



THE

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CABLE TOW

The Official Publication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of
Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines



HIRAM @ 100

HONORING THE PAST AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

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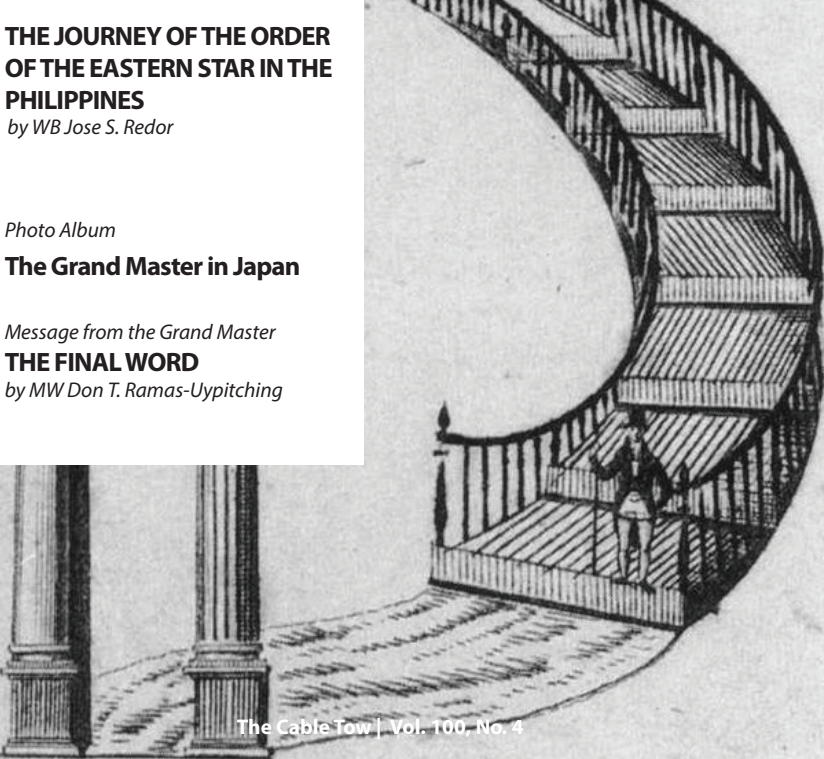
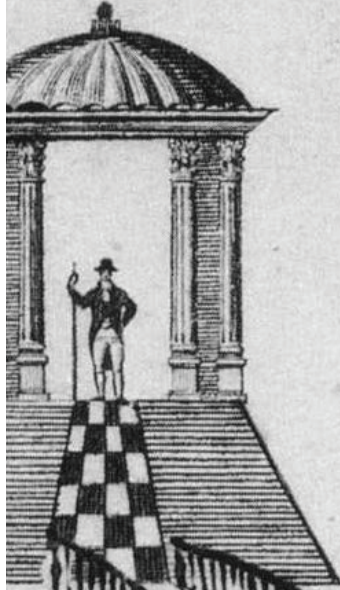
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Editor's Page

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Masonic Admonition

Masonic scholar, Bro. Albert G. Mackey wrote on the qualifications of candidates, thus: "Every candidate for initiation into the mysteries of Freemasonry must be qualified by certain essential conditions. These qualifications are of two kinds, Internal and External.

The internal qualifications are those which lie within his own bosom, the external are those which refer to the outward and apparent fitness."

The Internal qualifications are that the applicant must:

1. *Come of his own free will and accord and was not induced by persuasion of friends.*
2. *Not be influenced by mercenary motives.*
3. *Be prompted to make the application due to his favorable opinion that he entertains of the Institution.*
4. *Be resolved to conform with cheerfulness to the established usages and customs of the Fraternity.*

For further elucidation on the Internal qualifications, I offer that the applicant must:

1. *Come of his own free will and accord. No one is induced, compelled, influenced, forced or coerced to apply for Masonic membership.*
2. *Not be influenced by monetary or mate-*



rial gain. "The love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim 6:10, KJV). Money is a worthy servant but a wicked master.

3. Have a thorough understanding, conviction and perspective of Freemasonry. Freemasonry is the science and art of rightful living.

4. Adhere to the established practices of the Craft. He must faithfully observe the moral customs and lead a virtuous life.

Freemasonry is a way of life.

As MW Joseph Henry Schmidt, GM, 1927, would put it: "The work of Masonry is something that cannot be fathomed and the beauty and fascination of which can only be understood and appreciated in their fullness by a Mason who has entered upon it with his whole heart and soul." MW Christian William Rosentstock, GM, 1925, further reinforced: "We can not be true Masons, unless we inculcate outside of the Lodge-room those great moral and social virtues which we are taught in the Lodge. Inspiring lessons, exalted thoughts, and wonderful ideals, fill our ritual and enrich our teachings. But all these interpretations of moral truths are as naught if we leave them behind us when we walk out of our temples and join the busy throngs of the outside world."

"HIRAM MASONIC LODGE 88 CELEBRATING ITS CENTENNIAL YEAR"



*The Speech of PGM
MW Reynato Puno, Sr.
honoring the Hiram
Awardees and deliver-
ing a strong message
on morality and spiritu-
ality during its Centen-
nial Celebration.*

“Let me tickle your curiosity with the question: What Characteristics did these Hiramites possess to deserve these Awards? First, I like to believe that they exemplified the Masonic Virtues of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. In a fallen world, in a world where the unrighteous reign, it is not easy to embrace without compromise

these virtues of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. It is doubly difficult to practice these virtues in this new century where, incredibly, the self is getting glorified as the first among virtues and where selfishness is considered as the real engine of material progress. Then and now, we know that the inevitable consequence of glorification of self is the enthronement of materialism in man's hierarchy of values at the expense of spirituality. History tells us and keeps on telling us that the worship of materialism has caused humanity all its major woes... the exploitation of man by man, the perpetuation of inequalities, and the continuing conflicts all over the world. As Masons, it is our bounded duty to resist this temptation towards self, this trend towards selfishness and thus surrender to materialism. Let us heed the warnings of one

of our greatest Masonic gurus, Albert Pike who said and I quote:

“The battle between selfishness and selflessness is the battle of life which is waged in the breast of every individual.”

Than this, no more important battle is ever fought. Alexander the Great conquered the world and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. This selfish nature conquered Alexander and caused him to die in drunken revelry in the streets of Babylon.

Julius Ceasar, fired by love of country, led the Roman Legions through a thousand battles to a thousand victories but love of self induced him to commit the fatal act of placing on his own brow the crown of the Roman Government and thus caused his sudden downfall.

Napoleon Bonaparte unthroned kings and emperors of Europe and made them captives at his will. His selfish nature held Napoleon captive, swept him behind his appointed bounds, and thus caused him to be banished to a lonely island.

Men everywhere attains success but yielding to their selfish nature fail to fulfill any useful mission in life and they die unwept, unhonored and unsung.

Second, I like to believe that our Awardees received these awards for they know and understand more than the surface meanings of Masonry. I submit that this is the great challenge of Masonry today: the need for Masons to

break away from their ignorance about real Masonry, the need to produce Masons who are not just proficient in their lips with our rights and rituals but who can translate the symbolism of our concept in our real life, who can use our teachings to transform them from being good men to better men. Again, I beseech you to heed the counsel of another Masonic Scholar, Y. I. Wilmhurst and I quote him:

“Anyone, of course, can understand the simpler meaning of our symbols, especially with the help of the explanatory lectures, but he may still miss the meaning of the scheme as a vital whole. It is absurd to think that a vast organization like Masonry was ordained merely to teach grown up men of the world, the symbolical meaning of a few simple builders tools, or to impress upon us such elementary virtues as temperance and justice: - the children in every village school are taught such things or to enforce such simple principles of Morals as Brotherly Love, which every church and every religion teachers or as relief, which is practiced quite as much by Non-Masons as by us, or of truth, which every infant learns upon its mother’s knee. There is surely, too, no need for us to join a secret society to be taught that the Volume of the Sacred Law is a fountain of truth and instructions, or to go through the great and elaborate Ceremony of the Third Degree merely to learn that we have Each to Die.

The craft whose work we are taught to honour with the name of “a Science”, a “Royal Art”, has surely some larger end in view than has merely inculcating the

practice of social Virtues common to all the world and by no means the monopoly of Free Masons. Surely, then, it behooves us to acquaint ourselves with what that larger end consists, to enquire why the fulfillment of that purpose is worthy to be called a Science, and to ascertain what are those “mysteries to which our doctrine promises we may ultimately attain if we apply ourselves assiduously enough to understand what Masonry is capable of teaching us.

Come to think of it, if Masonry is different from other organizations, it is because it teaches us how to understand without fear man’s nature, how to comprehend without superstitions man’s PURPOSE, how to ascertain with intelligence his eternal destiny and all these require an endless intellectual labor and a ceaseless spiritual pursuit. It is this life long process to seek the Divine, to know the Eternal, to improve his relationship with the GAOTU that enables a Mason to play his proper role in society.

Third, and I will be done. Like all forces for good, Masons all over the world appear to be dwindling in numbers. In our Jurisdiction, the statistics show we are increasing quantitatively but unfortunately not qualitatively. Never in our more than one century of existence as a Grand Lodge, have we seen so many purged from our ranks, thanks to our MW Grandmaster Uypitching’s uncompromising policy of Zero tolerance against breaches of our moral and ethical precepts. But we need not despair because of our diminishing number, we need not be demoralized if we appear

to be destined to be in the minority. The validity of our Masonic precepts cannot and will not be tested by any arithmetic. Our mysticisms cannot be captured by any mathematical formula, nor by any of the modern algorithms. If our Masonic Virtues of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth are valid, they are valid not because a million voices say they are valid; if they are not valid, they will remain invalid even if a million voices proclaimed otherwise. Let us remember that from time immemorial. Masonry never relied on the power of number, on the infallibility of the numerals in order to be a dominant force in this planet. Masonry never relies on majority votes to transform the lives of men and redirect the trajectory of man’s destiny. Masonry is not popularity: Masonry is about correctness. Masons are not counted; Masons are weighed. We value quality, more than quantity.

Mabuhay ang Hiram Lodge Masonic Lodge 88!

Mabuhay ang Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines!

A pleasant evening to all. ❖



Lies We Tell Our Petitioners

By SATOR

NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, perhaps it is best to clarify the title. We do not really lie to our Petitioners and Candidates; at least, not intentionally. It is just that there are certain ideas that we keep telling their way in order to entice them, motivate them, or put their minds at ease, even though such do not necessarily turn out to be entirely true. Often, a Petitioner for membership would only discover the truth too late. Below are some examples that need to be corrected in order to avoid their disillusionment when joining the Fraternity.

“MASONRY IS JUST ONCE A MONTH”

Wrong. Masonry is a way of life and therefore something that Masons practice every day. Of course, this is not what was meant when we tell our Petitioners that Masonry is just one night a month. What we meant was that Masons are only required to attend one Stated

Meeting per month in order to fulfill his Masonic duty. Still, nothing can be further from the truth. A life of Masonry is not just limited to the monthly meetings. There are caucuses, degree works, charity events, fund raisers, planning sessions, mentoring candidates, off-lodge fellowships, District Conventions, Multi-District Conventions, Annual Communications – the list goes on. Saying that Masonry is only once a month is the promise we fail to keep to our Petitioners. Don't believe me? Ask a Mason's wife. Much as it pains us to admit, Masonry, to wives, only meant lost time for family to lodge.

“MASONRY IS NOT ONLY FOR THE RICH”

Actually, if you think about it, it kinda is. Masonry consumes much of your time, money, and effort. If you cannot spare these, you have no business being

or becoming a Mason, for it would only interfere with the duties you owe to yourself, to your job, and, most importantly, to your family. Family should always come first. Your wife and children should have first dibs on your time and attention. That is why the first working tool of a Mason is the 24-inch gauge, the better to enable one to practice proper time management. Your family should have first dibs on your money as well. That is why one of the first questions asked of you before proceeding to join is: *“Have you made adequate provisions for your family in the event of your death?”* Obviously, only the rich can answer this question confidently in the affirmative. In the Philippines, the average person belongs to the middle and lower-middle class, who works tirelessly to provide for his family, and therefore neither have the time nor resources to spare for extra expenses and activities such as Masonry.

The annual dues themselves may not be considered expensive, but maintaining membership rather is. There are charities we need to support, functions we need to participate, and places we need to travel to. There’s the regular *“passing of the hat”* for brothers in distress and for our widows and orphans. There’s regalia and paraphernalia we need to procure, food and drinks we need to consume, and almoners’ funds we need to replenish. All of these put together cost an awful lot of money. Not to mention the rising cost of fuel and worsening traffic situation in the Philippines that make us think whether it is still worth all that wasted money just to attend lodge meetings discussing minutes.

“CHURCH ALREADY ALLOWED CATHOLICS TO JOIN US”

Recent reiterations by the Clergy regarding the Church’s long standing prohibition against Catholics joining Masonry have prompted some Masons and Masonic leaders to claim the opposite – that the Church had already allowed Catholics to join Masonry. Unfortunately, these brothers were wrong. Their confusion stemmed from a misinterpretation of a Masonic article back in 2017 that seemed to say that Catholic Masons are no longer excommunicated, citing the removal of the mention of Masonry in the Vatican’s new Canon Law. The fact is that, after the publication of the new Canon Law, the Vatican was quick to address the said removal by saying that Masonry still falls under a more general criterion and that membership is still very much forbidden. And because some Masonic leaders have been broadcasting their false claim that it is no longer forbidden, a local Bishop wrote directly to the Vatican to seek definitive answers, to which he was swiftly replied the confirmation that the Church still prohibits Catholics from joining Masonry. Since Masonry itself does not have any such prohibition whatsoever against Catholics joining their organization and do, in fact, welcome them as members, a friction is thereby created between Masonry and the Church. This is a truth that we need to tell our Catholic petitioners before we initiate them, not to scare or discourage them from joining, but rather to leave it to them whether they still wish to proceed or not. Our Petitioners deserve to know the facts in order for them to make the right decision for themselves – a decision that

they would have to live with for the rest of their lives.

“RIZAL WAS AN 18° MASON”

We Filipino Masons have a tendency to elevate our national heroes who were Masons to such high pedestals that when we hear or read reports that do so, we never bother to question their authenticity. Take for instance the claim that Jose Rizal was an 18° Mason of the Scottish Rite. There is currently no credible record yet found to prove that that is true. The only evidence we have comes from MW Reynold Fajardo's book, *“Dimasalang,”* where it recounted the statement of a certain writer named Austin Craig who claimed: *“It was the impression of Doctors Tavera and Bautista, confirmed by other old Masons of whom I inquired, that Rizal had the Rose-Croix or 18th degree.”* The fact that the cover of Rizal's novel, *“Noli me Tangere,”* depicted a vague design of what appeared to some as a Rosy Cross only strengthened that claim. Yet, until we establish it as fact, backed by authentic and verifiable proofs on record, we simply cannot consider such claim to be true; at least, not yet.

“RIZAL WAS AN HONORARY WORSHIPFUL MASTER”

Another recent inappropriate title ascribed to Jose Rizal is that of *“Honorary Worshipful Master”* of *Logia Nilad*, allegedly given him when he was still alive. First of all, the term *“Worshipful”* was not used for the

Master of Continental lodges such as those in France, Spain, and Italy, and that the translated word *“Venerable”* was used instead. Secondly, what was really given to him by Pedro Serrano Laktaw was the title *“Venerable de Honor,”* which was the highest titular honor that can be bestowed upon a member of Continental lodges. It is similar in many respects to the *“Hiram Award”* we have here in our jurisdiction.

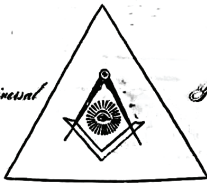
Venerable de Honor ad vitam was a lifetime title of dignity, with no official responsibility by itself, and usually granted to a Past Venerable Master for his extraordinary service to the lodge. Whether the title was given to Rizal as a simple gesture of honor or because he was an actual Past Venerable Master remains unknown.



Á L.: G.: D.: G.: A.: D.: U.:

Masonería Universal

Familia Filipina



Libertad, Igualdad, Fraternidad

Al Sr. Log. Central Nilad de A. L. y A masones en federación del Sr. Or. Log. (sede en Madrid)

S. F. U.

M. q. h. Dimasalang; y le hace saber:

Que en ten. ord. del 31 de Enero ppto. se acordó por esta...

Igualmente le participa que oportunamente se le comunicará...

Lo que transcribo para su conocimiento.

Reciba, q. h. el escudo de paz que os envían los obr. de este tall. Vall. de Manila, 9 de Febrero de 1892 (e. v.). Panday Bro. gr. d.

De Panday Pira (Pedro Serrano Laktaw) a Dimasalang (José Rizal)

(DOCUMENTO MASÓNICO)

Venerable de honor de la Logia Nilad por relevantes servicios a su país natal.—Reorganización masónica

A L.: G.: D.: G.: A.: D.: U.:

Masonería Universal.

Familia Filipina.

LIBERTAD, IGUALDAD, FRATERNIDAD:

La Gr.: Log.: Central Nilad de A.: L.: y A masones, en federación del Gr.: Or.: Esp.: (sede en Madrid)—civía

S.: F.: U.:

al q.: h.: Dimasalang [RIZAL]; y le hace saber que en ten. ord.: de 31 de Enero pasado se acordó por este cuadro nombrar Ven.: de honor de esta Resp.: Gr.: Log.: al susodicho h.: á quien se dirige el infrascrito Sec.: G.: S.: como premio á sus relevantes servicios en pró de su país natal.

Igualmente le participa que oportunamente se le comunicará el proyecto de reorganización mas.: que el que suscribe presentó al Gr.: Or.: Esp.: por lo cual se recabó los plenos poderes para constituírnos en familia aparte, como en efecto levantamos columnas en 6 de Enero pasado.

Lo que transcribo para su conocimiento. Reciba, q.: h.: el escudo de paz que os envían los obr.: de este tall.:

Vall.: de Manila, 9 de Febrero de 1892 (e.: v.:).

PANDAY PIRA [PEDRO SERRANO LAKTAW.]

“SCOTTISH AND YORK RITES ARE APPENDANT BODIES”

Technically, they are not. They are Masonic Rites. A Rite refers to a complete and comprehensive system of Masonic degrees. For instance, the GLP adopted that of the American F&AM which has a complete Masonic degree system from the 1° to the 3°. It is often considered part of an even expanded system of the Webb working, colloquially referred to as the York Rite. The Scottish Rite is also a complete Masonic system from the 1° to the 33°, although here in the Philippines, the 1°-3° are already worked under the GLP. So what are appendant bodies then? They are actually the organizations other than the GLP that work those Rites, such as the Lodge of Perfection, Chapter of RC, Council of KH, Consistory of MRS, and

Supreme Council for the Scottish Rite; and the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Council of Royal & Select Masters, and Commandery of Knights Templar for the York Rite. It is therefore incorrect for us to call the Scottish Rite and the York Rite themselves as appendant bodies. Perhaps we only do so for the sake of convenience and simplicity, however inappropriate.

“WE CANNOT WRITE THE NAMES OF H-A-, JB-A, JB-O, OR JB-M”

This is actually something we practice amongst ourselves that we eventually tell our Candidates later on – that we are not to say or write the full names of “H-A-,” “Jb-a,” “Jb-o,” and “Jb-m” outside of their ritual usages, as if such are part of the secrets we are meant to keep. This is

attributed to the fact that the said names are hidden in cipher in our ritual monitors; and that mentioning them might become spoilers to our Candidates, robbing them of the full initiatory experience of their *raising*. This practice of not writing them often extends to the listing of the roster of the conferring team, as they appear in minutes and lodge records. (Even the names of those who performed those roles are sometimes hidden, supposedly to protect their identities, but that is another topic for discussion some other time.) In truth, there is validity in this practice. It, however, creates the impression that we are absolutely forbidden from writing them even in Masonic Education materials, which is an incorrect presumption. For as long as we do not reveal any part of the ritual work, it is safe to write the said names in full, though I have chosen not to do so here for the same reasons mentioned above.

“AS ALL BROTHERS AND FELLOWS HAVE DONE”

We often chant the complete version of this phrase to our Candidates while they sit waiting outside the doors for their initiation to begin. We mumble it to their ears as if justifying that everything they are undergoing or about to undergo, whether part of the ritual or not (and we all know what that means), is something every Mason went through at the beginning of their Masonic journey. This, however, is not what that phrase actually meant, and saying it to them under such mistaken context would instill upon them that twisted meaning, which they would, in turn, pass on to future Candidates. We should stop performing or

condoning acts that are not actual parts of the process and spirit of initiation, lest we create Masons who have the wrong perception of brotherhood.

“WE ORIGINATED FROM THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR”

Okay, this one we all know to be false. But it is still worth mentioning because, when I myself was a Petitioner, I had been taught this fallacy several times by my mentors. It was during the height and popularity of the *Da Vinci Code* and *National Treasure*. As a consequence, when I already became a Master Mason, I too had been passing on this myth to our lodge's Petitioners. My ignorance back then was inexcusable and I would personally like to apologize to the Petitioners, now Master Masons, whom I had misled in the same manner I had been. Other unfounded claims abound such as that of having originated from King Solomon, or the Ancient Egyptians, or the Druids, or even as far back as Adam. These, however, are mere speculations borne out of an overactive imagination.

THERE ARE many other “*lies*,” or rather, misconceptions, that we tell our Petitioners and ourselves, some of which may be argued to be otherwise. Some we tell to make us feel better about ourselves, while others we tell out of ignorance. Some are quite misleading, while others harmless enough. Whatever the case may be, it is important that we refrain from propagating Masonic misconceptions in order to end the lies once and for all, and finally have a more real and honest perspective of the Fraternity to which we belong. ❖



Brethren in Poverty

By ANON

This is a tale that needs to be told. It is a tale of lost empathy and silent despair, whispering the faded echoes of a seemingly forgotten oath. It is a story that ponders on that mythical “*level*” upon which all of us Masons claim to stand yet fail miserably to notice the inequality it has wrought to the least of our brethren. Open your eyes, your ears, and your hearts, my dear brothers, to the harsh reality about to be revealed herein. Be rid of all prejudice and judgement that you may realize and understand that not all Masons are equal.

Our brightly lit lodges are witnesses to unseen shadows known only to them who suffer beneath their cloak. In the midst of one Masonic gathering, where coins clinked and bills unfolded in contribution to noble causes, I there found myself an outcast among my brethren. The hat passed around, brimming with goodwill and benevolence, mocked my inability to partake in the sacred act of charity. I glimpsed around and saw the specter of judgment in the eyes of some of my fellow Masons, casting scorn upon me as if questioning my worthiness to sit among them. What selfishness, I presumed they thought of me. It was a thought I may have cast upon myself as well. What selfishness indeed.

No poor man, they say, could ever join the ranks of Freemasonry. Its barriers were erected with financial obligations, casting a shadow upon the aspirations of those who dare to dream of belonging but could not. A potential candidate is even made to ensure that he had made adequate provisions for himself and his family in the event of his death. Those who manage to become Masons are faced with a life that constantly gives to charity and the community. Freemasonry thus requires time, effort, devotion, and money – but the greatest of these is money. Indeed, only the wealthy and well-qualified could seemingly become a Mason. Yet what happens when poverty, like a relentless specter, invades the sanctity of a good Mason’s abode? What becomes of the brother who once stood proud among his peers, only to find himself shackled by the chains of destitution?

I myself have tasted the bitterness of such a crisis. Though not born into opulence, I carved a modest path for myself and my family, one that afforded me the privilege of embracing a life of Masonic endeavors. But poverty, that merciless assailant, crept into my life like a thief in the night, stripping me of my means and leaving me bereft of solace. The once-familiar halls of our lodge became a chamber of shame, where the weight

of my empty pocket echoed louder than any ritualistic chant. After the stated meetings, I could barely face my brethren in fellowship, trying to avoid being sold a bundle of raffle tickets for “fun shoots” and golf tournaments.

Make no mistake, I wanted to help and participate in all of my lodge’s noble undertakings. Yet, I battled fiercely the march of poverty that I had to sacrifice much to make ends meet. One job came after another and, still, I found myself facing a future that threatened my ability to support myself and family. I dared not reach out to my brethren, many of whom, I presumed, were facing problems of their own. I dared not hele that “sign of distress” for I was never truly in distress, just somewhere in between of well and not well. If anything, what came under distress was my standing as a Mason. I apparently could no longer maintain a life of endless Masonic activities that mined me of my time and resources – time and resources I could better use for my family in need.

Then came the pandemic, that relentless storm that ravaged our lives with merciless impunity. Whatever livelihood I had left crumbled beneath the weight of economic turmoil. My wife had been laid off from a company that shut down. For a time, we managed, but depleting whatever savings we have had, until there was none left. Finding work and odd jobs was difficult and always ending in failure. Then the Grand Lodge decided to increase its collections, prompting lodges across the country to likewise increase their respective collection of annual dues from their members, putting more pressure

on those who could barely sustain their memberships, let alone their very lives. How could the Fraternity, I wondered, impose such burdens upon us, knowing full well the toll it would exact upon the less fortunate among our ranks? I wondered further: is it truly time to resign from Masonry? After all the brotherhood, all the labors, and all the challenges, is it only money that could prompt a Mason to succumb and leave his beloved Fraternity?

"They cling to the fading embers of brotherhood, hopping against hope that the Fraternity would find a way to embrace them in their time of need."

It seems that financial ability to sustain Masonic membership is the only thing keeping one worthy of being a Mason? Tribulations, personal trials, imperfections, or even misbehavior do not stop a Mason from still being a Mason. But apparently, poverty does. It all boils down to money – the lifeblood of every Masonic undertaking, without which, it seems, no amount of other forms of contributions would suffice.

Is it, then, a choice to abandon the Fraternity in the face of such adversity; to sever the ties that bind us, forged in the crucible of camaraderie and shared purpose? Or, are we condemned to linger in the shadows, cast aside by a circle that measures worth in gold and silver? For those of us ensnared by the clutches of poverty, quitting Freemasonry is not merely a decision, but a necessary sur-

render to the forces that divide us. We may all be standing on that illusion we call the “level,” but none of us were ever truly equal. Thus, for us to be subjected to extend the same amount of time and resources as the rest is an unfair treatment. To try to make unequal things equal is indeed the worst form of inequality.

This is a testament to the seeming failings of our Fraternity, where the bonds of brotherhood falter in the face of financial difficulty. Many of us may not be in distress, but neither are we thriving as well. Many of us exist in the liminal space between affluence and destitution, overlooked and disregarded by those who fail to see beyond the surface. The rituals that once resonated with profound meaning have seemingly rung hollow, as the weight of financial burden bore down upon the shoulders of our unfortunate brethren. The pillars of the temple, symbolic of strength and resilience, have seemingly trembled under the oppressive weight of economic hardship. The aprons, once worn with pride, now felt like burdensome shackles that threatened to sever the ties that had bound many of us together in the past.

Thusly, my dear brothers, let us ponder upon our institution with introspective eyes. Is Freemasonry a sanctuary for the privileged few, whose coffers overflow with abundance, or is it a refuge for the weary souls of our brethren who seek solace amidst the storms of life, regardless of the weight of their wallets? In the hallowed halls of our lodges, where the symbols of our craft stood as testament to our ideals, let us not forget

the true measure of our worth, for it is not in the glint of gold nor the clink of coins, but in the resilience of the human spirit, that the heart of Freemasonry should beat the strongest.

Meanwhile, the plight of the brethren in poverty continues, while the rest are unaware. Many choose to ignore them and even judge them for failing the Fraternity, when it was the Fraternity that might have failed them. But let not this narrative serve as blame on the Fraternity entirely for its ignorance on the current condition of its destitute members who feel shame and guilt for their own unpaid dues and unmet expectations. All of us have been ensnared by crises and loss one way or another, revealing the stark truth that not even the most revered institutions are immune to the cruel ravages of poverty.

In the eyes of our impoverished brethren, there still flickered a desperate plea for understanding, a plea that transcended the rigid structures of tradition and called for a compassionate acknowledgment of their plight. They cling to the fading embers of brotherhood, hoping against hope that the Fraternity would find a way to embrace them in their time of need. Let the gavel therefore, once a symbol of order and justice, now pound relentlessly as an ominous reminder of their precarious standing within the Fraternity. ❖



SHINDIGS

THE HOOPLA BEHIND MASONIC INSTALLATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

by SATOR

Every year, we Filipino Masons install our Lodge officers into the positions for which we have elected them. This we do with a solemn ceremony designed to instill upon them the great burden of the responsibility they are about to undertake. It is a sacred ritual wherein the torch of Masonic leadership is passed with reverence, marking the ascension of a Master and two Wardens, or what we call the three “*lights*,” together with the other elected and appointed office bearers. We charge them with the sacred duty of guiding the rest of their Brethren and administering the whole of the Lodge. The occasion, therefore, is all about the Lodge and its members successfully transitioning stewardship from one chosen hand to the next. Lately, however, a subtle shift began to seemingly corrode the sanctity of this venerable rite, as it slowly morphed into a spectacle of opulence and fanfare, where the essence of duty and responsibility became clouded by displays of grandeur. Once a solemn passage of transition, this *Ceremony of Installation* now seems to pulsate with the symphony of vanity and self-promotion.

Almost gone now are the days when the rap of the gavel echoed with reverence,

heralding the investiture of new office bearers. In its place, a cacophony of inaugural speeches from installed Masters now resounds, seemingly seeking to cast themselves in the center of an unfolding drama of their own making. Their words and gestures seemed to have become calculated performances designed not to honor the Lodges they posed to serve, but rather to exalt themselves and push their own ambitions.

When did our Installation ceremonies become all about the triumph and glory of the new Master and his Wardens, as if their election was a result of their own making and campaigning; as if they have attained the positions they sought instead of the positions having actually sought them? When did such sacred ceremonies become massive events, complete with luxurious venues, lavish dinners, and theatrical video productions that all seemed to portray the three elected *Lights* as the sole protagonists of the occasions, seemingly turning such into carnivals of egos, where their faces have been plastered on walls, tarpaulins, invitations, and commemorative trinkets? Are Installations really just glorified victory parties? Have we truly forsaken the essence of Masonic stewardship for the hollow accolades of position and prestige?

As the few learned brethren look on, who know the true meaning behind the Installation ceremonies, they hide their grief over the loss of something sacred. For in the place of reverence and solemnity, they now witness a shallow spectacle, where the true spirit of Masonry is outshined by the blinding glare of ego.

Sure, it may be easy to justify all the hoopla and shindigs as mere attempts to spread the joy of the occasion – a way for the new *Lights* to share the bounty of their accomplishments with their families, friends, and brethren. But what accomplishments? Sure, we may like to believe that Masters and Wardens would never have been elected by their Brethren if not for their services in past positions of office. But being elected to a higher position than before does not necessarily correlate to accomplishment; it is simply the natural movement, like clockwork, of “going through the chairs.” Indeed, what semblance of achievement can be gleaned from the mere act of being elected and installed? Are we to mistake the trappings of office for the substance of merit yet to be earned and proven? If so, we have nurtured a convoluted inversion of Masonic ideals – where ranks supplant virtues; and titles eclipse labor. We have developed the notion that the attainment of a rank, title, and position is already accomplishment in itself.

Blame it partly on the Masonic awards we have been giving our Brethren: Best Worshipful Master, Best Grand Lodge Inspector, Best District Deputy Grand Master, etc. It was as if we have been conditioned to think that ranks, titles,

and positions are the criteria for Masonic success, without realizing that it was the work put into by those Brethren that earned them such awards. Blame it also on our acquired local culture and attitudes, where titles equate to prestige and power begets respect.

I have interviewed some newly installed Masters as to why they spend so much time, money, and effort into making their Installations so grandiose. One asserted that the spectacle was but a gesture of gratitude to his Brethren, an offering of camaraderie for having placed their trust in his hands, and treating them, at least, to decent food and drinks. Not a bad reason; in fact fairly acceptable. Another, in defense of his seemingly extravagant indulgence, said that he waited so long, sacrificing “going through the chairs” to finally become Master of the Lodge. What was so wrong, he said, of spending a little extra money to celebrate one’s “attainment,” and to the delight, as a matter of fact, of his Brethren? Also a valid point. And then there was one who made perhaps one of the most compelling arguments of all. He said, “*We spend almost an equal amount on the reception of our weddings. Being installed Master is like being married to your position in Masonry. It is one of the highlights of your life and Masonic career that deserves to be commemorated with family, friends, and, most especially, the Brethren. We do not spend the money of the lodge; we spend our own. If we can afford to, we sponsor a banquet that comes after the Installation itself, which is no longer about the Lodge, but about us giving what we can to make the occasion more memorable.*”

Yet, beneath these veneers of justification lie the disquieting truth – that the issue was never about shindig or the hoopla, nor about the generosity of spirit that prompted it. No, the heart of the matter lies in the subtle shift in focus – from the collective to the individual, from the Lodge to the illuminated three. When the three *Lights* make the occasion all about them, even if during the banquet that follows the Installation, then it gives a scary foreshadowing of the kind of leadership expected from them and the mentality they nurture as to why they rejoice in their newfound glories in the first place. Then, it matters not whether these elected stewards ultimately discharge their duties with outstanding diligence and honor, for it is tainted with selfish and self-glorifying intentions, casting over their tenure the deceit of mercenary motives.

“We spend almost an equal amount on the reception of our weddings. Being installed Master is like being married to your position in Masonry. It is one of the highlights of your life and Masonic career that deserves to be commemorated with family, friends, and, most especially, the Brethren. We do not spend the money of the lodge; we spend our own. If we can afford to, we sponsor a banquet that comes

after the Installation itself, which is no longer about the Lodge, but about us giving what we can to make the occasion more memorable.”

We now glimpse the contours of a disconcerting future where leadership is spoiled by the specter of self-interest, where the sanctity of duty is eclipsed by the allure of personal glory. The ascent to Mastership, once a sacred journey of service and dedication, now risks degeneration into a mere procession of entitled elevation, a perfunctory march “through the chairs,” bereft of genuine accomplishment.

Amidst the blinding light of ego and ambition, we must cast aside all temptations of Masonic vanity and embrace instead the timeless virtues of humility and service, ever keeping our feet grounded upon that “*level*” we always speak of. We must remember that it is not the accolades of office that define us as Masons, but rather the sincerity of our Masonic labors and the purity of our noble intents.

I fervently hope and pray, for all of our sakes, that I am actually wrong about the observations and personal opinions I have shared above; and that everything I have written are nothing more than exaggerated viewpoints coming from a maladjusted lens. God help us all. ❖



*A Century of
Unity and Service:
Celebrating 100
Years of Mount
Kaladias Masonic
Lodge No. 91*
by Bro. Daryl Robinson

As dawn's first light broke over Dumaguete City, the hushed whispers of history in the making

fluttered through the air. During the week of February 23, 2024, a vibrant procession of brethren, family, and friends from Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge No. 91 converged upon Pantawan Rizal Boulevard for an opening celebration of a week-long festivities and events. The celebration started with a morning jog/walk. With every step taken in unison along the sun-kissed shores, a flame of celebration was kindled, heralding the start of a centennial festivity

unlike any other. This momentous occasion marked the beginning of a week dedicated to honoring a century's journey of brotherhood, service, and adherence to the noble Masonic principles that have been the cornerstone of the lodge's enduring legacy.

The centennial festivities showcased a deep-rooted commitment to community upliftment, starting with a compassionate outreach at Candau-ay Elementary School. Mount Kaladias Lodge's brethren demonstrated the essence of Masonic charity by donating essential food utensils and funds, igniting a week-long feeding program for the school's malnourished children. This gesture was a poignant reminder of the fraternity's pledge to support and elevate those in need within their community.

The wave of benevolence continued to ripple through the rugged terrains of Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental, reaching the lodges adopted school Kaladias Elementary. There, amidst the mountainous embrace, the brethren engaged with bright young minds, giving them raincoats, slippers,

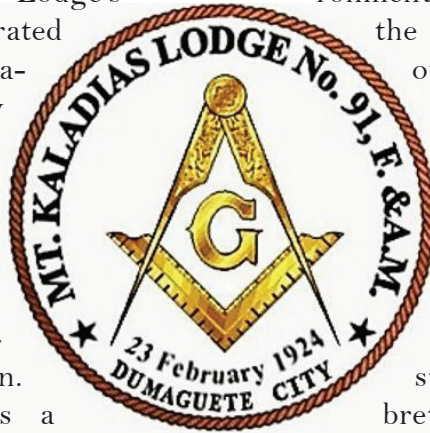
and lunch boxes. This initiative addressed immediate needs and symbolized the lodge's comprehensive approach to nurturing future generations' well-being and educational journey.

In a testament to their earth stewardship, the brethren joined forces with the Dumaguete Coast Guard Station for a tree-planting event. Each seed planted was a promise for a greener future, illustrating the Masonic commitment to environmental conservation and the sustainable care of our planet.

A standout moment of the week was the Ladies Fellowship Night, an evening illuminating the silent strength behind the brethren - their partners. This celebration was a heartfelt tribute to

the sacrifices and unwavering support of the brethren's better halves, reinforcing the family's pivotal role in the Masonic voyage and the successful realization of the lodge's goals.

The week's activities culminated in a grandiose Open House, a visionary Time Capsule ceremony, and a splendid celebration of the



lodge's past masters. The Open House provided an enriching insight into Freemasonry's illustrious heritage and the significant contributions of Mount Kaladias over the past century. The Time Capsule ceremony created a bridge to the future, sealing within it the aspirations and messages of today's brethren for those a century forward.

The Grand Celebration was a majestic affair, drawing brethren from across the Grand Lodge of the Philippines jurisdiction. This event was a fitting homage to the lodge's enduring legacy, recognizing the invaluable leadership of all living past masters and celebrating the familial pillars supporting the lodge's endeavors through the years.

Amid these celebrations, a special accolade was reserved for MW Don T. Ramas-Uypitching, a distinguished member of Mount Kaladias and the current Grand Master of Masons. His presence highlighted the lodge's integral role in the broader Masonic domain of the Philippines, underscoring the fraternity's interconnectedness and shared aspirations.

As the centennial week concluded, the brethren of Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge No. 91 and their esteemed guests reflected on the

profound odyssey that led them to this historic juncture. The celebrations paid homage to a century of Masonic legacy. They paved the way for the lodge's future trajectory, affirming its commitment to forging ahead with unity, service, and an unwavering dedication to the Masonic virtues.

Looking forward, Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge No. 91 stands poised at the dawn of a new century, ready to carry forward the torch of Freemasonry. With a spirit rejuvenated by the accomplishments of the past and eyes set firmly on the horizon, the lodge is geared to navigate the challenges ahead, perpetuating a legacy of improving good men, serving humanity, and steadfastly upholding the principles that have been its guiding light since inception. Here is to another century of brotherhood, service, and growth as Mount Kaladias Masonic Lodge No. 91 continues illuminating the path for future generations. ❖

WHEN IS IT TIME TO QUIT MASONRY?

By SATOR

IT IS UNTHINKABLE for a Mason to decide giving up Freemasonry, an institution that has given him brotherhood, personal identity, and a profound sense of purpose. Yet, one might question: why would a devoted member entertain the idea of resigning voluntarily? The reasons are actually more commonplace than you think. Below are some of the valid reasons and situations that could prompt a worthy brother to contemplate departure from his cherished Fraternity. Read them with openness and receptivity, for you might recognize yourself in their circumstances. Perhaps this is the perfect opportunity to reflect on whether you too should consider leaving.

YOU SHOULD QUIT FREEMASONRY WHEN...

1. It has gotten Expensive. There is no shame in admitting when you can no longer manage the cost of your membership. Financial difficulty is something we are all experiencing lately, but for some more dire than others. When you can no longer afford to give to charity and have to prioritize on your own family; when your annual dues have increased drastically and now cost more than what you save; when, in every stated meeting, you are expected to contribute a considerable sum, either for refreshment, for a fund-raiser, or for donation to a brother in need: then perhaps it is time to quit Masonry. Sure, you may choose to remain and not shell out any money, but what exactly would that do? You risk alienating yourself from your brethren, or feel unworthy, or feel guilty even. You might even lose your good standing if you do not pay your dues on time. Do you even dare reach out to your lodge and inform them of your financial difficulty, as if asking for hand-outs from the Fraternity that you are supposed to be helping instead of the other way around? It is really quite simple: If you cannot afford to be a Mason, then don't be, lest Masonry becomes the reason you become poor.
2. Your Family no longer Approves. Former Philippine President, Manuel Quezon, reluctantly "resigned" (demitted) from his lodge allegedly due to his wife's religious sentiments against Masonry. When your wife or any member of your family no longer approves of you being a Mason, whether for religious or any other reason, then perhaps you should take a cue from Quezon himself. He chose to give up his Masonic affiliation instead of convincing his wife that her views on Masonry were unfounded, thus avoiding unnecessary conflict and friction on their relationship. There are many other reasons why your wife may develop a negative opinion on Masonry. You may have been spending too much time at lodge rather than at home, perhaps using it as an excuse to escape domestic

responsibilities. You may have taken on too many Masonic roles and given too much time, money, and attention away from family in favor of Masonic endeavors. Sure you may choose to reform by limiting your Masonic activities and spend more time with family, but when the damage is already done and it has already caused enmity from your wife, then learn to accept the possibility that your Masonic career has reached its untimely end. Let it serve as a lesson to all Masons to always put family before Masonic activities.

3. It has taken over your Life. When Masonry has somehow become parasitic and has taken over every aspect of your life – you no longer have friends except Masons; you no longer have a job except Masonic-related; you no longer think of anything else except Masonry, Masonry, Masonry; your family only sees you exhausted and worrying about your next meeting, project, or degree conferral; and your very idea of success and accomplishment is rising within the ranks of the Fraternity – then please, do yourself a favor and quit while you still can. Masonry is meant to make you a better man, not cause harm to your character and mental health. Sure, you may choose to simply take a break from Masonic life, but would that really solve your problems and be any different upon your return, given the severity of the damage it has already done? You should have known better than get yourself addicted and intoxicated with excessive Masonic life at the expense of your own.

4. It is interfering with your Duties. Masonry, they say, should not interfere with your religious, nationalistic, professional, social, and personal life. The moment your religious denomi-

nation compels you to leave Masonry; the moment your political viewpoints clash with the tenets of the Craft; the moment you can no longer function efficiently and effectively at work due to Masonic commitments; the moment you start feeling alienated by your friends and neighbors who are against Masonry; and the moment you lose touch with your previous hobbies such as sports, movies, events, and travel: then you must choose and choose wisely. Are you willing to endure all the changes happening in your life in favor of remaining a Mason? Or are you holding Masonry accountable for its unfulfilled promise that it would not interfere with the duties you owe to God, your country, your neighbor, or yourself, and that its breach-of-contract naturally meant that you should already terminate your relationship with it? Think about it well.

5. It has become Toxic. When you are no longer happy with your Masonic life, for whatever reason, and have already lost interest, then what is the point of remaining a Mason? Why would you even choose to remain if you only plan to eventually become inactive in the long run? And what caused you to become unhappy and lose interest in the first place? Is it because of toxic company, of brothers you do not get along with, or of disillusionment that Masonry did not turn out to be what you expected and was really not what you came here to do? Normally, a problem such as this could easily be solved by seeking better company elsewhere, maybe by affiliating with other lodges with members who share your own views and interests. Unfortunately, you would eventually discover, to your dismay, that it is the same way everywhere else. You then realize that perhaps the problem lies, not with

Masonry, but with you all along. This toxicity, whether coming from you or from the Fraternity, should not hinder you from seeking happiness elsewhere. So when the drives to lodge have gone longer, the meetings have dragged on, and the discussions have become boring and meaningless, prompting you to tell yourself “there’s gotta be more to life than this,” then go in peace, my friend, and may you find what you are looking for outside Masonry.

6. You committed a Crime. Delikadesa dictates that, when you have committed a crime, corruption, or anything shameful in the public eye through your own fault, especially one so grave as to cause scandal, you should do the right thing and resign from the Fraternity that is supposed to promote moral and ethical living. Obviously, Masonry has failed you and you have failed Masonry. Remaining a Mason in a state of disgrace would put a bad light upon the rest of your brethren. Resigning, therefore, is not for your benefit, but for that of the organization. Exercise that final act of dignity and sacrifice as a Mason by saving the reputation of the Fraternity from yourself. Take a cue from Japanese culture, where men voluntarily resign from their posts even when merely involved or accused of misdeeds and still unproven guilty. That is honor worthy of Masonic emulation.

7. You have come for the wrong reasons. If mere curiosity led you here; if you came not seeking enlightenment to improve yourself; if you do not know the meaning of “word-of-honor;” if you petitioned initially not of your own volition, and were merely invited or improperly solicited to join, possibly for your fame, fortune, or influence; if you joined for distinction and

sought personal, business, and political advantage: then, in the words of a prominent local Masonic leader, “get out!” You have managed to penetrate the West Gate and simply do not belong here.

8. You have been suspended for a long time. When you are suspended for a long period of time already, either due to non-payment of dues or for some other reason, then obviously you no longer care about your membership status and no longer have plans of returning. In such case, quit the right way: write a letter of demit to your lodge and Grand Lodge and pay your arrears. That way, you leave the Fraternity in good terms and with a clear conscience. Let no record taint your reputation as a man by allowing your suspended status unresolved simply because you do not wish to pay your accumulated dues.

9. You believe nothing can take away your being a Mason. If you are one of those wisecracks who rationalize that you cannot cease, undo, or renounce being a Mason simply because you have already been conferred the degrees and that the lessons and secrets have already been known to you for your personal use and advantage, then you obviously believe that you have already reaped the benefits of Masonry and that quitting won’t make any difference to you anymore. While it is true that the essence and imprint of our Masonic experience remains indelible, even if we disassociate from Masonry, doing so actually severs our official ties with the Fraternity and makes us non-Masons. It is indeed a cruel realization of the plain and simple truth – that what makes a man a Mason is his official membership in a recognized lodge. No amount of phi-

losophizing will ever change that, for any man, whether a former Mason or not, who claims to be a Mason but does not hold membership in any legally constituted lodge, can only be considered a pretender or clandestine, regardless of how much he actually knows about Masonry.

There may be other reasons we failed to mention above, but it is clear from this enumerated list that you should quit Masonry either when it already poses harm to yourself or when you yourself are posing harm unto it. Note however, that not all reasons, valid as they may appear, merit your resignation. Below are some perceived bases for quitting that you should not be considering.

YOU SHOULD NOT QUIT FREEMASONRY WHEN...

1. You have Health issues. When you need some time off to rest and recuperate from a medical condition or illness, then no, it is not an acceptable reason to quit Masonry. Your brethren would understand if you could not attend lodge due to health problems. Even if your condition seems permanent or terminal, the more that your brethren should assist you in your time of need. In fact, there are local regulations (e.g. Edict 325–Suan 2019) now that exempt you from paying dues or from attending meetings if you have suffered accident, illness, injury, or other forms of distress, rendering you unable to earn a living and likewise preventing you from fulfilling many of your Masonic duties.

2. You cannot Attend anymore. When you just moved to another place or have been reassigned far away to an-

other country, thus preventing you from physically attending lodge or any other Masonic activity, do not quit. It is no reason to quit. Masonry means so much more than attending meetings. It is only one of many aspects that make up our Craft. You can still serve Masonry other than through face-to-face attendance. You can, for instance, contribute to charity or assist in committee works from afar. Technology has advanced so much in recent times that it is now possible to send money at the click of a button in your cellphones, or do Masonic work from home and send them through email. You can even meet online through teleconferencing platforms such as Zoom. Masonic labor has never been this easy and convenient. All you have to do is utilize these tools in order to still be able to contribute whatever you can to Masonry. However, if your lodge or Grand Lodge puts so great an importance on attendance (and understandably so), requiring you to attend a minimum number of meetings in order to maintain your Masonic standing, then there are local regulations (Edict 276c–Suan 2020) in place that allow you to count as attendance your visits to other lodges nearer to you.

3. Harassed or Bullied. Do not leave Masonry simply because a brother (or group of brothers) seems to be harassing or bullying you at lodge. Every lodge has them: the know-it-all grandstanders, the power-drunk officers, and the grumpy old Past Master who keep picking on your mistakes, your posture, your attire, and your ritual execution. Don't take it personally. Some people are just the way they are and their attitudes have nothing to do with you. Indeed you will find that you are not the only one they pick on. They seem to feel that it is their right

to criticize every member and control every aspect of the lodge. Try and be more tolerant of these clearly troubled brothers. Often they are undergoing domestic problems or low self-esteem and are merely using the lodge to make them feel better about themselves. By and large, they are quite harmless, and most brothers have already learned to simply ignore their negative aura. You may try whispering good counsel to them, but do you really want to poke the bear?

4. Accused or Charged of Un-Masonic Conduct. Whether out of guilt or sheer delikadesa, it is your own personal decision should you wish to leave the Fraternity when charged with un-Masonic conduct whose penalty could either be suspension or expulsion. Know, however, that you have a right to voice your side and defend yourself, especially if the accusations are untrue and unwarranted to the best of your knowledge. Let due process take its course to penalize the guilty and exonerate the innocent. If your conscience is clear, do not let the Fraternity lose a worthy Mason as yourself.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

There's this former brother I knew whose life, according to his own testimony, improved dramatically when he left the Fraternity, as there were no longer "fellowships" and Masonic commitments taking his time, money, and attention away from himself and his family. After he left, he had every night off to himself, found more time to go see the world, and basically re-discovered himself again. I imagine other former brothers like him who probably have never been happier after leaving as well. They might have taken on more productive hobbies, gone

to the gym, or reconnected with aging parents left in far off homes.

This actually reflects the sorry state into which the rest of our brethren have found themselves. Because of their own misplaced priorities, they have forgotten the lesson of the 24-inch gauge, and have allowed Masonry to consume its entirety. Remember: Masonry should be enjoyed, not endured. It should improve the quality of your life, not exhaust it. But Masonry itself does none of the damages listed above. They are brought on by outside forces beyond our control and sometimes by forces of our own doing. We can only hope that whatever the causes, you eventually never have to ultimately pay the price of giving up Masonry which you struggled so long and hard to join.

If you are, however, deciding on leaving Masonry for your own good, happily and without regret, then I commend you for your resolve and wish you good luck. To those who are still considering, allow me to console you for your predicament. To those who do not wish to quit Masonry and wish to avoid the pitfalls above, my advice is to never let Masonry overwhelm you. Masonry is to be sipped and savored like fine wine, not to be drunk uncontrolled in order to be intoxicated. Masonry is supposed to make good men better, but you should never stop looking for other ways to improve yourself in the greater world outside. In so doing, you will become a much more satisfied, talented, and well-rounded individual with more stories to tell and more wisdom to impart. More to that, you would have reaped the benefits of Masonry and still have kept the life you wanted for yourself. 🍷

SCRUTINIES

for Intellectual Masons

THE FOLLOWING is a collection of short expositions based on the INTROSPECTION series which run in the highly academic pages of the *Far Eastern Freemason* publication of the Scottish Rite. We likewise invite all Blue Lodge Masons under the jurisdiction of the *Grand Lodge of the Philippines* (GLP) to ponder upon them with open minds, unbiased judgment, and scholarly discernment. You are also free to disagree with anything below that you believe to be untrue.

DID YOU KNOW that it may be considered in bad taste to use the prefix “*Worshipful*” or “*Very Worshipful*” in the *first person*? It is much like it seems inappropriate for you to address yourself as “*Honorable A.B.*” or “*His Excellency A.B.*” even if those are your due appellations. Such titles and honorifics are meant to be used in the *second or third persons* only, meaning that they are prefixes meant by others to address you or to refer to you, not something you would use upon yourself. Therefore, although it is but proper to call and address a Worshipful Master as “*Worshipful Bro. A.B.*” (within the confines of the lodge, of course), it may be considered improper for him to introduce himself to others in such manner (e.g. “*I am Worshipful Bro. A.B.*” Sounds awkward, right?). Accordingly, it would be equally improper to use *Worshipful Bro.* as a prefix to one’s own signature, especially when signing his letters or his messages addressed to others (e.g. “*Yours truly, Worshipful Bro. A.B.*”). The proper way to do it is to sign your name, followed by your title (e.g. “*Yours truly, A.B., Past Master of __ Lodge No. __*”).

DID YOU KNOW that the objects resembling globes on both sides of the two pillars at the porch of King Solomon’s Temple might not actually be globes? In Masonic ritual, the entrance to the lodge, being symbolic of the Temple, is adorned with the same two pillars with the spherical objects on top. These were traditionally thought to represent the earth and the celestial world respectively. However, given that the concept of a spherical earth was unknown during Solomon’s time, the accuracy of such symbolism is questionable. The Old Testament’s description of Solomon’s Temple mentions two pillars situated at the porch (I Kings 7:21). On each chapter or capital atop the pillars was a bowl (I Kings 7:41), likely used for burning incense or oil.



The metal network covering each bowl may have created the appearance of a globe. Hence, the Masonic interpretation of them being globes seems to be a modern concept, emerging after the establishment of the idea of the earth being round and not flat. The first reference of the globes on the pillars may have been in the work of a 19th century ritualist, possibly William Preston.

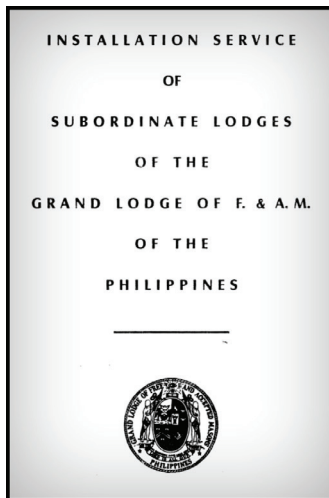
DID YOU KNOW that the number of *unrecognized* bodies of supposed Masons (locally labeled as “clandestine”) is rapidly growing in the Philippines? There’s the *Supremo Consejo del Grado 33° REAyA (A&ASR) del Gran Oriente de Filipinas* that’s connected with the *Gran Logia Soberana del Archipiélago Filipino (Sovereign Grand Lodge of the Philippine Archipelago)* or what we call “Soberanas” or “Soberanos” for short. There’s the *Supremo Consejo del Grado 33° para Filipinas* that’s connected with the *Gran Logia Nacional de Filipinas* or what we call here as the GLNF for short (not to be confused with the *Grande Loge Nationale Française* that uses the same acronym). There’s the *Independent Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands* or IGLPI, the most recent break-away group from the original Grand Lodge of the Philippines or GLP. There’s the *Supremo Consejo del Grado 33° y Ultimo del Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado de las Islas Filipinas (Cerneau Rite)* connected with the *Gran Logia del Lejano Oriente, Islas Filipinas*, an alleged breakaway group from the *Soberanas*. There’s the supposed *Supreme Council of Grand Inspector General of the Thirty-third Degree*, an appendant body of the offshore *Grand Lodge of Modern Mixed Masons* of England, having a Rose Croix chapter and Craft lodges here in the Philippines. There’s another offshore, the *Supremo Consejo, Soberanos Grandes Inspectores Generales 33°, REAA, Republica Mexicana, Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, also known as the *Supreme Council of Mexico*, operating one body here in the Philippines consisting of members who allegedly broke away from the GLNF. There’s a local Rose Croix Chapter of still unknown and unverified Supreme Council but connected with a so-called *Grande Loge Mixte Océan Indien*.¹ All of these are considered *irregular* and therefore *unrecognized* by our own Grand jurisdiction.



DID YOU KNOW that the word “*Sublime*,” in the context of Masonic degrees, did not and does not necessarily refer to the Third degree? The word was used as a descriptive or attributive adjective, not as a comparative one that distinguishes the Third degree apart from the others. However, when Masons today say, “*Sublime degree*,” they usually refer to the Third degree. That is because Masonic teachings in most *regular* Craft Lodges say so as a matter-of-factly – in rituals, in lectures, and in candidates’ catechisms – calling it “*the sublime degree of Master Mason*.” Since not all Master Masons choose to progress beyond the Third degree, only a few realize that the word “*sublime*” (which they mistakenly thought to mean “*highest*”)² also refers to other degrees and orders beyond the Craft and is therefore not exclusive to the Third degree alone.

In the Scottish Rite, some degrees have or once had “sublime” as an actual part of their names, such as *Sublime Knights Elected* (11°); *Perfect Masters of Sublime Scottish Masonry* (14°); *Grand Elect, Perfect, and Sublime Mason* (14°); and *Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret* (32°). The Scottish Rite itself, during its early days since 1801, had been referred to as “*Sublime Masonry*,” and its degrees as “*sublime degrees*,” inheriting such from the Rite’s predecessor, the *Order of the Royal Secret* (1767). Its Lodges of Perfection were called *Sublime [Grand] Lodges of Perfection*. In the Grand Constitutions of 1786, the last degree was referred to as the *Thirty-third and Most Sublime Degree* (33°). In Royal Arch Masonry, such as in the York Rite, members are said to be exalted to what is known as “*the Supreme and Most Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Masons*.” There is even a side degree called *Sublime Master or Jacob’s Wrestle* in the roster of the *Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests*.

With all of these Masonic bodies using the term “sublime” to describe themselves and their degrees, how then did the word come to be associated with the Third degree as its sole and unique characteristic? A clue may be found in the entry of Albert Mackey in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* regarding the word. He wrote: “*The first book in which we meet with the adjective sublime applied to the Third degree is the Masonic Discourses of Dr. TM Harris, published at Boston in 1801. Cole also used it in 1817 in his Freemasons’ Library; and about the same time, Jeremy Cross, the well-known lecturer, introduced it into his teachings, and used it in his Hieroglyphic Chart, which was, for many years, the text-book of American Lodges. The word is now to be found in the modern English lectures, and is of universal use in the rituals of the US, where the Third degree is always called the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason.*”³³



DID YOU KNOW that the charge being given to new lodge officers that says “*You admit that it is not in the power of any man or body of men to make innovations in the body of Masonry*” is actually incomplete and has caused much confusion? It still appears as such in the official Installation Ceremonies of the GLP, including its ceremonies for opening and instituting lodges under dispensation. Throughout the years, the charge had come to be understood to mean the discouraging of ritual revision – it being an essential part of the body of Masonry. This gives the impression of preserving the “purity” of what we have inherited for the benefit of our future brethren, thus enabling us to transmit our Masonic heritage as we ourselves received it. The said charge even made it to Albert Mackey’s version of the list of Masonic Landmarks⁴ (1858), which likewise considers itself part of the body of Masonry that should not be changed, quoting supposedly from the General Regulations of Masonry. However, like we said, the quoted charge is incomplete. The complete phrase should have been “*That it is not in the power of any person, or body of men, to make any alteration or innovation in the body of*

Masonry without the consent first obtained of the Annual Grand Lodge,” as it originally appeared in the amended 1723 General Regulation XXXIX of the *Grand Lodge of England*, pertaining to the preserving of the Ancient Landmarks.

In 1775, William Preston, with knowledge of the above phrase from the General Regulations, made the Installation ritual where the Master-elect was made to promise to support the accurate regulation summary, to wit: “*No alteration or innovation in the body of Masonry shall be made without the consent of the Grand Lodge.*” However, in 1781, the words “*without the consent of*

the Grand Lodge” were removed, thereby confusing its original meaning. Then in 1827, the shortened regulation summary was inserted into the Constitutions of the *United Grand Lodge of England* (UGLE) by its then Grand Master, the Duke of Sussex⁵ (Prince Augustus Frederick), perpetuating a new erroneous notion that making innovations in Masonry is absolutely forbidden, by anyone, including the Grand Lodge itself. The new severed phrase “*that it is not in the power of any man or body of men to make innovations in the body of Masonry*” has since been propagated throughout the entire Masonic world, carrying with it its mistaken implications. Although the UGLE has already corrected this serious corruption in its Constitutions and rituals in 1986, most other Grand Lodges, including the GLP, still have not.

DID YOU KNOW that the popular misconception that “*Masons do not believe in God*” actually has legitimate basis? The confusion lies in the fact that there are actually other “*kinds*” of Freemasonry in existence, two of which are the more prevalent – the Grand Lodge system popular among Anglo-American jurisdictions, and those known in some European and South American countries as the *Grand Orient* system, which basically follows the Scottish Rite *obedience* of French Masonry. On September 14, 1877, the *Grand Orient of France* voted to eliminate references to the existence of God from its Constitution, subsequently altered its rituals accordingly, and then started accepting atheists as members. As a result, some *Grand Orient* systems, as far as the *regular* Grand Lodges were concerned, ceased to be “*Masonic*”, and that their bodies were eventually denied recognition by mainstream Freemasonry. So, when people say that “*Masons are atheists and do not believe in God,*” they are actually referring to those of such *Grand Orient* systems. Unfortunately, the general public cannot distinguish the difference between *regular* Masonry, where the belief in God is a prerequisite for membership, and the *Grand Orient*s, where, in some, the belief in God was removed. Incidentally, the *Grand Orient* system, sometimes generalized as *Continental Masonry*, *Universal Masonry*, and *Liberal Masonry*, is the type of Masonry that first became popular in the Philippines during the era of its National heroes, thus explaining the animosity at that time between Masonry and the Spanish occupation which included the friars of the Catholic Church.

DID YOU KNOW that the discussions and debates pertaining to *politics* and *religion* were not only allowed in some old lodges in Europe, but were even encouraged? That is why Masons were often tagged as anti-government or anti-church. Many Masonic jurisdictions thereat, called *Grand Orient*s, were of the Scottish Rite *obedience* of French Masonry, meaning that their entire Masonic system, constitution, and beliefs are different from the ones GLP Masons are familiar with. Whereas the Masonic system of the GLP is York Rite, which puts more emphasis on *Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth*, the Scottish Rite system in Continental Europe, on the other hand, puts more emphasis on *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*. Whereas the York Rite system is more concentrated on self-improvement, the Scottish Rite system is more on the improvement of society. It is inherent therefore for many Continental Masons to be actively involved in societal reform, even if it meant possible rebellion. That explains why the Philippine National Heroes, who belonged to such Continental Scottish Rite *obediencies*, had stanch political and revolutionary tendencies in the cause of *Freedom (Liberty)*, *Justice (Equality)*, and *Peace (Fraternity)*. Many Continental systems are likewise *liberal* and *universal* in their belief systems, with some *Grand Orient*s even allowing atheists and women into their ranks. This also explains why mainstream Masonry and some Continental jurisdictions will always have a hard time

acquiring mutual *recognition* and inter-visitation. They basically follow different, sometimes opposing belief systems and landmarks, and are viewed by many to be fundamentally incompatible.

DID YOU KNOW that the Symbolic Lodge that works the first three degrees (1°-3°) of the Scottish Rite system is not necessarily considered *irregular* by mainstream Masonic lodges? There is a popular misconception among *Blue Lodge* Masons in the American and Philippine jurisdictions that they only *recognize* the American York Rite and the British system of degrees. This is false. For instance, the GLP currently has *amity* with some Continental European jurisdictions, such as the *Grande Loge Nationale Française* and the *Gran Logia de España / Gran Oriente Español* that work the Scottish Rite Craft degrees. Some lodges in Louisiana and New York also have their own Scottish Rite Craft rituals. The jurisdictions of Scottish Rite *obediences* that actually have trouble with *recognition* from mainstream Masonry are those whose Grand Lodges fall under the auspices of a Supreme Council, and therefore conflict with our standards on *regularity*. It has nothing at all to do with the Rite or Masonic system being practiced.

DID YOU KNOW that there may be something off with the narrative inscribed on the historical markers of the GLP building? At the entrance of what is called the New Plaridel Masonic Temple are two historical markers installed by the *National Historical Commission of the Philippines* (NHCP) in 2012, both recounting a short

origin and history of the GLP – one in English, the other in Tagalog. In the Tagalog marker, there is a phrase that says of the Grand Lodge: *“sumanib sa Regional Grand Lodge ng Gran Oriente Español.”* According to the English marker, the phrase is translated to *“merged with the Regional Grand Lodge of the Gran Oriente Español.”* Although such may be considered accurate, the Filipino phrase *“sumanib sa”* implies that it was the GLP (then called the *Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands* or GLPI) who joined the Regional Grand Lodge of the GOE, when it should be the other way around – that it was the Regional Grand Lodge that joined and was absorbed by the GLP. In fact, technically speaking, it was not even the Regional Grand Lodge that officially merged itself with the GLP (as it could not do so without the consent of the GOE). Rather, the individual members of the Regional Grand Lodge, through their own decisions, were the ones who affiliated with the GLP and were re-obligated to the same. These misunderstandings, of course, could easily be dismissed as mere translation issues between English and Tagalog. But what about the other

glaring confusion that exists on both the English and Tagalog markers – that the Grand Lodge was said to be *“organized”* or *“itinatag”* December 12, 1912? We all know that the GLP was officially formed December 19, 1912. Curiously, an earlier historical marker, installed in 1987, had the correct date of December 19 as the official foundation date. Perhaps the date in the current markers was intended to be December 12 for reasons we have yet to be told.

DID YOU KNOW that the *Gran/Grande*





Oriente Español (GOE) was united with the *Gran Logia de España* (GLE) or the *Grand Lodge of Spain* in 2001? We Filipino Masons are aware that most of our National heroes were Masons who belonged to GOE lodges before, during, and after the revolutionary era. Some joined in Spain, while others in Philippine-based lodges which later formed a Regional Grand Lodge under the GOE. At that time, the GOE lacked the *recognition* of most mainstream jurisdictions

(although it was recognized by the *Grand Lodge of Scotland*) such as the American Grand Lodges from where the GLP draws its lineage. When Franco came into power in the 1930s, Masonry was outlawed in Spain, and the GOE was exiled into Mexico. After his death in the 1970s, the exile of GOE eventually ended. In 1982, the GLE was formed and eventually became Spain's *regular* Masonic body, *recognized* by most jurisdictions in the world including that of the GLP. In 2001, the GOE united with the GLE into the *Gran Logia de España ~ Grande Oriente Español*, making arguably all their respective lodges, past and present, *recognized* by mainstream Masonry. The Philippine National heroes, therefore, who long ago belonged to the GOE, are now part of the long history of *regular* Masonry.



DID YOU KNOW that the initiation rituals of the Katipunan (KKK) bear uncanny resemblance to those of the Craft degrees (1°-3°) of the Scottish Rite? The ritual was practically a translation, with some parts changed and customized for their purpose. There was the concept of initiation by first being blindfolded before being obligated to the order. There was also a Chamber of Reflection, a skull, a use of allegories, regalia, passwords, and aliases, and a specific lodge setup with officers governing the body and the proceedings. In fact, the initiation ritual of the Katipunan could have easily been mistaken for an actual Masonic lodge at labor or degree work.



DID YOU KNOW that parts of the GLP seal have been incorrectly labeled all this time? Its coat of arms is divided into four quarters. The Second Quarter (Sinister Chief) is described as the arms of the *Grand Lodge of England*, while the Third Quarter (Dexter Base) is described as the arms of the *Freemasons at York*. Taken in context, the descriptions are actually implying that the Second Quarter represented the *Moderns* while the Third Quarter the *Antients*. This, however, is wrong. If you look at the illustration in the Second Quarter, it is actually the arms of the *Antients*, not the *Moderns*; and the one in the Third Quarter is actually that of the *Moderns*, not the *Antients*. Some might argue that all we need to do is reverse the descriptions. But that too would be problematic because the Third Quarter is also described as depicting the arms of the "*Freemasons at York representing the Rite which we practice.*" Such is highly inaccurate for the "*Rite*" supposedly practiced by the GLP is that of the Webb work or American F&AM. Although it is sometimes called the York Rite, it is not the same as the *Freemasons at York* which is generally known to be either referring to the 1751 *Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons according to the*



Old Constitutions at York (Antients) or to the supposed 1726 *Grand Lodge of all England held at York (York Grand Lodge)*. Neither represents the “Rite” that we practice in the GLP. The brethren who authored the official description of the GLP seal were probably unaware of the difference between the American “York Rite” and the “Freemasons at York.” How could local Masons have missed these incongruities all these years, as they keep getting reprinted over and over again in different revisions of the GLP’s Constitution or Masonic Law Book? Perhaps nobody ever noticed or that nobody ever bothered to raise the issue. It then becomes incumbent upon us to do so now, so that by the time future generations read this article, the above mistaken descriptions in the GLP seal would have already been duly corrected.⁶

DID YOU KNOW that a prevalent misconception perpetuated by Masons themselves is that Masonry does not allow recruitment of new members? A closer examination at Masonic traditions, official statements, and practices from various jurisdictions throughout history reveals that the notion of non-recruitment is rooted merely on the time-honored tradition emphasizing that candidates should come to Masonry of their own free will and accord. This principle therefore discourages coercion or improper solicitation and encourages genuine intent among prospective members. This does not imply an outright prohibition on recruitment, recommendation, or sponsorship.

Take for instance the Grand Master of the UGLE, who had openly addressed their declining numbers and consequently advocated for active recruitment. He emphasized that every Mason has a responsibility to participate in their recruitment process. They even have an official *Recruitment and Retention* program in place, further debunking the notion that Masons cannot engage in recruitment.

Some jurisdictions, like those in Ontario, Canada, and British Columbia and Yukon, allow for recruitment, taking due notice as to not border on “improper solicitation” (e.g. asking someone to join for their wealth, fame, or influence), and to make sure to ask a potential candidate once and only once. Other jurisdictions also have varying approaches. Open houses, white table events, and information campaigns are conducted to attract potential members. Other jurisdictions, however, may avoid using the term “recruitment” due to negative connotations. For instance, Filipino Masons have been known for strictly adhering to the practice of not inviting new members into Masonry. Such practice, however, is based solely on their own collective understanding of their Masonic ritual rather than a universal prohibition. There are generally no restrictions in many other jurisdictions against Masons recruiting new members. In fact, there are even some *regular* and *recognized* jurisdictions where Masonry operates on an invitation-only basis, and that asking to join may potentially get one disqualified.

The idea, therefore, that Masons do not recruit, is not universal, even though it applies to many regular jurisdictions. It is simply a belief rooted on a conservative interpretation of Masonic rituals and customs. We should thus cease from insisting this misconception, especially in the audience of brethren from other jurisdictions, as we all have local practices that do not necessarily apply to each other.

DID YOU KNOW that the term “Masonic Year” doesn’t always mean the same thing? The term is ambiguous and its meaning varies depending on who is using it and in what context. Some use it to specify the period a leader, like a Worshipful Master or Grand Master, holds office – from the start of his term to the end, usually completing an annual cycle. For instance, a Grand Master’s Masonic Year in the Grand Lodge begins right after the Annual

Communication (AnCom) or after his installation, say April 2024, and ends during the Ancom of the following year, say April 2025, after another Grand Master is installed. Since Masonic Year, in this context, is used as a period of time, the term should likewise be followed by a range. For instance one should say, “*Masonic Year 2024–2025.*”

Others use Masonic Year to describe how a year is counted or labeled in different Masonic orders. For instance, Royal Arch Masons call the year 2024 as “*Masonic Year 2554 A.I. (Anno Inventionis).*” Scottish Rite Masons call it “*Masonic Year 5785 A.M. (Anno Mundi)*” beginning sundown of October 2, 2024 (employing the Hebrew Calendar that changes its equivalent in the Gregorian calendar every year). Sometimes, Masonic Year is just a regular year, having the same number and calendar system, but only called such because of a specific Masonic event or occasion that occurs during said time. For instance, someone might say, “*2024 will be my Masonic Year because that is when I will start going to stated meetings regularly again.*”

However the term is used, one must not simply search for the definition of “*Masonic Year*” as it is used differently by different people under different situations and in different jurisdictions. Hence, you might apply the wrong meaning to what is actually being denoted. Instead, pay attention to how it is used in order to understand what it means in that context, usually one among those already mentioned above.

DID YOU KNOW that Albert Pike was not belittling the Blue Lodge in *Morals and Dogma*, when he seemingly implied that it is merely the outer court and that its symbolic interpretations are false? In Chapter 30 of his book, he wrote: “*The Blue Degrees are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry.*” Did he truly mean that only those who have taken the “*higher degrees*” of the Scottish Rite are the only ones privy to the true meanings of Masonry? Bro. Arturo De Hoyos provides his explanation in his *Annotated Edition* of Pike’s book. He said that, in the context of the topic being discussed in that Chapter, Pike was actually referring to Continental Masonic legends, where the Knights Templar, escaping persecution, fled to Scotland and joined Operative Masons guilds. They contributed to Masonic symbolism and offered superficial interpretations until new initiates could be trusted. So the lower initiates were “*misled by false interpretations,*” while the Adepts were informed that they were actually Knights Templar.⁸ Hence, the quote above had nothing to do with belittling our Blue Lodge. It is but a perfect example of how we should read *Morals and Dogma* in the entirety of the subjects being discussed, instead of just picking portions of passages and interpreting them outside of their intended contexts. Otherwise, we risk misinterpreting them to mean something else altogether. Take for instance that “*Lucifer*” quote elsewhere in the book. (Read on.)

DID YOU KNOW that when anti-Masons cite Albert Pike’s *Morals and Dogma* on what they believed was a satanic quote, they are actually exhibiting ignorance on his writings? Pike wrote: “*LUCIFER, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls? Doubt it not!*” (M&D p.321) The passage was actually addressing the irony of calling the Spirit of Darkness as “*Lucifer,*” which literally

meant “light bearer.” It was also suggesting that the Adversary uses light to mislead the weak and selfish, drawing a parallel with the Apostle Paul’s assertion that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). But why is Lucifer called “the Son of the Morning?” This alludes to older translations of Isaiah 14:12, which read, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” This verse, according to biblical scholars themselves, is actually a condemnation of an ancient king of Babylon who had persecuted the Israelites, and does not refer to the Devil. The original Hebrew verse used was “Day Star, son of dawn” for the Babylonian king, employing a term similar to the title for the planet Venus.⁹

Accusations therefore of Luciferian influences in Masonry are baseless, with some derived from malicious sources such as the Leo Taxil hoax. Careful examination of Pike’s writings reveals a symbolic and allegorical usage of the term, rooted in biblical allusions and moral teachings rather than nefarious intent. Intelligent readers could not possibly miss that.

DID YOU KNOW that most of Manly Hall’s Masonic writings do not really hold the level of legitimacy that many Masons think? Despite having extensively written about Masonry – a subject for which he is ironically most recognized – Hall did not bother to become a member in order to verify his beliefs until much later in life. His Masonic pieces were written long before he had any real insight into the *regular* and authentic forms of Masonry. He only became a Mason at age 53. His *Lost Keys of Freemasonry* was written 31 years before; his *Rosicrucian and Masonic Origins* was written 27 years before; his *Secret Teachings of All Ages* was written 26 years before; and his *Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians* was written 17 years before. Hall got most of his information from other books and hearsay.¹⁰ He himself admitted in the preface of an updated edition of one of his

early books, “At the time I wrote this slender volume, I had just passed my 21st birthday, and my only contact with Freemasonry was through a few books commonly available to the public.”¹¹ Hence, Hall only wrote about his understanding on where he thought Masonry came from and how they linked to others philosophies. The problem with such writing as an outsider is that it causes inconsistencies and often relies on guesswork rather than facts. He mixed theosophy, theology, occultism, classical philosophy, Rosicrucianism, and Eastern religions, consequently dividing opinions about his works into either one of two things: divinely inspired or semi-literate mystical drivel. Though some esoterically-inclined Masons saw him as a guru, despite his seemingly condescending opinions on other Masonic beliefs and practices, many Masonic scholars of the *authentic school* hardly give much credence to his supposed profound interpretations of Masonry. Nevertheless, his works eventually became primary references for conspiracy theorists and anti-Masons through the years.

In fairness to Hall, his esoteric writings were, at a minimum, adequately researched and pondered. The concern arises when it comes to his Masonic perspective. We should take heed not to learn Masonry from inaccurate or unreliable sources. Many of what we read are nothing more than what others believed Masonry is or should be. What it truly is can only be learned from its most reliable of sources – its degree rituals. So, before believing the words of Hall, Pike, Waite, Newton, or Wilmshurst, pick up your own ritual books first. Understand their lessons and their allegories. Track down their origins and the circumstances of when, where, how, and why they were created. Trace their evolution from their earliest forms to their latest versions and revisions. Seek how such were and are practiced outside of your own country and jurisdiction. In so doing, you will discover much about Masonry than from any of the

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A CHALLENGE TO NEWLY INSTALLED OFFICERS

by VW Jose Waldemar V. Valmores

GREETINGS!

Today, I am privileged to join you though quite apprehensive as having some second thoughts of what to talk about which you have not heard yet and there is nothing more, I can possibly add to inspire you.

I would like to congratulate our newly

installed WM and the other elected and appointed officers. Today is the start of a real challenging year for all of you. Not only were you given such an honor by your peers. Along with the distinction is a responsibility to your Lodge and Brethren in particular and Masonry in general. I don't know the key to success, but one key to failure is to please everyone.

After today, you will begin to set out and work on your new tasks. There are those who prefer to build on what the previous leadership has already accomplished, while others prefer to start to build their own legacy. Whatever, I hope that you would put the interest of our Brotherhood, the lodge, and our Brethren above all else. May all of you be blest with faculties necessary to transform your visions into tangible

plans and actions. I am certain that all are one with me in wishing you all the best for your term. In the end, I hope that you will be able to develop the best version of yourselves. You don't have to compare yourself to the person next to you. Aim to do your best and don't hesitate to do now what you can.

One Indian story goes like this: The children were told that whoever gets first to the tree will get candies as a reward. What the children did amazed the old Indian when the children hand-in-hand went to the tree together side by side in every step. The old Indian asked them why they did it? The children in a chorus replied, I AM BECAUSE WE ARE, putting emphasis on teamwork, trust, and time. We simply have to learn how our differences will lead us to come up with what will be best in us to change for the better. Last month we celebrated Valentine's Day and I wish to share a message about love, love is such a powerful force especially when shared.

For it is by love that we Masons serve
It is by patience that we Masons share
It is by trials that we Masons gain wisdom
It is by sharing that we nurture our brotherhood.
As there is no greater joy than giving joy to others.
No greater inspiration than inspiring others and no great gift than a selfless heart.

Yes, you may not be perfect in many things, but many things cannot be perfect without you. Continue to be a blessing to others.

To the Worshipful Master, to the Past Masters and very Worshipful Sirs, I have a message especially for you and I will do it through a short story which I found very amusing.

In the dark night, the captain cautiously piloted his battleship through the fog-shrouded waters. He strained his eyes as he scanned the hazy darkness searching for dangers lurking out of sight.

His worst fears were realized when he saw a bright light straight ahead. It appears to be a vessel on a collision course with his battleship.

To avert disaster, he quickly radioed the oncoming vessel, "This is Captain Rocha" his voice cracked over the radio. "Please alter your course ten degrees south! Over.

To Captain Rocha's amazement, the foggy image did not move. Instead, he receives this reply over the radio, Captain Rocha, this is private Manlulu. Please alter your course ten degrees North, Sir. Over.

Appalled at the audacity of the message, the captain shouted back over the radio, private Manlulu, this is Captain Rocha, and I order you to immediately alter your course ten degrees South! Over. The oncoming light did not budge. "With all due respect, Captain Rocha," I order you to alter your course immediately! Ten degrees North! Sir! Over! Fuming with rage and anger, frustrated that this arrogant sailor would endanger the lives of his men, the captain growled back over the radio, private

Manlulu, I can have you court

martialed for this! For the last time, I command you on authority of the Philippine Navy to alter your course ten degrees to the South! This is Captain Jeremiah Rocha, battleship commander speaking.

The private replied, "Captain Rocha, Sir, once again with all due respect, I command you to alter your course ten degrees to the North, Sir, Because I am a lighthouse and cannot change my position, Sir!

There are times and of being senior Masons get the better of us. Without considering the situation, we sometimes insist that our ideas are always better than the others. Ang lungkot, tawag ng mga nakakabata, ayan na naman ang mga pasaway.

Simply, people will notice the change in our attitude towards them, but they won't notice that it is their behavior that made us change.

Leaders who gather followers affect this generation- Leaders who develop leaders affect future generations.

People who lead followers are able to make an impact only on individuals whose lives they touch personally. But people who develop and make others as leaders can extend their reach beyond circle of influence and beyond his lifetime. Such a kind of leadership creating a legacy that continues to the generations yet to come.

Along this thought, I have come across

a passage, and I have no knowledge of its origins, Nonetheless, I am sure he or she would not mind sharing it with you today.

The passage reads:

"To know what to do is wisdom,
To know how to do it is skill,
To know when to do it is judgment,
To strive to do it is dedication,
To do it for others is compassion,
To do it quietly is humility,
To get the job done is achievement,
To get others to do all these is
LEADERSHIP."

Leadership, then, after all is more than just having an authority or power over others on certain things. It is getting people under your helm to happily walk with you toward your desired goal.

At this juncture, allow me with this judgment call exercise. Can you judge who is the better person out these three (3) characters?

Mr. A- He had friendship with bad politicians, two wives, chain smoker and drinks wine 8 to 10 times a day.

Mr. B- He was kicked out of office twice, sleeps till noon, used opium in college and drinks whiskey every evening.

Mr. C- He is decorated war hero, a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, and never cheated on his wife.

I like to venture a guess that most if not all of you would say it is Mr. C. But....

Mr. A- was Franklin Roosevelt (32nd President of USA)

Mr. B- was Winston Churchill (former

British Prime Minister)
Mr. C- was Adolf Hitler!!!
Strange but true!
It's risky to judge anyone by his habits!
Character is a complex phenomenon.
So, every person in your life is important, don't judge them, ACCEPT THEM.

I also want to share what former Prime Minister Churchill once said: He said, I took a taxi one day to the BBC office for an interview. When I arrived, I asked the driver to wait for me for 40 minutes until I get back, but the driver apologized and said, "I can't because I have to go home to listen to Winston Churchill's speech."

I was amazed and delighted with the man's desire to listen to my speech. So, I took out 20 pounds and gave it to the taxi driver instead in the usual 5 pounds, without telling him who I was. When the driver collected the money, He said: "I will wait for hours until you come back Sir and let Churchill go to hell."

You can see how principles have modified in favor of money. Nations were sold for money; Honor sold for money; Families split for money; Friends separated for money; People kill for money; and People being made slaves for money. For how much are we ready to sell our values.

The annual communication is forthcoming, would we Masons allow similar things to take place?

At times, life may not be the way we want it, but we live in the best way we

can. Not everything you see has value and not everything you work has merit. Perhaps we can make something good out of something undecided. Do not be afraid to seek help or guidance from our elders for after all, they have worn the same shoes sometime in the past and the lessons gained from their experience would prove very useful in your own journey to destiny.

When faced with the situation that requires us to make adjustments, we often look everywhere for a solution except within ourselves. Sometimes, the problem is not in the environment but in ourselves.

I often, when confronted with a problem, solve it by enforcing change around us. Sometimes, to make this world a happy place to live, we need to change ourselves and not the world. We need to change our perspective so that we can appreciate the wisdom of others around us. We are as old as our doubts and fears and as young as our hopes and dreams. Indeed, age is not a matter of time, but rather a question of perspective.

Finally, they say there are 4 kinds of bones in an organization. The wishbone, the jawbones, the knucklebones, and the backbones. The wish bones are those who do nothing but hope some kind soul will do the job for them. The jawbones are those who love to talk of great things but do nothing to get them done. The knucklebones are those who are fond of criticizing the work of other but do nothing to make them better. The backbones are those who get the job done. Of course, you know we have

all these 4 bones in our midst.

There was a man who could have been a great Grand Master of Masons of the Philippines, perhaps even President of our country, but he never did. On his last day on earth and as he was dying, he left to his Brother Masons his most precious legacy with these words engraved in his tombstones.

When I was newly raised to the sublime degree and the Grand Lodge was under the control of my imagination that knew neither fear nor limits, I wanted to change the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. But sadly, the Grand Lodge of the Philippines refused to change.

Then I grew older and wiser, I narrowed down my vision and wanted to change only my district. But sadly, my district refused to change.

As I approached the twilight of my life, I narrowed down my vision even further, I just want to change the attitude of my Lodge which was sinking in pessimism and despair. But sadly, even my Lodge refused to change.

Now as a lie on my deathbed with only a few hours to live, I realized that if I had only changed myself first, then perhaps I would have been able to change the attitude of my Lodge. With a renewed Lodge, then, I would have been able to make my district a better district...

And who knows, I may even have been able to make our Grand Lodge of the Philippines a better Fraternity where Masons live and part happy and in harmony.

Perhaps, you may now want to ask who that man is. I have asked the question myself many times.

He can only be you... and me... he is us!

By way of ending my message, I wish to quote the famous Nelson Mandela, (1918-2013) when he said:


When you are at the top, be careful of the monster called pride. Pride will make you look down on the people who haven't attained your level of success.

When you are on the bottom, be careful of the monster called bitterness. Bitterness will make you jealous and think other people are the reason why you haven't made it.

When you are on the way to the top, be careful of the monster called greed. Greed will make you impatient and make you steal or seek shortcuts.

When you are on your way down, be careful of monster called despair. Despair will make you think that it is all over, yet there is still hope.

Let us remember that no one has traveled the road of success without crossing the street of failure. God never promised us an easy journey; He only promised us a great destination.

(Speech delivered during the Installation of Elected and Appointed Officers of Taga-Ilog Lodge No. 79, March 2, 2024) 

The 2023 Annual Grand Sessions of the Grand York Rite Freemasonry of the Philippines

The 2-day Annual Grand Sessions kicked-off with the 71st Annual Grand Convocation of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the Philippines on its 1st day on October 20, 2023 at the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, Ermita, Manila. The following Grand Officers for 2023 - 2024 were installed.



Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the Philippines

L-R (standing): Rodel Riezl Reyes - PGHP, Alvan Joseph Balazo - Grand Sentinel, Victorino Floro III PGHP - Grand Treasurer, Joel Cabrera - GM 3rd Veil, Ryan Oliver Felipe - Grand RAC, Jonathan Edward Chua - Grand COH, Monty Glover - PGM of Hawaii, Evaristo Leviste PGHP - Grand Secretary, Paul Bilaoen - Grand PS, Henry Cheng - Asst. Grand Treasurer, Ruel Ditan GM 1st Veil, Benjamin Reuel Ortiguero Jr. - Grand Auditor, Nesty Tampol

PGHP - Grand Chaplain, Jomel Dennis Maranan, Orlino Pacioles Jr. - Asst. Grand Secretary.

L-R (sitting): Juanito Abergas PGHP, Dexter Ng - Grand King, Louie Thom-Arman Yu - Deputy Grand High Priest, Arlen de Guzman - Grand High Priest, Virgilio Cuajungco Jr. - Grand Scribe, McKentyre Cabrera - Grand Lecturer, Cameron Sloan - Hon 3rd Grand Principal.

While the 67th Annual Grand Assembly of the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters of the Philippines happened in the afternoon and the following Grand Officers for 2023 – 2024 were installed.



Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of the Philippines

L-R (standing): Romulo Capuno - Virginia, Evaristo Leviste PIGM – Grand Recorder, Benjamin Reuel Ortiguero Jr. - Grand Sentinel, Victorino Floro III PIGM – Grand Treasurer, Rodel Riezl Reyes – Grand Lecturer, Alvan Joseph Balazo – Grand Auditor, Henry Cheng – Asst. Grand Treasurer, Orlino Pacioles Jr. – Asst. Grand Recorder, Nestor Tampol PIGM – Grand Chaplain.

L-R (sitting): Michael Sherman - IGM California, Genesis Aquino - Grand Marshal, Ruel Ditan – Deputy Illustrious Grand Master, Juanito Abergas – Illustrious Grand Master, Arlen de Guzman – Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, Louie Thom-Arman Yu – Grand Captain of the Guard, Monty Glover - PGM Hawaii, Manuel Liam Garcia PIGM.

The 2023 Annual Grand Sessions concluded with the 61st Annual Grand Conclave of the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines on October 21, 2023.

Deputy Grand Commander SK Ruel L. Ditan, KCT led Cavite Commandery No. 7, Knights Templar in opening the said Annual Grand Conclave and the reception of all the dignitaries present during the event.



The Grand Commandery granted Charter to Kaamulan Commandery No. 27, Knights Templar from Maramag, Bukidnon.



The highlights of the said Annual Conclave were the election of the 2023 – 2024 Grand Commandery Officers and later followed by the installation of SK Ruel L. Ditan, KCT as the Right Eminent Grand Commander (REGC) of the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines for 2023-2024 with SK Jack M. Harper II, Right Eminent Grand Generalissimo of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA as his Installing Officer and assisted by SK Dustin T. Verity, Right Eminent Department Commander of Asia and the Pacific of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA.



SK Harper and SK Verity presented the Past Grand Commander's Certificate to SK Xerxez S. Coronado, KCT, Immediate Past Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines for 2022 - 2023.



The Annual Conclave concluded with the Inaugural Address of the newly installed Grand Commander, SK Ruel L. Ditan, KCT and followed by the awarding of the Plaques of Appreciation to SK Jack M. Harper II and SK Dustin T. Verity.

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the Philippines

L-R (standing): SK Romulo Capuno – Immediate Past Grand Commander of Virginia, SK Jesh Go – Grand Marshall, SK Victorino Floro III PGC – Grand Treasurer, SK Juanito Abergas – Grand Sword Bearer, SK Alvan Joseph Balazo – Grand Sentinel, SK Benjamin Reuel Ortiguero Jr. – Grand Auditor, SK Xerxez Coronado PGC – Grand Recorder, SK Orlino Pacioles Jr. – Asst. Grand Recorder, SK Evaristo Leviste PRDGC – Asia Pacific.

L-R (sitting): SK Dustin Verity - GM of Hawaii and Department Commander Asia Pacific of the GEKT of the USA, SK Jonathan Edward Chua – Grand Junior Warden, SK Orlando Mabutas – Grand Generalissimo, SK Genesis Aquino – Deputy Grand Commander, SK Ruel Ditan – Grand Commander, SK Emmanuel Bravo – Grand Captain General, SK Arlen de Guzman – Grand Senior Warden, SK Nestor Tampol PGC – Grand Prelate, SK Jack Harper - Grand Generalissimo of the GEKT of the USA.

Reported by: SK Laudemer A. Astudillo, Past Eminent Commander Cavite Commandery No. 7, Cavite York Rite Grand Editor-in-Chief, Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines and SK Orlino H. Pacioles, Jr., Assistant Grand Recorder Rajah Commandery No. 20, Davao York Rite Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines

Photos by: SK Franco Amour F. Basa, Cavite Commandery No. 7, Cavite York Rite Official Photo / Videographer, Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of the Philippines

For inquiries re: York Rite Freemasonry, you may visit us at the Grand York Rite Office located at the ground floor of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, Ermita, Manila or visit our website at <https://www.yorkritephilippines.org/>



SERAFIN L. TEVES; THE GOVERNOR

by MW Reynold S. Fajardo, PGM

"We impress other people when we call a fellow mason a brother," MW Teves told the Brethren. "But do we really mean it?" This is a query a number of us Masons have been hard put to answer categorically. It was the Grand Master's tool of stimulating the Brethren to co-operate in launching the Masonic leadership' general policy statement "Make Masons Manifest More Masonry" into a reality. The policy statement sounded euphonious because alliterative; generally however, it was the Brethren's fervent hope that the officers in the Grand Orient would give it more than just lip service. The hope was fervent because it was based on trust in the joint talents of their officers.



MW Teves' talents began to flower in Bais, Negros Oriental, where his parents, Don Emilio Teves and Doña Pilar Lajato were prominent citizens. Naturally, their youngest son Serafin, born on October 28, 1895, profited from that prominence. After his public-school education in his hometown, he transferred to Silliman Institute (now Silliman University), at Dumaguete in 1908. His father's death in 1913, however, interrupted his schooling. About a year later, he returned to Silliman to finish his junior high-school year. He finished the secondary course in Manila, where he served as Uncle Rep. Felipe Tayko's private secretary.

He hankered to begin his studies

in dentistry, but he had a change of heart. He went back to Bais in order to care for the family farm. In 1919, he married the former Milagros Montenegro. They had 12 children who in turn gave the couple over 50 grand children. Besides managing his family's farm, he tenanted with his father-in-law. Hard work and discipline enabled him to acquire his own farm and additional landholdings. He ramified, eventually, into business: theatres, movie production, rural banking, hotel, cattle ranch, and other productive enterprises.

MW Teves was a disinterested person. Hence, he shared his time, energy and funds for community service. He organized the Dumaguete Rotary Club, serving as its president. He also held the presidency of the Bais-Tanjay Sugar Planters Association twice. Up to this writing, he has been member of both the Dumaguete City Planning Commission and the Negros Oriental Planning Commission.

In 1923, he was drawn into politics through his appointment as councilor of Bais. Later, he was elected vice-mayor and then mayor. In 1955, he became Governor of Negros Oriental. But after his gubernatorial stint, he quit politics to devote more of his time to community work and to his Masonic activities. He served like-

wise, as member of the Board of Review for Motion Pictures.

Bro. Teves was made a Master Mason in Mt. Kaladias Lodge No. 91 in 1923, and served this Lodge as Master the following year. He became a Scottish Rite Mason in 1949, a Royal Arch Mason in 1951, and a Shriner in 1954. He was honored with a KCCH in 1958 and coroneted Inspector General Honorary in 1964. He was supervisor of the Supreme Council for the East Visayas Bodies, A. & A.S.R. Helping in the organization of the Josefa Llanes Escoda Chapter No. 11, OES, he served the Chapter as Worthy Patron for two years. He lent a helping hand, too, in organizing these: the Lodge of Perfection of Dumaguete, which metamorphosed into the East Visayas Bodies; the Royal Arch Chapter, the Leon Kilat Chapter of the Order of DeMolay; and Bethel No. 3, Order of Job's Daughters.

After serving as District Deputy Grand Master for District No. 14, he was elected Junior Grand Warden in 1962, Senior Grand Warden in 1963, Deputy Grand Master in 1964, and Grand Master in 1965.

Masonic love is, as MW Teves would define it operationally, never to say "Brother" without meaning it. ❖

MW JOSEPH E. SCHON;
***THE MASONIC
PILOT***

by VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC

A U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander, who saw action from 1942 to 1946 in the Atlantic and South Pacific areas, declared:

Over a span of centuries, our Fraternity has always stood at the forefront whenever and wherever freedom is threatened. Our history is one of militant protectionism over the rights of individuals under legally constituted authority. And whenever and wherever that legally constituted authority has itself been endangered, Masons have always had the courage and the ability and, above all, the responsibility to run to its assistance.

This declaration from M.W. Bro. Joseph E. Schon, 51st Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, makes one feel that he was still waging war, for, strangely enough, it came from his inaugural address, entitled "A Call to Arms."

Impressive is the masonic bio-data of him who was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on March 17, 1937, in Harmonic Lodge No. 356, St. Tomas, Virgin

Islands, a U.S. territory.

On October 11, 1961, M.W. Schon affiliated with Mt. Kaladias Lodge No. 91, Dumaguete City, of which he was the Worshipful Master in 1963 and in 1964.

An active Royal Arch, he was dubbed Knight Templar, York Rite on May 22, 1965, and then Red Cross of Constantine on April 22, 1968. He was, furthermore, a Worthy Patron of Josefa Llanes Escoda Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star at Dumaguete City in 1965.

Aside from being a Shriner, Nile Temple, Seattle, USA, as well as an Honorary Member of Afifi Temple, Tacoma, Washington, this 33rd Scottish Rite Freemason is a member of the Lapu-Lapu Consistory A & ASR.

M.W. Bro. Joseph E. Schon, who was born in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, January 6, 1913, finished his secondary education at St. Joseph College and his tertiary education at the College of Engineering, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

Having been discharged from the U.S. Navy, he worked as Manager with Bull Insular Lines. Later he acted as Owner's Representative, Pacific Far East Lines Inc. both in Hongkong and in the Philippines

until 1948.

Also in 1948 he married Helen Bennett and then became a Farmer Gentleman in Kanlaon City, Negros Oriental.

M.W. Bro. Schon's rise to the Exalted position was, indeed, one long preparation. This can be gleaned from these lines in his inaugural address:

. . . My Brethren, the preparations for this flight have been long in the making, ever since the year 1937, when this wondrous Fraternity first opened its arms to me. However, my preparations must have been faulty during most of that time, because no vehicle to make the flight was ever entrusted to me until 1965 when you put me into intensive training for it - first as Flight Steward, or Junior Grand Warden. The Chief Pilot at that time was a man of great stature and nobility: Most Worshipful Serafin L. Teves, Grand Master of Serenity and Harmony who, incidentally, is my guiding light in Masonry.

My training continued more intensively when I was promoted to Flight Navigator, or Senior Grand Warden under another great Pilot, the inestimable and lovable Ray-

mond E. Wilmarth, Grand Master of Tact and Philosophy.

The finishing touches to this training period were applied as Co-pilot, or Deputy Grand Master, by our stalwart, incomparable, strict but kindly task-master, Chief Pilot Mariano Q. Tinio, Grand Master of Labor and o Achievement.

M.W. Brother Schon subsequently said that, with our vehicle- the Fraternity about to take off on another trip, he was happy to observe that the crew the Grand Lodge Officers were the finest in the world and that the vehicle has had the most super maintenance of any craft on the earth by our eminent Past Grand Masters, the ground crew. And he continued: "Now it is all up to the Pilot. Course, distance, and speed are his to determine. He prays to the Greatest Architect of the Universe that there shall be no Pilot error that the Craft may reach its destination in safety."



Pilot Schon expertly guided the Craft to its destination. In the course of his pilotship, having fallen deeply in love with things Philippine and having imbibed traits deemed Filipino, our M.W. Brother exhibited the courage and the ability and the responsibility to make this country his haven and our "heaven." ❖

MARK TWAIN: FIRST WRITER ANTI- IMPERIALIST ADVOCATE

by VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) stirred a tempest in a tea pot after he read the Treaty of Paris, signed by Spain and United States of America in December 1898.

Mark Twain ruefully wrote a friend thus: “xxx Apparently, we are not proposing to set the Filipinos free and give their Islands to them, and apparently we are not proposing to hang the priests and confiscate their property. If these things are so, the war out there has no interest for me.”

Mark Twain was disillusioned and disenchanted that his country had become an imperialist and expansionist.

Masonic Involvement

Bro. Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910), was a member of Polar Star Lodge No. 27, St. Louis. Mo. He demitted on October 8, 1868 and presumably never again affiliated with any lodge.

During Bro. Mark Twain’s trip to Palestine, he sent his lodge a gavel with a note: “This mallet is a cedar, cut in the forest of Lebanon, whence Solomon obtained the timbers for the temple.”

Mark Twain cut the handle himself

from a cedar just outside the wall of Jerusalem. He had it made in Alexandria, Egypt, and was presented to the Lodge in April 1896.

Early Life.

Samuel L. Clemens, penname Mark Twain, American author and humorist, was born on November 30, 1835 at Florida, Mo. USA. After his father died when he was 12, Clemens went to work as an apprentice typesetter. He went west as secretary to his brother who had been appointed Territorial Secretary of Nevada.

Mark Twain became city editor of the Virginia City (Nev.) Enterprise in 1862. He alternated between mining and newspaper work, until becoming noted as a humorist. He began lecturing and writing books and founded the publishing house of C.L. Webster & Co. in 1884.

Novelist Ernest Hemingway once wrote: “All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called “Huckleberry Finn.” There is no question, no exaggeration that the novel has significantly influenced the development of American fiction.

When *The Ventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published, some critics praised the work, others condemned and criticized it. The book was immensely popular with readers and has influenced authors as diverse as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner.

Mark Twain's most famous works include: *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).

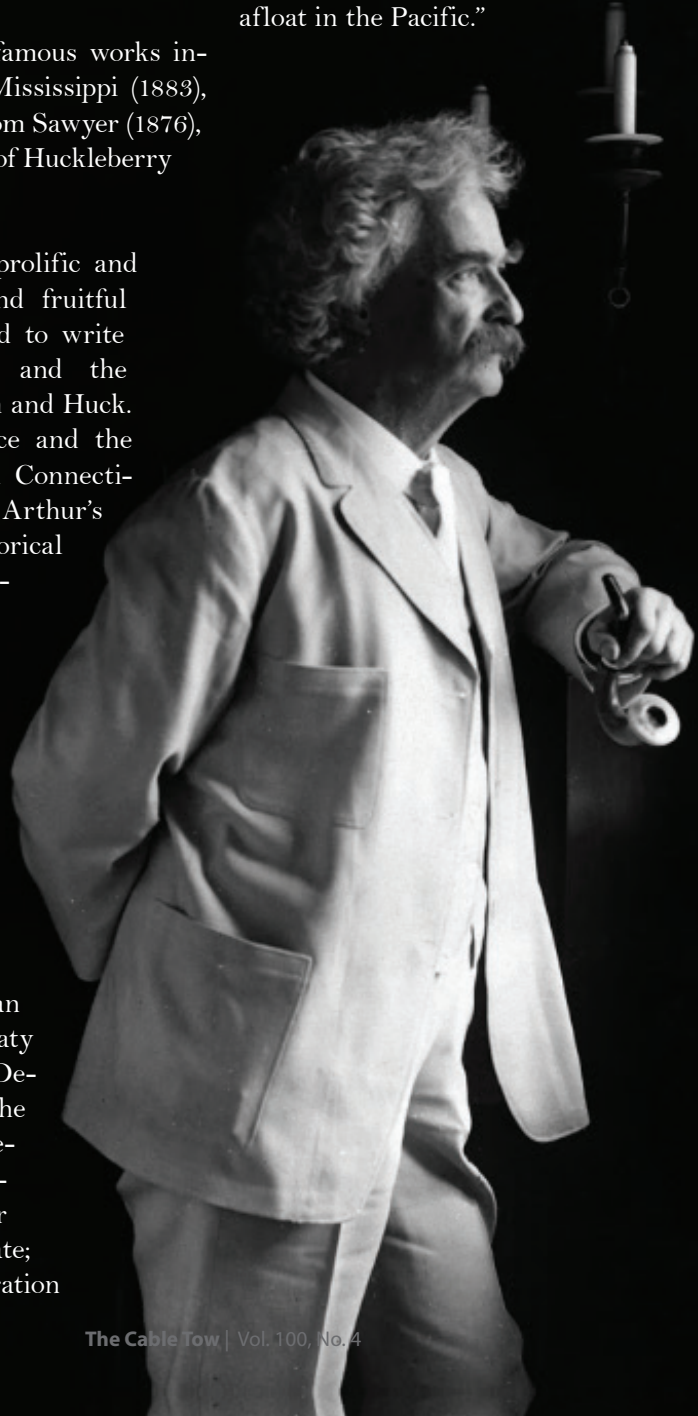
Mark Twain was a prolific and productive, fertile and fruitful writer. He continued to write newspaper columns and the amazing tales of Tom and Huck. He wrote *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889, historical novel laced and embroidered with his characteristic wit and humor. His last work, *The Mysterious Stranger*, was done in 1898 but published in 1916.

Treaty of Paris

The Spanish American war ended by the Treaty of Paris, France on December 10, 1898, by the American peace delegation headed by William R. Day, former U.S Secretary of State; and the peace delegation

headed by Senator Eugenio Montero Rios, President of the Spanish Cortes.

Before the Treaty of Paris arrested Mark Twain's attention, he would wise crack about putting "a minia-ture of the American constitution afloat in the Pacific."



When Mark Twain perceived and discerned that by virtue of the said Treaty the United States of America paid 20 million dollars for the Philippines (2 dollars per head), he began to voice this political sentiments and judgement. Interviewed by New York World, he declared thus: "I am an anti-imperialist. I am oppose to have the eagle put its talons in any other land." The 1898 provision of the Treaty of Paris states:

- **Spain ceded the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico to the U.S.**
- **U.S. paid Spain the sum of \$20,000,000 as compensation for the war**
- **Spain recognized the independence of Cuba.**
- **The civil and political status of the inhabitants of the ceded territories (including the Philippines) would be determined by the US Congress**
- **All Spanish troops, arms, and moveable property would be shipped back to Spain at the expense of the U.S.**

After the capture of Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo and the account rendered and submitted by General Arthur MacArthur, Bro. Mark Twain wrote sarcastically and contemptuously that the United States had become a world power. "xxx a funny one, a fictitious one, a brass-gilt one, a tuppence-ha'penny one, but a World Power just the same. He continued: We have bought some islands from a party who did not own them; with real smartness and a good counterfeit of disinterested friendliness, we coaxed a confiding weak nation into a trap and closed it upon them, we went back on an honored guest of the stars and stripes when we had no further use for him, and chased him to the mountains; we are as indisputably in possession of a wide-spreading archipelago as

if it were our property; we have pacified some thousands of the islanders and buried them, destroyed their fields, and burned their villages and turned their widows and orphans out of doors, furnished heartbreak by exile to some dozens of disagreeable patriots, subjugated the remaining 10 million by Benevolent Assimilation xxx"

Bro. Mark Twain joined the Anti-Imperialist League. He became its vice president in New York, USA, and was its staunch and steadfast advocate of its goals until his demise in 1910. ❖

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AMBROCIO FLORES

FIRST GRAND MASTER OF GRAN CONSEJO REGIONAL
By VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC

Regular Masonry was instilled and infused in the Philippines some 56 years before the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands was instituted by three American Lodges: Manila No. 342, Cavite No.350 and Corregidor No. 383. The brethren assembled at the Manila Temple for the purpose of considering the wisdom of establishing a Grand Lodge on November 17, 1912.

On December 19, 1912, the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands was organized by the three Lodges under the Grand Lodge of California with MW H. Eugene Stafford as the first Grand Master.

In the 1890's Lodges for Filipinos were established. By 1893, six of these Lodges had been organized by the Gran

Consejo Regional under the Gran Oriente Espanol, and elected Bro. Ambrocio Flores as Grand Master. At the time of his election, MW Flores was a retired lieutenant in the Spanish Army.

Bro. Ambrocio Flores was initiated in Nilad Lodge No. 144, the first Lodge established for Filipinos in Manila, adapting Musa as his masonic name.

To combat the ills perpetuated by the Spanish patriotic friars, Bro. Flores founded Bathala Lodge No. 157 where he served as its first Worshipful Master in April 1892.

On April 16, 1893, Bro. Flores was elected as Grand Master of the Grand Regional Lodge under the Gran Oriente Espanol.

Early Life

Ambrocio Flores was born in Manila on March 20, 1843. His parents were Ignacio Flores, a corporal in the Spanish army and Josefa Flores. Fr. Esteban del Rosario, his private tutor, taught him Latin. Bro. Flores studied philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas. He changed his mind and went to study medicine. It is not known whether he finished it.

Military Services

Following his father's footsteps, Bro. Flores enlisted on May 12, 1860 in the 9th Infantry Regiment of Isabela II where his father was a lieutenant. He served in Mindanao fighting the Moros.

Bro. Flores' military career for 30 years included flag bearer (abanderado) for eleven years, lawyer for the defense (defensor de oficio) in the military courts until 1894. He retired with the rank of First Lieutenant.

Philippine Revolution

Bro. Flores was inspired by the writings of Bro. Jose Rizal, thus he joined the propaganda movement. He regarded with disgust and animosity the patriotic Spanish friars who were the powerful agents behind Spain's colonial abuses.

For advocating general education and for his sympathetic attitude towards the Katipunan movement, Bro. Flores was jailed for 17 months. After his release, he joined the revolutionary troops and became one of Bro./Gen. Aguinaldo's trusted generals.

Political Involvements

In August 1898, in a conference at Ba-coor, Bro. Flores was named governor of the province of Manila. On September 8, 1898, Bro. Flores transferred his office to San Juan del Monte where he directed provincial officers until the outbreak of hostilities between Filipi-

nos and Americans on Feb. 4, 1899.

During the Filipino-American war, Bro. Flores was recalled by the Filipino Army and was appointed Director of Fortifications and Defense. He fought bloody battles in Polo and Calumpit.

After the assassination of Bro./Gen. Antonio Luna in Cabanatuan on June 5, 1899, Bro. Flores was appointed Secretary of War. Bro. Flores and Don Eduardo Gutierrez were appointed to represent the province of Batangas in Revolutionary Congress held in Tarlac on July 14, 1899. Bro. Flores surrendered to Bro./Gen. Arthur MacArthur.

Newspaper Work

With Bro. Flores' assets and properties destroyed, he returned to Manila a poor man. He then engaged in newspaper work and became Editor-in-Chief of *El Grito del Pueblo* (The city of the People), Editor of *La Democracia*, and Director of *La Luz* (The Light).

Politics During American Regime

Bro. Flores co-founded the Federal Party. With the help of the Party, he was appointed Governor of Rizal Province, a position he held until 1904. Bro. Flores was adopted as son of Pasig through the passage of a municipal resolution on December 20, 1903. At age 62, Bro. Flores became a member of the Bar. On July 1, 1911, Bro. Flores was appointed Justice of the Peace of Pasig. On June 24, 1912, at the age 69, Bro. Flores was summoned to the Celestial Lodge while still Justice of the Peace and Venerable of Lodge Silangan. ☒

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TEMPLES IN MASONRY

VR Samuel P. Fernandez, HA, PGC

A temple is a building used by mortals to pay homage, show devotion, adore, idolize, glorify, look up to, put on a pedestal, exalt, love a god/gods, goddess, or a supreme Being.

The Volume of the Sacred Law records the Temple of Artemis (Acts 19:27), Temple of Baal (II Kings 10:21, 27), Temple of Dagon (I Chronicles 10:10; I Samuel 5:2), Temple of the Astarte (I Samuel 31:10), and the Temple of Solomon (I Kings 6; Acts 7:47).

There are two King Solomon Temples: one built by King Solomon; and the other, built by King Herod.

Features of King Solomon's Temple

Masonic traditions about King Solo-

mon's Temple are elaboration of the allegories based on the Volume of the Sacred Law. They are not intended to be historically accurate and authentic. The allegories led Freemasons to contemplate and consider God's wondrous relationship with their Creator, the Great Architect of the Universe.

Many Lodge rooms have floors that are tiled with black and white squares. Some Lodges have small rectangular rug with a black and white pattern that is placed at the center of the lodge room. This is to remind the mem-

bers of the Craft that: “The Masonic pavement is emblematic of human life, checkered with good and evil; the beautiful border which surrounds it, those manifold blessings and comforts which surround us, and which we hope to enjoy by the faithful reliance on the Divine Providence, which hieroglyphics is represented by the blazing star in the center.”

Worship Facing the Temple

When the Israelites were away from the “promised land”, they were supposed to pray facing the temple. (I Kings 8:42). When Daniel prayed while he was in Babylon, he faced the temple. (Daniel 6:10)

The presider of a Lodge sits in the east and is called Worshipful Master, a title of respect. English magistrates are still addressed as Worshipful.

Other Masonic bodies use different superlatives to describe their presiding officers: Illustrious, Eminent, Excellent, Venerable, and so on.

The Temple Builders

Bro. Jeremy Ladd Cross provided one of the best explanations of two types of Masonry.

“By operative masonry, we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture whence a structure will derive figure, strength and beauty, and whence will result a due proportion and a just correspondence in all its parts ...

“By speculative masonry, we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the

square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity ... It leads the contemplative to view, with reverence and admiration, the glorious works of creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of his divine Creator ... “ (The True Masonic Chart of Hieroglyphic Monitor [1st ed., 1819, p22). “

Operative Masonry

The operative Masons had always been preeminently builders. Their primary objective was originally the construction of magnificent edifices.

The employment of “warden of the work” is the use of marks to prevent evasion, and the requirement of acceptable specimens of work before apprentice could become journey men were some measures taken to ensure proper performance on the part of the workmen of that period.

In a world where so many destructive forces were at work, there developed the conviction that no permanence is to be found in that which is strictly material, that all things external inevitably fall victim to the forces of decay and disintegration and nothing escapes the ravages of time save the intellectual, the moral and the spiritual.

St. Paul writes the Corinthian followers of the faith thus: “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (II Corinthians 5:1)

Dr. Mackey remarks that the second

Fellow Craft degree “refers to the combined operative and speculative origin of the institution; it details some interesting features relative to the Temple of Solomon and the usages of our ancient Brethren, in the course of which the mind is drawn to the contemplating themes of science and philosophy.”

As given by Bro. Cross’s chart and later by Bro. Mackey and Bro. Preston of operative Masonry, it is said: “By operative Masonry, we allude to a proper application of the useful art of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength, and beauty, and whence will result a due proportion of a just correspondence in all its parts. It furnishes us with dwellings and convenient shelters from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of season; and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice, as in the arrangements, of the sundry materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man, for the best, most salutary, and beneficent purposes.” (Masonic Education Program)

Speculative Masonry

Bro./Dr. Mackey calls operative an “art”; and speculative (or non-operative) Freemasonry, “science.”

Operative Masons were the founders of the system of Speculative Masonry. Dr. Albert G. Mackey, one of the greatest American authorities and writers, adopts the exact placing and phrasing used by Bro. Jeremy Cross. In his Monitorial Instructions, he wrote in part: “The theory is (and it is not an

untenable one), that at first operative Masonry existed simply as an art of building. Then the operative Masons, with the assistance of learned and pious men, invented the speculative science, or Freemasonry, and then each became an integral part of one undivided system. Not, however, that there ever was a time when every operative Mason, without exception, was acquainted with or initiated into the speculative science. Even now there are thousands of skillful stone-masons who know nothing of the symbolic meaning of the implements they employ. But operative Masonry was at first, and is even now, the skeleton upon which was strung the nerves and muscles of the living system of Free or Speculative Masonry.

“Speculative Masonry, now known as Freemasonry, is, therefore, the scientific application and the religious consecration of the rules and principles, the technical language and the implements and materials, of operative Masonry to the worship of God as the Grand Architect of the Universe, and to the purification of the heart and the inculcation of the dogmas of a religious philosophy. And as the original union of the operative and speculative branches of the system is traditionally supposed to have taken place at the building of the Temple of Jerusalem by King Solomon, more attention is paid in the symbolism to that edifice than to any other.” (Masonic Education Program)

With the swift and fast changes at the ending of the Dark Ages and the advent of the Renaissance, the cathedral builders and the operative Masons generally found ready means of perpetuating



their ideals by a simple transfer of emphasis from the material to the moral and spiritual. They were aware that the magnificent structure they erected could not in the end withstand the ravages and ruin of times.

As defined by Bros. Preston and Cross, “By speculative Masonry, we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under obligation to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative to view, with reverence and admiration, the glorious works of creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of his divine Creator.” (Masonic Education Program)

Mr. Arnold, in his Dutch Dictionary, under the word Freemasonry, says that it is ‘A Moral Order, instituted by virtuous men, with the praiseworthy de-

sign of recalling to our remembrance the most sublime truths, in the midst of the most innocent and social pleasures, founded on liberality, brotherly love, and charity.’

The accepted definition of Freemasonry is: “A beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.”

Synoptic Gospel writer, Dr. Luke penned: “But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet. Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool; what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?” (Acts 7:47-50, King James Version)

Freemasonry builds temple in the hearts of men.

MASONRY

A FRATERNITY BLESSED BY GOD

by Rev. Fr. Ranhilio C. Aquino

(with permission to publish at the TCT) as posted in FB by Kalilayan Masonic Lodge No. 37

When I attended one of your ceremonies, I was very pleased to see that “faith in God” plays a central role in your fraternity. I noted with great joy that in your ceremonies you give God’s word a position of honor. This, for me, was certainly an encouraging sign. But, of course, the physical presence of the Bible in our ceremonies is not enough. What is more important is God’s word in your lives, in your actions, in your decisions.

This holds true for all men, including us priests; for we may be surrounded by the physical trappings of religion, but we could have very unreligious, unholy and uncharitable decisions and dispositions towards others. No, it is not enough to give the Bible the marks of honor and respect. It’s by far more important to make the divine precepts it contains and the norms for checking the acceptability of our decisions and actions.

Next, I would like to make it exceedingly clear that, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned, it is not true

that one religion is as good as another. That, my brothers and sisters, was exactly one of the fears the Church in the past had about Masonry, for to say that one religion is as good as another would be some sort of religious indifferentism. As a professor of Law, I myself would advocate that sects be given equal status before the Law.



But as far as we Catholics are concerned – and now I speak as a Catholic, what was clearly enunciated in the second Vatican Council as part of the dogmatic constitution of the Catholic Church is this: There subsist in the Roman Catholic Church the elements of the true church of Jesus Christ. This means, it is true that one religious sect is as good as any other. If we are sincere Catholics, then we must profess our faith that in the Catholic Church subsist the elements of the true Church of Jesus Christ. My third point is, Religion cannot and should never be a secondary issue. All other issues are, in fact, secondary to religion. Religion should be the primary governing and determinative issue.

But, my brothers and sisters, we cannot go back to the old days of bigotry towards others. It is, in fact unchristian to assume a position "I'm better than all the rest." It is, indeed, presumptuous to consider ourselves wise and all the rest dumb. Rather, in the face of the truth of Jesus Christ, we should have the humility that allows us to open to others, to dialogue with them, to be hospitable to them.

If the masonic fraternity is, above all, a fraternity that welcomes all men, well and good. If it is a fraternity by which character is built and moral fiber strengthened, then it can only be a fraternity blessed by God. It its members take their religious duties with utmost seriousness and if, through its light, they make religion the pole star of their action, the criterion of their decisions and the standard by which their choices and options are resolved, then Masonry can be a fraternity blessed by God. ❖

OOO

Fr. Ranhilio Aquino
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San Beda University
Professor, Philippine Judicial Academy
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baseless opinions and preachy ramblings long believed or mistakenly treated to be actual Masonry.

IF YOU enjoyed the above discourses and found them informative or, at least, intriguing, then perhaps your inquisitive nature and inclination towards academic study could be further satisfied by joining the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* of the Philippines, where local Masons of like minds gather to actually learn and discuss all things Masonry without bounds. Its top-notch Masonic Education programs and research initiatives delve deeper into the historical, philosophical, and esoteric aspects of the Craft, providing much needed enlightenment to the Masons who dare seek its *further light*. To the intellectual Masons who wish to answer this call, this serves as your invitation to the "*University of Freemasonry*." We'll be waiting for you. ❖

Notes:

- 1 Larry Carbonel. online interviews dated January 11, 14, 21, and 30, 2024. Carbonel is a Masonic researcher and an expert in Philippine Masonry which includes the recent developments of "clandestine" Masonry in the country.
- 2 The term "sublime," in the context of the Master Mason or Third degree, is used to convey the profound and elevated nature of initiation. The term is intended to evoke a sense of grandeur, significance, and enlightenment associated with the rituals and teachings of the degree. It being the culmination of the Blue Lodge journey, it is referred to as sublime to emphasize the transformative experience it is meant to represent for the candidate. Any other experience therefore that resembles such profundity can just as easily be called sublime.
- 3 *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences, Vol.1*, New and Revised Ed., s.v. "Sublime." New York and London: 1914.
- 4 Albert Mackey, "Foundations of Masonic Law," *American Quarterly Review of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences* (Vol. 2, 1858), 250–269. Also, Mackey, *The Principles of Masonic Law: A Treatise on the Constitutional Laws, Usages And Landmarks of Freemasonry* (1856).
- 5 Toronto Society for Masonic Research, www.sites.google.com/site/tsmr99/innovation.
- 6 "Is the GLP Seal labeled wrong?," *Facebook*, accessed December 5, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/3752078445014893>. Also, Jose Eugenio Ilenberger, "Mysteries in the Grand Lodge Seal," *The Cable Tow* (Vol. 99, No. 5, Grand Lodge of the Philippines: 2023), 63–66.
- 7 Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (The Supreme Council, 33° SJ, USA, 1872), 819.
- 8 Arturo De Hoyos, "Secret Templar Origins of Craft Masonry," *Albert Pike's Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Annotated Edition* (2nd Ed., The Supreme Council, 33° SJ, USA, 2016), 929.
- 9 *Ibid*, 56–59.
- 10 Daniel Tomlinson, "Manly Hall and the Truth about his Masonic Writings," <http://www.quora.com/How-did-Manly-P-Hall-collect-information-for-his-books>.
- 11 Manly Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*: Preface of newer editions.



ROUGH & RUGGED ROAD

VW Victor A. Yu, PSGL (95)

ANCIENT BUT STILL HONORABLE?

It is said that Masonry is an ancient and honorable institution. Ancient because it existed since time immemorial and an honorable institution, supposedly, because “it tends to make all men so who strictly obedient to Masonic teachings and lessons.”

The touted teachings and lessons that makes us honorable consist of the “employment of the symbolisms of building and architecture to the science and art of character development.” The science is composed of the lessons we learn from our Masonic rituals, symbolisms, philosophy and interaction with the brethren with diverse backgrounds; while the art is the actual application of such lessons in our daily lives.

That is why we, Masons, sometimes refer to our fraternity as

the Craft with a capital “C” because like skilled workmen, Freemasons are principally engaged in the craft or profession of making ourselves better persons. Not to make others better persons! But rather making ourselves better persons. For we cannot make others better persons when we ourselves do not have any credibility. It is only through our exemplary acts within and without the lodge that others may witness the goodness of Masonry: and hopefully also be inspired to become better persons.

So as the operative builders construct edifices, our fraternity also constructs or “builds better persons.” Perennially in our lodge installation ceremonies, the Installing Officer reminds the Master to Charge the brethren to practice out of the Lodge those moral duties which we have been taught in in our lodges; and by amiable, discrete and virtuous

conduct, to convince the mankind of the goodness of our institution; so that, when a person is said to be a member of it, the world may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour out its sorrows; one to whom the distress may prefer its suit; one whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence.

To the better enable us to discharge such daunting responsibilities, however, we need to be ever mindful of two essentials of our Masonic life. First, we must accept the reality that we cannot achieve great things overnight. Instead, we should regularly labor to improve our character and perform humble yet worthy acts daily. The combined impact and ripple effects of such small acts when done altogether by the brethren shall through time make a substantial positive difference.

Secondly, the most effective way to learn our Craft or the Masonic science and art is to approach it on three levels. Initially, we obtain knowledge by going beyond the social aspects of our fraternity and commit ourselves to study the lessons in our symbol-

isms, rituals and philosophy. Subsequently, with such knowledge and profound understanding, we then reflect on how such lessons uniquely apply to each one of us in our personal lives. Lastly and most importantly, we thereafter apply such new learnings to our daily lives. Such process then becomes the actualization of the science and art of living as taught by Masonry.

Being part of our major sources of Masonic science, our ritual and its appreciation is essentially important. As per our revered Past Senior Grand Lecturer, Hermogenes P. Olivares who served in such position for 30 years, said: No single part, word or deed, has been included in a Masonic ritual without a clear intention to produce an appropriate and specific spiritual result. For Masonic labors are not just about having fun anymore. Our rituals are concerned with the inmost recesses of our souls, which shall aid us as we all are traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler ever returns. Thus, Masonry learning prepares us for such unavoidable journey towards that undiscovered place where we

shall be rewarded according to our merits in this earthly abode.

Masonry also introduces us to the art of institutional building in society where Freemasons become exemplary citizens. We experience the beauty of our Craft in teaching us good governance. Governance of ourselves in tempering our passions and prejudices; governance of ourselves in striving for happy and strong family relations; governance of ourselves in creating fulfilling and rewarding workplaces and governance of ourselves in contributing to the improvement of the communities where we reside.

In learning such governance, there is none better for us, Masons, than to allow freedom, fairness and disinterested friendships to prevail in our Masonic Lodges. For any Masonic Lodge is similar to a vocational school for life where opportunities are given to practice Masonic tenets and virtues within amongst us. So that we may thereafter practice those great moral duties when we rejoin others outside our lodge walls. Our Brother and National Hero, Bro. Graciano Lopez-Jaena elucidated such principle and re-

marked that out of well-organized associations come forth democracy and free states because they are the practical schools of equity, liberty and equality.

The above are just a part of the largesse of the working tools of life bestowed upon us by Freemasonry for Masonic knowledge “knows no shores.” Therefore, let us not rely upon the historical sacrifices of our heroic brethren who forged our nation and irresponsibly proclaim our affinity with them. Let us instead endeavor now to make positive differences to people around us through our own respective labors. So that future generations may continue to see the dignity and high importance of Freemasonry in society and be inspired to sustain our fraternal order as an honorable institution. May the Great Architect of the Universe bless all our sincere labors. Together, Brethren. ❖

FREEMASONRY IS NOT ANTI-RELIGION!

by MW Oscar V. Bunyi, PGM

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

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

with understanding and tolerance and respect toward one another, as well as aid, support and protect one another as children of one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet.

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

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

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

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

Says the German Hand bunch der Freimaurerei (1900): "Masonry is the activity of closely united men who,

employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from Masons' trade and architectural work for the welfare of mankind, are striving morally to ennoble themselves and others and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."

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

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

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

In the face of renewed attacks against the Craft, as Grand Master of the

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

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



FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION

by MW Raymond E. Wilmarth, PGM

The common denominator of Freemasonry and religion is God.

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

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


Accepting the infinity of God as an established truth, it is a short logical step to the acceptance of the finiteness of man in his earthly existence. But as the essence of God is not material, it is obvious that His infiniteness is akin to the spiritual and not restricted to the limits of material existence. Therefore, Freemasonry accepts with religion

that when the spirit of mortal man is freed from the bounds of its earthly existence, it will enjoy the infiniteness of eternal life.

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

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

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

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

UNDERSTANDING MASONRY BETTER

by MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., PGM

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

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

To stimulate the brethren to seek more light in Masonry, I gave more teeth to the Institute of Masonic Education and Studies (IMES), which is

responsible for the continuing education of, as well as the enhanced quality of instruction for, the Craft in our grand jurisdiction, so that there will be more Masonry among us.

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

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

Let's face it! There will always be groups that oppose us because they would be happier if Masonry did not exist. But we need not despair; for, as MW Puno once more has fearlessly stated: Freemasonry in the Philippines is here to stay. The foundation of this country was built by Masons, and the mightiest of men cannot obliterate



the goodness of Masonry. Masonry has survived and will succeed; for no institution that rests on the pillars of brotherly love, relief and truth will ever fall. There is only one thing that Masonry will not survive and that is the lack of Masonry among Masons. The future of Masonry lies on our hands and not on the hands of others.

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

Hence, let us take the following statement of RW and Rev. Cannon Richard Tydeman, a Past Senior Grand Warden of the United Grand Lodge of England, into serious consideration and act accordingly: We find it difficult to communicate with people who seem to speak a totally different language and have somehow conceived a fear, a dislike, or even a hatred of Masonry. To change their minds will be a difficult task and will take time. But if we cannot yet build a complete bridge across the river of ignorant prejudice, we can at least help by providing what one might call stepping stones.

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

These include the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOD LAUNCHES THE GRAND MASTER EDWARD Y. CHUA DEMOLAY LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Last February 27, 2024, the Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay launched the Grand Master Edward Y. Chua DeMolay Library and Museum at the second floor of the Philippine DeMolay Youth Center in Manila.

Attended by Grand Line Officers and graced by DeMolay International Grand Master Terry L. Peters, DeMolay International Past Grand Master Jonathan R. Sellars and Grand Lodge of California Past Grand Master Frank Loui, the Grand Master Edward Y. Chua DeMolay Library and Museum houses books for senior high school and college students. It houses several memorabilia and artifacts including the charter booklet of the Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay and a copy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper frontpage when former United States President and DeMolay Bill Clinton “broke protocol to meet RP brods.”

Also on display are centennial memorabilia items, former and current line of collar jewels of the Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay and DeMolay National Congress. A 3-set mannequin of DeMolay, Knight and Knights Templar with full clothing and paraphernalia are also on display. A replica of Dad



Frank S. Land’s office and stained-glass window are highlights of the DeMolay library and museum.

Past Grand Masters Evaristo A. Leviste, Victor Antonio T. Espejo, Edison Abella and Adriano B. Durano III were in attendance during the dedication ceremony. Grand Line Officers were in full force with Deputy Grand Master Raymund Joseph Ian O. Mendoza, Grand Senior Councilor Albert V. Manlulu and Grand Junior Councilor Ramoncito P. Javier in attendance. Very Rev. Samuel P. Fernandez, Frank S. Land Centennial Fellow, led the dedication and blessing of the new library and museum.

Senior DeMolay Francis Albert R. Buenafe, curator of the Grand Master Edward Y. Chua DeMolay Library and Museum, donated most of his personal collection.

The Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay enjoins everyone visit the Grand Master Edward Y. Chua DeMolay Library and Museum. For donations and contribution of memorabilia, please contact the Executive Director. ☒



DeMolay Library and Museum



SCOD Grand Master Edward Chua, with DeMolay International Grand Master Terry L. Peters, DeMolay International Past Grand Master Jonathan R. Sellars, Grand Lodge of California Past Grand Master Frank Loui, and other Grand Line Officers

THE JOURNEY OF THE ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

by **WB JOSE S. REDOR**

Worthy Grand Patron, Grand Chapter of the Philippines, OES

In the Philippines, the Order of the Eastern Star had its roots when 5 wives of Masons from Manila Lodge No. 342 under the Grand Lodge of California had the idea of forming a chapter in Manila. The group composed of Emily E. Grant, Florence Best, Mary E. Gordon-Dunster, Susan A. Seybolt and Annie L. Squier, gathered together and worked hard to secure 24 signatures to complete the petition for a chapter.

Thus, Mayon Chapter No. 1 was the first chapter formed. The Chapter was named after Mt. Mayon, which is a majestic, active volcano in the province of Albay and regarded as sacred in Philippine mythology. On October 23, 1904, Mayon Chapter U.D. was instituted with Bro. Louis T. Grant, Past Patron of Leahi Chapter No. 2 in Honolulu, acting as Deputy to the Most Worthy Grand Patron (DMWGP).

With the outbreak of the 2nd World War, Mayon Chapter No. 1 was forced to remain in the dark until September, 1946, when the Chapter was able to open again. Eventually, the Chapter was able to increase its membership and replaced the furnishings that were lost during the war. For 44 years,

Mayon Chapter was the only Eastern Star Chapter in the Philippines until on May 10, 1948, when Rosario Villaruel Chapter No. 2 was instituted by Bro. David Innis, DMWGP. The Chapter was eventually constituted on April 25, 1949.

On June 19, 1949, a group of brothers and sisters, led by Sisters Sarah M. England and Esther Boomer and Bro. David Innis, all members of Mayon Chapter No. 1 met at the Scottish Rite Temple to discuss the organization of a new Chapter. Sampaguita Chapter No. 3 was instituted on June 29, 1949 and constituted on June 6, 1951. The Chapter was named after the national flower of the Philippines, Sampaguita.

In 1951, Sis. Abbie Hanson was the first MWGM to visit the Philippines after the war. It was during her visit that Teodora Alonzo Chapter No. 4 was instituted in Davao City in a ceremony led by Bro. Walter Schoening, DMWGP. Teodora Alonzo Chapter No. 4 is the first Chapter formed in the Mindanao area, which is in southern Philippines.

At the stated meeting of Rosario Villaruel Chapter No. 2 on January 10, 1953, several Masons from Olongapo City, together with their wives were initiated into the Order at Plaridel Masonic Temple in Manila. The group eventually petitioned for a new Chapter to be formed in Olongapo City. Rebecca Parrish Chapter No. 5 was formally instituted by Bro. Michael Goldenberg, DMWGP on May 23, 1953. On April 10, 1954, Bro. Goldenberg and the officers of Rosario Villaruel Chapter No.

MW Don Ramas Uypitching, Grand Master, with delegates from Kalaw Chapter No. 9, OES;



Order of the Eastern Star

The newly-installed Worthy Grand Matron, Remedios Azarcon and Worthy Grand Patron, Jose S. Redor with Dignitaries from the General Grand Chapter headed by the Most Worthy Grand Matron Glenda G. Winchester and Most Worthy Grand Patron F. Lon Lowry



2 went to Olongapo City to constitute Rebecca Parrish Chapter No. 5.

In 1953, Cavite province was considered as one of the largest Masonic Districts under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. Several Masons from Bagumbuhay Lodge No. 17 realized the need for an organization where female relatives of Masons can work together to help spread the gospel of brotherly love, relief and truth. On August 29, 1953, Bro. Michael Goldenberg, DMWGP, formally instituted 13 Martyrs of Cavite Chapter No. 6 in Cavite City. Seven months after its institution, the Chapter was duly constituted on March 24, 1954.

Maria Clara Chapter No. 7 of Cebu City and Waling Waling Chapter No. 8 of Zamboanga City has since been in the dark and their charters surrendered to the General Grand Chapter. Other Chapters that have surrendered their charters also include Mt. Arayat Chapter No. 11 of Angeles City, Pampanga; Sinagtala Chapter No. 15 of Batangas City; Marapara Chapter No. 25 of Bacolod City; Orchid City Chapter No. 24 of Dipolog City and Lipa-Mabini Chapter No. 31.

Kalaw Chapter No. 9 was organized in San Juan, Rizal to honor the memory of Past Grand Master Teodoro M. Kalaw, Sr. Upon the petition of several brother Masons and their wives, a dispensation was received to institute the Chapter on November 28, 1953. One year later, the Chapter was constituted with former Senator Sis. Eva Estrada Kalaw as the Charter Worthy Matron in a ceremony led by Bro. Michael

Goldenberg, DMWGP.

Josefa Llanes Escoda Chapter No. 10, sponsored by Mt. Kaladias Lodge No. 91 of Dumaguete City was constituted on March 25, 1955.

The following Chapters were subsequently formed:

- 1957: Mt. Arayat Chapter No. 11 (Angeles City, Pampanga) Closed *
- 1961: Morning Star Chapter No. 12 (Tacloban City)
- 1973: Maria Cristina Chapter No. 13 (Iligan City)
- 1978: Bukagan Hill Chapter No. 14 (Ozamis City) and Sinag Tala Chapter No. 15 (Batangas City) Closed*
- Cadena de Amor Chapter No. 16 (Cagayan de Oro City)
- 1982: Mt. Apo Chapter No. 17 (Kidapawan, Cotabato)
- 1983: Maqueda Chapter No. 18 (Catbalogan City, Samar)
- 1984: Bukang Liwayway Chapter No. 19 (Bacoor, Cavite) and Pagadian City Chapter No. 20 (Pagadian City)
- 1985: Cattleya Chapter No. 21 (Davao del Sur) and Bai-A-Labi Chapter No.22 (Marawi City)
- 1987: Maria Makiling Chapter No. 23 (Los Banos, Laguna) Orchid City Chapter No. 24 (Dipolog City); Closed *
- Marapara Chapter No. 25 (Bacolod City); Closed *
- 1991: Kinampay Chapter No. 26 (Tagbilaran City, Bohol) and Rosal Chapter No. 27 (Mati, Davao Oriental)
- 1993: Balanghai Chapter No. 28 (Butuan City, Agusan del Norte)
- 1995: Mt. Banahaw Chapter No. 29 (Tayabas, Quezon) and Eleuteria R. Dizon Chapter No. 30 (Guimba, Nueva Ecija) Lipa Chapter No. 31 (Lipa City, Batangas) Closed *
- San Pablo delos Montes Chapter No. 32 (San Pablo City, Laguna);
- 2007: La Immaculada Chapter No. 33 (Dasmariñas City, Cavite)
- 2015: Golden Jewel Chapter No. 34 (San Francisco, Agusan del Sur)
- 2017: Strawberry Fields Chapter No. 35 (Baguio City)
- 2023 : Panay Gugma Chapter No. 36 (Iloilo City)

As of this date, the Philippines has a total of 36 Chapters, located in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, seven of which have been closed.

Since the start of the OES here in the Philippines, we were under the direct supervision of the General Grand Chapter whose See is at Washington D.C., hence Deputies were assigned to supervise the Chapters located in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Until the recent formation of the Grand Chapter of the Philippines, the Chairperson of the Deputies in the Philippines was Sister Fe Abarquez–Suaco, PM, Sampaguaita Chapter No. 3; DMWGM for Luzon, Sister Corazon F. Tandoc. PM, Mayon Chapter No. 1; DMWGM for

Visayas and Mindanao, Sister Remedios Azarcon, PM, Teodora Alonso No. 4; and DMWGP for Philippines, Bro. Jose S. Redor, PP, Kalaw Chapter No. 9.

FORMATION OF THE GRAND CHAPTER OF THE PHILIPPINES ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR

The dream of having a Grand Chapter of the Philippines, Order of the Eastern Star, has been finally realized! On February 27, 2024, the most awaited Grand Chapter of the Philippines was Constituted and the Charter Officers installed at a ceremony held at the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, San Marcelino, Manila, attended by about 400 delegates.

No less than the Most Worthy Grand Matron, Glenda G. Winchester, PGM-SC; and the Most Worthy Grand Patron, F. Lon Lowry, PGPOH, led the constitution team with 13 Past Grand Matrons and Past Grand Patrons participating, coming all the way from the United States, Brazil, and Canada. The first set of Grand Chapter officers which were elected during the Davao Convention last April 21-23, 2023 were then solemnly and ritualistically installed, with Sister Remedios M. Azarcon, PM, Teodora Alonso No. 4, and Bro. Jose S. Redor, PP, Kalaw

Chapter No. 9, at the helm.

Forming a Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star requires quite a lot of work, coordination and commitment and I commend the Sisters and Brothers who contributed their time and talents to work so hard in our effort to make the formation of the Grand Chapter of the Philippines a reality. Special mention goes to Teodora Alonso Chapter No. 4 of Davao City for spearheading the move to form the Grand Chapter. During the plenary session in Cavite in May, 2014, the Chapter presented a study on the formation, copies of which were distributed to all the Chapters, giving them ample time to discuss and decide on the proposal.

As the Deputy to the Most Worthy Grand Patron in the Philippines it was my task to coordinate with the General Grand Chapter and inquire what are needed in forming a Grand Chapter. Having been advised by the Most Worthy Grand Patron John Grobler of the requirements, survey letters were sent to the Chapters to determine their stand on the proposal.

In December, 2014, having complied with the necessary number of Chapters and members as stated in the Rule Book, we presented the petition to form a Grand Chapter to then MWGP Robert Penoyer, who advised that the by-laws should be drafted, which took awhile, going back and forth for correction and comments.

Finally, in December, 2019, the first draft of the proposed Constitution and



Most Worthy Grand Matron Glenda G. Winchester presenting the Charter of the Grand Chapter of the Philippines, OES.



By-laws of the Grand Chapter was submitted for review by the concerned GGC committee. In January, 2020, the Constitution and By-laws were approved by the GGC committee on By-laws after undergoing several revisions.

Then came the pandemic. MWGP Henry Martin wrote to me that he was sincerely hoping that he could travel to Manila to constitute the Grand Chapter. Unfortunately, the combination of the Covid Pandemic and his untimely passing kept him from fulfilling his dream of us becoming a Grand Chapter then.

Meanwhile, after the 50th Triennial Assembly in Salt Lake City, Utah, we were hopeful that the dream of becoming a Grand Chapter will finally be a reality. Our gratitude and thanks to the Most Worthy Grand Matron Glenda Winchester and Most Worthy Grand Patron, F. Lon Lowry, for working with us, guiding us every step of the way, and for all the valuable assistance and support extended to the subordinate Chapters in the Philippines towards the successful organization of a Grand Chapter.

Special thanks also go to my wife, Eleanor, for her patience and support throughout the time that we were in the process of forming the Grand Chapter, even overcoming some obstacles that came up during the event. You are truly the “wind beneath my wings.”

We were honored and privileged to have the Grand Master, MW Don Terng Ramas Uypitching, who took

time out of his busy schedule, to be our Guest of Honor and Speaker during this auspicious occasion. Your presence added credence and provided inspiration to all the Chapters. Your support meant a lot to the newly formed Grand Chapter.

Thanks also to Right Worshipful Ariel T. Cayanan, Deputy Grand Master, for receiving and inspiring the group, for the encouragement to be more dynamic. The group really enjoyed interacting with you. It was one of the highlights of their visit.

Finally, I know that a lot of work still needs to be done in the days ahead, but with the cooperation and support of the Sisters and Brothers and the blessing of our heavenly Father, we shall move forward together towards a common vision of a strong, dynamic, nurturing and caring Grand Chapter. Our success and prosperity largely depend on your cooperation and the work that we put into it. ❏



GM Don Terng Ramas-Uypitching gracing the 65th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Japan



The Grand Master in Japan



THE 65th ANNUAL COMMUNICATION
GRAND LODGE OF JAPAN
22-23 MARCH 2024

GM Don T. Ramas- Uypitching presenting a token to MW Joel A. Encarnacion





THE FINAL WORD

MW Don Terng Ramas-Uypitching
Grand Master

MY BELOVED BRETHREN,

As this is the last issue of our official publication for my term as Grand Master, kindly allow me to express my deep gratitude to all of you for the invaluable support and inspiration you have given me.

I chose the theme "Freemasons Altogether, Building Temples Inside the Hearts of Men" for my term because of my firm faith that as long as each Mason regularly enters the sanctum sanctorum of his heart to offer his adorations to the Ever Living God and pleads for wisdom and strength to continually improve himself, he cannot materially err.

Upon my assumption to the station in the grand east last year, I could not resist the urgings within my heart to strive for the betterment of our Craft. At times, agonizing and sad decisions had to be made by me lest I be remiss in my duties to maintain the purpose of our fraternal institution - which is to build character in men so that in turn, they can also build a better society.

It is my hope that the reforms that we

have initiated in our grand jurisdiction will be sustained so that the world may be ever convinced of the goodness of Masonry. May the Great Architect of the Universe always bless, prosper and protect our treasured fraternity, all the brethren and their loved ones. I bid thee farewell, my dear Brothers and wish you the best in all your labors.

Together, Brethren.



DON T. RAMAS-UYPITCHING
Grand Master of Masons





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