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THE REFORMIST GRAND MASTER
MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III

**Our Theme -- "A Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine
Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant"**

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The Cabletow

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“TOWARD GIVING DUE MEANING AND SUBSTANCE TO OUR THEME FOR MASONIC YEAR 2015-2016”

OUR INCUMBENT GRAND MASTER, MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, has challenged us to help him and his fellow Grand Lodge Officers give due meaning and substance to our theme for this Masonic year, namely, “A Revitalized, Relevant, and Revered Philippine Masonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant.” Specifically, he has enjoined us to stay committed to the Three Guards to Reform, namely, Guard the West Gate, Guard the Lamp, and Guard the Ballot.

He has urged us, moreover, to reconsecrate and rededicate ourselves to fulfilling faithfully and conscientiously the charge that we should strenuously enforce, by both precept and example, a steady obedience to the Fraternity’s main tenets, to wit, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

He has issued the clarion call, furthermore, that we contribute our respective shares to the attainment by our local and national communities of stable peace and inclusive prosperity.

Besides, he has reminded us, as individual Masons, to discharge our duty to help preserve unsullied or untarnished the reputation of the Fraternity before the non-Masonic pub-

lic by conducting ourselves exemplarily or regularly on all occasions in all places; to be faithful to every trust committed to our care; to support the dignity of our character as Masons at all times; and to manifest our fidelity to our principles by strictly observing the Constitutions of the Fraternity, by adhering to the ancient landmarks thereof, and by refusing to recommend anyone to a participation in our privileges unless we have strong reasons to believe that, by a similar fidelity, he will ultimately reflect honor on our venerable Institution.

Moreover, he has reminded us, as a Lodge, that we must responsibly select from among our petitioners only those who we believe possess those internal qualifications that recommend them to be made Masons, and not simply confer the degrees of Masonry on our candidates, nor yet enlarge our membership and, therefore, augment our income, but rather help Masonry attain its principal purpose, which is, in the words of the late Worshipful Brother and Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran, “to create in the world a band of men to whom others might look for example and inspiration –men who

others will say are men of honor, virtue, and charitable feelings.”

The attainment by us of that principal purpose of the Fraternity, decidedly, is not a swift or sudden process, but rather a slow and protracted one. Therefore, we should not desire to acquire and produce new members of our respective Lodges in a very fast fashion and in big numbers, but rather to “make haste slowly.” This oxymoronic statement connotes that we should responsibly perform our respective tasks in the process of carefully selecting candidates for Masonic degrees. Some of these tasks are specified hereunder.

If we sign petitions for Masonic membership, we must put the welfare and happiness of our respective Lodges in particular and of the Fraternity in general above the interests of our recommendees.

If our recommendees get the favorable ballot, it is our responsibility to continue whispering wise counsel to them and to show our moral support to them by attending the conferral of the degrees of Masonry upon them.

If we are assigned as investigators, we must faithfully and responsibly seek the necessary information about the character and status of every petitioner for Masonic membership, using as our guide the questions given in Edict No. 60, as amended, which are found in our Masonic Law Book or the Constitution of our M.W. Grand Lodge.

Besides, we must make sure that the name of a petitioner for Masonic

membership has been published in G.L. Form No. 12, and that the published name is read aloud during a stated meeting. We must, moreover, strictly comply with the provisions on the balloting of petitions for Masonic membership, as well as those on objections and prohibitions, contained in our Masonic Law Book.

If we are assigned to conduct the required orientation lectures to candidates for Masonic degrees, we must optimally use Tried and Proven, a Digest which the Masonic Service Association (MSA) has prepared to whet the appetite of every candidate for “more Masonic Light” and to prepare him for active membership both in the Lodge and in the Craft. Specifically, we should stimulate the candidates to understand the truths which the ritual and ceremonies of each degree are calculated to inculcate, and then to use these truths for transforming themselves from “rough” to “perfect ash-lars,” or for attaining personal perfection or self-mastery.

If we are members of the conferral team of our Lodge, we must exert all-out effort to solemnly, proficiently, and therefore impressively communicate the degrees of Masonry to our candidates because the ritual and ceremonies of the degrees are the Craft’s fundamental tool for providing candidates with Masonic education and instruction. Clearly, what the candidates learn from the Lodge’s ritualistic and ceremonial work is usually the first and the determining impression

which Masonry makes on them. Either they like what they hear, see, and feel before, during, and after each degree work or they discover that the Fraternity does not offer to them what they expected. Hence, as members of the conferral team, we must take the time to practice or rehearse before every degree work, and then present the ritual and ceremonies as efficiently and effectively as we reasonably can, eloquently and distinctly delivering our respective lines, as well as precisely and accurately executing the floor works.

Before the conferral of each degree, the Worshipful Master must remind the brethren present in the Lodge hall to refrain from doing anything unto the candidates that is not called for in the ritual and ceremonies. He must also inform them that he has assigned certain brethren to do the prompting in case some members of the conferral team will forget their lines, and that all others should refrain from doing any prompting.

We old members of the Lodge must always conduct ourselves so regularly that we stand as prima-facie evidence of the effectiveness of Masonic teachings, and that the new members look to us for example and inspiration. Before, during, and after degree conferrals, therefore, we must take good care that we do not give the new members any cause to doubt or question the Fraternity's fundamental principles and lofty ideals.

Whenever we confer the degrees

of Masonry on our candidates, we must practice the Golden Rule; that is to say, just as we ourselves wanted those who would confer the Masonic degrees on us to refrain from trifling with our feelings and persons, so the candidates on whom we confer the same degrees want us to refrain from trifling with their feelings and persons, as well as to strictly observe the edicts on how to properly and fairly treat candidates.

If the Worshipful Master assigns us to serve as mentors or coaches to the candidates, we should assist the latter not only in preparing for the required proficiency examinations, but also in understanding the symbolic meanings of the various forms and ceremonies made use of during their initiation, passing, and raising.

All of us brethren of the Lodge should not forget that, as provided in our Masonic Law Book, we are prohibited from requesting or permitting candidates to furnish or pay for refreshments during the period they are receiving the Masonic degrees.

We must continue paying close attention to the welfare, happiness, and Masonic development and advancement of our newly initiated, passed, and raised brethren even after they have passed the required proficiency examination.

To make good men worthy and exemplary Masons is, definitely, a slow and protracted process, as well as an interminable task. But we must patiently and perseveringly go through the process, as well as devotedly and

disinterestedly perform our task, in order to help Masonry carry out its great crusade, viz., to build its temple of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the souls of men and of nations.

ON IMPROVING INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE CRAFT

TO GIVE DUE MEANING and substance to our theme for Masonic year 2015-2016, we brethren of the different Lodges in this sovereign jurisdiction must renew, if not strengthen, our resolve to help the present leadership of our M.W. Grand Lodge raise the level of the general public's awareness and understanding of our fraternal order. To do this, we have got to work a little harder than before at becoming "a sacred band, or society of friends and brother, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

But, of course, unless we consistently live by the precepts and principles of our ancient and honorable fraternity, and unless we strictly adhere to its laws, rules, and regulations, we cannot become such a band or society. We must, therefore, renew, if not strengthen, our dedication and commitment to fulfilling our charges and obligations, so that we will exhibit ourselves as worthy and exemplary Masons at all times and in all places.

We should not pay mere lip service to our avowals, but rather put

them into consistent action. We avow, for instance, that we are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection, and that while we are influenced by the twin principle of goodness and truth, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us, sincerity and plain dealing distinguish us, and with heart and tongue, we join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity. But, have we persistently translated such avowals into meaningful action?

As pointed out by many a Masonic leader, unless we keep our promise to be true and faithful friends and brothers to one another in the Craft, we cannot help Masonry accomplish its self-imposed mission, which is to bring about a universal league of mankind or to establish upon earth a veritable brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions under the Fatherhood of God.

That is why we have got to pay a little more attention than before to maintaining harmony among ourselves. We have got to convince others, by both precept and example, that we Masons are always people working together in unity and harmony towards common purposes. Clearly, unless we do things together, accomplish things together, share things with one another in sincere love and fellowship, and demonstrate our pride in the Fraternity to one another and to the general public, we will not be able to make wonderful things happen.

Invariably, when we don't act like

Masons, problems arise, and problems always cause disunity, and disunity hinders us from progressing rapidly and smoothly in our endeavors.

The Grand Lodge Officers, led by our Grand Master, MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, cannot successfully implement the rally thrusts of our M.W. Grand Lodge's administrative program for Masonic year 2015-2016 unless we brethren at the Lodge and District levels extend to them our active assistance and cooperation as well as our sympathetic support. But if and when we align the calendar of the monthly activities of our respective Districts and Lodges to that of our M.W. Grand Lodge, then the activities of our Craft at all levels will be better articulated, better coordinated, and more efficiently and effectively executed. In this case, the residents of our local and national communities will realize, recognize, and revere Philippine Masonry as a revitalized and still relevant fraternal organization that walks arm in arm with progress toward a better way of life.

Since harmony is the strength and beauty of our noble brotherhood, we should renew, if not strengthen, our resolve to live by the all-important message of Psalm 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

For this specific purpose, at the start of this Masonic year, we should, as a Lodge or, better still, as a Masonic District, re-consecrate and rededicate ourselves to living by the Fraternity's

imperishable ideals, priceless principles, and timeless tenets, as well as to discharging with utmost fidelity and conscientiousness our duties, responsibilities as members of the Craft.

PRESERVING UNSULLIED THE FRATERNITY'S REPUTATION

LET US ALSO WEIGH and consider the salient points raised in an article in the April 1930 edition of the Short Talk Bulletin (STB), a publication of the Masonic Service Association (MSA) of North America. Although the article was published approximately 85 years ago, the points raised in it are deemed quite applicable to our situation in this sovereign jurisdiction.

The article stresses that, both as individual Masons and as Lodges or Districts, or even as an entire Craft, we should rededicate and recommit ourselves to fulfilling our charge to preserve unsullied or untarnished the reputation of the Fraternity, as well as to conducting ourselves so regularly at all times and in all places as to remove every aspersion against it; for, clearly, the Fraternity's reputation before the non-Masonic public is what makes it live and grow and thrive. This task requires us, among other things, to fulfill with utmost strictness the charge that we must be faithful to every trust committed to our care; support the dignity of our character as Masons on all occasions; strenuously enforce, by both precept and example, a steady

obedience to the tenets of the Fraternity; and manifest inflexible fidelity to our principles by strictly observing the Constitutions of Masonry, by adamantly adhering to the ancient landmarks thereof, and by refusing to recommend men to a participation in our privileges unless we have strong reasons to believe that they, too, will discharge their duties and responsibilities as Masons so faithfully and conscientiously that they will ultimately reflect honor on our venerable Institution.

It also strongly states that we should strictly obey the non-solicitation rule; that is to say, we should not ask the profane to join our fellowship, but rather let those men interested in becoming members of our ancient and honorable fraternity knock on its door on their own free will and accord. It points out, however, that we must also serve as effective public relations agents of Masonry. To be able to do so, in addition to conducting ourselves exemplarily or regularly at all times and in all places, we have to exert more vigorous effort than before to confidently, clearly, and convincingly tell to others the truth about our fraternal order, as well as to courageously and proudly defend it against the attacks of its critics and detractors. This task involves, among other things, ably and willingly sharing with non-Masons the non-secret teachings of its first three degrees.

We can tell those men who are sincerely interested in knowing more about Masonry that:

- o In the first or Entered Apprentice degree, the initiate:
 - Learns the necessity of secrecy and a belief in God, in mankind, and in a worthy brother Mason; the meaning of brotherly love and relief; the reasons for the greatness of truth; the advantage of temperance; the value of fortitude; the part which prudence plays in the life of a Mason; and the equality of strict justice.
 - Is charged to always mention God's name with much awe and reverence, to implore His aid in all his lawful undertakings, and to look up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support.
 - Is admonished to act with his neighbor upon the square (of virtue and morality); to render him every kind office which justice or mercy may require; to relieve his distresses and soothe his afflictions; to be reverent before God, to pray to Him for help, and to venerate Him as the source of all that is good, true, and beautiful; to practice the Golden Rule; to avoid excesses of all kinds; to be quiet and peaceable; to refrain from countenancing disloyalty and rebellion, to be true and just to government and country, to be cheerful under its laws; to come often to Lodge without neglecting his business; not to argue with the ignorant but rather to learn more about the Fraternity from his brother Masons; and once again, to strictly observe secrecy.
 - Is urged to present only such candi-

dates as he is sure will agree to all that he has agreed to.

o In the second or Fellowcraft degree, the initiate:

- Agrees that he will be secret regarding that which must be kept secret; obey the by-laws of his own Symbolic or Blue Lodge, as well as the laws, rules, regulations and edicts of his Grand Lodge; answer proper summonses; not lose sight of his duty as a Mason in charity and relief; and be an honest, just, and upright man in all his stations before God and man.
- Learns the importance of the seventh day, as well as the advantages of learning in general, but especially the science of geometry.
- Is reminded of the necessity of a reverent attitude before Deity, as well as the importance of making balanced judgment.
- Is exhorted to study the seven liberal arts and is shown that geometry is not only a mathematical and Masonic science, but a moral one as well.
- Is urged to conduct himself in an exemplary manner, as well as to practice all the virtues with much constancy.

o In the third or Master Mason degree, the initiate:

- Is emphatically reminded to observe the things he has been taught, and is caused to assume additional duties and responsibilities.

- Learns the importance – nay, the necessity -- of science, secrecy, fidelity to trust, courage, resignation and sacrifice.

- Is made to realize that his obligations are extended, and his brotherly relations with his fellows are more clearly and strictly defined.

- Also learns that he must willingly serve God and his fellowmen; not only petition to God for blessings or favors when he prays, but also praise, glorify and thank Him; be worthy of confidence; be strong not only for himself but for his falling brother as well; not only possess wisdom but also share it with others; warn or caution a brother of an approaching danger or disaster.; set a good example; guard others, as well as himself, against any breach of fidelity; preserve the Fraternity's ancient Landmarks and never countenance any changes in our established customs; not lose sight of the fact that he is charged to maintain secrecy; uphold the dignity of his character as a Master Mason; and be so faithful to the Fraternity as to merit the faith and confidence of his fellows.

Yes, dear brethren, we must be willing and able to share with non-Masons, including our critics and detractors, the foregoing non-secret teachings of the first three degrees of Masonry; for upon those teachings rests its reputation before the general public.

For your benefit, the non-secret teachings of the three degrees of Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry are listed down in another way, as follows:

- Belief in God; Observance of the Sabbath; Reverence, Prayer, and Veneration;
- Brotherly Love, Relief (or Service), and Truth;
- Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice;
- Golden Rule, Peaceableness, and Exemplary Citizenship;
- Obedience to Masonic Authority;
- Honesty, Education, Judiciousness, and Fidelity to Trust;
- Courage, Resignation, and Self Sacrifice;
- Service to God and Fellowmen;
- Trustworthiness to Confidence, Sharing Strength and Wisdom, and Setting a Good Example;
- Preservation of the Ancient Landmarks and Strict Adherence to Our Established Customs; and
- Faith and Dignity.

By living up to all these teachings, as well as by inducing others to do the same, we Freemasons will be helping our fraternal order accomplish its self-imposed mission or to attain its long-term goal, which is to bring about a universal league of mankind or to establish upon earth a veritable brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions under the Fatherhood of God.

Indeed, if we live by the timeless tenets and teachings, the imperishable

ideals, and the priceless precepts and precious principles of the Fraternity, we would be helping transform the world in which we live into an Utopia.

Unfortunately, we craftsmen frequently fail to live up to the Fraternity's tenets, precepts, ideals, and principles. We frequently fail, in effect, to fulfill our charge to help preserve unsullied or untarnished its reputation – or to help remove every aspersion, or avert the shadow of any scandal or reproach, against it, as well as to convince the world, by both precept and example, that since our raising to the sublime degree of Master Mason, we have become increasingly better men. We often forget that where we Masons, as a class, are false to our teachings, lax in our conduct, and forsworn as to our obligations, Masonry would not possess the fair reputation it has.

It is, indeed, ironic that despite the many provisions in our Monitor and the many injunctions and ordinances in our Masonic Law Book governing our interrelationships as individual Masons, as Lodges and Districts, and as an entire Craft, we have not yet become “*a sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.*”

It is also saddening to note that many of us Master Masons lack a due regard to Masonic jurisprudence or to the Fraternity's laws, rules, and regulations, and this disregard has not in-

frequently resulted in the conduct of Masonic trials.

In this connection, during his year in the Grand East, MW Quintin Paredes recurrently reminded the brethren to convince the world, more by example than by precept, that Masonry is a realm of peace, or that harmony is the strength and support of all societies, especially of ours, or it is the strength and beauty of our noble brotherhood. He strongly stated, "*Unless we exhibit ourselves as good and true friends and brothers to one another, we cannot help our beloved fraternity bring about a universal league of mankind or to establish upon earth a true brotherhood of men of different countries, sects and opinions under the Fatherhood of the Great Architect of the Universe.*"

In consonance with the foregoing statement of MW Paredes, the present officers of our M.W. Grand Lodge, led by our Grand Master, MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, have urged us to direct our special attention to improving inter-relationships at all levels of our Craft. They have also admonished us to keep the number of trial commissions to a minimum; for when such a commission is conducted, each Lodge or District concerned inevitably washes its dirty linen in public, and our good and great Order is, to some extent, sadly dragged into public notice.

During the ANCOM in Legazpi City, I was greatly saddened when a long-time friend and brother was given the worst Masonic penalty, namely,

expulsion or Masonic death. In fact, when the presiding officer ordered the Grand Marshal to escort the said friend and brother out of the convention hall, I really pitied him, but at the same time I feared that the world at large, particularly his relatives, friends, and neighbors, would hear of his expulsion from the Fraternity.

Actually, as an inevitable consequence of his expulsion, tense feelings were created among the members of the Lodge, and worse, the peace and good fellowship that used to prevail among them was disturbed or interrupted; instead, the serpents of discord, confusion, and factionalism have reared their ugly and venomous heads in the Lodge.

Admittedly, a Masonic trial cannot always be helped. I believe, however, that in many cases it can be helped or avoided.

Admittedly, it is natural for brethren wronged by a brother to wish that he be taken before the bar of public opinion and, perhaps, punished for his infraction of his obligation. But when a trial commission is formed, inevitably the result becomes public, and the whole Craft, and not only the Lodge concerned, eventually suffers.

I do agree with the Masonic Service Association (MSA) that the best surgeon does not use a knife until all other means fail, and that the Master, as well as other members, of the Lodge should consider other means to use for settling the differences between the erring brother and the offended

brethren, thereby doing a real service not only to their Lodge but also to the whole Fraternity, whose reputation ought to be our constant care – the Fraternity that has given us the following injunction:

“You are not to palliate nor aggravate the offenses of your brethren. But in the decision of every trespass against our rules, you are to judge with candor, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with justice.”

The MSA further comments:

“To whisper good counsel in the ear of an erring brother is sound Masonic teaching. To prevent tarnishing the reputation of the Fraternity, we must not only endeavor to live up to the high level of our teachings, but strive to help our brethren do likewise. The best way, the brotherly way, the way of Freemasonry is by kindly caution, the friendly word of admonition, the hand stretched out to assist and save the worthy falling brother.

“Only when these fail - and never then until after thinking first of the Order, next of the Lodge, and last of self – should we to the court of last resort, prefer charges, have a trial and do ourselves the injury which comes always from the knife of publicity in the body of our Ancient Craft.

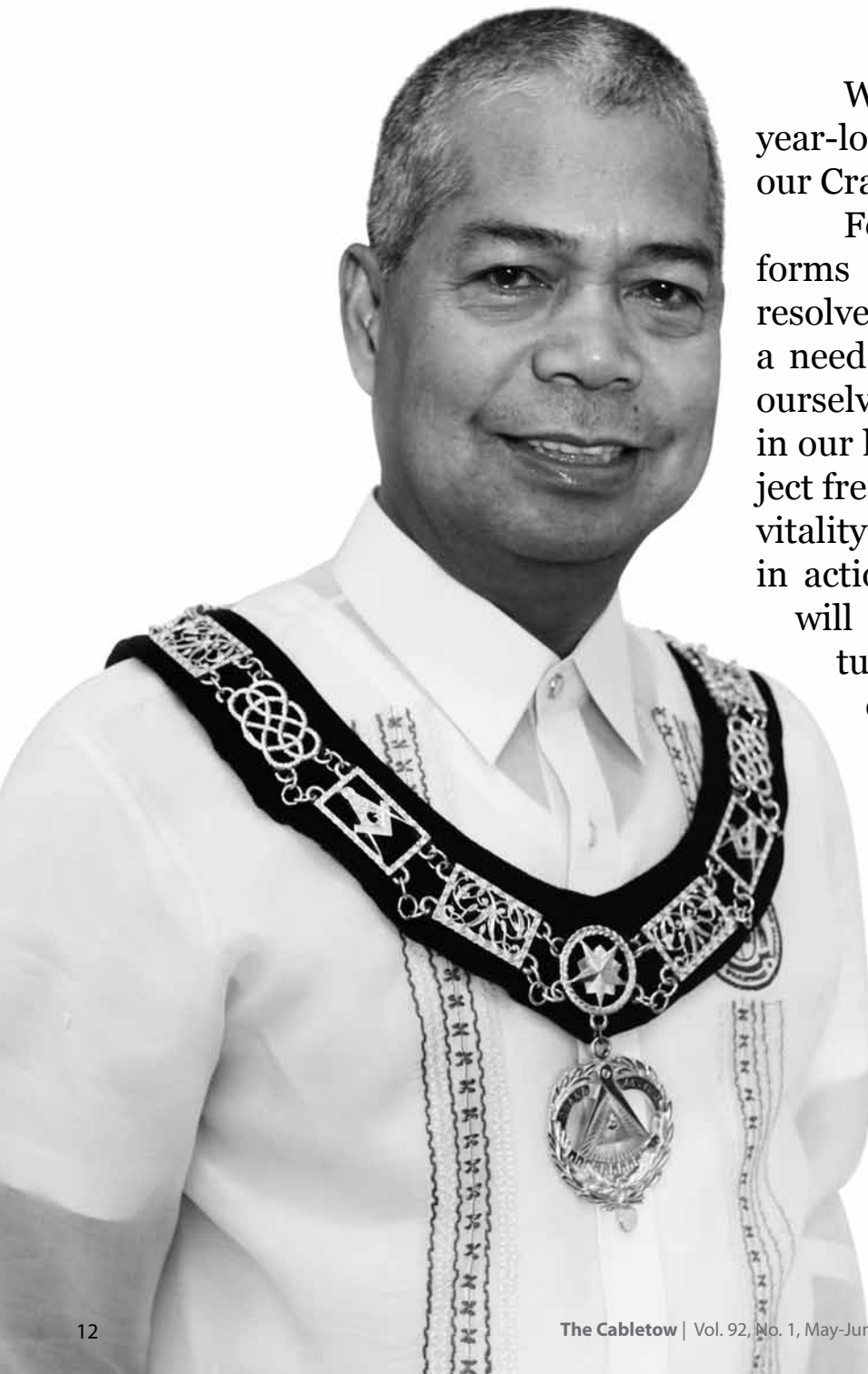
“Freemasonry -- so we truly believe -- is one of God’s bright tools for

shaping ourselves from rough to perfect ashlar.

“Let us strive to keep it bright!”

Yes, dear brethren, let us strive hard to keep our symbolic working tools bright for developing ourselves into Magistri Interiores or Inward Masters, so that our influence over other men will bring good results. Let us be more highly resolved than before to be vigilant and circumspect, as well as zealous and enthusiastic, guardians of Philippine Masonry. Specifically, as enjoined by our incumbent Grand Master, let us vigilantly guard the west gate, the lamp, and the ballot. We should be committed, perhaps more than ever before, to strictly fulfilling our covenant to work together in close harmony, coordination, and cooperation toward the successful implementation of the present Grand Lodge leadership’s program of reforms in order that the residents of our local and national communities will realize, recognize, and revere or respect Philippine Masonry as a revitalized and relevant fraternal organization capable of contributing significantly to the accomplishment by worldwide Masonry of its self-imposed mission, which is to bring about a universal league of mankind or to establish upon earth a brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions under the Fatherhood of God. ❖

What we intend to do in Masonic Year 2015-2016



WE EMBARK ON ANOTHER year-long journey at a crucial time for our Craft and our Country.

For our Fraternity, the call for reforms is highlighted by pervasive unresolved issues in our Craft. There is a need to immediately restore trust in ourselves, in our Masonic systems, and in our leadership. Only then can we inject fresh vigor to our mystic ties; a new vitality that will empower us to engage in actions that are relevant today and will remain relevant far into the future. For only by staying relevant can we expect our Fraternity to be revered now and for generations to come. A revered Fraternity – this is our vision.

Thus our theme: *“A Revitalized, Relevant, and Revered Philippine Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant.”*

Conceived from years of extensive consultations and intensive debates, the reform agenda that you, my brethren, entrusted me

to articulate on your behalf during the 2012 ANCOM in Naga City is and will remain the focus of our vision from the Grand Oriental Chair. The three guards to reform – Guard the West Gate, Guard the Lamp, and Guard the Ballot – will be our rallying cry as we embark to revitalize our Fraternity.

Link arms with me. Let us be guided by the three basic tenets of our Craft: Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Together let us take harmonious steps toward the long journey into becoming better men worthy of our fellowmen's respect and the blessing of the Great Architect of the Universe.

One step is to heighten the security level at the West Gate. Let us guard it from without and from within with such zeal that no worthy brother may vouch for a man whom he will not be happy to see seated on the Grand Oriental Chair. Another is to level up our Masonic education system taking full advantage of modern technology while simultaneously professionalizing the IMES faculty and devolving IMES down to the regional level to make it more accessible to the brethren. And finally, the touchy step in the direction of our electoral process. We must ensure that only those proficient, with selfless intention to serve, may stride towards the Grand East.

These steps are amply expounded in the Manual for Grand Officers for my year in the Grand East. I enjoin every worthy brother to read the explanation of the three steps carefully and to study it diligently. Should you find something that may have been overlooked, please


feel free to approach the Grand Oriental Chair. Your Grand Master will feel honored to listen.

And as our country contends with internal and external challenges, I urge every worthy brother to contribute, within the limit of his cabletow, to the attainment of stable peace and inclusive prosperity.

As individual citizens and as Lodges, as Masonic Districts, and even as an entire Craft, let us help our leaders steer us safely through the perils that threaten our ship of state into the calm seas of a contented Filipino citizenry living in harmony with the rest of humanity.

My warmest greetings to you all, my dear brethren.

Fraternally yours,


TOMAS G. RENTOY, III
Grand Master, 2015-2016



Our Theme -- “A Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant”

OUR THEME FOR MY YEAR in the Grand East, “A Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant,” evolved from extensive dialogues and intensive debate with and amongst the brethren under the Philippine jurisdiction starting from far back as the months leading up to the 2012 ANCOM. It is the essence of our common yearning for the reverence with which people look upon Philippine Masonry during the times of our illustrious brothers, Dr. Jose Rizal and Gat Andres Bonifacio. Indeed, a revered fraternity is our vision.

To realize our vision, we need to quick start our brethren into action and reenergize our mystic ties. To achieve this, we need to build up trust – trust in our leadership, trust in our systems, and mutual trust among ourselves. Trust is the steel sinew that boosts the tensile strength of the mystic ties that bind us as brothers.

Therefore, the first order of the day is to bolster trust anchored on

brotherly love relief, and truth in order to revitalize our Fraternity.

After witnessing our leaders confront severe tests recently, I take it as my first task to assure you, dear brethren, that as your Grand Master, I am not your lord but your servant. I will serve. I will toil. I will listen. I will inspire.

My second task is to restore trust in our systems. To carry this out, we will implement the Three Guards to Reform. We will guard the West Gate from within and from without. We will guard the Lamp, so that it will shine in all our lodges. And we will guard the ballot so that only servant leaders may travel East.

The third task you have imposed upon your Grand Master is to rekindle mutual trust among us all. Harmony is key to mutual trust. It thrives on brotherly love, ready relief when needed, and in an all-pervasive atmosphere of truth. To attain and sustain harmony, we will resolve, by mediation and other means, issues and

disagreements between brothers in and out of the lodges. We will purge cowans and eavesdroppers who may have succeeded in sneaking through the Wet Gate. And if need be, we will lock up lodges irreparably racked by discord.

The PNPA Best and the TGR Team

Brethren, it was indeed a great honor to have been entrusted with the privilege to articulate on your behalf the reform agenda you have long sought to pursue. These reforms were introduced by past Grand Masters with varying degrees of success. However, due mainly to the brevity of their tenure in office, there was no continuity. Reforms came in fits and starts resulting in the recurrence of practically the same problem over time. This was compounded by the fast growth in our membership. Ironically, as we grew in numbers, our systems failed to catch up with this surge just as they failed to level up to technological advances.

In 2010, brethren who are alumni of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) decided to form a Square and Compass Club. They named it the PNPA Brotherhood of Excellent Sojourners and Travelers (PNPA BEST) and elected me as their first president. It was the PNPA BEST that first encapsulated the call for reforms, invariably being aired by the brethren across the Philippine jurisdiction, into the concept of the three

guards to reform. In the run up to the 2012 ANCOM, this reform platform was tested among select lodges and appendant bodies. The response was generally encouraging. So, during the 2012 ANCOM, it was decided that these reform agenda be formally validated by adopting it as my platform in the election for Junior Grand Warden. And validated it was by an overwhelming vote.

The reform agenda having been validated during the 2012 ANCOM and inspired by the overwhelming mandate, a select group of volunteer worthy brothers from various disciplines, backgrounds, and lodges offered their services to craft practical steps to implement the reform agenda. Informally, they called themselves the TGR Team. We regularly met once a week and on occasion held special meetings. Hence, much credit is due them.

The Manual for Grand Lodge Officers for 2015-2016, which contains implementing instances, plans, programs, data, and other minutiae, may be rightfully said to be their labor of love. Therefore, on behalf of the brethren, I thank and commend the TGR Team.

Marching Off the Three Guards to Reform

The most brilliant plan is only as good as the result of its implementation. After all, the genius of a general is measured by the pace of the private

towards victory. And so on Day 1 we march off the Three Guard to Reform by signing and issuing enabling edicts to legitimize and institutionalize our reform agenda.

The second phase in implementing these reforms will be the series of seminar-workshops for blue lodge lights and grand line officers. They will study the Edicts, policies, guidelines and projects, and prepare their individual program of action. At the end of the seminar-workshops, the attendees will submit to the MWGM a deposition committing to accomplish the goals they have set for themselves based on their program of action. This document once accepted by the MWGM will serve as their covenant. The covenant will serve as yardstick with which their performance will be evaluated.

The implementation phase follows immediately after the seminar-workshops. Regular performance evaluation will be conducted going forward.

Guarding the West Gate

The West Gate is our first line of defense. Hence, it is the first in our agenda. We will zealously guard it from without.

Drawing lessons from the recent past and in light of the exponential pace of technology, travel, and communication, we will adopt new measures in the processing of petitioners at par with the fast-changing environ-

ment. We will keep pace and level up as we go along.

We will raise the bar even higher than just “the good man” standard we seem to have taken for granted. Henceforth, no worthy brother shall vouch for and allow entry into the West Gate any petitioner whom he will not be happy to see sitting on the Grand Oriental Chair in the future. The rationale is that we can never hew into perfect ashlar that which is not of ashlar material in the first place. This is the object of another Edict.

This Edict pushes a two-pronged approach: one aimed at petitioners and the other targeting brethren who interact with them. Petitioners will undergo thorough background investigation. The brethren, on the other hand, will be handed new and heavier responsibilities.

Aside from the existing requirements, petitioners must submit NSO-certified birth certificates. They must secure Police, NBI, and Court clearances to prove that they have no pending case. For PNP, BFP, and BJMP personnel, clearance from the legal service, and IAS or counterpart offices will be sought. For AFP personnel, JAGO clearance will be required. Proof of income (in the form of ITR – Income Tax Returns) will also be required to determine the petitioners’ financial capability to support their future masonic endeavors. Government employee will need to submit Ombudsman Clearance.

For brethren entrusted with the

processing of petitioners, the edict enumerates the responsibilities added to the existing ones. Among these is the mandatory reading of the corresponding Edict to petitioners by the Master of the lodge concerned. Another is the written deposition of second line signatories, committing to provide lifetime guidance and good advice to the petitioner they vouch for.

In my visits and consultations with the brethren, I sadly learned that petitioners had been subjected to maltreatment, financial whacking, and other forms of abuse. This is despicable and absolutely not acceptable. To correct this malpractice, petitioners will be required to report to the respective lodges not more than four times during their petition period. This will be for orientation, first degree conferral, second degree conferral, and third degree conferral only. It shall be prohibited to subject petitioners to solicitations, as well as to require them to report to perform errands and other personal services. Acts outside of accepted protocols in existing Masonic rites that cause physical injury or pain or that constitute hazing as defined in the Anti-Hazing Law of the Philippines are not only banned in our Craft but will be prosecuted in accordance with law. Penalties for prohibited acts against petitioners will be imposed ranging from suspension to expulsion.

With equal vigilance, we will reinforce the West Gate from within.

This we intend to achieve by providing ourselves with the necessary tools with which to hew and polish non-ashlar materials that may have somehow eluded quality control.

The tools come in the form of the Masonic Penal Code for which a corresponding Edict will be issued. The Code enumerates and defines all Masonic offenses and provides for the appropriate and commensurate Masonic penalty for each of them, ranging from reprimand, suspension to outright expulsion.

To address the deteriorating quality of our members, the Masonic Internal Affairs Office (MIAO) will be created by virtue of another Edict. The creation of the MIAO complements the promulgation of the Masonic Penal Code.

Take note, brethren, that while this office may sound like the purring of a kitten, it has the fangs and claws of a tiger. It is the masonically improved version of the Office of the Ombudsman. It will *motu proprio* or in cooperation with the blue lodges' disciplinary machinery investigate all cases of unmasonic conduct and recommend appropriate penalty where warranted. Erring and unworthy Master Masons who bring dishonor and embarrassment to our ancient and honorable fraternity will be weeded out without delay.

With the MIAO in place, any aggrieved worthy brother can file charges for unmasonic conduct against erring Master Masons even any-

mously, provided that the accusations or allegations can be verified from existing records, documents or testimonial evidence.

The MIAO will also be authorized to file, *motu proprio* or on its own, charges for unmasonic conduct against erring brethren, without having to go through the endless, costly, and time-consuming technical procedures that are being exploited by unworthy masons in order to foil, obstruct and frustrate the efforts of aggrieved brethren. Of course, the systems of conciliation and alternative dispute resolution will remain in place and will in fact be strengthened.

Make no mistake about our resolve to cleanse our ranks. They who sneaked through the West Gate while the Tyler was distracted or the lodge's lights were dimmed shall be purged.

To address the perennial backlog of cases pending before the Grand Lodge and the blue lodges, Masonic Tribunals at the District level will be created by virtue of another Edict. The District Tribunal will replace the Trial Commission in the blue lodges.

Guarding the Lamp

The second reform agendum is to guard the lamp. A dark house is a house in disarray where brotherly love cannot flourish, neither can truth prevail. It can offer no relief to a world engulfed in darkness.

So, to brighten up our lodges, we will not only light up lamps but let

in the sunshine. Masonic education will take a paramount place in our program of action. In the age of the internet, where information is just a click away and news travels with the speed of light, there is no excuse for Masonic education not to reach a brother whenever and wherever he may be. Masonic education will be made available to all for free.

Moreover to guarantee that we project the correct public image for our Craft, an Edict will be issued to prescribe Masonic Demeanor and Protocol. The Monitor will also be reconstructed. This should eliminate confusion and ensure uniformity in ceremonies and rituals, personal conduct, and appearance. Likewise an Edict will be promulgated laying down the protocols governing the turn-over of DDGMs. A separate Edict will regulate the production, sale and use of Masonic emblems and accouterment, and the accreditation of suppliers thereof.

To keep the Masonic fire fiercely burning, priority will be on broadening the scope of our intensive Masonic education programs. We will democratize our materials by maximizing opportunities offered by information technology. We will make available online and in hard copies all handbooks on rituals, primers on Edicts, lectures and reference materials for all qualified brethren to access. This dual approach is expected to fast track the Masonic learning process as more brethren study collectively and

individually at the same time.

To address the current paucity of qualified instructors, we shall task the IMES to train a cadre of instructors. In line with this, an Edict will be issued to rationalize the number of JGLs and DGLs to maximize efficiency and optimize effectiveness.

Newly-appointed SGL, JGLs, and DGLs will undergo intensive training to enable them to conduct IMES classes in their respective areas of responsibility. Accordingly, IMES classes will be conducted by Regional IMES Offices that will be established. IMES will be administratively and financially audited regularly.

Our aim in democratizing Masonic education is not to impose dogma but to encourage free-flowing discussion on Masonic topics and other subjects in the arts and sciences in a harmonious, brotherly atmosphere. Our goal is not as much to imprint knowledge as to nurture it, to internalize the Masonic lessons and not simply commit them to memory. We must draw out the artists and scientists among the brethren.

We will therefore encourage the brethren to write in-depth philosophical treatises. We will revive the brethren' interest in esoteric studies. And, within the limits of our cable-tow, we will support or sponsor scientific research and the application of established scientific studies by Filipino scientists. IMES will be tasked to spearhead this new thrust in Masonic education.

We will not sing the same song nor dance to the same tune. But we will calmly listen; we will speak in the same tone and act in the same rhythm so that as we shine our lights to the outside world, they will be clear and bright as day.

Guarding the Ballot

Finally, guarding the ballot. This is perhaps the most contentious of the three reform agenda. It is also the most critical. We have ample experience on how elections ought not to be conducted, and yet we seem to always fall short of solving them. Edict 268 was intended to address election-related issues. But even before it could run its course, it was revised.

A new Edict will be promulgated to eliminate the opportunities that tempt candidates to engage in electioneering. This perennial problem must be solved. We will not rest until we get it right.

We will level the playing field. Vote buying in all its forms will be prevented. This new Edict will rip off the underlying motive of candidates and reduce electioneering into a futile exercise. We will do this by a system whereby during the ANCOM only three names will be drawn from among the candidates for Junior Grand Warden selected at the multi-district level. The three candidates whose names have been

drawn will then be voted upon by the electorate. All brethren who, by virtue of their position or stature, are entitled to vote must be present at the ANCOM and vote. Failure to do so without justifiable cause shall be punished.

To liberate us from the tyranny of numbers, we will require that only brethren who have attended no less than six stated meetings prior to the election of lodge lights or casting of ballots for petitioners will be allowed to vote. The term “member in good standing” will be redefined accordingly.

Moreover, innovative practices will be introduced to improve our electoral system. In the website of the Grand Lodge, a spot will be dedicated for candidates to air their agenda for all brethren to consider and comment on, and ask questions that concerned candidates may respond to. This will mitigate the need for candidates to travel to the different lodges to expound on their agenda.

We need to get this right. For there can be no more painful tragedy than for honorable men to be led by one who falls short of their standard of honor.

No edifice, humble or grand, can stand on a cornerstone of rough ashlar. Those who have a gluttonous greed for glory or nothing more than selfish lust to lead must never be allowed to take a single step to the Grand East.

The Foundation of Relevance

Let us direct our attention and resources to a grave concern hobbling our craft – the issue of Relevance. How do we regain the relevance of Philippine Masonry in our country today amid the challenges of a global community?

History tells us that in the past Freemasonry attained preeminence in the world stage by pioneering in social engineering through advocates in democratic governance, public education, health care, equal opportunity economics, and by promoting the arts and sciences. My brethren, we cannot just sit on the laurels earned by such unequaled Master Masons as Dr. Jose Rizal and Gat Andres Bonifacio. We need to find and reestablish our place under the Philippine sun during our time and beyond.

Essential to attaining relevance in society is the ability to identify problems and offering, facilitating or providing solutions that adequately address those challenges. Attaining and sustaining that ability, as individual Master Masons and as a Fraternity, is indeed daunting. More so for one entrusted with the duty to preside from the Grand East over the consolidation and revitalization of the brethren so that they may shine bright enough for our people to notice, appreciate, follow, and eventually respect.

Doubtless, relevance can hardly

be achieved in a year. It may even elude us in our lifetime. For relevance is a goal of generations. Nevertheless, it is a journey that demands to be commenced NOW.

Philippine public education, particularly primary and secondary levels, has been falling below global standards. Health care is widely unavailable, and where available, is beyond the reach of the poor who need it most. And climate change is blasting us in the face.

Therefore, as our way of imparting Masonic light outside of our lodges and to attach relevance to our civic duties we are reorienting the thrust of our outreach projects to public education as mandated in our masonic constitution. We will veer away from myopic or shallow projects so as to put to maximum use our meager resources. We will invest our assets in the education of children in our public schools.

Toward this end, we have partnered with Exempli Gratia Foundation, an NGO that runs the “Library in a Box” project which provide compact libraries to public schools. We will provide the structures, basically container vans, and maintain them. The Exempli Gratia Foundation will keep it supplied with books. This project will be implemented nationwide, with each district tasked to sponsor at least one library. Capable lodges are encouraged to sponsor as many libraries as they can afford. Existing education-oriented projects will be

sustained and/or expanded.

Meanwhile, there is no more denying climate change. It is now the overarching challenge for the whole of humanity. Super-typhoon “Yolanda” roused us to the harrowing tragedy of ill-preparedness. In the face of this colossal challenge our Fraternity must present a robust response. Hence, we are going to revisit existing guidelines on projects related to Disaster Relief for our families and our communities and make them more responsive.

In the area of health care, we will review all existing health-related projects of the blue lodges and appendant bodies and study how we can extend and expand their benefits to the neediest of our countrymen. But first we will put in place a system whereby the health care needs of our brethren and their families are effectively addressed. While it will be too ambitious at this point for us in the Philippine jurisdiction to follow the example of our brethren in the United State of America who maintain a network of hospitals, it is never too ambitious for u to contemplate on and prepare ourselves for such a grand undertaking in the future.

Admittedly, the projects we are and will be embarking on in relation to these problems are insignificantly minute drops in a huge bucket. Neither for a second do we delude ourselves that we offer the only solution nor that we can solve them alone. For at best, we can set the example in the hope that in time people will no-

tice and be inspired to embark on the same, if not better, track. This is how we aim to become relevant to Philippine society. This is how we hope to be remembered and revered.

This is why our reform agenda put premium on selection, conduct and demeanor, masonic education, election, and on projects that are timely, with long-term benefits for broader constituencies. This is why we place so much emphasis on rebuilding trust with which to reenergize the brethren and revitalize our Fraternity.

An inspired mason builds, on land and in the hearts of men, edifices from which generations derive shelter, succor, and solace. And though his name be forgotten, his legacy lives on.

Rekindling the Kalaw Initiative

Sometime in the first half of 2014, after the assumption of Pope Francis to the Holy See and noting the pontiff's liberal views, VW Jay Miguel of the TGR team, on my instructions, drafted a letter to the Holy Father requesting clarification of the Catholic Church's stand with regard to Freemasonry. With the draft letter in hand, I sought the counsel of one of our most brilliant Past Grand Masters, the MW Reynato S. Puno. Elated, the MW Puno informed me that there actually had been previous dialogues undertaken by the MW-GLP with the Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines.

MW Puno cited the February

23, 1968 letter of the MW Teodoro V. Kalaw, Jr. to Manila Archbishop Rufino Cardinal Santos requesting His Eminence for a reconsideration of the Catholic Church's position on Freemasonry in the Philippines. Cardinal Santos endorsed the letter of MW Kalaw Jr. to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), whose Administrative Council subsequently formed a committee of Catholic experts to meet representatives of Philippine Freemasons in a dialogue over the issue. The Catholic experts came out from the dialogue with positive views on Freemasonry in the Philippines and submitted favorable recommendations to the Holy See.

However, the Vatican's reply was worded in general terms and gave no categorical concession. It decided the issue based on a circular letter dated July 18, 1974, whereby it declares that "excommunication applies only to those persons who are members of associations who militate against the Church."

MW Puno suggested that we invite to an informal meeting the Most Reverend Archbishop Emeritus Oscar V. Cruz, who is a widely recognized authority on canon law. Accordingly, MW Puno, VW Armando G. Cazzola, VW Jay Miguel, and myself met the Most Reverend Cruz on November 3, 2014, where the proposed letter to His Holiness Pope Francis was discussed. This was followed by another informal meeting on November 14, 2014, where it was agreed that representatives from the CBCP and the MWGLP meet to dis-

cuss the proposed letter.

On December 3, 2014, the CBCP panel, led by the Most Reverend So-crates Villegas, met with their MWGLP counterparts, headed by MW Reynato Puno, at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City. During this meeting, the CBCP encouraged the MWGLP to proceed with the letter addressed to Pope Francis through the CBCP. MW Reynato Puno subsequently prepared and signed the letter addressed to the CBCP. He also drafted another letter addressed to Pope Francis, which was signed by MWGM Alan Purisima.

The letter essentially requested the Vatican to unequivocally declare Philippine Freemasonry compatible with the Catholic Church and the brethren not subjects of excommunication. We are cautiously optimistic that our request will be granted. Meanwhile, we have also requested the CBCP to assign a chaplain who will celebrate Mass at the GLP (i.e., Plaridel Masonic Temple) every Sunday at the start of my term.

Let Us Journey On

My worthy brothers, the great responsibility of stewarding our noble Fraternity from the Grand Oriental Chair weighs heavy on my shoulders. The reforms we endeavor to achieve and the vision we seek to attain are immense, considering the limited time within which to accomplish them. Indeed, it is heartening to note that RW Voltaire T. Gazmin supports these reforms and has signified his intention to continue pursuing them

during his term. Many Past Grand Masters have likewise given their backing and encouragement. But, despite these and the long and meticulous preparations, the many challenges we confront still seem insurmountable.

The reforms and programs we have laid out for our journey toward our vision of a revered Fraternity are nothing less than revolutionary. Therefore, resistance is only to be expected. But with reason, patience, and understanding, we can reverse even the most obstinate opposition. The real threat to our reforms and vision is indifference – an indifference smug in the thought that all these will be just for a year like any other.

And so I call on all of you, my worthy brethren, to join me in realizing our common dream for our beloved Fraternity. These are the reforms we long have longed for. This is the vision we for years have yearned for. Together, let us journey on. Together, let us take cautious yet harmonious steps on the rough and rugged road in man's long journey to better himself and thus earn his fellowman's respect and the blessing of the Great Architect of the Universe. Together, let us infuse more vigor to our mystic ties as we endeavor to achieve relevance for our Craft. Together, let us earn, by our deeds, the reverence of our people for our Fraternity.

Join me in realizing our vision of a Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine Freemasonry. Let this be our commitment. Let this be our covenant.

May the Great Architect of the Universe bless us all. ❖

In the Shade of the Square and Compass

The Square and Compass have always loomed large in his life. As a child, he received his first formal education literally under the shadow of the Square and Compass. He attended kindergarten classes on the ground floor of Isarog Lodge No. 32 in his hometown, Naga City. He was awed by the reverence with which his teacher referred to the dignified gentlemen who met on the second floor. It is little wonder then that as he grew older, he was inexorably drawn towards the Craft.

His Humble Beginnings

Our Grand Master was born on February 25, 1958 in a quiet neighborhood in Naga City. He is the third son in a brood of six boys and two girls. His father, the late Tomas Milanay Rentoy I, was a former patrolman in the Naga City Police Department, who decided to turn in his badge and join the more sedentary teaching profession so he could be near his wife and their growing family. His father was a strict disciplinarian.

Explaining that he had nothing to bequeath his sons but his good name, he had them all named after himself. His mother, Minda Gontang Rentoy, was the typical dutiful wife and loving mom who stayed home to take care of her children.

Family and close friends fondly call him “Adit”, (short for the Bicol word “Sadit”), a term of endearment meaning “the little one.” He must have been a cute little baby boy to deserve that.

To support himself in college, he worked as a lowly utility man in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Naga City from 1978 to 1981. Midway through college, he heard about the newly established academy where struggling college kids could actually earn a living by studying to be police officers. He took and passed the stringent entrance examinations and screening. In June 1981, Adit discarded his civilian clothes, had his long curly hair shaved and donned the uniform of a police cadet at the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA).

His Years in the Police Service

That was how Adit, the former utility man, the son of a teacher and former local policeman, found himself marching among the proud graduates of the PNPA “MAGITING” Class of 1983. He then went on to serve the Philippine National Police (PNP) with honor and distinction, leaving an impressive trail of achievements in all his assignments.

As any other young Police Lieutenant fresh from the Academy, he sought and was granted assignment to remote police units. This was how he came to be, up until then, the youngest Station Commander the Dipaculao Police Station in Aurora province ever had. Back in those days, taking the long, dusty bus ride to Dipaculao was an adventure in itself.

It was in Dipaculao where he displayed his strong sense of heroism when in 1986 he was wounded and almost lost an arm in an encounter with several communist terrorists. He was brought to the Camp Crame Hospital for treatment. Before his wound could even heal, he left his hospital bed and returned to his station. General Renato S. De Villa, the then Chief, PC/ Director General, INP, recognizing his courage and heroism, personally intervened and had him transferred to his home province of Camarines Sur to recuperate. He served in various capacities his father’s former unit, the Naga City Police. He also served in nearby insurgent-infested towns.

Toward the 90’s, his leadership and financial management skills came to the fore as he rose in rank and position in the PNP, holding several assignments at the PNP Finance Service. It was while assigned in the Finance Service that he was admitted into the graduate program of the world-renowned Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

As a Police Superintendent in the mid-90s, he held various key positions. For several years, he served as Regional Chief of the Comptrollership Division of Police Regional Office 8 in Samar. He also held the position of Acting Director of the PNP Regional Training School 5 in Legazpi City.

In 2006, he was reassigned to the PNP Directorate for Comptroller-ship as Chief of the Budget Division. He later moved on to become its Executive Officer and consequently was promoted to the star rank of Chief Superintendent in 2010.

In October 2008, while assigned in the Directorate for Comptroller-ship, then Senior Superintendent Tomas Rentoy III got embroiled in what came to be known as the “Euro Generals Case”.

While not among the senior officers who made the now infamous trip to Russia, the case nevertheless provided Adit with the opportunity to prove his mettle as a Master Mason and his loyalty to the police organization.

In the final two years of his police service, he was assigned as Chief

of the PNP Supervisory Office for Security and Investigation Agencies (SOSIA), the office that supervises all security agencies in the country.

He retired from the police service last year and shortly thereafter was elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Philippine National Police Academy Alumni Association, Inc.

The Achiever

Adit has many “firsts” on his list. He is the first PNPA alumnus to graduate on a scholarship from the prestigious Asian Institute of Management. He is the first in his class to earn the much-coveted star rank of Chief Superintendent in the PNP. And he is the first PNPA graduate to finish a course at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at the Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Another first is the holding of the ANCOM of our M.W. Grand Lodge on April 23-25, 2015 in Legazpi City, in which he was installed Grand Master; this event actually began in the Naga City ANCOM held three years ago, when he was catapulted by the brethren to the much-coveted position of Junior Grand Warden.

His sterling leadership quality and outstanding management skills earned for him numerous awards and accolades through the years. Among these are the Medalya ng Kagitingan, Kasanayan, Papuri, Paglilingkod and Kabutihang Asal. He is also a recipi-

ent of numerous Certificates of Appreciation and Letters of Commendation.

His outstanding performance and competence was duly recognized when he was adjudged as the Best Training Director of the Year, awarded by PNTI in 2000 and as the Best PCO of the Year for Administration at the Regional Level during the 15th PNP Anniversary Celebration in 2005.

Aside from the various police service eligibilities he has obtained over the years as a police officer, he is also a CESO VI eligible.

The Worthy Brother

He was entered, passed and raised at Cosmos Lodge No. 8 in 1992. He became the Charter Master of the Grand Sec MW Reynold S. Fajardo Memorial Lodge No. 383 in 2010. He was Worshipful Master of Camarines Sur Lodge No. 382 the following year. He is a plural member of San Marcelino Lodge No. 380.

Moreover, his Masonic activities extend outside of the blue lodges as he actively involved himself in appendant bodies. He is the immediate Past Illustrious Potentate of Mabuhay Shriners Philippines; Past President of Maginoo Shriners Club; Member, Pilipinas York Rite Bodies; Charter Member, Davao York Rite College; Member, Munoz Bodies, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite; Member, Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay of the Republic of the Philippines; and

President Emeritus of the PNPA BEST Square and Compass Club.

In 2010, he was awarded the Distinguished Mason in Government during the celebration of the centennial of the founding of the MWGLP.

On March 18, 2015, he was conferred the Honorary Legion of Honor by the Supreme Council of the Order of DeMolay Philippines.

Many lodges, both here and abroad, have bestowed on him honorary membership.

The lodges under the Philippine jurisdiction that have welcomed him as their honorary member include the following: Gregorio Calit Memorial Lodge No. 154, Diffun Masonic Lodge No. 317, Norberto S. Amaranto Lodge No. 358, Jacques DeMolay Memorial Lodge No. 305, Lake Lanao Lodge No. 227, Sanchez Mira Lodge No. 233, Kutang Bato Lodge No. 110, Makahambus Lodge No. 315, Sta. Rosa Lodge No. 297, and Laoag Lodge No. 71.

The Masonic bodies abroad that have adopted him as honorary member include Park Lodge No. 516 under the jurisdiction of the M.W. Grand Lodge of New York and Aahmes Shriners Temple in Livermore, California.

He has fully imbibed the virtues of Freemasonry and incorporated them into his philosophy of life.

The members of his own family have also involved themselves actively in the Masonic Fraternity or Family. His wife, Sister Nancy, is active in Job's Daughters International. His son Russel is himself a Master Mason,

an active member of Grand Sec MW Reynold S. Fajardo Memorial Lodge No. 383. His daughter Aimee is Past Bethel Honored Queen, Past Miss Philippines Job's Daughter, and Past Royal Matron of Lily of the Valley Court, Order of the Amaranth. Athena, his youngest daughter, is Guide of Bethel 22, Job's Daughters International.

Indeed, the virtues of Masonry guide him in his relations with his other children, Mark Anthony and Ryan John.

A Reformer's Journey to the Grand East

He has come a long way since the day he knocked on the West Gate of Cosmos Lodge No. 8. His journey has taken him to the entire length of our archipelago and overseas. A disturbing trend that he witnessed during his visits to various lodges moved him to take the road to the Grand East.

He observed the loosening of the guard on the West Gate. It pained him to see our Craft slide down the road of college fraternities, where neophytes are brutalized in a distorted sense of brotherly welcome. He saw the lamp in the lodges flicker. He was alarmed to see the rise in the number of brethren who are proficient in the rituals and ceremonies but deficient in the practice of the social and moral virtues, upon which Masonry is founded. He saw blue lodges and masonic clubs

compete with snobbish civic organizations in undertaking myopic and shallow projects for photo-ops purposes. And he saw the ballot debased.

But the memory of those grand gentlemen who met on the second floor of his old kindergarten school reminded him of how his teacher held the in high esteem. How, in those days, being a master mason was in itself a badge of honor. So, he held on, his faith in the nobility of our ancient craft unshaken, his love for the brethren undiminished. He held on, determined to lead the brethren back on the right track.

To prepare himself for the arduous journey to the Grand East, he intensified his consultations with the brethren. He sought the counsel of the Past Grand Masters (PGMs). Thus evolved a vision drawn from the brethren's shared sentiments, the vision he had when he was but a little child – Philippine Masonry revitalized, relevant and, most of all, revered.

Having crystallized the vision, he then moved on to concretize it. He described the steps he took to do this in the inaugural address he delivered at the Ibalong Centrum for Recreation in Legazpi City on April 25, 2015.

Wrapping It Up

The way from kindergarten desk to the Grand Oriental Chair was long indeed. That little boy who played under the shadow of the square and compass now walks among the men

on the upper floor of the Isarog Lodge building – the men his teacher regarded with much respect.

But despite all his achievements and successes in life, he really has not changed much. He remains approachable as ever.

Nor has his zeal as a devotee of Our Lady of Penafrancia waned.

And, yes, he is still an avid golfer.

Call or text him any day or night, and should his phone be busy as is often the case now, you can rest assured he'll call you back. Approach him with a problem, big or small, and he will receive you with a helping hand. He listens. Ah, he even sings – very well!

The life he has so far lived is now legend. The rest of it is history in the making.

We are lucky witnesses to, as well as privileged participants in, revolutionary reforms to our ancient craft in this grand jurisdiction.

Fired up by our common vision of Freemasonry revered by society, we should extend to our incumbent Grand Master, MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, our active assistance and sympathetic support toward the successful implementation of our Grand Lodge's program of reforms, with particular focus on Guarding the West Gate, Guarding the Lamp, and Guarding the Ballot.

Toward this noble goal, let us give our unqualified commitment to and sign our covenant with our Grand Master for Masonic year 2015-2016. ❖



Grand Installation's Memorable Moments

Photos by Bro. Edwin Calayag

Incoming GM Tomas Rentoy III came with his wife, Sis. Nancy, who is now bent on helping her hubby for the new job up in the Grand Oriental Chair.

Bros and guests get ready for the Grand installation at the spacious Ibalong Centrum (left). Incoming Deputy Grand Master Voltaire Gazmin (right) and Incoming Senior Grand Warden Abraham Tolentino (below, left) take to their respective stations.





The Grand Deacons escort PGM Rudyardo Bunda, Grand Treasurer, (left) and other PGMs into the hall and up to the stage. VW Alex Madamba, Incoming Assistant Grand Secretary, (Right, 3rd from left) and VW Noel Rosal (3rd from left) huddled with other incoming grand line officers before the rite. The Grand Masters' Ladies. (below)





Then Incoming GM, RW Tomas Rentoy III, solemnly rests his hands on the Holy Bible (above) before taking his obligations. PGMs and visiting dignitaries pay respect to newly-installed MW Rentoy (below).



So just how successful is your Lodge?

By Bro. Frank Stevens

How can you decide how successful is your Lodge? By what yardstick can you measure it? By the number of members that attend every month?

Yes, that may be a good indicator, but how many members do you have who pay their Annual Dues but never attend even though they live within an easy travelling distance?

A few years ago, I was seated in the GL Canteen with some other frequent users of this lost and lamented facility, and a group of brethren arrived from Cavite and joined us. They asked each of us which lodge we attended and if it was successful. One elderly Brother from Bagumbayan Lodge replied “Well, 10 Grand Masters came from my Lodge!”

That is, indeed, an indication of a strong, united and successful Lodge!

How many Past Masters attend your Lodge every month?

The important point is discover why they no longer attend. Is it because they no longer feel the enthusiasm for the Craft that they did when earning the support of their brethren? I have often heard it said that unless a man has to struggle and overcome many obstacles to reach his prize, then he does not appreciate it and considers it to have little value. And, sad to say, I have seen several Brothers that,

having achieved their ambition to sit in the East or to serve as DGLs, then they just disappear and it is a shame that we should lose good members because they become Masters after three or four years after initiation. I have also seen Brethren lost because of jealousy, back stabbing and politicking. And certainly that is a lack of Masonic principles. Or is it simpler than that? The Master failed the lodge by failing to lead and inspire the brethren? Did he allow petty disputes to interfere with the harmony of the Lodge? Was he overly strict and stifled discussion? Or was there a faction within the Lodge that decided not to support him? The Past Masters should not wait for a disaster to happen before they intervene and whisper wise counsel to the Master. It must be remembered that many of our members have never held a management position and although there are natural born leaders, the majority of us have to learn management skills and the hardest and longest way is by self education – otherwise known as trial and error!

In many respects, a Lodge is the same as a business. Unless it expands, then it will die. A Lodge that has no petitioners is in a dangerous situation that must be rectified. We do not advertise and so personal contact is used. In The

United Grand Lodge of England, the most successful way to find new members is to have an annual Ladies Night when non-Masons and their wives are invited. When these visitors see for themselves the fellowship and harmony that is evident between all the members, they often want to join. We have a ready made opportunity in our annual installations and maybe if we make more of an effort to encourage visitors to attend, then it may pay off but the ceremony must run to a schedule and not be overly long with boring speeches; otherwise, it will have the opposite effect. Another custom is that the SW will contact any brother who did not attend the monthly meeting and report to the Lodge at the next meeting. Sad to say, I know of a Brother who was a regular attending member and he stopped attending. After 3 months, the Master contacted the Brother to find out why, only to be told that he was taken ill, hospitalized, died and had already been buried and the family didn't know how to contact the Lodge. Could that happen in your Lodge? I know of some where it could easily happen!

Brother is the most important term of address. But sadly, it is not used enough. When Lodges go to a restaurant for fellowship, the terms Very Worshipful, Worshipful and the insulting and degrading "Worshi" are said for all and sundry to hear. When in the Lodge, it is right and proper that Masonic titles are used but when the Lodge has closed, Brother is the only form of address to use no matter what the circumstances. And you will find Past Grand Masters are also in agreement. If I am wrong, show me in the Constitution

where I am wrong.

Before the 3 lights are installed, they are required to pass a test of their competency but how strict are these tests because I have seen many lights who cannot open or close the lodge without referring to the monitor or self-produced notes. This raises a number of points. Why are lodges electing members as lights when they are not proficient in even a simple ritual? A brother may be a competent wayfarer or seafarer man but it doesn't mean he can carry out the duties of the Master. Why are Lodge Inspectors, DGLs and DDGMs signing certificates of competency when the candidate is not fit? They are performing an important duty and have been appointed by the Grand Master. It is an important responsibility to discharge the duties to the best of their abilities and help to maintain standards within the GLP.

If they want to be popular, they should join another organisation that does not have exacting standards. It is good to see the Grand Master has organised training sessions. I hope something will be done to improve lodges' performance in investigating members. There is little point in having inspiring rituals during initiation when the candidate is not suitable. We have too many of them already! I hope the Grand Master will now complete the control of Men of Tyre so that thugs cannot continue to embarrass respectable Masons with senseless bloodletting that has been the trademark of so many lodges and still is in some!

I like many of the Grand Master's ideas. Certainly, our trial procedure needs to be looked at. I have always felt that a

brother who does not defend himself against charges by not attending, should be given a chance. When he does not defend himself, then that's fine and no problem. But if a brother feels the charges are unjustified and is embarrassed by being the subject of disciplinary action, then having wise counsel from a brother who he does not know could be beneficial to both parties.

The new Edict 237 is a concern to me and I have no axe to grind regarding such a business. As I see it, a voluntary code should be published and brethren requested not to trade in Masonic accou-

trements with non-members.

I would point out that the GLP does NOT hold the copyright of Masonic Symbolology; so they do not have the right to control its use.

Why is GLP now controlling a Brother's right to earn a living by manufacturing and trading in his own property?

Why is a deposit of P20,000 required to answer any violation of the edict when it states that the penalty is Reprimand in Open Lodge, Suspension or Expulsion? No fines are cited.

I personally feel that this is a step too far in control of Masons. ❖

Feature

WHAT MASONIC MATURITY IS TO ME

By Jose B. Abejo, PM

As I approach my sixtieth year as a Master Mason, I enjoy that feeling of Masonic fulfillment of my life as I recall my relationship with brethren I have looked up to as mature Masons.

I call to mind some brethren whom I have been associated with in the Craft during my lifetime, brethren like Conrado Benitez, Ray Beltran, Damaso Tria, Ildefonso Reyes, my dad Teofilo Abejo Sr., Benito Maneze Sr., Rudyardo Bunda, Simeon Datumanong, Cesar Virata, Danilo Angeles, Raymond Wilmarth, and so many low-profiled and simple brethren who

have deeply touched my life.

What is "Masonic maturity" to me? Must a Mason be blessed with proficiency and talent so as to be able to memorize and lecture the ritual from cover to cover? Must he be affluent? Must he have been an office-bearer of a Lodge or the Grand Lodge? Must he have shown leadership in the charitable projects of the Lodge? Or must he have been the life during Masonic Harmony or social fellowships? Emphatically, I would reply, "**None of the above personal qualities would be a major factor.**"

We are proud of our motto that good men knock at the door of Masonry to be better men – these are good men who believe in the Supreme Being, of mature age, and of good morals.

After undergoing tedious investigation or enquiry by the Lodge, a qualified petitioner is voted on by the Lodge. He then travels through the three degrees of the Craft.

In the beginning he learns about charity and benevolence. Then his attention is called on his duties to God, to himself, to his neighbor, to his country, and to the sovereign of the land that affords him protection. He learns the excellences of character like secrecy, fidelity, and obedience.

Further, he is instructed to encourage industry, to reward merit, to supply the wants and relieve the necessities of worthy brethren, and to steadily persevere in the practice of every commendable virtue.

To finally complete his character as a Mason, he must make deeper and more intense his attitude toward his brethren and his concern for them. He should extend his hand to a brother, for this is a pledge of true brotherhood. He should travel with his brother through dangers and difficulties. He should neither injure a brother nor allow him to be injured by others. He should protect the character of a brother not only in the latter's presence but in his absence as well. This is, to me, true and real Masonic brotherhood.

When do I consider a Mason to be “masonically mature”?

I consider a Mason to be “masonically mature” when and only when he has learned and understood, as well as truly practices, these Masonic teachings.

On the other hand, it has been observed that, in spite of their seniority in Masonry, or their educational attainment, or their intellectual advantage, some brethren still do not seem to understand the great principles and timeless teachings of Freemasonry. Perhaps their inborn character cannot fathom and absorb those principles and teachings in our ritual, and they consistently refuse to learn them.

A distinguished American writer, MW Harry Leroy Haywood, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan, wrote, **“The liar and the ignoramus may somehow get into Masonry, but Masonry will not get into them.”**

If you come to think of it, such Masons are actually important in our Craft since they serve as models of what a Mason should not be.

We still have the rest of our lives to examine ourselves if we are really happy and satisfied being Masons – if we are mature Masons. If we are mature Masons, then we are ready to close our eyes eternally and face the Judge Supreme, to whom we can declare that we have loved our fellowmen as much as we have loved Him.

That, my brethren, is what **Masonic maturity** is to me. ❖

Free from Restraint

By Brother Rolando S. Bala

For more than 50 years now, I have been a member of Cabanatuan Lodge No. 53, the mother of all Nueva Ecija lodges, which celebrated its 95th founding anniversary on September 20, last year. All those years have enabled my attentive ear to compile stories which brethren tell among themselves when they are free from restraint. Here are some of the stories I have compiled.

Bragging Rights

Through the years, Cabanatuan Lodge 53 has earned numerous bragging rights, the most notable among which are as follows:

- It has produced four Grand Masters, namely, Clifford Bennett, Manue Q. Tinio, Vicente Orosa, and of course,, our beloved Danilo Dimaya Angeles (DDA). Of the four, only DDA is still living, earning the distinction of being the only living PGM of Lodge 53. Another trivia about Grand Secretary Angeles is that he startled the Masonic world when he was elected Junior Grand Warden on a pauper's budget, sleeping on newspapers as his mattress, after a simple repast contributed by his supporters. Such distinction made him a populist, a Lincolnian PGM.
- The translation of the Monitor into Tagalog, now considered as an elegant classic, was crafted through the common efforts of National Artist Lazaro Francisco, KAWIKA prexy Carlos Masters, M. Ferrer, and many other purists. This copyrighted masterpiece is the crown jewel of Lodge 53.
- Two of the Lodge's members, who served as its Masters, were the first Masons to render Decision in Tagalog. They are Associate Justice Cezar D. Francisco of the Court of Appeals and Judge Nathanael B. Grospe, when he was assigned at the Cabanatuan City Regional Trial Court. Judge Grospe later on was appointed and served as Associate Justice of the Sandiganbayan. (Nota bene: Supreme Court Associate Justice Gregorio Perfecto penned one decision in Tagalog years before, but he did not walk the Square. Cezar Peralejo translated the Civil Code of the Philippines into Tagalog, but likewise he is not of the Craft.)
- As the Mother Lodge, Cabanatuan 53 gave birth to so numerous lodges whose jurisdictions encompass the length and breadth of Nueva Ecija that Masonic and management issues compelled the Grand Lodge to divide District III into two, the North and the South.

- For almost a decade, Lodge 53 held the powers of the province of Nueva Ecija, in its hands -- in the hands, that is, of Doroteo M. Josen, the provincial treasurer; Lazaro D. Francisco, the provincial assessor; and Herminigildo Pascual, the provincial auditor. This triumvirate held the purse, the tax base, and the power to review expenditures of the province. Before their retirement, they were joined by Eduardo L. Josen, who was elected Governor. Many old-timers declared that this period was one of perspicacity, prosperity, and peace.

The Elitist Vapor

Our Masonic forebears, like teachers, affected eternity, because they know not when their influence would stop. That's from Henry Adams, who is also of the Craft.

"The lodge then was not airconditioned, quite unlike today. Nevertheless, uncomfortable though the brethren were, we enjoyed talking shop, swapping stories, because we were a band of few men. Remember the religious prejudice against the Craft, and this prejudice wormed into putative petitioners, intimidated them, and so there were fewer 'poor blind candidates at the door', or even at the secretary's table. For those who were already in, far be it that religious bias or undertones fragmented us; no, au contraire, it bound us tighter, like our cabletow. We felt that the air we breathed has the scented, elitist vapor denied to the profane."

That was Domingo Nicolas, who joined masonry during his youth, but is

now celebrated as a 50-year-uninterrupted member, and wears a tasseled golden apron for that distinction. He lives alone? No, he said, because I have memories as a companion.

To Kill Rizal Again

Another Brother recalled that soon after his raising, he was requested to be present at the December 30 vigil of Rizal monument at Plaza Lucero. "I arrived in the evening. I was surprised to see the big guns of the lodge already there, sipping coffee provided by Tata Teong (D.M. Josen)."

Rizal was in stone, clad in European clothes, facing north, his back against the Cabanatuan convent, at the façade of which is the marker memorializing the murder of Gen. Antonio Luna.

"You might be surprised, young man," ilustrado Saro Francisco, seeing my eyebrows arched in curiosity, "why we keep up this annual tradition. The frailes might have killed Rizal's body, but not his soul, for why would there be a monument for him whose flesh was pierced? Yet Rizal lives, no bullet could ever touch a hero's heart, and we, as all brethren withersoever dispersed, particularly brethren of Cabanatuan Lodge No. 53, should guard monuments in his honor to prevent any further attempt to kill his memories, his ideals, his heroism."

The light in the convent, theretofore brilliant and effusive, was put out.

Only then did the coffee energize my nerves.

A Ruffian in Irony

“My father was a Mason. My eldest brother, too. I supposed then that it would be easy sailing for me to be elected to receive the degrees in Lodge 53. I was right, at least in that aspect, for the reputation of my father and (blood) brother had preceded my petition. But I was wrong about the illusions of soft gloves in apprenticeship, passing and raising, for the ruffians who attended me suited actions to words, in a vigorous way, for me to keep inviolate the secrets of Freemasonry.”

The speaker was Efraim B. Grospe.

“But I took everything in stride. Afterwards, at raising of candidates, I was often requested to be one of the ruffians. Never, never did I abuse my role as a ruffian, erasing from my mind my experience when I personified our GMHA.”

All those present guffawed. It was an irony.

For in truth, Kuyang Em was the quintessence Jubilum of all travelers who were thereafter raised first in that canvas, and later at Mount Moriah.

Such mayhem, though, was not the *de rigueur* in Lodge 53. For that one can thank Tata Teong, Carling Ferrer, and all the elders, who admonished all the participants in the Trag that words of instructions whispered into the ear are more important than actions. A word about Kuyang Em: As far as I know, he is the only brother who was awarded lifetime membership posthumously.

But that is another story.

A House Divided

According to George S. Patton, the unconventional, controversial general of the US Army, if all are thinking alike, then somebody is not thinking.

There were occasions when brethren in Lodge 53 did not think alike. They differed, and their differences have gone haywire, creating a schism when otherwise there should be harmony.

One such incident erupted during my time,

The bone of contention centered in one word: higher. The Scottish and the York rites are higher bodies. Somebody objected to the use of the word higher.

The controversy turned ugly; names, brickbats were called, uttered.

It was then when Tata Saro stood up. He said he was happy to know that in the lodge, there are still thinking men, and that the controversy was confined with the lodge.

“Outside, the public see us as becalmed members, a beautiful image masons enjoyed since time immemorial. And why should we be bothered with the pettiness, or arrogance of a word? Is there a greater word than love, the affection that a brother has for another brother?” Tata Saro hammered on the words and spirit of Paul’s biblical injunctions contained in Philippians 2:1-4.

Love. That was the oil poured on troubled waters.

After that short speech, the lodge was peaceful again. Harmony reigned.

Don't Leave Your Manners at the Tyler

Tata Teong, in a manner of speaking, acquired Torrens title to the position of secretary of the lodge. He was indefatigable, scrupulous to a punctilio, kind and fair.

But let not his gentleness beguile you, for when it comes to Masonic conduct, he was most strict, a stern disciplinarian.

One time, at a stated meeting, we were inside the lodge, after it was duly tyled. Sammy Vigilia, in his inimitable way, cracked a joke. At the punchline, we erupted into an uninhibited glee, the noise of which reached Tata Teong. We checked ourselves, because Tata Teong glared, and approached us. With a pointed index finger, he rebuked us: "Have you left your urbanidad at the tyler? Where are your manners?"

Was that not too severe?

Well, judge for yourself. At the time, the Worshipful Master was seated in the East, already reading aloud the agenda.

Since then the WM's admonition for the brethren to comport themselves in due order and propriety while the lodge is tyled gained meaning, and so we behaved accordingly.

Like schoolchildren, we observed this rule.

Over, Marc Antony

As everybody knows, Julius Caesar

was murdered in the Senate of Rome. Casca, one of the conspirators, rhetorically asked "Of what meat does Caesar feed that he has grown so big?" And Brutus, who, with a poniard, struck the coup de grace (Et tu, Brute!), justified the betrayal by saying, "There are tears for his love, honor for his valor . . . but death for his ambition."

Marc Antony, the best friend of Caesar, was not at first allowed to speak, but the murderers later relented, and thus history was privileged to listen to a funeral oration, delivered at the portals of the Roman Senate and regarded as one of the world's best literary pieces, a Shakespearian classic, which has been studied and re-studied for its enduring quality.

"My heart lies there with Caesar, and I must pause till it come back to me." This line keeps ringing back in the corridors of time.

But in another time and clime, I heard a funeral oration just as brilliant, in contents and delivery, in cadence and chiaroscuro, in all its glory, performed on the graveside by the son of a tailor doing business in a southern town of Nueva Ecija.

Venue of that profound and moving eulogy was Palayan City.

It was many years ago. But I can recall its details as if it happened only yesterday.

Pedro Santos was an employee at the Assessor's office under Ka Saro. He lived on Parumog Street. He is the father of Elvira Santos, who later on became Miss Nueva Ecija. Unfortunately, Kuy-

ang Pedro succumbed to an ailment. There was some hullabaloo as to how our brother should be interred, but in the end, the family agreed to a Masonic ritual.

I don't know why I was present; I never attended any funeral before. I preferred to meet my acquaintances while they were on their feet. But probably I consented to attend the last rites for a brother to show my respect to Tata Genio and Naning Matias, who fetched me with the latter on the wheel, its motor running. Besides, I had never attended any Masonic ritual of this type before.

After the traditional acacia leaves, and flowers thrown at the grave, I walked away, my eyes moist, trying hard to deceive a brother next to me, who was a hard-boiled journalist, that I was not touched. For my father, Pedro C. Bala, admonished all his boys never to show tears in public.

"It must have been the onion in the sandwich that I am this way," I explained to my brod; for by then, I was in near tears. And my neighbor said, "Move over, buster, for I must have eaten the other half of that onion." He pulled out his perfumed hankies, and wiped his eyes.

The upstart (for he was very young) mason, who precipitated the betrayal of our lachrymal glands, was no other than DDA, shoehorned to his role, and who, later on, by sheer merit, went up to the highest rung of the Masonic ladder.

Mine Is a BMW

If for anything else, Kuyang Mario V. Calara, PM, never loses his elan, or his cool, on occasions when everybody else does.

One time, there was a Masonic affair at La Parilla. He must attend it because he was a participant in the program. Afraid of being late, he borrowed the ramshackle, old model jalopy of his neighbor. He had barely warmed his seat at the presidential table, when the hotel's p.a. requested that the owner of the jalopy return pronto to the parking lot. "Isn't that your car?" somebody asked, seeking to embarrass him. "Oh, no!" was Kuyang Mario's reply. "Mine is a BMW."

But he was right! The insignia of BMW, and only the insignia, was cleverly welded to the bowsprit of the car.

A Final Word

There are many more vignettes that abound at the Masonic temple on Del Pilar Street, snapshots of brethren and the venerable institution to which we belong. Indiscreet snapshots, indeed, to show of what stuff Cabanatuan Lodge No. 53 is made.

But in the meantime, I fold my tent, and like Abou Bou Adhem, walk away to try, gently, to vanish into the night. ❖

A Reflection

By Brother Eymard D. Eje

Magdiwang Lodge No. 238

Under Article VI C, Section 19 of our Constitution, the Worshipful Master charges us:

“One of your important privileges as a mason is that of accepting or rejecting all who may apply for the degrees or for membership. I wish to impress upon your mind an immense power for good or evil with which you are entrusted. The white ball, secretly cast by you, signifies your approbation of any candidate who may apply, while the black one, when cast by you, signifies that the candidate is unworthy for some reason known to you, and will have the same effect as though each member of this lodge were to cast one of them. Hence, how important it is that you should be extremely careful in depositing your ballot, always remembering that white balls elect and black reject. That ballot, my brother, is inviolably secret, and you are cautioned that to discuss or make known your ballot is one of the greatest of Masonic offenses. The ballot is never the proper place to exhibit

petty spite towards any individual within or without the lodge, and the ceremony attending the casting of a ballot is equivalent to a sacred promise to cast it in accordance with your obligation.”

The Constitution declares and so holds that our privilege in casting our ballot is an immense power entrusted to each and every mason. Hence, we are reminded that we should be extremely careful in depositing our ballot.

But, with due respect to our brethren, how do we really cast our ballot?

Do we look upon the candidate who was properly investigated? Or do we look upon the proposers, who are our brothers known to us?

We know that the candidate was properly investigated by a team carefully chosen by the Master, composed of our brethren believed to be with impeccable integrity. We know that a thorough investigation was conducted, and he was initially found to be worthy and well-qualified, thereby

concluding that he is a good man. We know that a favorable report was submitted to the Master.

Based on the report of the investigating team, we confidently assume that it would be fair in the south, clear in the west and bright in the east.

Nonetheless, we are still mandated to conduct balloting. Why? Why do we need to cast our ballot when the candidate was already investigated, found to be worthy and well-qualified, and a good man? What is the sense of balloting when there is already a favorable report made by the investigating team?

In reality, most of the time when we cast our ballot, we consider the proposers themselves and not the candidate. We look up to the proposers' attitude, conduct or performance in the lodge and not that of the candidate. We even consider the level of our tie with the proposers; how close are we to them as compared to the rest of the brethren. Or even the fact that the proposers had done something favorable to us in the past. And though sometimes we have reservations with the candidate, we just set them aside and then proceed to cast white.

But, have we ever thought - why is there a black cube? And why, sometimes, a black cube is cast?

It is the duty of a Mason "to

give every petitioner the benefit of a fair and intelligent use of the ballot. The upright man and Mason, true to the tradition of the Craft, would never allow personal spite or prejudice to influence his decision or his action."¹

Thus, if we have a personal spite against the petitioner, or even against the proposers, we should never use the ballot as a weapon to reject such a good man. We should always remember that the "ballot is an inviolable secret; that the ballot box is never the proper place to exhibit petty spite toward an individual; and that the balloting ceremony is equivalent to a sacred promise to cast the ballot in accordance with one's moral obligation and conscience."²

On the other hand, what happens when it is cloudy in the south, dark in the west and black in the east?

Second balloting is proposed, and, though it is prohibited by the Constitution,³ discussions begin. The brethren are even quick to react and give their piece. And because we do not want our brother to nurse a grudge against the brethren, we are immediately persuaded and re-cast white.

But, is it right? Is it proper?

Casting a black cube is neither a sin nor unmasonic. The act is not even condemnable.

It must be noted that “every Mason should protect the integrity and honor of his lodge against the acceptance of poor material.”⁴ Hence, a brother who casts a black cube is just performing his duty and may have reason or reasons to believe that the candidate is unworthy to receive the benefits of the Craft. He only wants to protect the lodge from unworthy petitioners; from petitioners who desire to benefit themselves from the noble name of our Craft.

If one has the right to choose the white ball, so does the other have the right to choose the black cube. One must respect the choice of the other.

Bear in mind that the system of Balloting was designed by our ancient brethren. A process where all brothers and fellows have done who have gone this way before. “Years of experience have taught us the wisdom of this law.” It is necessary not only because we are so mandated by the Constitution, but it is a positive duty of an upright Mason. Balloting is the only time when the rule of the majority shall not prevail. It is the only time when the youngest brother is as powerful as the Master of the lodge. And it is a proof that we are all indeed on the level.

And so, brethren, remember: The ballot is held most sacred

next to the Holy Bible.⁵ In exercising this privilege, we must do it with extreme caution but with fairness. Never allow personal spite upon the applicant or the proposers to influence our decision. Determine if the applicant will strengthen the Fraternity more than weaken it. *Notatum Dignum!* - the one to be elected or rejected is the applicant and not the proposers. Be objective. For all we know, the applicant maybe a diamond in the rough. After all, Freemasonry’s main function is to make good men better.

May the blessings of the GAOTU be upon us. ❖

¹ Masonic Demeanor and Proper Decorum In Lodge Meetings, Duties Regulations & Suggestions, p. 15;

² *Ibid.*

³ Article VI C, Section 21. If but one cube appears in the ballot box, the Master without declaring the result, shall at once order a second ballot for the purpose of correcting a possible mistake, which ballot shall be the last; but in no case, after the ballot has been had, shall any discussion be permitted in the lodge before the second ballot is had, nor shall the second ballot be postponed to another meeting of the lodge. Section 22. There shall be no discussion regarding an unfavorable ballot, and no member shall be required or allowed to divulge his vote upon a ballot for affiliation or for the degrees of Masonry, nor to assign reasons for such vote, if it be known, except for the Master for the purpose of correcting a mistake.

⁴ Masonic Demeanor and Proper Decorum In Lodge Meetings, Duties Regulations & Suggestions, *ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*



MCCCI MET ORTHOPEDICS DOCTORS FROM ALOHA SHRINER'S HOSPITAL

On 25th May 2015, MCCCI Medical Committee headed by Bro. Dr. Michael Z. Rivera with its members VW Benito K. Tan and VW Lucas Ty together with Mabuhay Shrine Temple representatives Noble Dr. Gene Bautista and Noble Chris Halford hosted a lunch meeting for Dr. Craig Ono and Robert Nemecheck, Orthopedics Doctors of Aloha Shriners Hospital with Dr. Juanito Javier and Dr. Jerome Sison of PGH Orthopedics Doctors.

According to Dr. Ono that the visitation of Aloha Shriners Orthopedics Doctors was made possible in coordination with the Department of Orthopedics of UP-PGH. Sharing of medical, surgical and rehabilitation practices are the main point of their visit to the Philippines. MCCCI, as partner of PGH was privileged to be invited to meet them. It was a good conversation that focuses on charitable performances based on functional task satisfying the needs of differently abled children in the society. MCCCI, as the oldest charity institution for crippled children in the Philippines received compliments for its continuing Medical and Surgical assistance. Dr. Ono agreed that whoever MCCCI patient aiming to become expert in Prosthetics and Orthotics can be trained at the Aloha Shriners Hospital for free in supports to the planned Proposed Masonic Children's Center. However, MCCCI must provide the transportation and subsistence allowance.

The Masonic Children's Orthopedic Ward at the PGH was visited on the next day by Dr. Ono and Dr. Nemecheck with their team.

A young lady named Ms. Regine Valdez (an MCCCCI patient in 1993) expressed her gratitude to MCCCCI Trustees in giving her life an amazing and promising future.



Regine P. Valdez : Words of Gratitude


I was born with a club foot (left foot), because of that, my mother thought that I won't live a normal life so she never stopped to seek for help for me to get healed. That's when she was introduced to Masonic Charities for Crippled Children. When I was 11 months old, my family and I travelled from Pical to Manila for my operation. We stayed at MCCC Mary Johnston Hospital until my foot was cured. Happily, we left the hospital at my age of 2, with both feet that can run and walk properly.

As I grow up, I was treated "normally", like I've never undergone any operation. And so my mom's dream for me was fulfilled. Now, I am already 20 years old and a 5th year college student. In March 2015, I will be graduating with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering.

Now, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to those people whom I believe has helped me reach where I am now: from the members and sponsors of Masonic Charities for Crippled Children, to Mr. Lucas T., to my doctor, Doctor Michael Rivera who performed my operation, and my family.

To my fellow patients, I pray that you never give up and that your hope will never fade, because as long as you keep on helping yourself and as long as there are people who are willing and able to help, everything will be fine on the right time.

Again, thank you Masonic Charities for Crippled Children.
GOD SPEED!


- REGINE P. VALDEZ 12/14/14



CALENDAR OF MONTHLY ACTIVITIES Masonic Year 2015-2016

June 2015

The Committee on the Improvement of Grand Lodge Temple prepares and executes design for the improvement of the Grand Lodge Temple (otherwise known as Plaridel Masonic Temple).

The Masonic education lecture for the month focuses on Edict No. 268, as Amended.

July 2015

Every Masonic District holds Lodge of Instruction designed to improve the brethren's proficiency in the ritualistic and ceremonial work of the Lodge.

August 2015

The Masonic education lecture of the month deals with Masonic Tribunals.

August 8 – Our Grand Master officially visits one of his dual Lodges, CamSur Lodge No. 382.

August 30 – He and other Grand Lodge Officers participate in the celebration/commemoration of the anniversary of the birth of Ill. Bro. Marcelo H. “Kupang” del Pilar in Bulacan.

September 2015

The Masonic education lecture for the month focuses on Masonic Rituals and Ceremonies.

MW Tom Rentoy, accompanied by other Grand Lodge officers, attends the following Multi-District Conventions on the dates specified: Visayas, Sept. 4-5, and Southern Mindanao, Sept. 25-26.

October 2015

The Masonic education lecture of the month centers on Lodge Management.

Accompanied by other GLOs, MW Rentoy attends the following Multi-District Conventions: Northern Luzon, Oct. 2-3; Central Luzon,

Oct. 16-17; Northern Mindanao, Oct. 23-24.

Oct. 26 -- Every Masonic District holds Lodge of Remembrance.

November 2015

The Masonic education lecture deals with Edicts on Membership and Balloting.

The Grand Master and his party attend/participate in the following Multi-District Conventions: NCR, Nov. 6-7; Western Mindanao, Nov. 13-15; and Southern Luzon, Nov. 27-28.

December 2015

The Masonic education lecture for the month focuses on Masonic Protocols.

Districts or Lodges hold their respective Christmas parties.

Dec. 19 – GLP celebrates anniversary of its founding by holding its own Christmas party. On that day take place the selection of the singing idol, the Ritual Olympics finals, and the Lodge Logo in Pin.

December 30 – Wreath-laying at the Rizal Park (Luneta); program at the Paco Park spearheaded by the Rizal Lodges League.

January 2016

Our Grand Master, accompanied by his party, officially visits the GLP's subordinate Lodges in Korea.

The Masonic education lecture centers on the Masonic Internal Affairs Office (MIAO).

February 2016

The Masonic education lecture deals with The Craft and Its Symbols.

Feb. 25 – Our Grand Master's birthday celebration.

Feb. 28 – Grand Master's golf tournament.

March 2016

MW Tom Rentoy, accompanied by his party, officially visits the GLP's subordinate Lodges in Guam...

The Masonic education lecture focuses on Assessment and Self-Evaluation of Masonic Journey.

April 2017

100th ANCOM of our M.W. Grand Lodge – April 27-30.

Accordingly, the Masonic education lecture for the month centers on matters relative to the ANCOM.

THE HISTORY OF ELECTORAL REFORMS

Why and How Edict No. 268 Came into Existence

When then RW Rentoy submitted a draft of the edict on electoral reforms to then Grand Master Juanito G. Espino, Jr., the latter expressed his full support therefor, as well as his willingness to have it implemented at once.

Thus, after reviewing the same and incorporating his own ideas and suggestions, MW Espino promulgated Edict No. 268, which was presented to the brethren during the 98th ANCOM at the DMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

Edict No. 268 (MW Espino) in a Nutshell

The following are the highlights of the original version of Edict No. 268 promulgated by MW Espino:

Nominations of candidates for the position of Junior Grand Warden (JGW) will be done by Lodges, and the election of the said nominees will commence at the District Level.

At the District Level, the member lodges will choose the district's nominees to the Multi-District Convention by electing either one or two nominees depending on the number of lodges in the district. A district with seven or fewer lodges will be entitled to one nominee, while a district with eight or more lodges will be entitled to two nominees.

A brother shall be nominated for the position of JGW in only one Masonic District.

The brethren recommended by each district for the position of JGW must be regular or plural members of lodges in the said district.

An incumbent appointed officer of the Grand Lodge who accepts the nomination at the district level shall be deemed automatically resigned from his position as such appointed officer.

At the Multi-District Level, the several nominees coming from the different Masonic Districts will be short-listed by public drawing of lots. This will be done by the host District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM).

From among the short-listed nominees at the Multi-District Lev-

el, 19 will be elected by the brethren, whose names will be forwarded to the GM and the PGMs.

On the day before the election of the JGW by the ANCOM, the PGMs shall meet to finalize their short list of nominees to be considered at the ANCOM.

On the day of the election of the JGW, the most senior PGM present shall present to the GM the sealed envelope containing the short-list of seven nominees determined by the PGMs as the most qualified candidates.

From this short list, the GM shall draw by lot, in public, the names of two candidates who shall be voted upon by the ANCOM as the new JGW.

The two candidates drawn by lot shall be required to present briefly their respective platforms of governance for the Grand Lodge and the brethren.

In the election for the JGW, the candidate who obtains the higher number of votes shall be declared the winner, provided he garners majority of the votes cast by the voting delegates.

Should none of the two candidates garner the required majority vote on the first balloting, the election shall proceed to the second balloting.

The candidate who garners the higher number of votes in the second balloting, even if it is a simple majority of the votes cast, shall be

declared the newly elected JGW.

However, during the 2014 ANCOM, before the ELECOM could conduct the elections, MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM, proposed an amendment to the original edict promulgated by MW Espino. He sought the elimination of the drawing of lots at the ANCOM level by reverting to the old rule of short-listing candidates, i.e., by way of deliberations to be conducted by the PGMs.

MW Espino accepted the amendment. Thus, Edict No. 268, as finally approved and ratified by the brethren, eliminated the drawing of lots at the ANCOM level.

Edict No. 268-A (MW Purisima)

Subsequently, MW Alan La Madrid Purisima promulgated Edict No. 268-A, amending Edict No. 268 (MW Espino). The amendment effectively removed the “deemed resigned” clause in Edict No. 268, which states the following:

“An incumbent appointed officer of the Grand Lodge who accepts the nomination at the district level shall be deemed automatically resigned from his position as such appointed officer.”

This was replaced by the provision:

“An incumbent appointed officer of the Grand Lodge who ac-

cepts the nomination at the district level need not resign his position as such appointed officer.”

The same Edict also provided for the short listing of the nominees by the PGMs to not fewer but not more than seven candidates. The candidate who gets the highest number of votes shall be proclaimed the winner, provided that he gets the votes of the majority of the voting delegates. If no one obtains a majority, the election shall proceed to a second balloting. In this event, only the candidates who obtained the first three highest number of votes shall be qualified to be voted upon. During the second balloting, the candidate who obtains the highest number of votes by plurality (not majority) shall be proclaimed the winner. In case of a tie, the same shall be decided by a toss coin.

Edict 268-B (MW Rentoy)

During this Masonic year, a new edict, Edict No. 268-B (MW Rentoy) was promulgated.

Although it superseded Edict No. 268 (MW Espino) and Edict No. 268-A (MW Purisima), it adopted the best features of the two prior Edicts and introduced three major improvements designed to level the playing field during the nomination and election process for the position of JGW, by reinstating the “deemed resigned” clause, removing any ambiguities in the procedures,

and by reinstating but modifying the short-listing of nominees at the ANCOM level through the public drawing of lots. In addition to the aforesaid improvements, the other salient points of this new Edict are as follows:

(A.) Amending and clarifying the qualifications for Grand Lodge Elective Office, under Section 4, Article V (Part I) of the Masonic Law Book, which shall now read as follows:

Sec. 4. Minimum Qualifications for Grand Lodge Elective Office. No member shall be eligible for nomination and election as an elective officer of the Grand Lodge unless:

(a) He is at least forty (40) years of age **at the time of the ANCOM election.**

(b) He shall have been a Master Mason in good standing for **at least ten (10) consecutive years immediately preceding the ANCOM election, without any suspension for whatever reason and regardless of the duration.**

(c) He shall have served and completed his term of office as Master of a lodge of Master Masons.

(d) He is an actual resident of the territory within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines

for at least two (2) years immediately **prior to the ANCOM election.**

(e) He has not been found guilty by competent authority of unmasonic conduct or convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of any offense involving moral turpitude. **In both cases, such finding or conviction must be by final judgment.**”

(B) The nomination, once accepted by the nominee, cannot be withdrawn. Such acceptance shall be valid and effective from the lodge level up to the ANCOM level.

Any form of withdrawal by the nominee at all levels shall be reported by the DDGM or Host DDGM concerned or by the ELECOM Chairman, to the Grand Secretary for reference and records purposes; and, if unjustified, shall cause his disqualification for nomination for the next three years.

(C) The qualified nominees of the District shall be voted upon thru secret ballot by the voting members of the District during the District Meeting scheduled between July 15 and August 15 of each year. Voting delegates at the District level shall vote for one nominee only.

(D) Every district with seven or fewer lodges shall be entitled to one nominee, and the brother who gar-

ners the highest number of votes shall be that particular district’s official nominee. But every district with more than seven lodges shall be entitled to two nominees, and the two brothers who garner the highest number of votes shall be that particular district’s official nominees. In case of a tie, the tied candidates shall exclude those with lower number of votes. If the tie still persists, the same shall be broken by a toss coin, and the candidate who wins in said toss coin shall be proclaimed the winner. The DDGM shall do the toss coin in public.

(E) The District ELECOM shall then proclaim the brethren who garner the highest number of votes according to the aforementioned entitlement as the District’s official nominees for the position of JGW, at the Multi-District Level.

(F) At the Multi-District Level, the number of nominees from the different districts shall be short-listed by **drawing of lot**, in public, according to the following entitlements:

- Northern Luzon – 4 nominees;
 - Central Luzon – 6 nominees;
 - NCR – 7 nominees;
 - Southern Luzon – 4 nominees;
 - Visayas – 2 nominees;
 - Mindanao – 6 nominees; and
 - Overseas – 2 nominees.
- Total number of nominees = 31.

(G) The 31 short-listed nominees shall be voted upon by secret ballot to determine the nominee of the various Multi-Districts to the ANCOM, in accordance with the following number of entitlements:

Northern Luzon, 2 nominees;
Central Luzon, 3 nominees;
NCR, 3 nominees;
Southern Luzon, 2 nominees;
Visayas, 1 nominee;
Mindanao, 3 nominees; and
Overseas, 1 nominee.

Total number of nominees = 15.

(H) On the day of the election the Past Grand Masters (PGMs) shall convene and make a preliminary determination as to who they believe are best qualified to be considered by the brethren as Junior Grand Warden. Of the fifteen (15) nominees elected by the various Multi-Districts, the PGMs may opt to reduce the number of candidates to not less than twelve (12). Such option by the PGM to reduce the number of candidates shall not be exercised if for any reason, only twelve (12) nominees or less are submitted by the various Multi-Districts.

On the day of the election, and right before the election of JGW, the Past Grand Masters present shall choose from among themselves a representative or representatives who shall draw by lot, in public, THREE (3) names from among the nominees elected by the various

Multi-Districts and as may be reduced in accordance with the immediately preceding section.

(I) Only candidates who are personally present at, and duly registered in, the ANCOM may be elected. The candidate who obtains the highest number of votes shall be declared the winner; provided, that he garners majority of the votes cast by the voting delegates. If no one garners the required majority vote on the first balloting, the election shall proceed to the second balloting. Only the candidates who obtain the highest and the second-to-the-highest number of votes shall be qualified to be voted upon on the second balloting.

The candidate who obtains the higher number of votes by plurality in the second balloting shall be proclaimed the winner and the new JGW. In case of a tie, the same shall be broken by a toss coin.

According to Edict No. 268-B (MW Rentoy), the following shall be the schedule of the electoral processes every year:

- Lodge Nominations – Submitted to the District at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the District Meeting/Elections.
- District Elections – July 15 to August 15 of each year.
- Multi-District Conventions – September 1 to November 30 of each year.
- ANCOM – April

REORIENTING THE THRUST OF OUR OUTREACH PROJECTS TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

In his inaugural address, Grand Master Tomas G. Rentoy, III also strongly stated:

“As our way of imparting Masonic light outside of our lodges and to attach relevance to our civic duties, we are reorienting the thrust of our outreach projects to public education as mandated in our Masonic constitution. We will veer away from the myopic or shallow projects so as to put to maximum use our meager resources. We will invest our assets in the education of children in our public schools.”

“Towards this end, we have partnered with Exempli Gratia Foundation (EGF), an NGO that runs the ‘Library in a Box’ project, which provides compact libraries to public schools. We will provide the structures, basically converted container vans, and maintain them. The EGF will keep it supplied with books. This project will be implemented nationwide, with each district tasked to sponsor at least one library. Capable lodges are encouraged to sponsor as many libraries as they can afford. Existing education-oriented projects will be sustained and/or expanded.”

For a better understanding and

appreciation of the “Library in a Box” project, district and lodge officers are encouraged to take a close look at the January 3, 2015 letter of Ronald A. Rodriguez, EGF Founding Chairman, to then Right Worshipful Tomas G. Rentoy, III, which is reprinted in Manual for Grand Lodge Officers, 2015-2016, pp. 83-88.

In that letter, Mr. Rodriguez explains the “Library in a Box” project; the importance of engaging the right partners and stakeholders in the project; the difference between the “Library in a Box” project and traditional libraries; how to bring down the cost of producing container vans; and what is inside the box.

The EGF Founding Chairman told RW Tom Rentoy that the EGF was ready to execute the following activities with the GLP:

- Drafting of agreements and identification of stakeholders – January 2015;
- Finalization of stakeholders and agreements – February 2015;
- Production of “Library in a Box” for Oas, Albay – March 2015;
- Media event: Delivery of “Library in a Box” on-site, Oas, Albay -- June 2015; and

- Mass production of “Library in a Box” and multiple site deliveries -- July-September 2015.

The die is cast. As a Craft, we are now the partner of EGF in providing children in our public schools with opportunities for acquiring quality education via the “Library in a Box” project.

We must commit ourselves to making this joint venture with EGF a resounding success; for, after all, our Masonic forebears founded the public education system in this country on the pillars of brotherly love, relief, and truth, as well as on the columns of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

More power to the Philippine educational system!

RITUAL OLYMPICS

Main Purpose

The main purpose of this Ritual Olympics is to upgrade/keep & maintain the incumbent elected and appointed officers’ proficiency in the rituals of our fraternal order, as well as their ability to execute the floor works properly.

Suggested Topics:

1. First degree opening and closing
2. Second degree opening and closing
3. Third degree opening and closing
4. Reception of dignitaries in private and public forms
5. Reception and retirement of the Philippine flag
6. Procedures of balloting
7. Receiving and surrendering of jewels

Mechanics:

- A. First drawing of lots is to determine

the first lodge to perform.

B. Second drawing of lots is to determine the topics they will perform.

This way to encourage the officers to study and prepare for all the topics as suggested. (No advance assignment of topics).

NOTE: *Only the incumbent elected and appointed lodge officers will participate. (If in any event, any of the officers is not available, non-officers who will participate are very much welcome. If a Past Master is going to substitute any of the officers, the team will earn one point deduction from the total points earned from their performances.*

Criteria for Judging:

1. 25% -- Proficiency, which includes masterpiece, voice, gestures. Receiving and surrendering their jewels (opening and closing).
2. 25% -- Floor work – footworks or

steps, movements and right facing.

3. 25% -- Rods handling – rod in carry, returning/rod emblem faces, rod in salute, rod in prayer, pass and fidelity.

4. 25% -- Participation – attendance of elected and appointed officers, unity and group/team performances.

Each of the criteria is given 100 points. Each error or mistake by an in-

dividual member will be deducted from the 100 points. And to be multiplied on the corresponding percentage based on the criteria.

ANOTHER NOTE: *The format of the score sheet to be used in the Ritual Olympics is given in the Manual for Grand Lodge Officers, 2015-2016, p. 82.*

OPLAN: SAGIP KALIKASAN PROGRAM TO BE CONTINUED

Grand Master Tom Rentoy likewise stressed the following point in his inaugural speech:

“There is no more denying climate change. It is now the overarching challenge for the whole of humanity. Super-typhoon ‘Yolanda’ roused us to the harrowing tragedy of ill-preparedness. In the face of this colossal challenge, our Fraternity must present a robust response. Hence, we are going to revisit existing guidelines on projects related to Disaster Relief for our families and our communities and make them more responsive.”

Hence, two circulars on Oplan: Sagip Kalikasan are reprinted in the Manual for Grand Officers 2015-2016, namely, Circular No. 7 – Lim Lo Suy, dated July 8, 2009 (p. 78), and Circular No. 16 – Razon, Jr., dated October 11, 2010 (pp. 79-80). The present leadership of our M.W. Grand Lodge is highly resolved to pursue the Craft’s Oplan: Sagip-Kalikasan program in

close coordination with offices of the DENR nationwide. District and Lodge officers are encouraged to take another close look at both circulars.

VW Guillermo B. Lazaro, Jr., PDDGM, incumbent Building Administrator of the GLP, explains another initiative related to the Craft’s Sagip Kalikasan program, as follows:

GRAND LODGE PROGRAM TO RATIONALIZE OUR MASONIC DUTY IN DISASTER-PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

It has long been observed that disasters, both natural and man-made, are causing increasing toil to communities, and the wrath of climate change and injustice does not portend any letting up.

Despite the foregoing, our responses as Masons have been ob-

served by and large as being often delayed and inadequate, largely because of our being unprepared mentally, system-wise and resource-wise.

To enhance our being Masons and our commitment and practice of moral duty, it is possible as it is imperative that we rationalize our readiness and capacities to respond to disasters.

By Decree:

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge shall lead in raising our individual and collective knowledge about disasters, in establishing a jurisdiction-wide system for coping with disasters and in generating all-round resources to address and respond to the same.

The Grand Master creates a new Standing Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Relief as an administrative mechanism performing staff functions with a permanent office under the direct orders of the Grand Oriental Chair. It shall take charge in generating all-round resources for our preparedness and relief efforts. The Committee shall have three members, who shall be appointed by the Grand Master with one, two, or three-year terms, respectively, to ensure continuity and stability, and headed by an Executive Director for a three-year term.

The territorial mechanism of our preparedness and relief efforts shall be the Masonic District Coordinating Council (MDCC), composed of heads

of our Lodges and Appendant Bodies/ Allied Orders, which is to be presided over by the District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM). This Council shall lead at the District level in so far as generating and administering our relief resources (is concerned).

Five per cent (5%) of the net income of all our fund-raising projects (Lodges and Appendant Bodies/Allied Orders) shall be remitted to the Grand Lodge General Relief Fund, which is to be managed by the aforementioned Standing Committee; another five per cent (5%) of the net income of all our fund-raising projects of the same shall be turned over to the District Coordinating Council and earmarked for relief purposes.

At the national, district, and lodge levels, we shall coordinate and collaborate with, among other, the National Disaster Risk-Reduction Management Council and the Department of Science and Technology's National Operational Assessment of Hazards (NOAH) and its Disaster Risk Exposure Assessment for Mitigation-Light Ranging and Detection (DREAM-LI-DAR).

Lodges and Appendant Bodies/ Allied Orders situated together in one city or municipality are enjoined to supplement this Edict with their particular policies and regulations for the relief and welfare of the affected communities and such should be furnished the Grand Lodge for recording and authentication. ❖

Recent events and developments in the Craft, other segments of our Masonic Family

MENCIUS LODGE NO. 93'S CONTINUING OUTREACH PROJECT

“Human beings share an innate goodness that either can be cultivated through education and self-discipline or squandered through neglect and negative influences, but never lost altogether.”

-- MENCIUS

Said VW Paul C. Ibasco, PDDGM, a leading member of the Lodge: *“Inspired by that statement of the great Chinese philosopher after whom our Lodge was named, we have traveled by air, by land and by sea to reach poverty-stricken places of Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Romblon, Northern Samar, and other Philippine provinces, in order to build classrooms for use by economically disadvantaged pupils or students, and thereby enabling them to bring out the goodness that is present in them and therefore to hope for a brighter future.”*

TEN LODGES CONSTITUTED

MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, our incumbent Grand Master, constituted 10 Lodges and installed the officers thereof on the dates specified below:

- Kasiguruhan Lodge No. 423 – May 15, 2015;
- Fairway Lodge No. 415 – May 22, 2015;
- Muntinlupa City Lodge No. 414 – May 25, 2015;
- Silang Lodge No. 416 – June 01, 2015;
- Talisay Sugbo Lodge No. 422 – June 08, 2015;
- Solidarity Lodge No. 421 – June 12, 2015;
- Diego Silang Lodge No. 417 – June 16, 2015;
- Mt. Palali Lodge No. 420 – June 17, 2015;
- Crescent Lodge No. 419 – June 19, 2015; and
- Siquijor Lodge No. 418 – June 20, 2015

SECOND FELLOWSHIP WITH GRAND MASTER TOM RENTOY, III

The last Friday of every month has been earmarked for the holding of the Grand Master's Fellowship with the brethren at the Emilio Aguinaldo Hall of the Plaridel Masonic Temple (Grand Lodge Bldg.).

The May fellowship was sponsored by Masonic District NCR-G, while the June fellowship was hosted by AFP Sojourners Club, the DPWH Plumb and Level Club and the PNP BEST Square & Compass Club.

MW RENTOY INDUCTS BIRTH OFFICERS FOR 2015-2016

Our incumbent Grand Master, MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, inducted the officers of the BIRTH, INC. for 2015-2016 in the evening of Thursday, June 25, 2015 at the Ballroom, Celebrity Sports Club, QC.

Emceed by VW Oliver V. Yabut, PDDGM, and Bro. Gerald Alan A. Quebral, the programme consists of the following parts: invocation by Bro. Julius Tomas Esquivias; singing of the National Anthem and the Grand Lodge March, led by VW George A. Brown; inspirational message of VW Percival T. Salazar, BIRTH Chairman; induction of officers by MW TGR III; inaugural address, by BIRTH President Edgar B. Tolentinto; introduction by

VW Sixto Esquivias of the guest of honor and speaker; the message of MW Rentoy; and the singing of the BIRTH theme song, led by VW Sixto Esquivias.

There can be no doubt that the auspicious occasion was, to all participants therein, an exciting, entertaining, enlightening, and fellowship-fraught experience. ❖

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within oneself. In response to the eulogy, Tessie told the brethren that VW Vic often reminded her of his earlier request that should he die, she should immediately let the brethren know. She then said that she now understood why VW Vic would make such a request: and it was because VW Vic meant so much to the brethren and his brothers also loved him very much.

Nowadays, there has been too much Masonic precept and a huge want of exemplars. While there is present focus on educating the Mason's mind, let us not neglect the Masonic education of the heart. Regrettably, such education cannot be taught in lectures but can only be imparted through deeds. In his silence of words, purity of heart and worthiness as a man and Mason, VW Vic has most effectively taught us the greatest Masonic education--that of living a life worthy to be called a Mason. We thank you, VW Vic, for teaching us through your life and deeds. We are fortunate to be your brother and friend. We miss you, but even without your physical presence, the life lessons you taught us remain strongly felt in our hearts. We shall unite again in the celestial lodge above. Till then, we shall endeavour to continue to share your heritage of genuine Freemasonry. ❖

“SO QUIET . . . YET SO FELT . . .”

A Tribute by the Brethren of Masonic District NCR B to the Quintessential Honorary Member of almost all of the Lodges in the District

For brethren in the 80s to mid-2000s who had lodge meetings at the Grand Lodge, “VW Vic” would be a very familiar face to them. He regularly attended Stated Meetings of various lodges, taught young brethren how to read our monitor and mentored them in our rituals. During Roll Call of Lodges in our past Annual Communications, one could not help but notice his presence because he stood up numerous times for the lodges that had bestowed him with honorary membership. He was regarded as a happy person who lived a full life. However, very few people would know that during his tender years, this amiable brother was placed on the lowest spoke of fortune’s wheel and travelled many rough and rugged roads in life.

As a young child, he lost his mother and later became an orphan. He grew up with the immediate family of his late mother and even had an uncle about his age. With utmost gratitude to such family for adopting him as their own, he always gave priority to the members of such family in all his endeavours. This mindset of lowliness became so much a part of him that we saw him constantly giving way to others within and without the lodge. Even in Masonic fellowships, he would let others get their food before him; and he would just partake his meal in a distant table without any fanfare.

He often told us that he was not destined to be a businessman as he failed in his attempt to become one after his initial employments. Accepting business failure and acknowledging his strengths, he then welcomed his vocation

as an employee and dedicated the bulk of his employment life to Fortune Tobacco Corporation. Even if he was very much able to get married and have his own children, VW Vic decided to live his life as a bachelor. He had a few relationships; but it seemed that the trauma he experienced in losing his parents while very young might have continued to haunt him. Apart from his active involvement in the Craft, he also dedicated his time and resources to his cousins, nieces and nephews. In turn, VW Vic also had his real family amongst such blood relatives and the brethren close to him. Hence, when his retirement financial security was at risk of being obliterated, he kept his temperance and fortitude; owing perhaps to the memories of his trials and tribulations in life; and also perhaps knowing that he would not be abandoned by his loving relatives and Masonic friends.

In his older years, he suffered from Parkinson’s Disease and had the family of his caregiver in his own house. He was not cared for well by such family despite his genuine concern for their welfare and future. With the blessings from the Grand Artificer of life, his cousin’s family in Quezon City adopted him and finally gave him the love he deserved as a good man. One fateful morning, the brethren received a telephone call from his cousin-in-law, Tessie, who informed us that VW Vic was happily joking during their dinner and afterwards died quietly when he was asleep. While living, he never wanted to cause any inconvenience to others. In death, he also made sure of it and passed on to the celestial lodge above without bothering anyone.

In the eulogy during the funeral rites, VW Remigio Lumicao expressed his admiration for VW Vic for being a man who did not harbour any heartache within his heart and remembered him as a Mason who taught him much about the wonders of living with peace

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THE ELECTED GRAND LINE OFFICERS FOR MASONIC YEAR 2015-2016

(From left): MW Rudyardo Bunda, PGM, Grand Treasurer; RW Voltaire Gazmin, Deputy Grand Master; Newly-installed Grand Master Tomas Rentoy III; RW Abraham Tolentino, Senior Grand Warden; RW Romeo Momo, Junior Grand Warden-elect; and MW Danilo Angeles, PGM, Grand Secretary.

