MW John Choa bilang Grand Master.

Dahil na rin sa matagal na pagkakatirik ng mga gusaling pagmason sa compound, hindi nakapagtataka na hitik sa kuwento at kasaysayan ang lupain. Mangilan-ngilan dito ay maaaring makapagpatindig ng inyong balahibo.



Mga Karanasan ng Pamilya Pili

Para sa sanaysay na ito, ating kinapanayam si Aling Ging at kanyang anak na si Niña. Bagamat malaon ng nawala ang nipa hut, ang pamilya Pili ay patuloy na naghahanda ng meryenda para sa iba't-ibang lohiya at masonic groups sa GLP at Scottish Rite Temple sa loob 39 na taon. Dahil na rin sa mahabang taon kanilang paglilingkod sa mga mason (halos apat na dekada), ang mag-ina ay nagkapagbahagi ng ilan sa kanilang mga karanasang may taglay na kababalaghan. Kabilang dito ang hindi pangkaraniwang tagpo sa limang Nagdaang Gran Maestre (Past Grand Masters) na di-umano ay kanilang nakahalubilo bagamat sumakabilang buhay na.

Food Order para sa Palma Hall

Pagbabalik-tanaw ni Aling Ging. “October 2005 po – may isang Amerikanong Mason ang lumapit sa akin sa nipa hut



Ang mag-Inang Cecile (Aling Ging) at Niña Pili ay tumatanggap pa din ng mga Food Orders para sa mga Lohiya at iba pang samahan ng mga Mason para sa kanilang mga pulong sa GLP at SRT. Mag-mensahe lamang sa numerong 0908-588-9110.

upang magpahanda ng 40 pieces na chicken sandwich para daw sa kanilang Lodge Meeting.” Matapos ihanda ang mga order, ay agad niya itong inihatid sa Palma Hall sa GLP Building at doon ay nag-hintay sa labas ng bulwagan. “Naririnig ko na may mga nag-uusap sa loob ng silid, may pumupokpok pa nga po kaya naupo lang ako sa labas.” Habang naghihintay ay may mangilan-ngilan pa daw na mga Amerikano ang lumalabas mula sa nasabing pagpupulong upang magpunta ng CR. “Naisip ko pa po noon – aba may bagong lodge yata sa GLP na pang-Ameri-

kano.” Dagdag ni Aling Ging habang dinadaan-daanan ng mga naka-Amerikana. Dumaan ang ilang oras at hindi pa din lumalabas ang taong nag-order sa kaniya ng mga sandwich hanggang sa datnan siya ng isang kuyang na mason na umakyat sa 4th floor at nag-usisa kung ano ang ginagawa niya doon. Matapos magpaliwanag na naghatid lamang siya ng meryenda para sa mga nagmi-miting sa Palma Hall, sumagot ang ating kapatid na may halong pagtataka. *“Wala naman pong Stated o Special Meeting na naka schedule sa Palma Hall ngayon, Ate Ging.”* Binuksan pa ng kuyang ang pinto ng Palma Hall upang ipakita sa ginang ang loob ng bulwagan na madilim, tahimik, at walang bakas ng anumang pagpupulong!

Ibinigay na lamang ng pobreng ale ang mga sandwich sa mga janitor at guwardya sa GLP habang ang ilang natira ay kaniyang iniuwi sa pamilya. Pagbaba ng gusali bitbit ang mga meryenda, ay nahagip ng kanyang mata ang larawan ng Amerikanong mason na nag-order sa kanya kangikangina lamang. Ito ay walang iba kundi si MW John O. Wallace ang GM natin noong 1974. Para sa kaalaman ng lahat, si MW Wallace ay ang huling Amerikanong Grand Master sa Grand Lodge of the Philippines. Siya ay ipinanganak taong 1911, naging mason sa Manila Mt. Lebanon Lodge No. 1, at pumanaw noong 1992.

Ang Gripo sa Stafford Hall

Ang anak na dalaga ni Aling Ging ay may mga ibinahagi din, lalo na sa mga pana-

hong siya ang pinauuna ng Ina upang maghanda ng mga kasangkapan o dili kaya ay magligpit ng mga pinagkainan matapos ang mga miting sa ika-apat na palapag ng gusali. *“Minsan habang naghubugas po ako ng mga pinggan sa may Stafford Hall, bigla na lang namamatay ang tubig. Kusang sumasara po ang gripo kahit hindi pa ako tapos mag-urong at bigla din pong magbubukas na parang may nagbibiro.”* Saad ni Niña. Dugtong pa niya na pagkatapos daw ng paramdam sa tubig at gripo ay iihip ang hangin na siya namang magpapalamig sa paligid kahit dapit hapon pa lamang.

Nakasalubong sa lumang elevator

Ayon din kay Niña, maging sa lumang elevator ay may nararanasan siyang kakai-ba. *“May mga pagkakataon po – habang bumababa o umaakyat ang elevator, bigla na lamang po iyun hihinto kaya natatakot po akong sumakay doon ng mag-isa.”*

Subalit ang pinakakahindik na karanasan ng pamilya sa lumang elevator ng GLP ay ang naikwento ni Aling Ging. *“Panahon po iyon na ang Building Administrator ay si Kuyang Wilfredo Bihis. Galing 4th Floor, ibababa ko po sana ang mga mineral water para sa mga Taga-Ilog Lodge No. 79 na nagpe-fellowship sa nipa but. Nagkasabay po kami ni Kuyang Willy pababa ng elevator, pero imbis na dumerecho pababa ay bumalik ito sa taas sabay baba ulit.”*

Mga dalawang beses pa daw nagbaba-taas ang elevator at sa ikatlong pagkakataon ay huminto sa ikatlong palapag at dahan-

dahang bumukas ang pinto...

“Pagbukas po ng elevator sa Third Floor, nakita ko po si MW Jolly Bugarin – nakasombrero pa. Nagmamadali ko pong pinindot ang buton para isara ang elevator dahil sa takot.” Sabi ni Aling Ging. Nagtataka naman si Kuyang Willy kaya siya ay nagtanong: *“Bakit mo isinara Ate? Sasabay ata ang Kuyang sa pagbaba.”* Nanginginig na ipinaliwanag ni Aling Ging ang nakita nila ay si MW Bugarin na ilang taon nang pumanaw! Pareho na ngayong namumutla ang dalawa na napainom ng dalang tubig. Si MW Jolly R. Bugarin ang ating Grand Master taong 1979. Ipinanganak noong 1916, siya ay naging hepe ng National Bureau of Investigation. Naging mason sa Tamaraw Lodge No. 65 at sumakabilang buhay taong 2002.

Nanood ng Funeral Rites

Dalawa naman sa mga Past Grand Masters ang namataang nanonood ng Funeral Rites na idinaos para sa kanila:

Una ay si MW Reynold S. Fajardo – ang ating Grand Master noong 1986 at nagsilbi din bilang Grand Secretary mula 1998 hanggang January 2006. Bantog sa kanyang mga naisulat tungkol sa kasaysayan ng Masoneriya sa bansa, ang Pinakamarangal na Kapatid mula sa Quezon City Lodge No. 122 ay binigyan ng Funeral Rites sa Jose Abad Santos Hall.

“Noon mismong araw ng kanyang Funeral Rites, habang nag-batid ng meryenda, nakita ko po si MW Fajardo sa 4th Floor

na pinapanood sa baba (3rd floor) ang mga mason na nakapaligid sa kanyang burol.” Salaysay ni Aling Ging. Ang Jose Abad Santos Hall ay ang pinakamalaking Bulwagan sa GLP. Kaya nitong magupo ng mga bisita sa dalawang palapag ng New GLP Temple bagamat madalang na may nanonood sa 4th Floor, makikita ng mga nasa ibabang bahagi ng bulwagan ang mga nasa itaas kung ito ay kanilang titingalain.

Ang sumunod ay si MW Napoleon A. Soriano na ka-lohiya pa ni MW Ariel T. Cayanan sa Walana Lodge No. 13. Naging Grand Master si MW Nap taong 2001. *“Ibinurol po dito sa GLP si Most Worshipful Nap.”* ani Aling Ging. *“Sa Jose Abad Santos Hall din ang kanyang naging Funeral Rites noong 2007 at nagpahanda po sa amin ng meryenda para sa mga mason. Kagaya ni MW Reynold, present din po siya habang isinasagawa ng mga kapatid ang Funeral Rites para sa kanya.”*

Sa parehong pagkakataon ay unang nakakaramdam ng panlalamig si Aling Ging na nauuwi sa kilabot, kasunod nito ay makikita niyang unti-unting maglalaho ang mga pangitain na siya lamang ang naging saksi sa panandaliang pagdalaw ng mga ito.

Namataan sa may IMES Hall

Sa kasalukuyan, ang isa sa mga huling pangitain ni Aling Ging ay nang maghatid ng pagkain para sa isang klase ng IMES sa ikalawang palapag ng Plaridel Masonic



Temple. *“Doon po sa may Past Grand Masters Lounge, isang lalaking may edad ang dumaan papasok sa kwarto. Hindi po ako maaaring magkamali – si MW Jimmy iyun.”*

Miyembro ng Jose Rizal No. 22, si MW Jaime Y. Gonzales ay siya nating naging Grand Master taong 2007. Kagaya ni MW Reynold Fajardo, palagiang laman ng GLP compound si MW Jimmy noong siya ay nabubuhay pa. Ayon sa IMES staff na si WB Leng Ocuaman – kasalukuyang Worshipful Master ng Island-Luz-Minerva Lodge No. 5, nakagawian nang magpalipas ng oras sa tanggapan ng Institute of Masonic Education & Studies ang butihing GM bago ito pumanaw noong 2021 sa edad na 73.

Ang Kabilang Buhay

Dagdag pa ni Aling Ging, *“Sa limang Grand Masters – apat po sa kanila ang personal kong kakilala: Sina MW Jolly, MW Reynold, MW Nap, at MW Jim-*

my. Naging suki na po namin sila sa katagalan ng panahon. Yung Amerikanong GM lang po ang hindi ko personal na kilala. Sa tuwing nadadaan ako ang kanilang mga portraits sa Aguinaldo Hall, umiiwas na lang po ako ng tingnan lalo na kay MW Wallace.”

Matapos ang panayam, ay bantulot pa si Aling Ging na mapalimbag ang kanilang kwento dahil baka raw masamain ng ilang Mason ang kanilang sanaysay. Atin namang isinagot na wala silang dapat na ipag-alinlangan dahil ang kanilang kwento ay kabilang sa mga patotoo na may kabilang buhay. Bagay na siyang pinaniniwalaan ng lahat ng kasapi ng Masoneriya.

Kung hahanapan ng aral ang mga naging tagpo sa artikulong ito, ito ang ilan sa kanila:

Una, pahalagahan natin ang Masonic Funeral Rites at pag-igihan ang trabaho kung kabilang sa mga magbibigay nito dahil nanonood ang ating mga kapatid na



pinag-aalayan ng ating mga gawa o labors. Pangalawa, ang pag-aaral sa Masoneriya kagaya ng pagpasok sa klase sa IMES ay hindi dapat gawing biro ng mga buhay. Ikatlo, masmabuti ang may kasama kung sasakay ng elevator. At ang huli, kung makikipag-transaksyon sa kapatid - lalo na kung noon mo pa lamang nakilala, maiging humingi ng downpayment.

Bago pa natin tapusin ang kabanatang ito sa Paminggalan, nais po natin ipabatid sa lahat na ang paglalalahad ng kwento patungkol sa ilan sa mga yumaong Past Grand Masters ay hindi para takutin ang mga mambabasa. Bagkos inilahad natin ito upang gunitain ang alaala ng mga kapatid na gumugol ng kanilang “time, talent, at treasure” upang pamunuan ang Kapatiran ng mga Mason sa bahaging ito ng daigdig. Malaya din po ang mga kapatid na hindi paniwalaan ang mga sanaysay lalo na kung ito ay taliwas sa inyong paniniwala o pananampalataya.

Maraming Salamat at Magandang Gabi... KUYANG!

tions. Remember the meaning of the Compasses, as explained during our initiation, to control our impulses, emotions, and desires. Making conscious choices to avoid actions that may lead to negative consequences, even when tempted, is our inherent duty to our beloved fraternity.

Conclusion:

The misuse of Masonic symbols and terminology on social media presents a significant challenge for Freemasonry. By understanding the historical context of these symbols and implementing strategies to address their inappropriate use, Masonic organizations can work to preserve the integrity of their traditions and educate the public about their true significance. Effective management of this issue will require a combination of education, policy development, and proactive engagement with both members and social media platforms.

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REMEMBER NOW **THY CREATOR**

The Significance of Ecclesiastes 12 in Freemasonry and Beyond

by VW Gene Illenberger (379)

Freemasonry, an ancient fraternity steeped in symbolism, allegory, and moral teachings, seeks to cultivate the moral and spiritual growth of its members. One of the most profound texts that resonate deeply within Freemasonry is Ecclesiastes 12 from the Old Testament. This chapter reflects on the nature of life, aging, death, and the ultimate journey of the soul. Its use in Freemasonry, particularly in the Third Degree, highlights key themes of the fraternity, such as self-improvement, the contemplation of mortality, and reverence for the divine.

Ecclesiastes 12, however, is not confined to Freemasonry alone. Its universal themes of aging and mortality have resonated across religious, philosophi-

cal, and cultural contexts, making it a powerful reflection on the human experience. Whether used in Christian funeral rites, philosophical discussions, or literary works, Ecclesiastes 12 offers profound insights into the nature of life and death.

At its core, Ecclesiastes 12 presents a meditation on the transient nature of life. It begins with the famous admonition, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," urging reflection on one's relationship with the divine while still in the vigor of youth. The chapter then uses allegorical language to describe the decline of the body through metaphors like "the keepers of the house shall tremble" and "the grinders cease because they are

few," illustrating the frailties of aging. It culminates with the inevitable fate of all men: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

For us Freemasons, this chapter transcends its role as a meditation on mortality—it aligns with the Masonic philosophy of *Memento Mori*, or the reminder of death. Freemasonry teaches that regardless of wealth, status, or position, every man must face death. Ecclesiastes 12 reinforces this universal truth while emphasizing the importance of living a virtuous and purposeful life before death claims us. It serves as both a sobering reminder and a call to action for Masons, urging them to lead lives focused on personal growth, the service of others, and spiritual reflection.

Use of Ecclesiastes 12 in Masonic Ritual

Ecclesiastes 12 finds its most significant application in Masonic rituals within the Master Mason degree, the culmination of a Mason's journey through the Blue Lodge. Also known as the Third Degree, the Master Mason degree delves into themes of mortality, resurrection, and the immortality of the soul. The central allegory of the degree is the story of Hiram Abiff, the architect of Solomon's Temple, who is murdered for refusing to reveal the secrets of a Master Mason. His death and eventual rais-

ing symbolize not only the end of life but also the hope of spiritual rebirth.

During the Third Degree perambulation, Ecclesiastes 12 is recited by the senior deacon while the hoodwinked candidate is led around the lodge to underscore the lesson that life is fleeting, and death is inevitable. The vivid depiction of aging and death in Ecclesiastes mirrors the fate of Hiram Abiff, inviting the candidate to contemplate his own mortality. The chapter acts as a powerful tool for spiritual reflection, reminding the Master Mason that life's true secrets lie not in worldly achievements, but in moral integrity, reverence for God, and service to others.

Historical Context of Ecclesiastes in Freemasonry

The inclusion of Ecclesiastes 12 in Masonic rituals is no accident. Freemasonry as we know it took shape during the Enlightenment, a period in which thinkers sought to harmonize reason and faith. The Bible, especially the Old Testament, was widely regarded as a source of moral guidance. When Masonic rituals were codified in the 18th century, the Bible's teachings on morality and spirituality naturally became integrated into Masonic symbolism.

Ecclesiastes 12, with its reflections on mortality and the return of the soul to God, perfectly aligned with Freemasonry's belief in the immortality of the soul. This belief transcends

specific religious doctrines, appealing to men of various faiths who seek spiritual enlightenment through the fraternity. Throughout Masonic history, Ecclesiastes 12 has been used not only in the Master Mason degree but also in Masonic funeral rites. The chapter's emphasis on death and the soul's return to God provides comfort to the bereaved while reinforcing Freemasonry's teaching that death is not the end, but rather a transition to a higher state of existence.

Symbolic Interpretations in Freemasonry

Beyond its literal interpretation, Ecclesiastes 12 offers rich opportunities for symbolic interpretation—central to Masonic practice. For instance, the trembling "keepers of the house" may represent the hands of an aging Mason, now weak from years of labor and service. The "grinders," who cease because they are few, symbolize both the teeth that wear down with age and the diminishing vigor of youth. The "silver cord" that is loosed and the "golden bowl" that is broken serve as poignant symbols of life's fragility.

In Freemasonry, these images are not viewed with despair. Rather, they represent the soul's progression toward union with the Creator. Freemasonry encourages its members to accept life's stages, including the decline of the body, as part of the soul's purification and ultimate return to God. The chapter's imagery serves as a re-

minder that the trials of life are not to be feared but embraced as essential steps toward spiritual enlightenment.

Beyond Freemasonry

While Ecclesiastes 12 holds a special place in Freemasonry, its universal message extends well beyond the fraternity. The chapter's reflections on aging, death, and the human relationship with the divine resonate across numerous religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions.

Christian Funeral Services

In Christian traditions, Ecclesiastes 12 is frequently read at funerals and memorial services due to its solemn reflection on the end of life. The imagery of aging and the return of the spirit to God offers comfort to those mourning the loss of a loved one, reminding them that while physical life is temporary, the soul's connection to the divine is eternal. Various Christian denominations, including Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches, incorporate this passage into funeral liturgies as a reminder of the hope of eternal life.

Judaism

In Judaism, Ecclesiastes, or Kohelet, is traditionally read during the festival of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. Sukkot celebrates the harvest, but it also reflects on life's impermanence and the importance of acknowledging God's providence. Ec-

clesiastes 12, with its focus on old age and the return of the spirit to God, serves as a fitting conclusion to the book's meditations on the fleeting nature of worldly pursuits. The chapter reminds readers that true meaning lies in honoring God.

Philosophical and Literary Reflections

Ecclesiastes 12 is often referenced in philosophical discussions on existentialism, aging, and the search for meaning. Writers and thinkers examining the human condition frequently turn to this passage for its stark acknowledgment of life's temporality. The chapter's metaphors have also inspired countless works of literature and poetry, where they serve as symbols for the fragility of life and the inevitability of death. The "silver cord" and "golden bowl," for instance, have become enduring metaphors for the delicate balance of life and its eventual end.

Tool for Personal Reflection

Beyond its religious and philosophical uses, Ecclesiastes 12 is also used in personal meditation and reflection. The chapter's stark acknowledgment of aging and mortality provides a powerful prompt for individuals to contemplate their own lives. It encourages people to live with purpose and intention, mindful of life's fleeting nature. In counseling and end-of-life discussions, Ecclesiastes 12 is often cited to help individuals come to terms with mortality, encouraging them to reflect on their values and spiritual commitments as they face the end of life.

Other Fraternal Orders

Although Ecclesiastes 12 is most commonly associated with Freemasonry, its message resonates with other fraternal organizations that emphasize spiritual growth, moral lessons, and existential themes. Various orders and societies refer to Ecclesiastes 12 to reinforce teachings on life, death, and the soul's journey, drawing upon the chapter's imagery to teach their members the importance of virtuous living and spiritual reflection.

Finally, Ecclesiastes 12 holds great significance in Freemasonry, where it serves as a profound meditation on mortality, spirituality, and the soul's journey. Its inclusion in Masonic rituals, particularly the Master Mason degree, reinforces the fraternity's emphasis on the importance of living a life of virtue, reflection, and service to others. However, Ecclesiastes 12's universal themes transcend Freemasonry, making it a meaningful text across religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions.

From Christian funerals to Jewish celebrations, from philosophical discourses to personal reflection, Ecclesiastes 12 continues to offer insights into the human condition. Its message—that life is fleeting, death is inevitable, and the soul's return to God is certain—resonates across time and space, making it one of the most enduring reflections on the nature of existence. Whether within the solemn rituals of Freemasonry or the broader cultural landscape, Ecclesiastes 12 invites us all to reflect on our lives, our mortality, and our relationship with the divine.

ORIGIN OF PLEYEL'S HYMN

by VW Alberto C. Dumlao, PJGL (46)

The Masonic Funeral Dirge (aka Pleyel's Hymn) sung during the Second Section of the Third Degree was composed by Bro. Ignaz Joseph Pleyel (1757-1831), an 18th century Austrian classical composer. He was a contemporary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and a student Joseph Haydn, who were also Freemasons.

The Hymn used for the Funeral Dirge was a part of his "4th Quartet, op. 7" published in 1791. Bro. Pleyel was a member of Lodge "Zum Goldenen Rad" (The Golden Wheel) in Eberau, Hungary. Aside from being a composer, Bro. Pleyel also ventured into music publishing and piano manufacturing. Pleyel Pianos were the first to use metal frames and were the instrument of choice of famous composers of the 19th and 20th century such as Frederic Chopin, Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky.

The lyrics of the dirge were written by Bro. David Vinton (1774-1833) in 1813, and was first published in 1816 under the title "The Masonic Minstrel" - a compilation of Masonic songs and glees. Bro. Vinton was an American silversmith, merchant and Masonic Lecturer and was a member of Mount Vernon Lodge No. 4 located in Providence, Rhode Island.

As an itinerant masonic lecturer who visited many lodges in the United States in the early part of the 19th century, Bro. Vinton's lyrics to the Pleyel's Hymn gained much influence and was adopted by most Grand Lodges in the US. It has since found its way to the Philippine Jurisdiction through our Mother Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of California.

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Indiana Freemason – Spring 1997



FUNERAL DIRGE.

MUSIC—Pleyel's Hymn.

Solemn strikes the fun-'ral chime, Notes of

our de-part-ing time; As we jour-ney

here be-low, Thro' a pil-grimage of woe.

ON THE LEVEL

VW Edgar S. Bentulan, PDDGM



LOOKING FOR A BROTHER SUPERMAN

In the early dawn of wonderment in my quest for further light, this was always the question bugging me, burying myself in the deep of read on books written by some revered gurus of the mystic ancient quarries. Nagging issues seem always to pop in my mind's intermittent spaces needing deeper research. Is this really the end of our speculative moral and spiritual calling? What exactly do we ourselves expect to see in threshold or beyond the horizon? Can we find one we can call Brother Superman or Superman Brother?

Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Hitler

"The world is full of ills and evil and society is in need of a new person to save it!" This is where I'd like to begin digging in this essay because this was where the basic notion (mine) all started to flicker and sink into my curious concern in the mysticism of the craft against a long burgeoned personal love for philosophy.

I first met Friedrich Nietzsche, an influential German existentialist, in a Philosophy subject back in college. Back then, I came to know that he gave this prognosis in his book "Thus

Spoke Zarathustra" in 1883. Horribly, bizarrely, half a century later then, from this, a physically minuscule figure decimated by gas six million Jews -- already a much ballyhooed race in the Bible -- and caused horrific havoc in Europe and parts of Asia and Africa! He was Adolf Hitler.

In the book Nietzsche posited his concept of the Superman in *Übermensch*, a person with astounding superhuman powers, as a goal for mankind to aim for itself. But never for racial motive. . . Hell, no, this is not about Clark Kent of the planet Krypton Jerry Siegel created for the comics, who moves large trains and ships daring the pounding of heavy artillery shellings, etc.

By the late 19th up to early 20th centuries in retrospect, there accordingly pervaded to postulate that the Indo-Europeans or commonly known Aryans, originated from north of the Indus River, were of the highest level of humanity and race as the purest form of all races. Nietzsche took interest on this testament and immersed in his work pursuing it. The idea eventually became the fulcrum of Hitler's horrid campaign in World War II to make Germans the superior race in all of humanity! This ungodly scheme of human purging for a master race is today termed in scientific racism Eugenics, which accordingly was even consented by prominent 20th century names of luminaries to include -- believe it or not -- Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Emile Zola, Bernard Shaw and John Maynard Keynes, to name a few.

Nietzschean Superman philosophy suggested that since human beings are not capable of solving the problems of the world, they must be “replaced by a higher form” to save the world. The higher person spiriting the Aryan archetype Superman, will take the place of humans with “superhuman capabilities” who can do anything he desires without being bothered by the restrictions of ethics. Hitler's Nazi followers unconcerned with any norm of ethics, skewed and exploited this theory to justify their agenda of master “race view” of the supremacy of the Aryan race they were embracing, by the elimination of “inferior” races and selective breeding.

Plato and the Philosopher King

Where did the Superman theory originate from to usher and lead itself, paradoxically, to an odium bordering nigh our ethical contemplation?

At least two other great intellectuals may scintillate wider insights into this. One, Albert Pike, was a 19th century leading American influential writer and eminent esoteric guru, 33* in Scottish Rite Freemasonry. But centuries before him, in ancient Greece, a philosopher, Plato, between 427 and 347 BCE, might have preceded being the concept's precursor. Both, apparently, had their ideals spawned in different narrative of time, rather oblique, from the succeeding macabre madness of Hitler.

Plato was the earliest to envision a wise society but run by a philosopher who could be trusted to lead with dedication and a strong sense of justice for the common good. In his dialogues in Republic, Plato defined the Philosopher King as a leader who combines philosophical commitment to knowledge, virtues, pursuit of truth, and the common good. Socrates' most brilliant pupil, Plato proposed a theoretical ruler who possesses

superior wisdom and “combined philosophical knowledge and temperament with political skill and power” to wield for the rational and virtuous ordering of human affairs and ultimate good of the state.

The Superman subsumed in this prototype of Philosopher King is endowed with extraordinary powers who uses them to serve humanity, upholding moral values and compassion for a better, just and harmonious world to live. Unless the world is ruled by a leader imbued with the “spirit and power of philosophy,” society will never be free from their evils, Plato so blazoned to promote his ideal philosopher king.

IN CONSPIRACY FOR A 'SUPER-RACE'?

Somewhere in time:

Pike: 1809-1891, USA

Nietzsche: 1844-1900, Germany

Hitler: 1889-1945, Germany

Maybe deemed in a strange confluence of personages in history, a conspiracy unwitting, this mystic genius of the world's Western frontier, Illustrious Albert Pike, got intensely involved in the explore for the ancient 'super-race' called Aryans. Was it coincidence or paradox of history that this Illustrious Brother would be in mystic kinship with this amazing ancient race just as contemporary existentialist Nietzsche and fascist Hitler? It appears that a significant modicum of Brother Pike's personal element could have more keenly taken in to obsession a race deified in common with abominable scourge that was Hitler. But, goodness, Brother Pike was ahead in time! And, absolutely, he was too advanced in time to have even thought of the latter. If the Illustrious brother was the influencer of the two Germans, especially the latter,



Illustrious Pike to have hailed generously the Aryans in articulating in his Lectures of the Arya, "They were white men, as we are, the superior race in intellect, in manliness, the governing race of the world, the conquering race of all other races." Pike believed that the early Aryans were the first people to distinguish light with knowledge as a metaphor, apparently letting his light temper his Aryanic "white race" passion to inhibit from forced racist cleansing or genetic purification (eugenics).

for the same purpose, we may need not speculate.

In his own fertile esotericism, Albert Pike did not specifically reify his notion of the superman as Nietzsche in *Übermensch* concept or Plato in his philosopher king ruler. But, indeed, Rex R. Hutchens, author of *Pillars of Wisdom*, reveals that because of his unquenching passion for ancient wisdom, Pike personally brought himself in an intellectual pilgrimage to the Aryans of the steppes of India, South-Central Asia.

Hutchens is prone to believe that Pike in fact brought far greater iota of bias of his view of the ancient Aryans, and he "probably ennobled them their character more than warranted." In particular, Rex Hutchens, also 33* in Scottish Rite, cites

Hutchens profiles Pike as a product of the time when America was plunged in the chaos of industrialization, the agony of slavery so freshly swept away, the ignominy of the treatment of the native Indians, the exploitation of labor of the common man, etc. Minus the red men, this too was the situation of Europe in Nietzsche's time, particularly Germany which was characterized by vast social upheaval and political turbulence -- when human and civil rights, democracy and nationalism, industrialization and free market systems also became vibrant.

Nietzsche's life from budding youth to adulthood saw the full bloom of the beligerency of German national liberalism borne out of the nation's bitter experience

from prior Napoleonic conquest resulting in his countrymen's loss of pride and cultural colonialism superimposing French egalitarian influence in the German national psyche for some generations.

Inner Transformation of Man:

In imperfect parallelism of history, Bro. Albert Pike who was ahead and had longer time than his virtual progeny, in the scholarly pursuit of mystic pilgrimage in the craft, focused his inquest on the profound ideology of Aryanism, not for genetic motive albeit, but as ancient material to enrich Masonic rituals and meditative system of attaining perfection of the ashlar character in Masonry. The Aryans practiced many "elaborate rituals" and were so meticulous to remain "ritually pure" according to their varna (tribe or race), said Hutchens. Thus, the Scottish Rite Ritual which Pike refurbished, and *Morals and Dogma* and other volumes of works he wrote invoking the Aryan ideology.

Pike stressed, the goal of Masonry is to bring about the inner transformation of man. The combined power of the developed and refined character and wisdom of man, he propounded, will necessarily lead to the enhancement of the collective development of humanity to its highest plain with the "whole mankind as one great nation without any division of race, creed or color."

Pike proposed this human quality of perfection in virtues and character which, incidentally, maybe speculated in the personification of Superman. He endorsed the purpose of Masonry, summarized, thus: 1) to develop and perfect the Ma-

son himself as a rough stone (ashlar) in character and wisdom; and, 2) to apply the power of such character and wisdom to the "amelioration of the condition of our fellowmen and the improvement of human society."

Symbolism and Society

The Craft's rituals and practices abound with Masonic symbolism and which is, per se, in the aspiration to attain the highest level of humanity, and thus, yes, in same vein, the symbol is as well in the depiction of the Siegel comics' superhero endowed with an x-ray vision, hearing and mind abilities superior to profane human capabilities. The soul of Masonry is her symbolism, Pike once told Robert F. Gould, an English Masonic historian. Just as a symbol is a visible representation of what is invisible, society's dynamic realities are just but a reflection of a deeper truth beneath.

The civilization all around Pike then as Hutchens furthers his picture of him, was somewhat awry: "democracy was a sham; capitalism was rapacious in its greed; religions competed in the arena of doctrine for resources rather than souls; government was a burden; and the press pandered to a corrupt public appetite."

In this morally putrid darkness, Masonry evidently sparkled as some kind of activist alternative to beacon "man to come closer and stand in the light of duty and moral integrity." Plato and Nietzsche shared with Brother Pike the ideal as option to society's anathema, the philosophical commitment by the perfection in virtues and character, the common good of humanity and greater society through a better world of superhuman capabilities to do better for brothers through greater wisdom. Till now still in deadlock of eternity.

The Superman

It is said, symbol requires little medita-

tion as it becomes more elaborate, no matter how complex. But the problems of society are largely becoming more complex and less elaborate. Isn't it because society is in unbridled bondage to science and technology -- in man's unceasing greed?

In interlude of meditation, I see me poor and blind, in the hoodwink of darkness but guided by the light of a wiser brother. After persevering through three trying ordeals from man's lust, I die. Then I am raised in my immortal soul to see the eternal light of Wisdom in a Kingly embrace. I am called sublime. Later in the loftier journey for brighter light, I learn that in my death the Word was lost. And it was, accordingly, one of cosmic and universal loss! Is he the lost word?

Perceiving the Superman, he is but an abstraction of the ideal of an evolved ashlar to spiritual perfection through irrefragable virtues and higher knowledge in Masonic philosophy and charged with the mission to alleviate his fellowmen's condition so they can enjoy life better in society. These are his goals: deeper grasp of the symbolism of God's nature and His plan for that equilibrium in humanity revealed by the realities affecting society; and, winning over evil in the greed of man and devoting selfless service for the happiness of fellowmen and ultimate betterment of society. This state of perfection is both moral and spiritual, impacting the developed collective

base of men and Masons with Masonry perpetuating as its rock-foundation of ideology permeated in a greater base of society.

An offering, a messianic character heavily equipped with state-of-the-art moral and spiritual warfare is a logical magic for eureka ahead. Supplanting sanity and decency in the discomfiting politics of state governance by fools and clowns around, drowned in so much waste of public resources and hypocrisy of service to justify the state's existence, seems to be ideal for a philosopher Superman at the helm wielding virtues of political power and mental skills, unvacillating. But. But, take this only in symbolism, as to happen, maybe, only in sci-fi movies.

The Superman in my Brother is for me faceless, a philosopher who has evolved in honor to that apex of perfection, simply and humbly serving in transcendence beyond the allegory of the lodge, sharing a goal driven by the determined will of force to redeem true peace and happiness for society, and, finally, enjoying in complete discernment with the divine nature in the likeness of the ineffable One God. This is how our purpose should be defined.

Superman, my Brother! Is this what they mean of Masonry, a metaphysics of life and existence?

In addition to pandemic response efforts, the Lodge has continued its tradition of community service. From scholarship programs to disaster relief initiatives, Muog Lodge remains dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of those in need, upholding its commitment to the Masonic tenet of relief.

Looking Forward:

A Vision for the Next Century

As Muog Lodge No. 89 celebrates its Centennial Anniversary, its members are not only reflecting on the past but also looking ahead to the future. Worshipful Master WB Chris Angelo T. Olan emphasized the significance of this milestone, stating, "As we celebrate this, our 100th-year milestone, let us come together in unity to honor our rich heritage and renew our commitment to the principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth."

The Lodge's vision for the future includes expanding its charitable efforts and continuing to offer opportunities for personal and professional growth for its members. By embracing modern technology while staying true to Masonic values, Muog Lodge No. 89 is poised to continue its legacy of brotherhood, integrity, and service for the next hundred years.

Additionally, the Lodge aims to strengthen its connection with the

local community. Recognizing that service is at the heart of Freemasonry, Muog Lodge plans to deepen its involvement in civic projects and charitable initiatives, ensuring that it remains a fortress of strength and support for both its members and the wider Parañaque community.

Celebrating a Century of Brotherhood

The Centennial Anniversary of Muog Lodge No. 89 is a time for reflection, celebration, and renewal. This significant milestone honors the many brothers who have come before, each contributing to the Lodge's enduring legacy. It is also an opportunity for the current members to reaffirm their commitment to the principles that have guided the Lodge for 100 years.

As Muog Lodge No. 89 embarks on its second century, it does so with the same resilience and dedication that has defined its first 100 years. The Centennial celebration serves as a powerful reminder of the Lodge's rich history and its ongoing mission to be a beacon of brotherhood, charity, and truth in the world.

Looking to the future, Muog Lodge No. 89 remains dedicated to its founding principles, ensuring that it will continue to serve as a stronghold for Freemasonry and the community for many generations to come.

A New Legacy Begins: Quezon City Bethel U.D.

Job's Daughters International

by Mom Alyssa Marih H. Mitra

Job's Daughters International (JDI) is a leadership organization for girls aged 10 to 20 that helps young women grow into confident, compassionate leaders. With chapters—called "Bethels"—in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Brazil, and the Philippines, JDI teaches values like leadership, charity, respect, and teamwork.

Members engage in activities like meetings, fundraisers, service projects, and leadership workshops, building lifelong skills and creating cherished memories.

The Dream for a Quezon City Bethel

For years, Master Masons in Quezon City hoped to see their daughters and nieces join the Job's Daughters sisterhood. In 2023, that dream started to take shape. VW Dad Arthur Allan Ponce, Dad Joseph E. Joaquin, Mom Gerda L. Joaquin, and JDI majority members Mom Alyssa Marih H. Mitra and Mom Justinne Chynna Garcia began planning a Bethel in Quezon City, setting the stage for an exciting journey. With the guidance of Sis Pamela Magbanua, Grand Guardian, and Dad Luke Jickain, Associate Grand Guardian, the foundation of the Quezon City Bethel was laid. A dedicated team,

including Mom Katherine Huiso, Mom Gabrielle Anne L. Joaquin, WB Dad Christian Q. Valenzuela, Dad Garnil Cabrera, and Dad Edgar L. Argote, worked behind the scenes. Sisters from Bethel No. 36, Makati offered enthusiastic support as dual members. A humorous moment arose when Dad Joseph's attempt to explain a food order to a delivery guy led to some laughs.

The Grand Moment

After months of preparation, Bethel UD, Quezon City was officially established on September 7, 2024, at Silanganan Masonic Center. During the Public Installation of Officers, one nearly tripped over her gown but recovered with grace, embodying Job's Daughters' teachings of confidence

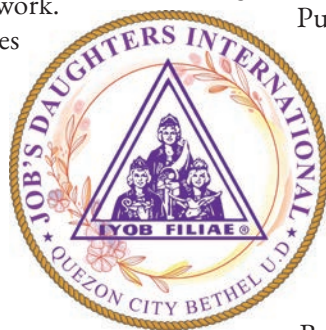
The Journey Begins

Bethel UD, Quezon City meets every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at Capitol Masonic Temple. Despite being new, the Bethel is already making its mark with leadership, laughter, and camaraderie.

Join the Sisterhood

If you're interested in joining, please reach out to Bethel Guardian Mom Alyssa Marih H. Mitra or Sis Athena V., or connect with us on Instagram or Facebook for more information. For more information about Job's Daughters International, visit:

www.jobsdaughtersinternational.org







8 Key Pitfalls to Avoid as a Freemason for a Healthy Life

Freemasonry, like any social organization, involves regular meetings and a commitment to personal development. While it promotes positive values such as brotherhood, self-improvement, and charity, there are potential pitfalls that members should be aware of to live healthier, more balanced lives. Here are eight key things to avoid as a Freemason to ensure your physical, emotional, and mental well-being:

1. Avoid Neglecting Physical Health

Freemasonry often includes social events where food and drink foster camaraderie among members. While valuable for building relationships, these occasions can lead to overindulgence, particularly in alcohol and unhealthy foods. Practicing moderation is crucial, as excessive eating or drinking can contribute to long-term health issues. Incorporating regular exercise into your routine is essential to counter the sedentary nature of these events and main-

tain overall physical well-being.

2. Avoid Overcommitting Your Time

Freemasonry offers numerous opportunities for engagement, from meetings to charitable activities. However, overcommitting can lead to stress and burn-out. Many members take on too many responsibilities, sacrificing personal time. It's vital to set limits and learn to say "no" to additional commitments to maintain a healthy balance between Freemasonry, work, and personal life.

3. Avoid Isolating Yourself Outside of Freemasonry

While Freemasonry fosters strong bonds, it's important not to let these relationships replace other social connections. Maintaining friendships and family relationships outside the fraternity ensures a well-rounded social life. Freemasonry should complement your life rather than dominate it, and keeping in touch with non-Masonic friends and loved ones helps ensure balance.



4. Avoid Emotional Stress from Unmet Expectations

Freemasonry promotes self-improvement, but setting unrealistic expectations for personal growth can lead to frustration. It's essential not to compare your progress to others, as each Masonic journey is unique. Focus on your individual path and personal growth within the fraternity. Unrealistic goals can cause unnecessary stress, so embrace gradual, personal growth at your own pace. Freemasonry encourages reflection and self-discipline, guiding members toward internal progress rather than competition.

5. Avoid Ignoring Mental Health

Mental health is as vital as physical health. Balancing Masonic duties with other areas of life can cause emotional strain. Address any signs of stress, anxiety, or burnout early. Freemasons should feel comfortable seeking help through trusted friends or professional counselors if overwhelmed by their commitments.

6. Avoid Financial Strain from Excessive Charity

Charitable giving is a core principle of Freemasonry, but it's crucial to give within your means. Some members may feel pressured to contribute more than they can afford, leading to financial strain. Remember that every contribution, regardless of size, is valuable,

and personal financial stability should always come first.

7. Avoid Neglecting Family and Personal Relationships

Freemasonry can demand significant time, but it's important not to let it overshadow family and personal relationships. Striking a balance between Masonic commitments and family life is essential. Ensure that your involvement in the fraternity enriches your life rather than detracts from time with loved ones.

8. Avoid Suppressing Personal Growth Beyond Freemasonry

Freemasonry promotes lifelong learning and self-improvement, but it's essential to seek growth beyond Masonic teachings. Explore new ideas and experiences that enrich both your Masonic and personal lives. Freemasonry is a tool for growth, but it's not the only path to self-improvement.

In Conclusion

Freemasonry is a rewarding pursuit, but it's important to approach it with balance and mindfulness. By avoiding the pitfalls mentioned above, Freemasons can ensure that their participation enhances their well-being rather than detracting from it. Embracing Freemasonry as a complement to a healthy, balanced life will lead to personal growth, strong relationships, and lasting happiness.

THE FINAL WORD



MW ARIEL T. CAYANAN

106TH GRAND MASTER

My Dear Brethren,

I hope that this issue of the Cable Tow has given much enlightenment on our theme this quarter: *Memento Mori* – a wake-up call to us Masons that death awaits everyone, and that, as such, we must face it bravely and calmly, as taught to us by Masonry itself. It is not something that we should anticipate with dread, but rather something we should embrace with the clarity of understanding that our Masonic teachings provide. In Masonry, the symbolism of death is meant to inspire reflection on the frailty of life and on the virtues we are called to cultivate during the time that we are given. Though death is the great equalizer – reminding us that regardless of our station in life, wealth, or influence, we will all meet the same end – within this truth lies a profound beauty: the opportunity to live our days in a manner that truly matters.

This issue of our publication contains articles explaining how our rituals and symbols continually remind us of the transient nature of this world. The sprig of acacia, for instance, our ancient symbol of immortality, signifies that while our bodies may perish, the spirit and the legacy we leave behind would still endure. We are encouraged not only to live but, more importantly, to live well. In so

doing, the memory we leave behind outlasts our earthly existence, echoing in the hearts of our brethren, family, and loved ones. *Memento Mori*, therefore, is not a call to despair, but a call to action. It is a reminder that each day is a gift, and that the measure of our lives will not be counted by years but by the goodness we bring into the world. Through our Masonic labors, we are building a spiritual temple not made with hands but eternal in the heavens.

Brethren, allow thus our theme of *Memento Mori* to inspire all of us Masons to live mindfully and to serve selflessly, knowing that in the end, it is the light that we share with others, the good we impart, and the love we give that will continue to shine long after we have dropped our working tools.

Ariel T. Cayanan

Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines



Congratulations

Mencius Lodge No. 93

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1924 2024

From the Brethren of



**MASONIC DISTRICT
NCR-A**

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They are Heroes and Leaders.
They are bold, brave, brilliant
and big-hearted men.

But there are thousands of
greater but nameless Masons
out there—helpful citizens, suc-
cessful professionals, responsi-
ble family providers and caring
fathers. All worthy brethren.
They strive everyday to make
themselves deserving of this
apron.

Make yourself count. Make
your apron proud—of you.
It's what more than a hundred
years of having a GLP meant.
More than a hundred years of
making good men better.

The Cable Tow



ANDRES BONIFACIO