

The Cabletow

The Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines
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**NORTH LUZON
Multi District Convention**



The Programme for the
Testimonial Dinner

ANCOM GLOC 2015





The Grand Lodge of the Philippines delegation, led by Most Worshipful Tomas G. Rentoy III, pays a visit to Most Worshipful William J. Thomas, Grand Lodge of New York.

The Cable Tow

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FROM THE GRAND EAST

LET US STAY THE COURSE

A semester has breezed by and I am halfway into my tenure on the Grand Oriental Chair. The reforms that you, my dear brethren, have commissioned me to institute on your behalf are well under way. The entire jurisdiction has been reinvigorated, the brethren have taken on a renewed sense of purpose.

Individually and as a fraternity, we have reasserted our presence among our people and overseas.

Our charitable and civic projects that we have refocused towards public elementary education and the environment are certain to leave indelible imprints in the minds and hearts of the present and future

generations. Individually, the lives we lead will be role models for all way beyond our own lifespan. If, we stay the course.

Overseas, we have in the nick of time salvaged our amity relations with the rest of the Masonic world. This we did without compromising our independence while strengthening our Grand Lodge and steering many of our brethren away from physical and legal accidents waiting to happen. Moreover, our relations with our neighboring jurisdictions in Japan and China have never been more vibrant.

Indeed, you were right about those reforms, my dear brethren. They measure squarely into the call of the times. I am pleased that I listened to your good counsel – grateful for making me your working tools.

March on with me, my beloved brethren. We are on the right course.

Fraternally yours,


TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master, 2015-2016



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OF THE GRAND MASTER AND OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS

For the Period 05 August – 31 October 2015

By: VW Caesar M. Ortega, GH

This report is a continuation of a previous article, “The First 100 Days”. It documents the major activities and accomplishments of the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge for Masonic Year 2015-16, in faithful compliance with the duties of the Grand Historian as mandated under Article XXIII of the Masonic Law Book.

Latest Issuances

The Grand Master, in pursuit of the reform agenda for the attainment of our vision of a Revitalized, Relevant, and Revered Philippine Freemasonry, issued the following Edicts:

September 2015

Edict No. 283, dated 22 September 2015. – Deferring the implementation of the Wardens’ Academy courses and the training courses for secretaries, treasurers and auditors; and providing for a substitute therefor; recalibrating the IMES schedule of fees, and providing for an additional requirement for the appointment to the position of District Deputy Grand Master.

Edict No. 259-A, dated 23 September 2015. - Amending Edict 259 (MW Gabionza). It placed Masonic Allied Organizations, Clubs and Associations under the jurisdiction and regulation of the GLP.

Edict No. 256-A, dated 23 September 2015. - Amending Edict 256 (MW Gabionza), which created the Committee on Masonic Clubs and Associations.

Edict No. 284, dated 23 September 2015. - Defining the proper “Masonic Attire” under Section 1, Article XIX of the Masonic Law Book.

October 2015

Edict No. 285, dated 07 October 2015. - Providing for the procedure on the merger of two (2) lodges or consolidation of more than two (2) Lodges.

As additional implements in the never-ending endeavor to improve the Craft, the Grand Master has issued the following circulars:

August 2015

Circular 22, dated 26 August 2015. – Creating the Committee on the December 19 Grand Lodge Anniversary Celebration.

Circular 23, dated 28 August 2015. – Policy directive on the display of the Official Portrait of the Grand Master and all Past Grand Masters.

Circular 24, dated 28 August 2015. – Testimonial Dinner to honor outstanding Masons in government/public service.

Circular 25, dated 28 August 2015. – Schedule of Multi-District Conventions.

Circular 26, dated 23 September 2015. - Exemplification of the 3rd Degree Conferral; and the Opening & Closing Rituals.

Circular 27. – Informing the brethren about the **“Joint Statement on Unrecognized Organizations, the Proper Conferral of the Ritual, and Allegiance to the Grand Lodge and its Protocol”**, issued by the Grand Lodge of the Philippines and the Grand Lodge of California. The Joint Statement was actually signed during the 166th ANCOM of the Grand Lodge of California, held on October 9 to 11, 2015, in San Francisco, California. However, the final draft was approved in principle as early as 31 August 2015, and was made the basis of Edict 259-A (MW Rentoy), on Masonic Allied Organizations, Clubs and Associations, which was officially promulgated on **23 September 2015**.

A perfunctory reading of the foregoing issuances would clearly show that all are attuned to the chosen theme for this Masonic year.

Administrative Duties

The Grand Master performed the following administrative functions and gives us an insight into his continuing administrative responsibilities:

August 2015

- 5 - MCCCCI 91st Anniversary – Guest of Honor and Speaker China Place Resto, Pan Pacific
- 8 - Inauguration Library in a box Camarines Sur Lodge No. 382
- 14 - District Convention MD RXIII-A (Message sent through VW Jeffrey Acebido)
- 19 - Wreath Laying Ceremony Quezon City Day – Q.C. Memorial Circle
- 20 - Visited the North Cemetery (Masonic Cemetery).
- 24 - 100th Year Anniversary – Bagumbayan Lodge No. 4
Guest of Honor and Speaker
- 25 - Fellowship with the Past Grand Masters
Host: MW Rosendo Herrera, PGM and Sis. Ching Herrera, Manila Hotel
- 26 - Inauguration, Library-in-a-Box and Cornerstone Laying, Rizal Lodge No. 20, Lopez, Quezon
- 28 - Fellowship with the Grand Master – Host: NCR-B
- 29 - Shoot fest Mahambus Lodge No. 315 – CDO
- 30 - M.H. del Pilar Day

September 2015

- 3 - Courtesy Call on CBCP President, Archbishop Socrates “Soc” Villegas.

- 4 - Visayas Multi-District Convention – Host: RVIII-B Tacloban City
- 16 - Testimonial Dinner, Distinguished Masons in Government - GLP
- 30 - Exemplification of the 3rd Degree Conferral – Host: MD NCR-C

October 2015

- 2 - Meeting/Seminar Masonic Associations and Clubs
- 2-3 - Northern Luzon Multi-District Convention – Host RI-A, Pangasinan
- 9-11 - 166th ANCOM – Grand Lodge of California – San Francisco, California.
 - Signing of Joint Declaration
- 16-17 - Northern Mindanao Convention – Cagayan de Oro City
- 23-25 - Annual Communication Grand Lodge of China

The Masonic Internal Affairs Office (MIAO).

Without having to enumerate the cases and brethren under investigation, suffice it to say that there are about twenty (20) active cases being investigated by the MIAO.

ISO Certification

As of 31 October 2015, most of the requirements for the issuance of ISO Certification to the Grand Lodge have been complied with. It is expected that the GLP will get the much-coveted ISO Certification before the year’s end.

Initial Results of Electoral Reforms

The election of candidates for Junior Grand Warden at the Multi-District level pursuant to the provisions of Edict 268-B has been completed. A total of fourteen (14) candidates have been selected under the election and elimination scheme at this stage of the reformed election scheme. Of these, two (2) are from Northern Luzon, three (3) from Central Luzon, three (3) from the NCR, two (2) from Southern Luzon and one (1) each from the Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Western Mindanao and Southern Mindanao multi-districts.

The GLP-GLC Joint Statement

The 166th ANCOM of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of California was highlighted by the signing of the GLP-GLC Joint Statement. This historic document reflects the GLP’s version and position on the issue regarding masonic clubs raised by the GLC in 2009 that remained unresolved for more than six (6) years. This joint statement and Edict 259-A, that was subsequently issued by our Grand Lodge, strengthened the power of both the blue lodges and the Grand Lodge to supervise masonic clubs. They also preempted legal and physical risks during admission rituals of masonic clubs. It also warmed up our amity relations with the GLC.

Assessment

We are generally on tract towards the attainment of our vision. Edicts and circulars issued and masonic projects adopted to push our reform agenda are being implemented satisfactorily at all levels. Relevant feedback from the brethren are being reviewed and assessed continuously in order to make adjustments whenever necessary.

MASONIC EDUCATION



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

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MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III
GRAND MASTER

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

EDICT NO. 278

DECLARING DECEMBER 19 OF EVERY MASONIC YEAR AS PAST GRAND MASTERS' DAY

WHEREAS, the Grand Lodge of the Philippines is annually celebrating its Anniversary every 19th day of December.

WHEREAS, in order to give meaning and significance to the anniversary celebration, a program paying tribute to the Past Grand Masters shall be drawn up honoring their exemplary performance and unselfish contributions to Philippine Freemasonry during their respective incumbency;

WHEREAS, such Tribute to the Past Grand Masters should be institutionalized to coincide with the celebration of the Grand Lodge Anniversary.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TOMAS G. RENTOY III, by the powers in me vested as Grand Master, hereby decree the creation of a Special Committee tasked to oversee the annual celebration of the *Grand Lodge Anniversary* and the program "*Tribute to the Past Grand Masters*," further decreeing every 19th Day of December as "*Past Grand Masters' Day*."

This Edict shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes of said Stated Meeting

Given under my hand and the seal of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, this 19th day of August, 2015, in the City of Manila, Philippines.


TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master

Attest

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Grand Secretary

TGR/DDA/ABM/vangie
"A REVITALIZED, RELEVANT AND REVERED PHILIPPINE FREEMASONRY:
OUR COMMITMENT, OUR COVENANT"




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MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III
GRAND MASTER

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

EDICT No. 259-A

AMENDING EDICT 259 (MW Gabionza), DEFINING ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS; PLACING THEM WITHIN THE JURISDICTION AND REGULATION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE PHILIPPINES; AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF.

WHEREAS, Edict No 259 (MW Gabionza) required the officers of clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons existing within the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines to submit to the Grand Lodge a copy of their association's by-laws in compliance with the Resolution adopted by the Twelfth (12th) Annual Communication in 1924 which resolved that Masons under the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines are forbidden from holding any kind of membership in any organization or society without due authority from the Grand Lodge; and from making use of Masonic emblems, insignia, or rituals, or any near resemblance thereto, which, in the opinion of the Grand Master might tend to deceive or be confused with Masonic emblems, regalia, insignia, and rituals;

WHEREAS, while Edict No. 259 (MW Gabionza) requires the submission of the by-laws of clubs, societies and associations of Masons in this jurisdiction, it also states in paragraph 5 thereof that: "Nothing in this Edict shall be construed or understood as placing the clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons within the jurisdiction, control, supervision, or regulation of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines";

WHEREAS, as correctly observed in the 6th WHEREAS clause of Edict 259 (MW Gabionza), "...these clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons, though not officially recognized and regulated by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, are unavoidably associated and identified with the Grand Lodge and perceived to be under its jurisdiction and control;

WHEREAS, as correctly observed and pointed out in the 5th WHEREAS clause of Edict 259 (MW Gabionza), "... it has come to the attention and knowledge of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines that some of these clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons admit members by conducting admission rituals that are similar or tend to resemble the rituals followed by Subordinate Lodges in conferring degrees of Masonry, and

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by performing or demanding the performance of acts that humiliate and/or cause injury to its intended members or violate the Anti-Hazing Law”;

WHEREAS, both of the aforementioned observations in the 5th and 6th WHEREAS clauses of Edict 259 (MW Gabionza) are still true and existing at present;

WHEREAS, the unregulated proliferation of unrecognized and unaccredited Allied Organizations tends to create fragmentation and factionalism within the Craft.

WHEREFORE, it is necessary and desirable to place the aforesaid clubs, societies and other similar associations of Masons within the jurisdiction and regulation of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines consistent with the Resolution of the 12th ANCOM in 1924.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TOMAS G. RENTOY III, Grand Master of Masons in the jurisdiction of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers in me vested by the Constitution, hereby decree that:

1. All clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons which require its members, prospective members, candidates or applicants to be a Freemason in order to be accepted in its ranks, roster or roll are hereby placed under the jurisdiction and regulation of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. These clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons as defined above, shall hereinafter, be referred to as ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS, for brevity.

2. Consequently, the officers of these Allied Organizations are hereby required and directed to submit an application for accreditation, attaching thereto the updated or current By-laws of their respective organizations or its equivalent and an updated listing of their members. The officers of Allied Organizations which have been incorporated or registered as corporations or cooperatives are, likewise, required and directed to submit their respective Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Cooperation, as the case may be.

In the meantime, pending compliance with this requirement, all Master Masons within this jurisdiction are prohibited from participating in all activities or attending fellowships or meetings, conferrals, installations, inductions and other similar or related events or ceremonies undertaken, performed or conducted by said unrecognized Allied Organizations.

3. The foregoing directive in paragraph 2 hereof must be complied with by any or all of the officers of the Allied Organization within a period of sixty (60) days from the date of effectivity hereof. The unjustified failure of said officers to comply with the same within the period herein prescribed shall automatically confirm the non-accreditation or non-recognition of the Allied Organization concerned, without the necessity of any further act or declaration on the part of the Grand Lodge.

4. The Committee on Associations and Clubs, as constituted under Edict No. 256 (MW Gabionza), shall review and evaluate the applications for accreditation, together with the By-laws, Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Cooperation, submitted by the Allied Organizations; and submit its recommendation to the Grand Master. Additional documents or requirements may be imposed, as the Grand Master may require.

5. If found worthy of accreditation, an official certification to that effect shall be issued by the Grand Master, attested by the Grand Secretary. All certificates of accreditation, together with the recommendations of the Committee on Associations and Clubs, shall be incorporated in the Annual Report of said Committee, and be included in the Grand Master's Report.

6. The Committee on Associations and Clubs shall adopt its own guidelines, rules and regulations as it may find appropriate subject to the approval of the Grand Master.

7. The non-accreditation, non-recognition or non-compliance with this Edict shall have the following effects and consequences:

(a) All Masons (of any degree) within the jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines are prohibited from joining or becoming a member of any Allied Organization that has failed to secure accreditation from the Grand Lodge. The act of joining or becoming a member of any unaccredited Allied Organization shall be deemed a direct violation of this Edict.

(b) All Masons (of any degree) who are already members of said unaccredited Allied Organizations at the time of effectivity of this Edict shall be deemed resigned or demitted from said organizations after ninety (90) days from date of effectivity hereof.

(c) A non-accredited Allied Organization as well as its members are strictly prohibited from using, appropriating, exhibiting or otherwise presenting to its members or to the public Masonic names, rituals, words and phrases that are monitorial in origin or that bears any near resemblance thereto. They are, likewise, strictly prohibited from using, displaying, installing, manufacturing, making, selling, distributing, giving away, whether for a fee or gratis, any Masonic emblem, logo, seal, insignia, sticker, novelty or souvenir item, or any near resemblance thereto, which, in the opinion of the Grand Master, might tend to deceive or be confused with Masonic emblems, insignia, regalia and rituals. A violation hereof shall also be deemed a direct violation of this Edict.

(d) Applications for accreditation of existing Allied Organizations that are submitted past the deadline may be evaluated during the next Masonic Year, but ONLY IF the late filing thereof is justified by clear and convincing evidence.

(e) For this purpose, the existing Allied Organizations shall be understood and refer to those already in existence at the time of effectivity of this Edict.

8. The following are the existing Allied Organizations, with no official recognition or accreditation from the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines:

- (a) Grand and Glorious Order of the Knights of the Creeping Serpent (GGOKCS).
- (b) Pagong Ako Kuya, Philippines (PAKP) or Turtles
- (c) Order of the Secret Monitor (OSM)
- (d) KAMANAVA Travellers Club, Inc.
- (e) Philippine Balanghay Association
- (f) Quezon City Trowel Club
- (g) Square and Compass We Connect (SCWC Club)
- (h) All Square and Compass Clubs or Associations
- (i) All Plumb and Level Clubs or Associations.
- (j) Rabbit / Blue Rabbit
- (k) All other Allied Organizations and similar associations or clubs already organized and existing at the time of effectivity of this Edict.

9. The following acts or omissions are STRICTLY PROHIBITED and shall likewise constitute violations of this Edict.

(a) Any act or omission constituting a violation of the Anti-Hazing Law (R.A. No. 8049) committed by Masons (of any degree), within this Grand Jurisdiction, as members of any accredited Allied Organization.

(b) Any act or omission constituting a violation of Edict Nos. 131 (MW Choa), 131-A (MW Galvez), 245 (MW Lim Lo Suy) and 259 (MW Gabionza); and Circulars No. 15 and 21 (MW Lim Lo Suy) committed by Masons (of any degree), within this Grand Jurisdiction, as members of any accredited Allied Organization.

(c) Any act, performance, prescription, requirement, or the undergoing of, additional rites or activities similar to the rituals in the Monitor as a requirement for conferral of membership in any accredited Allied Organization.

10. The following are the existing and duly recognized Masonic Appendant Bodies and are exempted from the accreditation requirements of this Edict:

- (a) Grand York Rite of Freemasonry of the Philippines
- (b) The Supreme Council, A.A.S.R. of the Philippines
- (c) Order of the Eastern Star
- (d) Order of the Amaranth
- (e) International Order of DeMolay
- (f) International Order of Rainbow for Girls
- (g) Job's Daughters International
- (h) Royal Order of Scotland
- (i) Shriners Clubs, Oasis or Organizations

11. The foregoing exempted Allied Organizations are allowed to continue with their existing rituals, subject to the prohibitions on hazing, and related Edicts.

12. Any prospective members or applicants in any of these Allied Organizations shall comply with the following basic requirements:

- a) Proficiency in the Third Degree;
- b) Must be a Member in Good Standing in his mother lodge and all lodges where he is a dual or plural member of;
- c) Must have secured the prior written consent of his mother lodge or other lodges where he is a dual or plural of.

13. Any violation of this Edict shall constitute UNMASONIC CONDUCT and, after due notice and proper proceedings, shall be punishable with a penalty of either a Reprimand in Open Lodge, Suspension or Expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense, as may be determined by the Committee on Associations and Clubs or such other committee as may be formed and approved by the Grand Master.

14. All Edicts, Circulars and other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

15. This Edict shall take effect immediately and shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting following its receipt; and recorded in the Minutes of the Lodge.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in the City of Manila, this 23rd day of September 2015.


TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master

Attest:


DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Grand Secretary

TGR/DDA/JEM/vangie



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MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III
GRAND MASTER

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

EDICT NO. 268-B

**AMENDING EDICT NO. 268 (MW Espino),
EDICT NO. 268-A (MW Purisima) AND THE PROVISIONS
OF THE CONSTITUTION GOVERNING THE NOMINATION PROCESS
FOR THE POSITION OF JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN.**

WHEREAS, Edict 268 (MW Espino), as ratified with revisions during the 98TH ANCOM in Manila last April 24-26, 2014, amended certain provisions of the Constitution governing the nomination process for the position of Junior Grand Warden.

WHEREAS, Edict 268-A (MW Purisima) amended certain provisions of Edict 268 (MW Purisima) to further enhance the nomination process for the position of Junior Grand Warden.

WHEREAS, in the actual implementation of the aforementioned edicts, certain difficulties, ambiguities and inadequacies were encountered at the District, Multi-District and ANCOM levels.

WHEREFORE, there is a need to supersede both of the aforementioned edicts and consolidate their valuable and beneficial features for the purpose of achieving the desired reforms in the nomination process for the position of Junior Grand Warden.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TOMAS G. RENTOY III, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers in me vested by the Constitution, do hereby promulgate and decree that the following shall, henceforth, be strictly observed:

I. Nominations to Originate From Subordinate Lodges; Election of Nominees to Start in the Districts.

1. All nominations for the position of Junior Grand Warden (JGW, for brevity), shall originate from the subordinate lodges only. Each subordinate lodge may nominate, in writing, only one candidate for the position of JGW; provided, that a nominee must be a regular or plural member of the nominating lodge. In addition, he must possess all the qualifications enumerated in Section 4, Article V (Part I) of the Constitution, which is hereby expressly amended to read as follows:

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“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.*

2. The nominee shall duly accept his nomination in writing. Said nomination and acceptance shall be submitted by the nominating lodge to the District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) not later than fifteen (15) days before the District Meeting, which shall be convened by their respective DDGMs any day from July 15 to August 15 of each year to elect their nominees for the position of JGW.

3. The nomination, once accepted, 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 shall be reported by the DDGM or Host DDGM concerned (at the Lodge, District and Multi-District levels) to the Grand Secretary; and, if unjustified, shall cause his disqualification for nomination for the next three (3) years.

4. A brother can be validly nominated in only one (1) Masonic District. Once he accepts his nomination from a particular subordinate lodge, he shall be disqualified from accepting another nomination from another lodge belonging to another Masonic District. However, a brother may be nominated by one or more subordinate lodges; provided, that said lodges belong to the same Masonic District; and provided, further, that he is either a regular or a plural member of either of the nominating lodges.

5. A subordinate lodge cannot validly nominate a brother belonging to a Masonic District other than the District where the nominating lodge belongs.

II. District Level.



6. After the receipt by the DDGM of the nominations from the subordinate lodges, each lodge in the District shall be furnished by the DDGM thru the respective Lodge Secretaries with a Certified List of all nominees not later than five (5) days before the District Meeting.

7. The qualified nominees of the District shall then be voted upon thru secret ballot by the voting members of the District during their District Meeting scheduled between July 15 and August 15 of each year. The voting members are the Incumbent Masters, Senior Wardens, Junior Wardens of the Lodges in the District, the Past Grand Masters and other Grand Lodge Officers, elected and appointed, as provided in our Constitution; provided, that they are regular or plural members of any of the subordinate lodges within that particular District. The Grand Lodge Inspector (GLI) shall not be a voting delegate. Voting members at the District Level shall vote for one (1) nominee only.

8. The incumbent DDGM and District Grand Lecturers (DGLs) shall act as the Chairman and members, respectively, of the District Electoral Committee (ELECOM) and shall not be entitled to vote. They may call on the brethren in the District to assist them in the discharge of their duties.

9. Districts with seven (7) or less lodges shall be entitled to one (1) nominee and the brother garnering the highest number of votes shall be the official nominee of that particular district. Districts with more than seven (7) lodges shall be entitled to two (2) nominees and the two brothers, who garner the highest number of votes, shall be their official nominees. Only nominees who are personally present at, and duly registered in, the District Meeting can be elected. A deliberate or unjustified absence at, as well as a deliberate or unjustified failure to register in, the District Meeting shall be tantamount to a withdrawal of candidacy which is expressly prohibited, and which will merit similar sanctions prescribed by Section 3 above. This fact shall be reported by the host DDGM to the Grand Secretary, for future reference.

Any district which fails to elect the required number of nominees shall forfeit their entitlement as provided for in the immediately preceding paragraph, for the succeeding masonic year.

10. The brethren who garner the highest number of votes according to the aforementioned entitlement shall then be proclaimed by the District ELECOM as the District's official nominee/s to be included in the Multi-District election of nominees for the position of JGW.

11. In case of a tie, the tied candidates shall exclude those with a lower number of votes. If, after excluding the candidates with a lower number of votes, a tie still remains for one slot, the same shall be broken by a toss coin and the candidate who wins in said toss coin shall be proclaimed the winner. The toss coin shall be done in public by the DDGM.

12. The DDGM shall, within ten (10) days after the proclamation by the District ELECOM, officially communicate to the DDGM of the Host District of the Multi-District Convention, the official nominees of the District for the position of JGW.



13. Within ten (10) days after their proclamation by the District ELECOM, the winning nominees shall secure a certification from the Office of the Grand Secretary to the effect that they have all the qualifications for Grand Lodge elective office, as provided for in Section 4, Article V of the Constitution, as amended by this Edict. This certification shall be submitted to the host DDGM of the Multi-District, directly or through the District Secretary, in order to qualify them for inclusion in the Consolidated Official and Certified List of nominees in the various districts for the position of JGW.

14. To avoid giving undue advantage to any incumbent Grand Lodge Officer, once he is elected as a nominee for the position of JGW at the District Level, he shall, ipso facto, be considered RESIGNED from his Grand Lodge position. The act of accepting his nomination in writing at the lodge level and his participation in the nomination process shall be the operative acts constituting his assent and acquiescence to this proviso.

III. Multi-District Level.

15. After receipt of the official list of the nominees from the Districts, the Host DDGM thru the District Secretary shall prepare and disseminate to each District a Consolidated Official and Certified List of Nominees from the various districts for the position of JGW, not later than fifteen (15) days before the Multi-District Convention. For this purpose, the Multi-District Convention to elect the Multi-District's nominees for the position of JGW shall be held from September 1 to November 30 of each year, following the schedule prescribed by the Grand Lodge.

16. On the basis of the number of Lodges and the number of members in good standing, the DDGM of the Host Multi-District shall prepare the number of Multi-District nominees by coming up with a short-list from the Consolidated Official and Certified List of District Nominees submitted by the various Districts, in accordance with the following entitlement:

Northern Luzon	4 nominees
Central Luzon	6 nominees
National Capital Region	7 nominees
Southern Luzon	4 nominees
Visayas	2 nominees
Mindanao	
Northern Mindanao	2 nominees
Western Mindanao	2 nominees
Southern Mindanao	2 nominees
Total Mindanao	6 nominees from 3 Multi-Districts
Overseas	2 nominees
TOTAL:	31 shortlisted nominees

17. During the Multi-District Convention, the Host DDGM shall publicly draw by lot the above number of nominees from the Consolidated Official and Certified List of nominees of



the various districts for the position of JGW. Thereafter, the names of the brethren drawn by lot shall be voted upon thru secret ballot, to determine the Multi-District's Official nominees in the selection process of JGW at the Annual Communication (ANCOM) level in accordance with the following entitlement, to wit:

Northern Luzon	2 nominees
Central Luzon	3 nominees
National Capital Region	3 nominees
Southern Luzon	2 nominees
Visayas	1 nominee
Mindanao	
Northern Mindanao	1 nominee
Western Mindanao	1 nominee
Southern Mindanao	1 nominee
Total Mindanao	3 nominees from 3 Multi-Districts
Overseas	1 nominee
TOTAL:	15 elected nominees

18. The brethren garnering the highest number of votes according to the entitlement provided in the preceding section shall forthwith be proclaimed by the Multi-District ELECOM as the Multi-District Convention's official nominees in the selection process at the ANCOM Level for the position of JGW.

19. Only nominees who are personally present at, and duly registered in, the Multi-District Convention may be elected. A deliberate or unjustified absence at, as well as a deliberate or unjustified failure to register in, the Multi-District Convention shall be tantamount to a withdrawal of candidacy which is expressly prohibited, and which will merit similar sanctions prescribed in Section 3 above. This fact shall be reported by the host DDGM to the Grand Secretary, for future reference.

20. The Host DDGM and his DGLs shall act as the Chairman and members of the Multi-District ELECOM and shall not be entitled to vote. They may seek the assistance of the brethren in the Multi-District to assist them in the discharge of their duties.

21. Only the incumbent Worshipful Masters and Wardens shall be the voting members of the Multi-District, including the Past Grand Masters and other Grand Lodge officers, elected and appointed, as provided in our Constitution; provided that, they are regular or plural members of any of the subordinate lodges in that particular Multi-District. The Grand Lodge Inspector (GLI) shall not be a voting delegate. Voting members at the Multi-District Level shall vote for one (1) nominee only.

22. The brethren who garner the highest number of votes according to the aforementioned entitlement (paragraph 17 above) shall then be proclaimed by the Multi-District ELECOM as the Multi-District's official nominees for the position of JGW at the ANCOM Level.

23. In case of a tie, the tied candidates shall exclude those with a lower number of votes. If, after excluding the candidates with a lower number of votes, a tie still remains for one slot, the same shall be broken by toss coin and the candidate who wins in said toss coin shall be proclaimed the winner. The toss coin shall be done in public by the DDGM of the Host District.

24. The DDGM of the host District shall, within ten (10) days after the Multi-District nomination, officially communicate and certify to the Most Worshipful Grand Master and Past Grand Masters, through the Office of the Grand Secretary, the names of the brethren who are the official nominees of the Multi-District, by way of a Consolidated Official and Certified List of Nominees for said Multi-District.

25. This Consolidated Official and Certified List, together with the respective program of governance of each nominee, shall be announced and disseminated thru The Cabletow, Grand Lodge website and a corresponding Circular of the Most Worshipful Grand Master addressed to all the Subordinate Lodges on or before December 15 of each year.

26. Upon being elected at the Multi-District Level the prohibitions and restrictions enumerated under Section 5(d.6) of Article V; and Sections 4 and 5 of Article VI, Part I of the Constitution shall strictly apply. Thus, all nominees elected at the Multi District level are strictly enjoined to follow all the laws, edicts, rules and regulations governing Masonic elections. Any breach thereof, whether done directly or indirectly, personally or thru agents or representatives shall not be tolerated. In addition to the present laws, edicts, rules and regulations, said elected nominees shall bind themselves, in writing and under the Masonic oath, to refrain from committing any or all of the following acts: (a) directly tolerate any person or group of persons to work in favor of his election; (b) attend any blue lodge meetings (except in his mother lodge), district or regional convention; (c) accept any invitation to be the speaker or lecturer in any blue lodge meeting or district or regional convention or be the guest honor or installing officer in any blue lodge installation, and attend or participate in any Masonic function, fellowship or gathering whether in the blue lodge or appendant bodies and other related institutions; (d) commit any act, directly or indirectly, in violation of Sections 4 and 5, Article VI, part I of the Constitution. Compliance with the foregoing prohibitions shall be monitored by the ELECOM and the Masonic Internal Affairs Office (MIAO). The prohibition shall last until the day of election for the position of Junior Grand Warden.

27. It is understood that the foregoing restrictions and prohibitions do not apply to situations wherein the nominees are constrained to register and be present at the District Meetings, Multi-District Conventions and ANCOM in order to be qualified to vote and be voted upon or elected as nominees for the position of JGW.

IV. Annual Communications (ANCOM) Level.

28. 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 PGMs 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.

29. 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.

30. The three (3) candidates drawn by lot shall be required to speak briefly (not to exceed ten [10] minutes each), according to the order in which their names were drawn, on their respective platform of governance, plans and programs.

31. Only candidates who are personally present at, and duly registered in, the ANCOM may be elected. A deliberate or unjustified absence at, as well as a deliberate or unjustified failure to register in, the ANCOM shall be tantamount to a withdrawal of candidacy which is expressly prohibited, and which will merit similar sanctions prescribed in Section 3 above. This fact shall be reported by the ELECOM Chairman to the Grand Secretary, for future reference.

32. The ANCOM Electoral Committee (ELECOM) shall, in accordance with and as mandated by the Constitution and this Edict, conduct the election of the Junior Grand Warden and other elective Grand Lodge Officers.

33. The incumbent Worshipful Masters, Wardens and Immediate Past Masters shall be the voting members at the ANCOM, including the Past Grand Masters and Grand Lodge officers, elected and appointed, as provided in our Constitution. The Grand Lodge Inspector (GLI) shall not be a voting delegate.

34. In the election of the JGW, the candidate who obtains the highest vote shall be declared the winner; provided, that he garners majority of the votes cast by the voting delegates. Should none of the candidates voted upon garner the required majority votes on the first balloting, the election shall proceed to a second balloting. Only the candidates who obtain the first and second highest number of votes shall be qualified to be voted upon on the second balloting.

35. The candidate who obtains the higher number of votes by plurality in the second balloting shall be proclaimed the winner and the duly elected Junior Grand Warden. In case of a tie, the same shall be broken by a toss coin and the candidate who wins in said toss coin shall be proclaimed the winner and the duly elected Junior Grand Warden. The toss coin shall be done in public by the Chairman of the ELECOM.

36. The number of votes currently required by our Constitution to elect the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden, Grand Treasurer, and Grand Secretary shall remain.

37. Immediately following the effectivity of this Edict, all Districts shall elect their respective District nominees within the period July 15 to August 15, 2015. Multi-District conventions shall be convened from September 1, 2015 to November 30, 2015 for the purpose of electing their respective nominees for the position of JGW who shall be elected during the 100th ANCOM in 2016. Thus, all lodge nominations shall be submitted to the respective Masonic Districts not later than June 30, 2015.

V. Continuity Clause.

38. Henceforth, all lodge nominations, with the written acceptance of the nominees concerned, shall be submitted to the respective Masonic Districts WITHIN THE PERIOD June 30 to July 31 of every Masonic Year, depending on the date of the District Meeting. All Masonic Districts shall elect their respective District nominees within the period July 15 to August 15 of that Masonic Year; and Multi-District conventions shall be convened from September 1 to November 30 of the same Masonic Year, in accordance with the schedule to be prescribed by the Grand Lodge.

39. The DDGMs of the different Host Districts shall, within ten (10) days after the conclusion of their respective Multi-District nominations, officially communicate and certify to the Most Worshipful Grand Master through the Office of the Grand Secretary, the names of the brethren who are the official nominees of the said Multi-Districts, by way of a Consolidated Official and Certified List of Nominees.

40. Such Consolidated Official and Certified List, together with the respective program of governance of each nominee, shall be announced and disseminated thru The Cabletow, the Grand Lodge website and a corresponding Circular of the Most Worshipful Grand Master addressed to all the Subordinate Lodges, on or before December 15 of each year.

VI. Penal Clause.

41. Any violation of this edict shall be penalized in accordance with the following schedule of penalties:

FREQUENCY OF OFFENSE	IMPOSABLE PENALTY
First Offense	Reprimand in Open Lodge
Second Offense	Suspension
Third Offense	Expulsion

VI. Repealing Clause.

42. All provisions of the Constitution, edicts, circulars and other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

VI. Effectivity.

43. This Edict shall take effect immediately and shall be read in open lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and shall be recorded in the Minutes. Likewise, the same shall be read during the District Meeting, prior to the conduct of the election.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Grand Lodge on this 25th day of April 2015, in Legazpi City, Philippines.


TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master

Attest:


DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Grand Secretary

5/8/15

TGR/DDA/vangie



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

PLARIDEL MASONIC TEMPLE

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MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III
GRAND MASTER

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

CIRCULAR NO. 26 – MW RENTOY III

**TO : ALL GRAND LINE OFFICERS, DDGMs, DGLs, GLIs, MASTERS,
WARDENS and OFFICERS and MEMBERS of SUBORDINATE LODGES
in this JURISDICTION**

SUBJECT : EXEMPLIFICATION OF 3RD DEGREE CONFERRAL

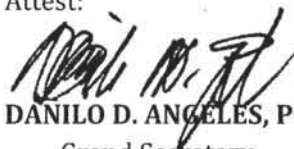
In order for the brethren to be familiar with the proper opening and closing of the Lodge and the conferral of the Third Degree (1st and 2nd sections), all Grand Line Officers, DDGMs, DGLs, GLIs, Masters, and Wardens of subordinate lodges are hereby encouraged to attend the exemplification of the above rituals with the Grand Master as King Solomon.

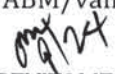
This activity shall be held on September 30, 2015 at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the Abad Santos Hall, Plaridel Masonic Temple, Grand Lodge of the Philippines and hosted by Masonic District NCR-C under VW Paul Santos Estrella, DDGM.

This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes of said meeting.

Given under my hand and Seal of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the City of Manila, this 23rd day of September, 2015.


TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master

Attest:

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Grand Secretary

TGR/DDA/JEM/ABM/vangie


**"A REVITALIZED, RELEVANT AND REVERED PHILIPPINE FREEMASONRY:
OUR COMMITMENT, OUR COVENANT"**



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MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III
GRAND MASTER

DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

CIRCULAR NO. 24 – MW RENTOY III

**TO : ALL GLOs, DDGMs, DGLs, MASTERS, WARDENS and OFFICERS
and MEMBERS of SUBORDINATE LODGES in this JURISDICTION**

**SUBJECT : TESTIMONIAL DINNER TO HONOR OUTSTANDING FREEMASONS
IN GOVERNMENT AND/OR PUBLIC SERVICE**

History records Freemasons as pioneers, martyrs, heroes, liberators and nation builders.

Each year we celebrate National Heroes Day to pay tribute to all known or unknown men and women who sacrificed their lives for Philippine Freedom.

Interestingly, National Heroes Day was initially celebrated on 30th of November as it was the birthday of Andres Bonifacio, founder of Katipunan, and was a worthy Master Mason. Moreover, it is noteworthy to stress that most of our National Heroes are member of our Honorable Fraternity.

In the last one hundred years, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines was able to produce four (4) Presidents of the Republic, two (2) Prime Ministers, several Senators, Assembly men and/or Congressman, local leaders, three (3) Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Excellent Educators, and Brilliant gentlemen in the Military and Police hierarchy.

Indeed our country achieved its identity due to the noble deeds made by number of freemasons as recorded by our history.

Thus, it is but fitting that the Grand Lodge of the Philippines honor these great and influential Freemasons in our history by remembering the lives and works of all these great and honorable men through a Testimonial Dinner in honor of the new generations of Freemasons in Government and/or Public Service, who best emulate the ideals and principles set by their predecessors.

For this purpose, our Grand Lodge will be hosting a Testimonial Dinner for Outstanding Freemasons in the Government and/or Public Service on 16 September 2016 at 6:00 o'clock in the evening at the Aguinaldo Hall, Plaridel Masonic Temple, Ermita Manila

**“A REVITALIZED, RELEVANT AND REVERED PHILIPPINE FREEMASONRY:
OUR COMMITMENT, OUR COVENANT”**

In relation, all District Deputy Grand Master are requested to submit the names of these outstanding Freemasons in the Government Service, who will be honored and awarded, and who are members in good standing within their respective masonic jurisdictions.


This Circular shall be read in open Lodge at the Stated Meeting next following its receipt and action thereon duly recorded in the Minutes of said meeting.

Given under my hand and Seal of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the City of Manila, this 28th day of August, 2015.



TOMAS G. RENTOY III
Grand Master

Attest:



DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Grand Secretary

TGR/DDA/vangie

my
8/28

THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MASONIC RITUALS & CEREMONIES

Prescribed Masonic Education for the Month of September 2015

By: VW Caesar M. Ortega, GH

- Definitions and Concept; their role in Masonry.
- Their significance; are they really necessary? Or do they only delay the meeting & fellowship?
- Some examples: Perambulation, Circumambulation, Rite of Disalceation, Book of Ruth.
- The 3 Lesser Lights; which is which; common mistakes.

As defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, RITUAL is a formal ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way; an act or series of acts done in a particular situation and in the same way each time; or regularly repeated in a set and precise manner.

It is also defined as: the performance of certain acts and/or utterance of certain words in order to demonstrate, explain or teach some mystery. It is an external demonstration consisting of words and/or acts for the purpose of conveying a deeper meaning.

MASONIC RITUAL, on the other hand, refers to the scripted words spoken and/or the actions or floor works that are performed in the opening and closing of a Masonic Lodge, the performance of degree works and all other fixed or prescribed proceedings undertaken therein, for the purpose of conveying or imparting lessons, doctrines, concepts and ideas, through the use of symbolisms and allegories. Our rituals are of two kinds, NARRATIVE and PARTICIPATORY. The narrative parts are informative and educational. They explain traditional histories. The other parts involve the participation of the candidate. These would include the obligations, and the

examinations conducted by the designated examiner.

SYMBOLISM: The art or practice of using symbols, especially, by investing things with a symbolic meaning. It is the use of symbols to express or represent ideas, concepts or qualities. Thus, the square symbolizes morality. The level symbolizes equality (not literally, but equality in difference and unity in diversity). The plumb symbolizes rectitude of conduct and integrity or uprightness in life.

ALLEGORY: A story or a written, oral, or visual expression in which the characters and events are symbols that stand for ideas, concepts, teachings and generalizations about human conduct or experience, including political, historical or religious situations. The most common examples are fables and parables. Thus, in Masonry, we have the legend of Hiram Abiff.

Having said all that, what then is the purpose and objective of Masonic rituals and ceremonies?

The PURPOSE of Masonic rituals and ceremonies (*or the reason why we are doing it*) is to demonstrate and

teach Masonic doctrines, lessons and concepts through *symbolisms* and *allegories*; and the OBJECTIVE (*or the set tasks that we want to accomplish*) is to improve our character and make us better men.

Having observed and having been a part of numerous Masonic rituals and ceremonies, some of us have become so used to them that they have become dull and boring. When that happens to us, we can be sure that we have lost or forgotten the purpose and objective of our Masonic rituals. Since the purpose of our rituals is to impart Masonic concepts, ideas and teachings, it is imperative that those who already know it, or the “veterans”, must be able to communicate and impart the same to the neophytes, in the most impressive, solemn, meaningful and effective manner. By manifesting signs of boredom, nonchalance and lack of interest during rituals, the so-called “older” masons are sending the wrong signals to the younger ones.

To prevent this from happening, it is important that we should never lose sight of the significance, solemnity and the desired impact of our Masonic rituals. One way of achieving this is to regard each and every ritual with great respect and reverence, such that no matter how grand the planned fellowship is; and no matter how late the hour is, our rituals should NEVER be rushed nor performed in a perfunctory manner. Simply because a priest is running late for his birthday party will NOT justify skipping some parts of the Holy Mass or rushing the prescribed prayers. Just because a surgeon has to attend his 25th wedding anniversary celebration will NOT justify making 5 stiches on his patient when what is required is at least 8 stiches; and similarly, just because the lodge members are already hungry will NEVER justify the hurried, careless, superficial or cursory performance and execution of the opening or closing rituals and all other Masonic rituals, for that matter. Certainly, nobody will die of hunger if we perform our rituals with utmost solemnity, respect and reverence.

It is elementary that the opening and closing rituals of a Lodge are mandatory and should be conducted with utmost solemnity and decorum. There is no question

about that. The opening or closing of a lodge in short or ample form may only be allowed under a few exceptions, i.e., (a) In extreme emergency or calamity, as determined by the Worshipful Master (*MLB Part II, Art. IV, Sec. 2[g]*); (b) The GM has the authority to open or close the Grand Lodge or any Lodge in short form provided the opening and closing prayers are given. (*MLB Part I, Art. IX, Sec. 2[d]*); and (c) The DDGM has the authority to close a lodge in short form even with the presence of the Grand Master, during tyled or public installation of officers, or a Host Lodge or Lodge which opens for a District Convention, Multi-District Convention or Regional Convention, PROVIDED, that it is done after the flag is retired and the closing prayer is rendered and the Altar attended to. (*MLB Part I, Art. XXXII, Sec.[J]; and Edict 85 (Puno) and GM Circular of MW Agustin V. Mateo, found in pp. 145-146 of our [MLB, Centennial Edition]*). Needless to state, unless specifically authorized, there are no shortcuts in opening and closing a lodge.

Aside from the opening and closing of a lodge, the following are a few selected examples of Masonic Rituals and their significance:

1. The Rite of Perambulation or Circumambulation: Both have the same meaning, i.e., to walk around a central point or object and, in ordinary English, may be used interchangeably. In Masonry, both are performed in a clockwise manner around the altar by the candidate, guided by the Senior Deacon. However, in our Monitor, it will be observed that the term perambulation is used particularly to refer to that portion of the ritual where the candidate is guided by the Senior Deacon in walking around the altar, in a clockwise direction, while the latter recites certain verses from the Volume of Sacred Law. The particular verses depend on the degree being conferred. During the perambulation, the Worshipful Master is required to remove his hat as a manifestation of respect for the Volume of Sacred Law and the Great Architect of the Universe.

Both the perambulation or circumambulation are patterned after the movement of the sun as it is seen

from the earth, moving from East to West by way of the South. The candidate's journey around the altar enables the brethren to observe that he is duly and truly prepared.

Perambulation should teach the candidate that Freemasonry is a progressive moral science; and that life is a progressive journey through which each must travel toward his ultimate destiny under the guidance or instructions of a Supreme Being, as relayed to us through the Volume of Sacred Law (VSL).

2. The Rite of Discalceation. The Rite of Discalceation (in the First Degree) is a symbol of reverence and utmost sincerity. It signifies that the spot (altar) which is about to be approached in a humble, sincere and reverential manner is consecrated to some holy purpose. In the lecture of the First Degree, we learned about an ancient custom in Israel adopted by Masons concerning redeeming and changing: that to confirm all things, one plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor – this was testimony in Israel.

In the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth, particularly the 7th and 8th verses, we read: "Now this was the manner in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for Thee. So he drew off his shoe."

"Redeeming" here means the taking back or recovery of land or property pledged for a debt; "changing" refers to the transfer of ownership. As both are of utmost importance, then and now, it is clear that the plucking-off of the shoe (not shoes), as a pledge of honor and fair dealing, was of great significance, akin to swearing under oath when documents are notarized before a Notary Public.

3. The Three Lesser Lights. Which is which? According to MW William H. Taylor, PGM of the MWGLP, the light in the East is dedicated to the Master of the

lodge, the one in the West to the sun and the one in the South to the moon. As the Master sits in the East the light dedicated to the Sun is on his right hand; the one to the Moon is on his left. This also explains why the jewels of the Senior and Junior Deacons who likewise sit on his right and left bear the representations of the Sun and of the Moon, respectively.

Therefore, in that part of our ritual wherein the WM points out the lesser lights to the candidate, the WM should be careful to call his attention first to the light in the West as representing the Sun, next to the one in the South as representing the Moon and finally to the one in the East as representing the Master of the Lodge. The common mistake is to point to the light in the South as representing the Sun; and the light in the West as representing the Moon.

Since the purpose of our rituals is to impart Masonic concepts, ideas and teachings, it is imperative that we are able to properly interpret and impart the meaning and significance of the words and floorworks that are integrated in our rituals; and since the objective of our rituals is to make us better men, it is absolutely necessary that the concepts, ideas and knowledge being imparted to our candidates, be used as tools and guideposts in helping us live honorable and exemplary lives. To paraphrase MW Reynato S. Puno, PGM and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines: "***Many people will not know Masonry because many people will not come knocking at our doors; but a lot more people will know what Masonry is, by the lives we live.***"

Thus, the importance of rituals. It is some kind of Masonic road map used by a travel guide to help a tourist go from one place to another; a place which the tourist has only heard of but not actually seen yet. Nonetheless, he has been assured that the place to which he is going is a good place to be. So it is essential that the guide should not only know how to read the map, but he should also know how to explain to the tourist the things or events that happen along the way during his journey. Nothing should be allowed to happen which would make the tourist afraid or uncomfortable, as the same would tend

to lessen his appreciation and understanding of the things and events, to which he may be exposed, during his entire journey.

Now, why bother with rituals. Could we not become better men without having to engage in role-playing and drama?

Well, for one, there is a FUNCTIONAL BENEFIT. We are able to learn and teach in a steady, uniform and predictable fashion. Thus, in the lecture of the Second Degree (Letter G) we are taught that *“despite the lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance and the devastations of war, Freemasonry has survived. The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue; and the mysteries of Freemasonry are safely lodged in the repository of the faithful breasts. Tools and implements of architecture are used to imprint wise and serious truths upon the memory, thereby transmitting, unimpaired, the most excellent tenets of our institution from generation to generation.”*

There is also the BENEFIT OF ORDER AND HARMONY which rituals impose upon our, otherwise, befuddled lives. Without rituals, people would be very much confused if, for instance a person would like to get married; or if a particular school would like to hold a graduation ceremony; or when a person desires to go to confession, hear mass or receive holy communion; or when we have to bury a dead relative or close friend. What do we have to do, for instance, when a government official has to assume office; or when a turn-over of command has to be made or when the citizens of a country would like to choose their leaders through elections? In all these instances, we need some guidance as to procedure and form, which we can find in rituals. Thus, in all the foregoing examples, there is a certain degree of RITUAL that is required to bring order and harmony where there is none.

Without the appropriate ritual, it would seem as if nothing important has happened, leaving us to ponder: shouldn't there have been something done that would have made an event or achievement quite distinctive and memorable? Something that would distinguish an

important event from the ordinary and routinary events that happen during our daily grind? Indeed, there should be some kind of distinction.

Which brings us to the third benefit of rituals. The BENEFIT OF MEMORY AND RECALL. One need not be reminded of how we memorize our speaking parts during degree works. One need not be reminded of how we memorize our lessons and formulas in math, physics and chemistry in preparation for school examinations. In all these, we needed to repeat, over and over, our speaking parts, lessons, formulas, etc., until we know them by heart. This act of repeating the same thing over and over until we master it and until we can do it without much effort is, in ESSENCE, what we call RITUAL, in its pure, albeit, diverse forms.

Hence, we now realize that, with the aid of rituals, we are better enabled to understand, memorize and teach masonic truths, tenets and lessons not only today but for generations to come. We are better enabled to impart knowledge not only for the benefit of one or a few candidates but even for the benefit of hundreds or thousands of candidates in the years to come. Most importantly, we are better enabled to impart Masonic knowledge without diluting or adulterating the same by improvisations, deviations and extemporizations; and to continue imparting the same quality of Masonic education despite the passage of time.

With the foregoing discussions and examples, it is hoped that both the “veterans” and “neophytes” of our ancient and honorable fraternity would take to heart our ancient rituals and consider them, NOT as dilatory procedures or superfluous obstacles to their fellowship dinner and refreshment, but as NECESSARY INSTRUMENTS FOR CONTINUING MASONIC EDUCATION.

By and through our Masonic rituals, we find it much easier to use and apply Masonic knowledge and wisdom that have been accumulated over thousands of generations, to attain the ultimate objective of Freemasonry – to help us become better men.

SPECIAL FEATURE



**GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED
MASONS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

-and-

**GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED
MASONS OF THE PHILIPPINES**



JOINT STATEMENT ON UNRECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS, THE PROPER CONFERRAL OF THE RITUAL, AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE GRAND LODGE AND ITS PROTOCOL

Dear Brethren,

The Grand Lodge of California and the Grand Lodge of the Philippines have a long and important relationship. Though there are differences between our jurisdictions, we have much more in common than not. For years now, there has been a continuing problem with organizations other than Masonic lodges exercising a negative influence on the fraternity and the lodges and members that form our respective grand lodges. Some have perceived this as a problem between the Grand Lodge of California and the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. This is not the case. Our grand lodges maintain very good fraternal relations. We seek to use this joint statement to reinforce our unity, and to point out the problems that exist and our mutual agreement on how best to resolve them.

Proliferation of Unrecognized Masonic Clubs and Organizations

It has been noted that there are Masonic organizations forming outside of the normal lodge structure that require membership in Freemasonry as a prerequisite for membership in their groups. Oftentimes, these groups will have causes and charities that their group promotes. There are other groups too, with different names. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines refers to these organizations as *allied organizations*. The Grand Lodge of California refers to these organizations as *Masonic organizations*.

In the Philippines, the following are some of the existing unrecognized Masonic allied organizations:

- (a) Grand and Glorious Order of the Knights of the Creeping Serpent (GGOKCS)
- (b) Pagong Ako Kuya, Philippines (PAKP) or Turtles
- (c) Order of the Secret Monitor (OSM)
- (d) KAMANAVA Travellers Club, Inc.
- (e) Philippine Balanghay Association
- (f) Quezon City Trowel Club

- (g) Square and Compass We Connect (SCWC Club)
- (h) All Square and Compass Clubs or Associations
- (i) All Plumb and Level Clubs or Associations
- (j) Rabbit/Blue Rabbit
- (k) All other allied organizations and similar associations or clubs already organized and existing at the time of effectivity of this Edict

In California, the following are some of the existing unrecognized Masonic organizations:

- (a) Grand and Glorious Order of the Knights of the Creeping Serpent (GGOKCS)
- (b) The Turtles

The unregulated proliferation of unrecognized and unaccredited Masonic allied organizations tends to create fragmentation and factionalism within the craft. Moreover, it has come to the attention of both grand lodges that some of these clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons admit members by conducting admission rituals that are similar or tend to resemble the rituals followed by subordinate lodges or blue lodges in conferring degrees of Masonry, and by performing or demanding the performance of acts that humiliate and/or cause injury, constitute hazing, or violate the law. There are even situations wherein Master Masons have become more active in these unrecognized Masonic allied organizations to the detriment of the subordinate lodges or blue lodges.

Accreditation of these Masonic Allied Organizations, Clubs, Societies, and Other Similar Associations of Masons

In order to prevent the proliferation of unrecognized Masonic allied organizations, clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons, our respective grand lodges have accreditation procedures and place said organizations under their jurisdiction and stringent regulation.

The Grand Lodge of the Philippines:

For its part, the Grand Lodge of the Philippines has drafted Edict No. 259-A (MW Rentoy), defining Masonic allied organizations, enumerating some of them, and providing penalties for the violation thereof. This edict will further strengthen Edict Nos. 131 (MW Choa), 131-A (MW Galvez), 245 (MW Lim Lo Suy), 259 (MW Gabionza), and Circular No. 15 (MW Lim Lo Suy), and Circular No. 10 (MW Espino, Jr.).

The Grand Lodge of California:

For its part, the Grand Lodge of California operates according to Section 1200.015 of the California Masonic Code, which states that a Mason residing in California shall not be, become, or remain a member of any Masonic organization with activities in California, unless

the Masonic organization was established or organized in this jurisdiction on September 27, 1957, or the constitution and bylaws of the Masonic organization have first been submitted to grand lodge for approval at a subsequent Annual Communication. A Masonic organization is any group, chapter, order, club, association, or organization requiring Masonic affiliation as a prerequisite to membership, other than a Masonic lodge.

Common Stand of Both Grand Lodges

There is no greater authority in your lodge than the master. The grand lodge is the only authority over your lodge and the grand master is the supreme authority over the grand lodge.

As long as unrecognized allied organizations, groups, clubs, societies, and other similar associations of Masons are tolerated in any form, they will continue to bring division and disharmony in our beloved craft.

You can help by not belonging to these organizations or supporting any effort that these groups might undertake. You can help by informing the less-informed brethren about the dangers of these groups, so that they will not fall victim to the influence of members of these groups. You can help by supporting your lodge and grand lodge over any of these groups that pretend to be affiliated with or superior to your lodge or grand lodge. There are, of course, a number of recognized Masonic organizations in our jurisdictions and you are entitled to join and be members and supporters of these organizations. If you are unsure about which organizations are recognized and which are not, please contact the grand secretary of your grand lodge for clarification. If you do not have legitimate information from your grand lodge that the organization is recognized, do not join or take part in the organization until your grand lodge provides such information.

No Conferral of the Ritual in Masonic Allied Organizations

All Masonic allied organizations, clubs, societies and other similar organizations are STRICTLY PROHIBITED from conferring degrees and other rituals (also commonly known in the Philippines as "2"d Section"), which would constitute a violation of the anti-hazing and other laws of the Philippines, the United States of America, or the State of California, or any of the constitutions, ordinances, edicts, and circulars issued by the respective grand lodges.

Proper Conferral of the Ritual

Our ritual must always be conferred in accordance with our Masonic laws and the applicable laws of our local, state, and federal governments. There is nothing about the conferral of our degrees that should intimidate, humiliate, harm, or cause distress to any person. We are charged as Masons to use our good judgment at all times. You are never to conduct yourself or allow conduct by others that would intimidate, humiliate, harm, or cause distress to any person, especially a candidate for any of our degrees. To do so is a violation of our Masonic laws and those laws that govern our respective countries. If you witness

anything, during degree conferrals and other ceremonies of Masonic organizations, that would cause this type of harm, you are to report it to your respective grand lodge immediately.

Allegiance to the Grand Lodge and Its Protocol

Our grand lodges have sovereign authority in their respective jurisdictions. We each likewise have authority over the Masons who belong to our lodges, regardless of where that Mason resides. Our grand lodges also have authority over all Masons that reside in our respective jurisdictions. So if a Mason who belongs to a lodge under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines moves to California, he continues to owe his allegiance to the Grand Lodge of the Philippines and he must obey the laws and edicts of that grand lodge. In addition, because he is a Mason and he resides in California, he is also subject to the authority of the Grand Lodge of California.

It is important, therefore, for all Masons who either belong to both grand lodges or who belong to one grand lodge and live in the territory of the other, to be well versed in the laws and customs of both grand lodges.

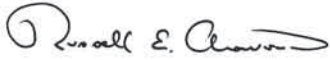
One custom that is important to adhere to is the protocol for communication between lodges and grand lodges. Any formal correspondence between lodges or between the lodge and the grand lodge must be done through the grand secretaries' offices. There should be no direct communication between a lodge or its members from one grand lodge and the lodge or members of the other grand lodge. If a lodge or one of its members under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California desires to have official communication with a lodge or member under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, the lodge or member must send this communication to the grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of California, who will see to it that it is forwarded to the grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. The same protocol applies to invitation of lodge from the Philippines to a lodge or members of the Grand Lodge of California. This applies as well to invitations to grand lodge officers. If a lodge or member would like to have communication with a grand lodge officer from a different jurisdiction, the lodge or member must make this communication through his own grand lodge. This applies to invitations for visitation.

We have agreed, as grand masters of our respective grand lodges, to decline any invitation for visitation from a lodge or member of a lodge from a different jurisdiction, unless the invitation has been received from the grand secretary of the grand lodge having jurisdiction over the inviting lodge or Mason. As an example, the grand master of the Philippines will decline any invitation to a meeting, degree, social event, or any other kind of program or gathering made by a California lodge, California Masons, or a Mason residing in California unless he has received that invitation from the grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of California. The grand master of California will, likewise, decline any invitation to meet with a lodge or a Mason in the Philippines unless the grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines has made the invitation.

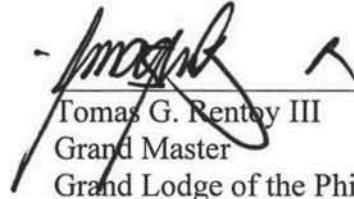
Brethren, we hope that this information will be useful as it is our desire over the next few years to build an even stronger bond between our grand lodges. We have so much in

common and we have such a strong history that we will only benefit from a strong and healthy relationship. Let us work together to end the distractions caused by unrecognized and harmful groups. Let us ensure that our ritual is properly conducted. Let us be clear about the allegiance we owe to the grand lodge and its protocols. In doing so, we will remove any obstacle that might block our trowel from spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection. Together, we can build a strong and united brotherhood of men.

With our warm and sincere fraternal regards,



Russell E. Charvonja
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of California

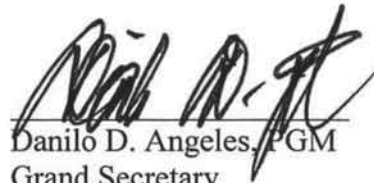


Tomas G. Rentoy III
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of the Philippines

ATTESTED:



Allan L. Casalou
Grand Secretary
Grand Lodge of California



Danilo D. Angeles, PGM
Grand Secretary
Grand Lodge of the Philippines

***Most Worshipful Danilo Angeles
PGM, Grand Secretary of the
Grand Lodge of the Philippines
with brother Elmer Andrei
Manaid of Bay Cities Lodge 337
in California attending the 166th
Annual Communication***





Most Worshipful Tomas G. Rentoy III and party poses for a shot during his U.S .trip.

THE
PROGRAMME
FOR THE
TESTIMONIAL DINNER

Ably emceed by Sis. Aimee Mariama O. Rentoy and VW Raul E. Canon, Jr., the programme for the special event consisted of the following parts:

- o *Invocation, by VW Romeo S. Musngi, Grand Chaplain*
- o *Singing of Lupang Hinirang, led by VW Francis E. Blanco, Grand Organist*
- o *Welcome Message, by MW Danilo D. Angeles, PGM, Grand Secretary*
- o *Fraternal Dinner*
- o *Testimonial Messages and Awarding of Plaques of Recognition to the Honorees*
 - For Uniformed Personnel*
Presenter: MW Rosendo C. Herrera, PGM, GMH
Response: VW Ricardo C. Marquez, Police Director General, PNP Chief
 - For the Executive and Legislative*
Presenter: MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., PGM & Governor, Province of Zambales
Response: Bro Vicente C. Sotto III, Senator, Senate of the Philippines, 16th Congress
 - For the Judiciary and Academe*
Presenter: MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM
Response: VW Magdangal M. de Leon, Associate Justice, Court of Appeals
- o *Introduction of the Grand Master, by VW Alexander B. Madamba, Asst. Grand Secretary*
- o *Message of MW Tomas G. Rentoy III*
- o *Fellowship*

The Honorees

LEGISLATIVE

Senate of the Philippines, 16th Congress

Bro. Vicente C. Sotto III

House of Representatives

1. **WB Manuel S. Agyao, Kalinga, Lone Dist.**
2. **Bro. Leopoldo N. Bataoil, Pangasinan, 2nd Dist.**
3. **VW Leo Rafael M. Cueva, Negros Occ. 2nd Dist.**
4. **Bro. Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez, Laguna, 1st Dist.**
5. **WB Luis A. Ferrer IV, Cavite, 6th Dist.**
6. **Bro. Lawrence Lemuel H. Fortun, Agusan Del Norte, 1st Dist.**
7. **VW Arnulfo F. Go, Sultan Kudarat, 2nd Dist.**
8. **Bro. Jeffrey B. Khonghun, Zambales, 1st Dist.**
9. **Bro. Roy M. Loyola, Cavite, 5th Dist.**
10. **Bro. Mark Llandro L. Mendoza, Batangas, 4th Dist.**
11. **VW Henry S. Oaminal, Misamis Occ., 2nd Dist.**
12. **Bro. Raden N. Sakaluran, Sultan Kudarat, 1st Dist.**
13. **Bro. Hadjiman S. Salliman, Basilan, Lone Dist.**
14. **RW Abraham N. Tolentino Cavite, 7th Dist.**
15. **Bro. Jerry P. Treñas, Iloilo City, Lone Dist.**
16. **VW Peter M. Unabia, Misamis Oriental, 6th Dist.**
17. **Bro. Carlos Isagani T. Zarate, Party List Bayan Muna**

JUDICIARY

Supreme Court Associate Justice

Bro. Arturo D. Brion

Court of Appeals Associate Justice

1. **WB Oscar B. Badelles**
2. **Bro. Romeo F. Barza**
3. **Bro. Danton Q. Bueser**
4. **VW Magdangal M. De Leon**
5. **Bro. Samuel H. Gaerlan**
6. **Bro. Edgardo T. Lloren**
7. **Bro. Jhosep Y. Lopez**
8. **Bro. Elihu A. Ybañez**

Regional Trial Court Judges

1. **VW Maximo R. Ables**
2. **VW Jeoffre W. Acebido**

3. VW Alsad H. Alfad, Jr.
4. Bro. Alfredo D. Ampuan
5. VW Maximo B. Ancheta
6. Bro. Sergio T. Angnganay
7. Bro. Paul R. Attolba, Jr.
8. VW Agerico A. Avila
9. Bro. Antonio Camillos A. Ayo, Jr.
10. VW Jose L. Bautista, Jr.
11. VW Crisologo S. Bitas
12. VW Edgar I. Atilo
13. Bro. Antonio L. Del Val
14. VW Nery D. Duremdes
15. WB Erwin Virgilio P. Ferrer
16. VW Pepito B. Gellada
17. VW Leo L. Intia
18. VW Edwin G. Larida, Jr.
19. WB Ivan Kim B. Morales
20. Bro. Bonifacio S. Pascua
21. Bro. Roberto P. Quiroz
22. VW Joselito E. Villarosa, Jr.

EXECUTIVE

Governors

1. MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., Zambales
2. Bro. Esmael G. Mangudadatu, Maguindanao
3. VW Suharto T. Mangudadatu, Sultan Kudarat
4. VW Aurelio M. Umali, Nueva Ecija
5. Bro. Wilter Y. Palma, Sibugay
6. Bro. Victor A. Yap, Tarlac

City Mayors

1. Bro. Melandres D. De Sagun, Trece Martires
2. VW Alfredo D. Maranon III, Sagay City
3. VW Noel E. Rosal, Legazpi City
4. VW Rolen C. Paulino, Olongapo City
5. WB Ferdinand D. Tubban, Tabuk

CABINET SECRETARIES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES,

UNDERSECRETARIES & COMMISSIONERS

1. RW Voltaire T. Gazmin, Secretary, DND
2. Bro. Peter Irving C. Corvera, Undersecretary, DILG
3. Bro. Fernando I. Manalo, Undersecretary, DND
4. RW Romeo S. Momo, Undersecretary, DPWH
5. VW Nabil A. Tan, Undersecretary, Office of ---
6. WB Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon Commissioner, Human Rights
7. VW Gadwin E. Handumon Commissioner, Nat'l Anti Poverty

ACADEME

1. VW Ruperto S. Sangalang, CHED, Commissioner
2. WB Samuel O. Benigno, President, Quirino State Univ.
3. WB Monsito G. Ilarde, President, Camarines Norte State Univ.
4. Bro. Ricardo E. Rotoras, President, Mindanao Univ. of Science and Technology

FOREIGN SERVICE

1. VW Generoso DG. Calonge
2. Bro. Wilfredo R. Cuyugan

UNIFORMED PERSONNEL

Star Rank Officers

Armed Forces of the Philippines

1. VW Romeo G. Gan
2. Bro. Leoncio A. Cirunay
3. Bro. Ignacio A. Obligacion
4. Bro. Ricardo A. Visaya
5. Bro. Arnold M. Quiapo
6. Bro. Romeo Santiago O. Nebres

Philippine National Police

1. VW Ricardo C. Marquez
2. VW Juanito B. Vaño, Jr.
3. Bro. Rosauro V. Acio
4. Bro. Roberto L. Aliggayu
5. Bro. Miguel C. Antonio, Jr.
6. Bro. Ramon C. Apolinario
7. Bro. Noel P. Armilla
8. Bro. Prudencio Tom T. Bañas
9. WB Elmer C. Beltejar
10. Bro. Conrado S. Capa
11. VW Regino S. Catiis
12. VW Lyndell A. Desquitado
13. Bro. Bernardo A. Diaz
14. Bro. Sergio A. Dimandal
15. Bro. Asher A. Dolina
16. Bro. Manuel R. Gaerlan
17. Bro. Jose L Gentiles
18. VW Arnold D. Gunnacao
19. Bro. Ranier Q. Idio
20. Bro. Edgar L. Layon
21. Bro. Wilben M. Mayor
22. Bro. Jonathan Ferdinand G. Miano
23. Bro. Danilo S. Pelisco
24. VW Dennis J. Peña
25. Bro. Efren M. Perez

- 26. Bro. Robert G. Quenery
- 27. Bro. Nestor F. Quinsay, Jr.
- 28. VW Eric Serafin G. Reyes
- 29. VW Francisco DB. Santiago, Jr.
- 30. VW Keith Ernard L. Singian
- 31. Bro. Noli G. Taliño
- 32. Bro. Edgardo G. Tinio, Jr.
- 33. WB Orlando D. Ualat
- 34. VW Buenaventura M. Viray

Philippine Coast Guard

- 1. VW Luis M. Tuason, Jr.
- 2. WB Athelo L. Ybañez

Bureau of Jail Management and Penology

- 1. WB Allan S Iral
- 2. Bro. Ruel S. Rivera
- 3. Bro. Michael E. Vidamo, Sr.

Bureau of Fire Protection

- 1. Bro. Ariel Barayuga
- 2. WB Leonard R. Bañago
- 3. Bro. Aloveel B. Ferrer



Members of AFP Sojourners. Honorees for tonight's program.
RAdm Romeo Nebres AFP, BGen Obligation AFP, BGen Leoncio Agudo Cirunay Jr. AFP
Testimonial Dinner in Honor of Distinguished Masons in Government



Photos taken during the awarding ceremony as distinguished masons in the government service with PNP chief Gen Marques and several others at GLP on 16 Sept 2015.







OUR GRAND MASTER'S *MESSAGE* to Masons in Government Service

{Delivered during the Testimonial Dinner for Outstanding Freemasons in the Government Service held at the Emilio Aguinaldo Hall, Plaridel Masonic Temple (GLP Bldg.), on 16 September 2015.}

First of all, I want to convey, for and in behalf of the other officers and members of our MW Grand Lodge, my most cordial felicitations to all of you, the honorees and guests in tonight's special event.

All of you are well-admired and highly respected because of your disinterested or unselfish dedication to your various fields of endeavor and your faithful service to the Republic of the Philippines. Clearly, you are deserving of your appointment or election, as the case may be, to the various exalted and honorable positions in the government you are now occupying.

By your acts, you have reflected honor upon our venerable Institution. You represent what Masonry wants its members to be. You are, to use a phrase popularized by the late Worshipful Brother and former Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran "a band of men to whom others might look for example, inspiration and edification – men who others will say are men of honor, virtue, and charitable feelings." You have blazed the trail upon which others

may tread. I am humbled by your achievements both as men and as Masons. Indeed, like our Grand Master Hiram Abiff, you have manifested your inflexible fidelity to your trust as servant leaders. It is for this reason that we have honored you tonight with a simple token of appreciation and recognition in the form of a testimonial dinner held, not in Manila Hotel or elsewhere, but in this hall of our Grand Lodge Temple named after the President of the First Philippine Republic, Ill. Brother Emilio Famy Aguinaldo. It is our tribute to the innumerable hours you have spent, as well as the sweat and tears you have shed towards making a difference in the lives of your fellowmen. To a great measure, therefore, you have helped us, the incumbent leaders of our MW Grand Lodge, give due meaning and substance to the thematic focus of all our activities during my one-year watch in the Grand East, namely: "A Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant."

Brethren, ladies and gentlemen, let us give tonight's distinguished honorees a standing ovation!

Secondly, I want to express my heart-warm gratitude to all the dedicated brethren, as well as the Grand Lodge staff, who worked very hard to steer this special event to success and fruition.

Thirdly, I want to express my proud thanks to our dear Past Grand Masters: MW Rosendo C. Herrera, MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr. and MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., for accepting my invitation for them to be our speakers tonight.

Most Worshipful Rosendo Herrera, MW Jun Ebdane, and MW Boy Gabionza, thank you very much for gracing this momentous occasion with your presence and for sharing your wise thoughts with us, thereby adding more significance to it. You yourselves have set the inspiring and edifying example of disinterested and dedicated public service. Maraming salamat po.

Fourthly, I want to use this auspicious occasion as an opportune time for me to resound my clarion call to all brethren at the Blue Lodge and District levels that they extend to us, the present officers of our M.W. Grand Lodge, their active assistance and sympathetic support towards successfully implementing our program of reforms, which focuses on three important concerns: Guard the West Gate, Guard the Lamp, and Guard the Ballot.

In relation to our program of reforms, allow me to cite a significant statement of the late Past Grand Master and Auditor General Pedro Gimenez, who was himself a model government official during his time. He said, “No matter how heavy the task, no matter how rough and rugged the road may be, no Mason refuses to do his duty. No one among us should falter to proceed to his allotted task if that would mean for the best interest, the welfare,

and the survival of both our dear country and our beloved fraternity.”

Yes, dear brother Masons throughout this Grand Jurisdiction, we are all expected to faithfully and conscientiously discharge our duty to REVITALIZE Philippine Freemasonry and keep it RELEVANT and REVERED as an ancient and respected fraternal organization, not only among the members of the Craft, but more importantly, in our respective communities.

Finally, by way of a fraternal reminder, as you occupy your exalted positions in government, may you remain forever mindful of the principal tenets of our ancient and honorable fraternity: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Maintain your warm relations with your respective Mother Lodges or better still, make them even warmer. Preserve Charity in your hearts, or better still, be even more charitable. And above all, never forget your beloved brethren who look up to you for inspiration, guidance, and assistance -- all within the circumscribed boundaries prescribed by our Masonic principles and ideals.

With you in the government service and with other Mason achievers in the private sector; and with the blessings of the Great Architect of the Universe, I entertain no doubt that Philippine Masonry will regain its rightful place as a fraternal order that exerts a decisive influence upon the affairs of our government.

Thank you very much for lending me your attentive ear.

Masaya’t makabuluhang gabi sa ating lahat. Mabuhay ang Masonerya dito sa Pilipinas. Mabuhay po tayong lahat!!!

SPECIAL FEATURE

JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN NOMINEES

MASONIC YEAR 2015-2016



Narciso S. Salunat
Villaverde Lodge No. 206
Northern Luzon



Edilberto P. Carabacan
Nueva Vizcaya Lodge No. 144
Northern Luzon



Rolen C. Paulino
Lincoln Lodge No. 34
Central Luzon



Faustino C. Garcia
Malolos Lodge No. 46
Central Luzon



Michael DJ. David
Arcadio Evangelista Memorial Lodge No. 254
Central Luzon



Rudy L. Ong
Labong Lodge No. 59
NCR



Ricardo C. Marquez
Kagitingan Lodge No. 286
NCR



Jose A. Roncesvalles
Cosmos Lodge No. 8
NCR



Edwin P. Costes
Pilar Lodge No. 15
Southern Luzon



Edelito B. Amon
Mendez-Nuñez Lodge No. 316
Southern Luzon



Edward Y. Chua
Makabugwas Lodge No. 47
Visayas



Agapito S. Suan, Jr.
Macajalar Lodge No. 184
Northern Mindanao



Nabil A. Tan
Bud Daho Lodge No. 102
Western Mindanao



Jose A. Lim III
Sarangani Lodge No. 50
Southern Mindanao



FATHER OF PHILIPPINE MASONRY

KA SELO “KUPANG” DEL PILAR

by MW Jaime Y. Gonzales, PGM

His Birth, Parents, Studies

Marcelo Hilario del Pilar (subsequently referred to in this series of articles as Ka Selo or Bro. Kupang) was born in Kupang (now San Nicolas), Bulacan, Bulacan on August 30, 1850 to Julian H. del Pilar and Blasa Gatmaitan.

He first studied under the tutelage of Herminigildo Flores, a writer in his own right, who impressed upon his mind and heart the need to know and defend the truth. After attending elementary classrooms in his hometown, he enrolled at the Jesuit-run Colegio de San Jose, where he developed a marked fondness for letters and from where he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Then he took up Law at the University de Santo Tomas.

In 1869, however, his legal studies were interrupted because when he stood as a sponsor during a baptism, he was made to pay four reales for the curate's fees while each of the other sponsors was charged only two. Naturally, he protested over the unfairness of the mode of paying for the curate's fees. But the supercilious friar got so infuriated that he insulted Ka Selo to his face. The latter kept his peace. But before he left, he remarked, "I have no desire to remain in a place where the norms of good manners and right conduct are not observed." For this remark alone, the friar denounced Ka Selo to the police authorities, who kept him in jail for 30 days, and had him suspended from school although he was about to graduate. (Fajardo, p. 47).

It was during this period that Ka Selo immersed himself in the extensive and intensive reading of European classics, which provided him with singular delight (Del Castillo and Medina, p. 160).

In 1880, after a delay of 11 years, he finally received his licentiate in jurisprudence and therefore qualified as a law practitioner. He was then 30 years old.

He Becomes a Political Evangelist, an Ally of the Triangulo de los 33°

By this time, however, he was no longer keenly interested in practicing law. He had decided to dedicate himself totally to the service of Filipinas and her people. So, he became a political evangelist, using the town plaza, the cockpit, the wakes for the dead, and other gathering places for carrying out his campaign for reforms.

In 1882, he founded the newspaper Diariong Tagalog, which he made the mouthpiece of his nationalist movement. With the active assistance, support, and collaboration of several dedicated associates, he was able to come out with daily editions of the newspaper. As a writer, he expressed his progressive views in a very clear style. Effectively using satire and parody, he deeply deplored the backward condition of Filipinas and her people. He produced several works of biting prose under pseudonyms like Dolores

Manapat, Piping Dilat, L. O. Crame, and Plaridel. (The last two are anagrams of Marcelo and del Pilar, respectively.) He directed a few of these works at his favorite targets, the abusive friars. Unfortunately, Diariong Tagalog did not last long. At any rate, Ka Selo del Pilar is considered the “Father of Philippine Journalism.”

Ka Selo became the most ardent ally of the Triangulo de los 33°, so called because it was composed of three 33° Masons, who combined forces to reduce as far as they reasonably could the power and prestige of the abusive friars in the Philippines. He, as well as his faithful and dedicated associates in Bulacan, regarded the coming of the three 33° Masons to the country as “manna from heaven.” Together with them, he gave his unswerving cooperation to the Triangulo de los 33°, which was composed of the following 33° Freemasons:

1. Emilio Terrero y Perinat, a general who served as commanding officer in New Castille and chief of the King’s military household. He was appointed governor-general of the Philippines in 1885. He was a conservative Carlist, but after seeing first hand the abuses and avarice of the friars and their blatant disregard for the laws of the land, he gradually abandoned his absolutist and apostolic Carlist convictions and was transformed into a liberal, reform-minded, and anti-cleric government chief executive officer.
2. Jose Centeno y Garcia, the acting Civil Governor of the province of Manila, a long-time resident of the Philippines, and a mining engineer and author of several geological works on the Philippine archipelago. He was therefore appointed as the chief of the mining bureau in 1876 and served as such up to 1886. Moreover, since 1884, he had served as the Grand Delegate of the Oriente Nacional de España (National Orient of Spain). Due to his efforts, the officers and members of Luz de Oriente transferred their Lodge from the Gran Oriente de España (Grand Orient of Spain) to his Grand Orient.
3. Benigno Quiroga y Lopez Ballesteros, trained as a forester and had served in the Spanish parliament as a liberal. A protégé of Segismundo Moret, he would, in later years hold the portfolio of Interior in the Cabinet. He started serving as Director General for Civil Administration in June 1887. He used the daily newspaper La Opinion as the mouthpiece of the Triangulo de los 33°. Most of the subscribers to this newspaper were “progressive Filipinos.”

Many other Filipino patriots, as well as provincial governors and municipal justices of the peace, especially

the Masons among them, extended their support and cooperation to the Triangulo de los 33°. (Fajardo, pp. 46-57).

He Organizes, Leads a Demonstration

Together with Doroteo Cortes and Jose A. Ramos, Ka Selo organized and led the manifestation or demonstration that took place in Manila on March 1, 1888. On that day, about 300 gobernadorcillos and principales in Manila set out from the townhouse of Santa Cruz on the outskirts of Intramuros, crossed the Puente de España, and proceeded to the office of Centeno, to whom they handed a petition carrying more than 800 signatures. The petition, which was addressed to the Queen Regent, formally asked for the transfer of Archbishop Pedro Payo, the suppression of the religious orders, and the secularization of the parishes. It accused the Archbishop and the friars of violating Quiroga’s circular on funerals because they were desirous of profit, opposing the teaching of Spanish so as to be better able to exploit the Filipinos, being a great danger to the government due to their perennial hostility to the commands of civil authority, and draining the country of its wealth.

Rizal Disagrees with Ka Selo and His Group

Even at this early point, Jose Rizal and Ka Selo already had disagreements. The former believed that the petition which the demonstrators had submitted to Centeno was imprudent. In a letter to his close friend, Ferdinand Blumentritt, he said in part, “I do not think it was good to set the Queen and nation against the friars. It would have been better if my countrymen had only given the real reasons since these would have been sufficient to prove the charges.” (Cited in Fajardo, pp. 5859).

The Authorities Move Against the Triangulo de los 33°

Three days after the demonstration, the Junta de Autoridades met and placed the responsibility for the manifestation squarely on the shoulders of Centeno. He tried to explain his side, but the full might of the friars was brought to bear on him. Within a week he was forced to resign. A few weeks later, he departed for Spain.

The fall of Centeno did not deter Terrero and Quiroga from continuing their campaign for reforms. On March 31, Quiroga traveled to Malolos, where he attended a dinner which Civil Governor Gomez Florio, Captain of the Civilian Guards Galindo, and the principales of the town tendered in his honor and which was held in the house of Graciano Reyes. Aside from the hosts, Ka Selo del Pilar and Captain Jose A. Bautista were present during the affair.

A month later, there was a sharp increase in the propatria activities of Ka Selo and his group. In a confidential report to his superiors, the cura parroco of Malolos revealed that in April a large amount of anti-friar literature had circulated in the town. In that month, however, the three-year term of Terrero expired and was not extended. On the 25th of the month, he sailed for home.

Quiroga was the only one of the Triangulo de los 33° who was left in the country. But when he found out that the new Governor-General, Valeriano Weyler, was a firm believer in the iron fist and the indispensability of the friars, he too deemed it prudent to leave for home.

The Aftermath of the Departure of the Triangulo de los 33°

The departure of the Triangulo de los 33° from the country enabled the influential and powerful friars to take their revenge on the Filipino patriots, and General Weyler facilitated their retaliation. The friars succeeded in undoing the reforms which the Triangulo de los 33° had instituted. They instigated Weyler to rescind Quiroga's decree on burials and to remove from office the gobernadorcillos who had supported the decree. They saw to it that the Noli was included in the censor's list and that every Filipino caught possessing a copy of it was imprisoned. They worked hard for the restoration of Hevia Campomanes, whom Terrero had removed as cura parroco of Binondo, to his former position and for his subsequent consecration as a bishop, as well as for the conferral of the Grand Cross of Carlos III upon Archbishop Pedro Payo, whose transfer had been demanded by the demonstrators. They also exerted pressure on Emilio Bravo, the Civil Governor of Laguna who, on orders of the central administration, inquired into the size of the hacienda owned by the Dominicans and into the amount of the income they derived from increasing the rent to be paid by the inquilinos, including Jose Rizal's father. Most probably Bravo could not bear the pressure exerted on him, so that he sailed for home "to recover his health." Furthermore, the friars circulated rumors in Manila and in the provinces that "filibusteros" were planning an insurrection similar to the Cavite Mutiny.

Actually, no insurrection took place, but leaders of the reform movement were either deported or executed. In addition, they instigated Weyler to close La Opinion, the daily newspaper founded on April 1, 1887, which, as mentioned earlier, became the mouthpiece of the Triangulo de los 33°. This was closed in April 1889.

Doroteo Cortes, one of the organizers and leaders of the demonstration or manifestation of March 1, 1888, was imprisoned in Manila. The gobernadorcillos who had signed the petition given to Centeno were not only removed from office, but they were also imprisoned incomunicado in Bilibid. Police authorities searched the home of Pedro Serrano Laktaw, a teacher in Malolos. Although they were unable to find any incriminating evidence, they hauled him to prison. They also searched the La Gran Britania and the house of Jose A. Ramos for copies of the Noli, but they did not find any copy of the novel.

The leaders of the demonstration/manifestation were brought to court, but they were ably defended by Ka Selo. At first, they were accused of holding a secret meeting. But, of course, the charge did not stick. Then they were accused of committing an "offense against duly constituted authority (Archbishop Pedro Payo)," but the case was thrown out. Finally, they were charged with "falsification," but still they were not convicted. Also on the instigation of the friars, Weyler exerted pressure on Civil Governor Gomez Florio to remove Manuel Crisostomo, Ka Selo's brother-in-law, as gobernadorcillo of Malolos. Gomez Florio obliged, but he replaced Crisostomo with Vicente Gatmaitan, another brother-in-law of Marcelo. Besides, he continued to give aid and protection to Marcelo and his associates. When his recalcitrance reached the ears of Weyler, he was immediately booted out of office.

Instigated by the friars, Weyler was highly resolved to stop the activities of the principales of Malolos once and for all. He ordered a special investigation of the situation in the town and set in motion a secret administrative machinery to gather evidence against Ka Selo, their leader.

Ka Selo Organizes Comite de Propaganda before Leaving the Country

Fortunately, Quiroga at that time had not yet quit his post, and his faithful followers were able to give Ka Selo timely warning of his impending arrest and deportation.

Thus, Ka Selo forthwith got in touch with the leaders of the Manifestation in Manila and his followers in Malolos.

Ka Selo and Other Filipinos in Barcelona

Ka Selo took up residence with two Filipino Masons, Graciano Jaena Lopez and Mariano Ponce, at Rambla Canaletas 2, 3° in Barcelona, Spain.

Some writers opine that because he was close to Jose Ma. Basa and to the Triangulo de los 33°, Ka Selo must have been made a Mason in the Philippines. But there are no extant records that validate that opinion.

In any case, he apparently did not immediately collaborate with Jaena Lopez and Ponce in any Masonic activity because his first concern then was to discharge his duties as the chosen delegate of the Comite de Propaganda. So, he had his pamphlets and poems in Tagalog reprinted and arranged for their distribution in the Philippines by the Comite de Propaganda. In February, he published his most serious work in Spanish, “La Soberania Monacal” (Monastic Sovereignty), a detailed indictment of the abuses of the friars in the Philippines. (Fajardo, pp. 70-71).

In his conversations with Jaena Lopez and Ponce, as well as with other Filipinos in Barcelona, Ka Selo learned, among other things, that:

- o Not a few Filipinos craving for the “modern liberties” contributed patriotic articles to Spanish newspapers, in which they sought reforms, preached enlightenment, and spread nationalist ideas.
- o In 1882, the Filipino reformists in Spain, together with a handful of Spaniards who were friendly to Filipinos, established the Circulo Hispanico-Filipino. Originally, the Circulo was intended merely for social intercourse, but shortly after the arrival of Jose Rizal in September of that year, it was strengthened into a solidarity group. In October, it began a biweekly magazine called *Revista del Circulo Hispanico-Filipino*. In the following year, however, both the Circulo and its biweekly magazine were dissolved for lack of funds.
- o Not a few government officials and politicians who were affiliated with the Masonic fraternity took interest in the welfare of the Filipino people, defending their rights in the parliamentary tribunals and issuing decrees in their favor. Among them were ministers Segismundo Moret

and Manuel Becerra, former presidents Francisco Pi y Margall and Emilio Castelar, and above all, Miguel Morayta, a Past Grand Master of the Gran Oriente de España (Grand Orient of Spain), who would found the Grande Oriente Español (Spanish Grand Orient).

- o A significant number of patriotic Filipinos entered Masonic Lodges in Spain as early as 1876. For instance, Graciano Jaena Lopez was initiated in 1882 in Lodge Porvenir No. 2 in Madrid under the Gran Oriente de España; he adopted Bolivar as his Masonic or symbolic name. Likewise, when he was still a student in the Universidad Central de Madrid, Jose Rizal joined Acacia Lodge No. 9 in Madrid and adopted Dimasalang as his Masonic or symbolic name. Pedro de Govantes y Azcarraga, who became a delegate to the Spanish Parliament and, was the counsel in the deportation case of Manuel Timoteo de Hidalgo, a brother-in-law of Jose Rizal, also became a Mason. Enrique Ayllon, too, joined Masonry; in fact, in 1886, the 18° was conferred upon him. Tomas del Rosario, a fiery and eloquent orator, also joined Acacia Lodge No. 9.
- o Not a few Filipinos played an active role in founding Lodge Solidaridad, which was given a Charter by the Gran Oriente de España on March 30, 1886. The Charter was signed by Grand Master Manuel Becerra. The Lodge was constituted on April 4. Subsequently, it conferred on Miguel Morayta the title “Honorary Venerable Master;” and it held joint activities with Morayta’s Mother Lodge, Hijo del Progreso. But after languidly existing for a year and a half, Lodge Solidaridad was dissolved, owing, according to Rafael del Pan, who was the Lodge’s Second Vigilant, “to nothing but the schisms and conflicts which then prevailed in Spanish Masonry.”
- o In 1887, the Filipinos published a patriotic newspaper named *España en Filipinas*.
- o In 1888, at the initiative of Miguel Morayta, the Filipinos joined hands with some sympathetic Spaniards in Madrid in establishing the *Asociacion Hispano-Filipina*, whose expressed objective was to campaign for the rights of Filipinos. (Ibid., pp. 66-70).

Ka Selo Renews His Acquaintances with Centeno, Quiroga, et Alii

Ka Selo renewed his acquaintances with Centeno, Quiroga, and other Spaniards who had extended protection to him and his group in the Philippines in their fight for the

emancipation of their oppressed country and her people. These men, even in Spain, remained staunchly pro-Filipino and the Filipinos, in return, showered them with affection.

Centeno and Quiroga in turn extended assistance to Ka Selo del Pilar. They saw to it that copies of “Soberania Monacal” were distributed to Cabinet ministers and other prominent personalities. (Ibid., p. 71).

He Helps Filipino Students Launch La Solidaridad

After the dissolution of Lodge Solidaridad, a group of Filipino students organized themselves into an association which they also called La Solidaridad. Galicano Apacible, a cousin of Jose Rizal from Batangas, who went to Spain in early 1888 to complete his medical studies, was elected president; Graciano Jaena Lopez, vice-president; Mariano Ponce, treasurer; and Manuel Sta. Maria, secretary.

The members of La Solidaridad aimed at publishing a suitable organ that would become the mouthpiece of all patriotic Filipinos, but they encountered difficulties in launching their project to reality. So, Ka Selo del Pilar extended his active assistance and sympathy to them.

Thus, on February 15, 1889, the first issue of the fortnightly newspaper *La Solidaridad* appeared, with Graciano Jaena Lopez as editor. It consisted of only eight two-column pages, and no more than 500 copies were printed. In time, however, the newspaper would exert a great influence on the course of events in the Philippines. Its avowed program was “to combat all reaction and all backward steps; to applaud and accept every liberal idea and to defend progress; in a word, to be a propagandist first and foremost of all the democratic ideals, hoping that these may reign in all nations here and beyond the seas.” (Ibid., pp. 71-72)

He Writes to His Dearest Niece

Nostalgic of family and country, Ka Selo wrote letters to members of his family and to his associates in the Comite de Propaganda. On March 13, 1889, for instance, he wrote a letter to his dearest niece, Josefa Gatmaitan.

Here are some excerpts of his letter:

“The vagaries of life, which Providence in its most inscrutable design has allotted to me, had taken me away from that beautiful land where I have left

*behind the treasures of my life without even giving me the chance to say good-bye to the people I cherish and appreciate. In this letter to you, I shall try to make amends for my precipitate flight, by sending through you this my humble message to the young women of Bulacan. I feel convinced that you have been chosen, and on you depends the regeneration, the rebirth of our town. For there is no doubt of the strength and scope of woman’s influence on the family. Daughter, sister, wife, or mother – a woman offers the balm of solace that makes endurable the rigors of everyday life. More than that, she is the element that guides men to paths of virtue and courage or to the pitfalls of wrongdoing and cowardice.”*In all of these countries that I have now visited, I have found eloquent proof that where women are virtuous, vice is timid and dignity predominates in the life of man. But where feminine frivolity reigns, the men are taken up in immorality and the abandonment or disregard of the sacred duties of man is the popular way of life.” *The influence of women in the sphere of morals finds an equal reflection in the sphere of the mind. The education of women stimulates and elevates the education of men. This is why perhaps in some of foreign towns it is customary to hold periodically public contests among the students of the schools for boys and schools for girls, putting mind to mind to win valuable prizes and demonstrate their intellectual gifts....*

“Education is not a luxury reserved for a few and denied to the indigent and the female. To study is not a useless activity to be passed up in indifference and carelessly exchange for a few idle hours of gossip everyday. You see around you the tragedy of the untutored and the unlearned.

“Ask our old men and women in Bulacan and they will tell you how their lack of learning had shackled their innate dignity and made mockery of their self-respect. With tears in their eyes and despair in their hearts, they will rue their fate that had robbed them of the opportunity now opened to you. But if their mothers had been able to teach them their letters, they would not have grown in the darkness of ignorance.

“You, my dear niece, and your friends who will be the mothers of tomorrow, do not throw away this treasure. Cherish knowledge not only for yourself but that posterity may have received it from you and bless you for this legacy. Surely, for this you may well sacrifice a few hours a day, the few hours you waste so carelessly in ‘panguingue’ and idle gossip.” (For the

text of Ka Selo's entire letter to his niece, Josefa, refer to Del Castillo and Medina, pp. 162-166.)

He Helps Establish Logia Revolucion

On April 2, 1889, as shown by extant records, a meeting was held in the quarters of del Pilar, Ponce, and Jaena Lopez and was attended not only by the three but by four other Masons as well. They were Jose Ma. Panganiban, a young Filipino medical student from the Bicol region; Celso Mir Deas, a former Spanish officer who had served in the Philippines; and two Cubans named Juan Jose Cañarte (*Caridad*) and Justo Argudin. The seven immediately proceeded to establish a Lodge under the title Revolucion. Since Jaena Lopez was the highest-ranking Mason in the group (he alone held the 18°), he was elected as the first Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Argudin, 3°, was chosen Senior Warden; Mir Deas, 3°, Junior Warden; del Pilar, 3°, Orator; and Cañarte, 3°, Secretary.

The seven founders decided to place Lodge Revolucion under the Grande Oriente Español, a new obedience which was established by Miguel Morayta on January 9, 1889.

He Becomes Morayta's Close Friend

On April 16, in the course of his campaign to win adherents to his new Orient, Morayta visited Barcelona, where he met for the first time Ka Selo del Pilar, who had adopted Kupang as his Masonic or symbolic name. The two conferred with each other several times and eventually became close friends. Their friendship would have a profound influence on the direction of Philippine Masonry.

Morayta's visit of Barcelona further cemented his ties with Filipino Masons there, and it brought together the Asociacion Hispano-Filipina, of which he was the president, the association La Solidaridad, and the newspaper *La Solidaridad* in a common fight for the extension to the Philippines of the fundamental rights enjoyed by all other peninsular and overseas provinces.

After that visit, Morayta displayed increasing activities in behalf of the Filipinos. Many Filipinos in Barcelona, such as the following, took their Masonic obligation in Lodge Revolucion: Teodoro Sandico (*Libertad*);

Santiago Icasiano of Bulacan; Ariston Bautista (Balagtas) of Manila; Domingo Marcelo Cortez; Galicano Apacible (*Lanatan*) of Batangas; Damaso Ponce (*Florante*), a cousin of Mariano; Ramon Imperial; Captain Agustin Blanco from Macabebe, Pampanga; and Jose Alejandrino of Arayat, Pampanga.

Morayta must have been gladdened so greatly by the affection which members of the Lodge displayed towards him that many of them ascended to the higher degrees of Masonry "much faster than those of other Lodges." By August 30, 1889, Ka Selo del Pilar and Mariano Ponce had reached the 18°, and Ariston Bautista the 14°. On September 17, Galicano Apacible and Jose Panganiban were proposed for the 30°, and Icasiano, Damaso Ponce, and Ramon Imperial for the 18°. Eventually, Ka Selo del Pilar and Mariano Ponce became 33° Masons and held high positions in the inner councils of the Grande Oriente Español.

Filipino Masons in Barcelona Spring to Action

With the help of del Pilar and Ponce, Worshipful Master Graciano Jaena Lopez drew up a petition addressed to Prime Minister Praxedes Mateo Sagasta (*Paz*) and Overseas Minister Manuel Becerra, both Past Grand Masters, asking them not to permit administrative deportations in the Philippines.

The members of Logia Revolucion waged a campaign in which they solicited the support of all other Lodges owing allegiance to the Grande Oriente Español and those under other Obediences for their petition. A great many Lodges signed the petition, two copies of which were sent by Graciano Jaena Lopez to Miguel Morayta. In an official letter, the former requested the latter to see to it that the petition would reach the hands of the Cabinet ministers concerned. (Fajardo, pp. 66-75).

Ka Selo Extends Assistance to Lallave, Castells

Desirous of bringing religious freedom to the Philippines, Ka Selo used his Masonic connections in order to extend support to Manrique Alonso Lallave, a former Dominican priest who served as the parish priest of the town of Urdaneta, Pangasinan, and who, after reading an English Bible, became "Protestant" in his preachings. In 1870, he took advantage of a short-lived decree of Segismundo Moret

authorizing friars in the Philippines to leave their orders. This infuriated the Dominicans, who promptly expelled him from their order and forced him to leave the Philippines.

In Spain, Lallave became a Mason in Numantina Lodge under the Gran Oriente Lusitano Unido, renounced Roman Catholicism, and joined a Protestant Church called the Spanish Christian Church. Then he published a diatribe against the friars, entitled *Los Frailes en Filipinas*. In 1873, he translated the Gospel of St. Luke into Pangalato (Pangasinan dialect). This was the first translation of a part of the Bible into a local dialect. Four years later, he translated nearly the whole New Testament to Pangalato.

In 1881, he helped establish the Gran Logia Simbolica Independiente Española, and he became its Grand Orator. He also edited the Masonic journal *Taller*.

In 1889, Lallave, now 50 years old, returned to the Philippines in the company of a young Spanish Protestant pastor, Felipe de P. Castells. Their unconcealed mission was to spread Protestantism in the country. Thus, they brought with them Spanish Bibles and copies of the Gospel of St. John which Lallave had translated into Pangalato. They were to distribute these in the country, particularly in Pangasinan.

Lallave and Castells sailed for the Philippines under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the sponsorship of Overseas Minister Manuel Becerra. He was banking on the protection of a circular Becerra had issued to Governor General Valeriano Weyler, which stated that Europeans, Asiatics, and Americans in the Philippines who profess different religions “should be respected in their beliefs and in their worship.” His trip was nonetheless fraught with danger. In those days, any active propaganda in favor of a non-Catholic religion was an offense punishable by law. Mere possession of the Bible was also considered seditious and penalized with imprisonment.

In his letters to the members of the Comité de Propaganda in the Philippines, Ka Selo del Pilar exhorted them to extend all possible assistance to Lallave. Similarly, he wrote to Teodoro Sandiko and Pedro Serrano Laktaw, who at that time were still in the Philippines, and to Doroteo Cortez. A part of his letter to Serrano Laktaw reads as follows:

“... You have coming to you there in person, in body and soul, your Manrique Lallave, now a Protestant pastor. The government will not be able to prosecute him, since he is protected by a circular. If he succeeds in making proselytes, an exposition will be presented to the government with 300,000 signatories in demand

of greater tolerance and even of freedom of worship. This latter is still a remote possibility, but even toleration is already a great step against the monastic power. As to their expulsion, you know already that we cannot hope for this from the government; we have to do it ourselves.”

Lallave and Castells failed to carry out their mission because shortly after arriving in the Philippines, both of them fell ill. Castells recovered, but Lallave died.

Castells consistently claimed that Lallave and he had been poisoned. His claim was corroborated by messages sent to Lallave’s daughter. Roman Catholic writers, however, stoutly maintained that Lallave had died of a fever.

The Bibles and gospels that Lallave and Castells were bringing to the Philippines were left in a warehouse in Singapore and lay there for nine long years. It was only after the Americans entered Manila in 1898 that B. F. Randall of the British and Foreign Bible Society was able to bring them to the Philippines and distribute them in Pangasinan.

The Friars versus Alcala Zamora

Incidentally, another Mason-priest, Luis Alcala Zamora, who was in the country many years earlier, suffered a fate similar to that of Lallave. When Romualdo Jimeno, Bishop of Cebu, died in 1872 (the year Fathers Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora were executed on Bagumbayan field), the Masonic government in Madrid appointed Alcala Zamora as the new bishop of Cebu. Upon his arrival in the country, Alcala Zamora tried to take over the administration of the diocese of Cebu. Governor-General Izquierdo and his successor, Governor Juan Alaminos y Vibar, both his brothers in Masonry, tried to install him. But Archbishop Meliton Martinez successfully thwarted all their attempts. The intense fight over the installation of Alcala Zamora ceased when he unexpectedly died. His death, according to some well-meaning writers, was due to broken or ground glass which found its way into the rice he was eating. But sources friendly to the friars, true to fashion, discounted foul play as the cause of Alcala Zamora’s sudden death. (*Ibid.*, p. 75-77).

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In The UGLE, There Is No IMES

By Bro. Frank Stevens

It seems to me that there is a Filipino disease that is present at all levels and every part of society. It pervades every society, club and organisation without exception. That disease manifests itself as a need to show new members they are welcome by giving recognition. The result is “The Peter Principle”. That is when someone is promoted to their level of competence and then promoting them once more.

A neophyte Senator was seen as honest, not rooted in corruption and immediately she was inundated with requests to stand as president. It didn't matter that she had no experience in politics or that she had never wielded power in a government department. All that mattered was other candidates were suspected of being corrupt and she could defeat them. But the clamour soon stopped when it was realised that she was being advised by another Senator with questionable morals and principles.

In the UGLE, the oldest Grand Lodge of our fraternity, procedures have been developed and refined for the last 3 centuries. There is no IMES because they don't need one. In every Lodge, a new EAM will be continually assessed by his Mentors from the night of his initiation into Masonry and within a few weeks, it will be determined whether the Brother has ambitions to be more than just a Master Mason. All EAMs will be invited to attend the Lodge of Instruction and those with ambition will be assisted in learning the ritual and performing the various offices within the Lodge.

Mentors are a new innovation and were introduced to assist the EAMs with reaching their level within the Lodge. Not everyone wants to become Worshipful Master. Some will aspire to be secretary or some other position which is their forte. Either way, those who showed a desire to sit in the East, displayed a level of competency required and the ability to succeed as Master were rewarded at least 10 years after initiation. The Master last year in my Lodge in England took 12 Years and this is normal. He can perform every task in every degree including lectures and tracing board. He will have a very good knowledge of rules and procedure and he will have the Square and Compass in his heart!

Indeed, if you talk to older members of GLP, you will soon discover that historically, members were encouraged to learn not only ritual and floor works, but also The Rules and

Constitution. Ten years was a minimum time from initiation to sit in the East. We had so much in common with UGLE!

But what happens now? I know of brethren being installed as Master 2 years after initiation. 5 years is commonplace. But it is not sensible to give such responsibility to someone with so little time in the Craft. But now it is compulsory for the lights to attend IMES but in truth, this is insufficient. It gives a basic grounding in the knowledge required to be Master. That basic information requires further study so that the depth of information is acquired. The Master also requires ability and aptitude and that cannot be taught.

If you think I am wrong, why do we have VW Inspectors? It is often because the past masters in that district have insufficient knowledge to perform the task. Admittedly some cannot perform the task due to work or family commitments but why could they perform as Master but not assist with the administration of our Brotherhood?

It is a total rethink of brethren's attitude to Masonry that is required. Just because he is your friend and a good man, it does not mean you need to make him Master after 5 years of Membership.

Standards of ritual are very high but I have found that not everyone is aware of the meaning of the words he is saying. The Grand Master has made some real improvements in some areas and some retrograde steps in others. Most of all, we need to pull together so that wisdom pervades through all Lodges.

A wise Master does not have appeals filed against him or the Lodge. Every EAM, regardless of jurisdiction, is asked “Where were you first made a Mason?” And you all know the reply. Do not take this for granted Brethren. You cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear is an old English saying with so much truth. Just 5 minutes talking informally to any man will reveal whether he is a fit candidate or not. Sadly, some members do not have masonry in their hearts and we allow them to fill high offices within GLP. One thing is certain. If a brother does not make a good Mason then the fault is with the sponsors and they should also be looked at very closely. A good Mason will attract good candidates and unless your lodge attendance increases every year, then your Lodge will die! And it is all in your hands.

La Solidaridad-11

WHEREAS, La Solidaridad I was a masonic organization composed of ideologues and idealists who fought for the successful emancipation of the Filipino people from three centuries of Spanish colonization;

WHEREAS, La Solidaridad I espoused the masonic values of liberty, fraternity and equality to enthrone the Filipino people as the sovereign in their own land;

WHEREAS, La Solidaridad I would not have succeeded in restoring to the Filipino people their God given liberty and their inherent right to human dignity were it not because of a small group of masons who exposed in patriotic writings the political, economic and social abuses of the Spanish government in the Philippines at the risk of their lives and limbs;

WHEREAS, after the lapse of more than a hundred years, we see the resurrection in our time of these persistent evils of society in greater number, albeit, in different forms, hence, the need for a common effort to extirpate these abuses with haste and without the waste of time;

WHEREAS, some of these, evils and abuses devouring the vital entrails of our society, which have accumulated thru the years because of the disempowerment of the Filipino people and the discontinuation of La Solidaridad I, are: betrayal of trust and interest of the people by the so-called representatives of the people; immoral monopoly of political power by political dynasties; stranglehold by the elite of our economy; rampant corruption in the government; continuing neglect of the poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalized; unconscionable jobless growth; unstoppable flight of the OFW and brain drain; serious breakdown of peace and order; open-ended violence in Mindanao and real threats of secession; ceaseless extra judicial killings, especially of the media people; neglect of the basic socio-economic needs of the people like education, health and housing; bungling of foreign relations with US, China, Malaysia and other countries; failure to meet the mass transportation needs of the people with the inefficient operation of the MRT, LRT, PNR, etc.; rampant smuggling of taxable goods, including high powered arms, ammunitions and illegal drugs; and wanton disregard of the rule of law.

WHEREAS, the lethal virus of these societal ills have afflicted even our masonic fraternity as shown by the multiplying number of unmasonic charges being filed by our brethren against each other and worst, by the involvement of some of our masonic officials in high profile corruption cases and participation in crimes involving moral turpitude.

WHEREAS, our country is in crisis and the Filipino people need the light of masonry which can only be reflected by masons who live and lead by the moral rule dictated by the Square and Compass;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved, that La Solidaridad II, strongly urge the MW Grand Lodge of F & A Masons, our blue lodges as well as our Appendant Bodies to undertake

1. Concerted and quick efforts to awaken our brother masons to the continuing degeneration, deterioration and continuing slide of the Craft
2. Concerted and quick efforts to guard the West Gates of our blue lodges and Appendant Bodies and prevent the entry of candidates to the fraternity who are unworthy because they are driven alone by the highest of self-interests and the lowest of mercenary motives;

3. Concerted and quick efforts to reeducate our brethren of the meaning of our principal tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth and the meaninglessness of masonry if these tenets remain only as creeds and un-lived in deeds.
4. Concerted and quick efforts to discipline without delay the members of the Craft who violate our masonic landmarks, laws, customs, traditions., rules and regulations thru various acts of commission or omission;
5. Concerted and quick efforts to cleanse our putrid electoral system which allows our highest masonic offices to be dominated by men with immense purchasing power and little else and to be controlled by voting delegates to the ANCOM who are awed by the glitter of gold and unawed by the moral call of the Square and the Compass.
6. Concerted and quick efforts to purge masonry of leaders who bring dishonor to masonry and disrepute to their brother masons by their involvement in crimes involving moral turpitude and yet, still cling and cleave to the purple of the fraternity.

FINALLY, let us all be committed to the ancient call of masonry to make good men better. Only changed masons can change masonry. Only a reborn masonry can lead the rebirth of our nation.

Mabuhay ang Masoneriya. Mabuhay ang La Solidaridad II, ang Tambuli ng boses ng Bagong Masoneriya, ang Tagapagtangol ng Pilipino.

Done at Club Filipino San Juan on 17 June 2015.

Reynato S. Puno	Hiram : 88
Nilo S. Tayag	Andres Bonifacio 199
ABELARDO GARCIA P. MENDRANA	RAFAEL PALMA LODGE 147
FERNANDO S. TAYAS	ANONRES BONIFACIO 199
REYNALDO C. CABAUTAN	Malolos Lodge 46
DAVID T. TAN GANA	CAVITE LODGE # 2
QUIRINO S. CALONZO	PAGKAKAISA LODGE 282
DANILO T. PABIAN	JOSE RIZAL LODGE 22
HERBERT P. ESCALERA	LUZON LODGE #57
Sid P. Bannua	Burk Dahn 102
Horacio S. GONZALEZ	JACOBI ZIMMEL 202
RODRIGO D. BONIFACIO	LPDO WSA S.C
JOSE F. GAMBS	KAGITINGAN 286
JIM C. CABAUTAN	A. BONIFACIO 199
GREGORIO BONIFACIO	LPDO WSA SC
REYNALDO I. BERROZA	CAPITOL CITY 124
ALEX GO	SINDANGAN 46
NELSON WILLANERA	HIGH TWELVE :: 82
RUFINO G. ARIAS JR	CAVITE LODGE 2
RODRIGO B. GUTANG	110 KUTANG BATO

Reynato S. Puno

**COVER
STORY**

3RD NORTH LUZON MULTI DISTRICT CONVENTION *(SEMI ANCOM OF THE NORTH)*

By VW VAL C. SANTOS, PDDGM

INTRODUCTION

The 3rd North Luzon Multi-District Convention of Masonic Districts in Regions 1 and 2, and Cordillera Administrative Region, Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, was held on October 1-3, 2015, in Three Different Venues, at Pangasinan Provincial Capitol Complex, Lingayen, Pangasinan, with Masonic District No. R1-A (Pangasinan) and Moises J. de Guzman Memorial Lodge No. 161 as District and Lodge Hosts, respectively.

RI-A District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) VW Michael Valenzuela and Host Committee executive chairman VW Val C. Santos, PDDGM jointly reported that the onslaught of “Typhoon Kabayan,” a weather disturbance at that time, did not hamper the enthusiasm of brother master masons in coming to the Province of Pangasinan to attend the convention which had for its theme – “A Revitalized, Relevant and Revered Philippine Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant.”

The activity included opening and closing ceremonies, reception of dignitaries and special guests, elocution contests, plenary sessions, reports, automated election of nominees to the position of Junior Grand Warden, and fellowships that gathered almost 700 brother Master Masons from 53 Masonic Lodges of 9 Masonic District in the above-mentioned regions as well as from other Masonic Districts in the jurisdiction.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015 EARLY REGISTRATION AND TOUR

Brethren who registered early ahead and on October 1, with their spouses, were conveyed to Hundred Islands for island-hopping tour and sight-seeing with free bus.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2015 WREATH-LAYING, OPENING OF THE CONVENTION, ELOCUTION COMPETITIONS, AND GRANDMASTER’S NIGHT

The first activity in the morning of October 2, was the laying of wreath at the foot to the monument of the late Gov. Daniel Maramba, charter Worshipful Master of the Pangasinan Lodge No. 56, mother lodge of all masonic lodges in the province.

Earlier in the afternoon, the convention initial activities of which were conducted at the Provincial Development and Training Center, opened in public form with the reception of the Grand Lodge and Line Officers and Philippine flag.

During the program, Pangasinan Governor Amado T. Espino, Jr., represented by the Provincial Legal Officer, delivered his welcome message. Pangasinan 2nd District Congressman Leopoldo N. Bataoil, as the Guest of Honor and Keynote Speaker, delivered his keynote speech.

Elocution competitions on Letter G and Lambskin Apron followed, and were won by representatives from MD RII-D and RII-E, respectively

Later in the evening, the Grand Master's Night with the Attire Circa 60's was held at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center Gym where an Caranto Orchestra and Gov. Amado T. Espino Band played musical numbers to the delight of the attendees and awards were presented to the winners of the Night's Best in Costume Circa 60's, Convention's First To Arrive Delegation, and Biggest Delegation and the winners in the Elocution Competitions.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015 **RECEPTION OF DIGNITARIES, PLENARY SESSIONS, MASONIC EDUCATION,** **ELECTION OF NOMINEES FOR JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN**

During the morning plenary session, on Saturday, October 3 at Sison Auditorium, the convention formally received the District Deputy Grand Masters and District Grand Lecturers of the different Masonic Districts and the Grand



Lodge Inspectors of the different Lodges in North Luzon; Senior Grand Lecturer VW J. Ermin Ernest Louie P. Miguel; Junior Grand Lecturers for North Luzon East and North Luzon West, VW Mario Ancheta and Dominador Delizo, respectively; Grand Chaplain VW Romeo S. Musngi; and the Grand Master of Masons, MW Tomas G. Rentoy III.

MW Rentoy installed into office the District Deputy Grand Masters of Masonic Districts RI-CAR B and RII-A, VWs Eric Calixto and Alexander Gragasin, respectively.

One of the highlights of the convention was the conduct of a Masonic Education with VW J. Ermin Ernest Louie P. Miguel, Senior Grand Lecturer delivering a lecture that focused on different Edicts issued by the Most Worshipful Grand Master.

The Minutes and Proceedings of the 2nd North Luzon Multi District Convention held, at Tuguegarao City, Cagayan,



on December 13, 2014 was next read by Past District Grand Lecturer VW Domingo de Asis of Masonic District RII – C which was subsequently approved..

The District Deputy Grand Masters of the different Masonic Districts in North Luzon presented their respective District Reports and submitted to the host District.

Later in the afternoon, Resolutions were presented and approved as regards various masonic matters and endorsing the same to appropriate committees in the Grand Lodge.

VW Michael M. Valenzuela, presiding officer, announced that there are three (3) nominees qualified for election, and each one of them was requested to deliver a ten-minute speech in the following order: VW Edilberto P. Carabacan, RII-A, VW Narciso S. Salunat, RII- E, VW Samuel C. Parilla, RI-CAR C



Casting of votes by District and Lodges followed and was accomplished with the use of Automated and Computerized gadgets within thirty-nine (39) minutes the result, VW Narciso S. Salunat of RII-E and VW Edilberto P. Carabacan of RII-A who garnered the top two most number of votes cast, were thus duly elected and subsequently declared by VW Michael M. Valenzuela as the official nominees of the North Luzon Multi-District to the position of Junior Grand Warden.

Subsequently, at this point, the MW Grand Master Rentoy delivered his inspirational message which was anchored on the Masonic Theme. He was thus presented a handsome token from the Convention.

After which Governor Amado T. Espino played host to the delegates in a dinner-fellowship during the Governor's Night, at the Sison Auditorium, he thank the brethren that for the first time the Masons of Pangasinan visited them in his office thru the initiative of VW Michael M Valenzuela and his Grand Line Officers and members of the different lodges of Pangasinan and that Saturday night which was the final highlight of the activity.



3rd NORTH LUZON MULTI-DISTRICT CONVENTION REPORT

Host District MD RI-A

October 2-3, 2015

Capitol Compound, Lingayen, Pangasinan

MASONIC DISTRICT	LODGE	NO. OF REGISTERED ATTENDEES	
RI-CAR-A	APAYAO LODGE No. 396	7	
RI-CAR-A	BESSANG PASS LODGE No. 314	7	
RI-CAR-A	BONTOC LODGE No. 140	7	
RI-CAR-A	MAMPIYA-AN LODGE No. 284	5	Worshipful Master-Absent
RI-CAR-A	RIO CHICO LODGE No. 182	4	Worshipful Master-Absent
RI-CAR-B	BAGUIO LOGDE No. 67	27	
RI-CAR-B	DIEGO SILANG LODGE No. 417	10	
RI-CAR-B	LA TRINIDAD LODGE No. 344	10	
RI-CAR-B	SIETE MARTIRES LODGE No. 177	10	
RI-CAR-B	UNION LODGE No. 70	10	
RI-CAR-C	ABRA LODGE No. 86	8	
RI-CAR-C	ANGALO LODGE No. 63	16	
RI-CAR-C	LAM-ANG LODGE No. 164	8	
RI-CAR-C	LAOAG LODGE No. 71	12	
RI-A	AGNO LODGE No. 75	19	
RI-A	ALFONSO LEE SIN LODGE No. 158	20	
RI-A	EDILBERTO TAMONDONG SR. LODGE No. 217	8	
RI-A	HUNDRED ISLAND LODGE No. 201	10	
RI-A	MANGALDAN LODGE No. 354	11	
RI-A	MOISES J. DE GUZMAN LODGE No. 161	33	
RI-A	PANGASINAN LODGE No. 56	17	
RI-A	URDANETA LODGE No. 302	19	Worshipful Master-Absent
RII-A	ARI-TAN LODGE No. 279	12	
RII-A	GUILLERMO BONGOLAN MEM. LODGE No. 330	11	
RII-A	MAGAT LODGE No. 68	8	
RII-A	SALINAS LODGE No. 163	11	

RII-B	AURORA LODGE No. 405	8	
RII-B	CASIL CREEK LODGE No. 340	8	
RII-B	ISABELA LODGE No. 60	7	
RII-B	MALLIG PLAINS LODGE No. 191	8	
RII-B	PINACANAUAN LODGE No. 318	10	
RII-B	SAN MARIANO LODGE No. 307	4	
RII-B	TUMAUNI LODGE No. 251	7	
RII-C	GONZAGA LODGE No. 66	9	
RII-C	GUALBERTO C. AGATEP MEM. LODGE No. 341	3	
RII-C	ITAWES LODGE No. 215	11	
RII-C	MABINI LODGE No. 39	26	
RII-C	SANCHEZ LODGE No. 233	7	
RII-C	TUGUEGARAO LODGE No. 408	9	
RII-D	CAGAYAN VALLEY LODGE No. 133	11	
RII-D	DIFFUN LODGE No. 317	11	
RII-D	GANANO LODGE No. 313	7	
RII-D	MAHARLIKA LODGE No. 180	7	Worshipful Master-Absent
RII-D	PINAPPAGAN LODGE No. 353	8	
RII-D	SAN MATEO LODGE No. 319	12	
RII-D	SARANAY MASONIC LODGE No. 193	13	
RII-D	TIMPUYOG LODGE No. 343	9	
RII-D	RUFINO S. ROQUE MEM. LODGE No. 289	0	
RII-E	CORDILLERA LODGE No. 178	13	
RII-E	IFUGAO LODGE No. 218	14	
RII-E	MT. PALALI LODGE No. 420	14	
RII-E	NUEVA VISCAYA LODGE No. 144	16	
RII-E	VILLAVERDE LODGE No. 206	9	

JGW Nominee:

1. VW Narciso Salunat
2. VW Edilberto Carrabacan

Submitted By:

VW MICHAEL M. VALENZUELA
Host DDGM

SPEECH

THE MEANING AND PURPOSES OF SPECULATIVE OR PHILOSOPHICAL MASONRY

Its origins, its accomplishments, the historical reasons for its pre-eminence. The continuing relevance of freemasonry to mankind along the centuries, past, present and future

By VW Bro. Armando G. Cazzola

This Speech / Lecture written by VW Bro. Armando G. Cazzola, of IMES [Institute of Masonic Education and Studies, Grand Lodge of the Philippines] , Junior Grand Lecturer for Southern Luzon (2015), was delivered on Saturday May 16, 2015 at a gathering of Masonic Lodges of various Grand Jurisdictions, organized by MacArthur Lodge 183 (GLP) in Seoul, South Korea and was again delivered at the Joint Cavite Masonic Districts' Convention on Saturday August 15, 2015 at General Trias, Cavite.

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS :

WHENCE CAME WE?

WHITHER ARE WE TRAVELLING ?

WHAT ARE WE IN SEARCH OF ?

THE MEANING OF FREEMASONRY AS THE KEY TO ITS STAYING RELEVANCE TO MANKIND ALONG THE CENTURIES, PAST, PRESENT AND.....FUTURE.

Let us briefly clarify first what is meant when we mention “ Freemasonry “. I found recently, in a book of the late 1800 about Continental European Masonic Orders (Grand Orient), [of which the Masonic Heroes of the Philippine Reform, Propaganda Movement, La Liga , Katipunan and Revolution were members] , the following definition : “Masonry is a World-wide Association of Elected Men, who have chosen, to be guided throughout life by the LOVE OF GOD, called Grand Architect of the Universe, and by the LOVE OF MANKIND (or Humanity), and who rule their life by the principles of the NATURAL LAW and conform to a UNIVERSAL SYSTEM OF MORALITY. Freemasonry stands for Truth, is the Bearer of “Light”, the Champion of Human Rights and Basic Freedoms for everyone; Freemasonry bases all

its actions on the principles of EQUALITY , UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD and CHARITY. The Weapons of Freemasonry are PERSUASION and GOOD EXAMPLE; its Products are VIRTUE, SOCIABILITY and PROGRESS. Freemasonry, as a Universal Brotherhood, targets the achievement of PERFECTION and HAPPINESS for Humanity, and in its quest for it, does not discriminate about race, nationality, color or religion, as in fact it embraces the whole of Mankind”.

Freemasonry is not a Religion, and does not promise Salvation; it admits to its ranks only men who believe in God and afterlife, and does not accept atheists; it is an Initiatic Society, a progressive moral science which targets the betterment of Mankind, a Beautiful

System of Morality, Veiled In Allegory, Illustrated by Symbols.

To understand the hidden meaning of Masonic Symbols, is to understand the essence of Masonry. ALBERT PIKE, greatest of Masons as he was greatest of mystics, says, *“Masonry . . . follows the ancient manner of teaching. Her symbols are the instructions she gives; and the lectures are but often partial and insufficient one-sided endeavors to interpret those symbols. He who would become an accomplished Mason must not be content merely to hear or even to understand the lectures, but He must, aided by them, STUDY, INTERPRET AND DEVELOP THE SYMBOLS FOR HIMSELF.”*

SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY started to be active towards the end of 1500, when, Lodges of OPERATIVE **FREE MASONS**’ “the Stonemasons; the Cathedral Builders” started to **ACCEPT** NON-OPERATIVE Members. Thus Enlightened, SPECULATIVE or Philosophical Masons, were ACCEPTED into Lodges of Operative FREE MASONS, and started to call themselves **FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS**. Speculative Freemasonry grew in number of adepts and activity in 1600 and organized itself into the first Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons on June 24, 1717 feast of St. John the Baptist, in the eve of Summer Solstice, in London, UK. In 1723 a Masonic Constitution (Anderson) was promulgated; in 1725 the Degree of Master Mason and the Hiram Legend were created and introduced. In 1751 a rival Grand Lodge (Called Grand Lodge of the Ancients) was formed, due to disagreements, among Masons, on several issues which included the number of Masonic Degrees for Symbolic Lodges. The two Grand Lodges eventually agreed to settle the issues and fixed the number of degrees of Symbolic Lodges to the present three, and the final agreement reads : the Symbolic Lodges Degrees are three and the Royal Arch is part of the third Degree. In 1813, on December 27, feast of Saint John the Apostle, on the eve of Winter Solstice, the two Grand Lodges became the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), also called The Mother Grand Lodge of the World, whose recognition is up to now needed by Grand Lodges, in order to be considered part of main

stream Masonry. During the years of the “Illuminism” or “Enlightenment”, 1600, 1700, Speculative Masons were a cultural elite “the enlightened ones” and in the political system then existing in continental Europe and the Colonies, which was founded upon the divine right to govern, with monarchs wielding absolute power of life and death over their subjects, Masons started bringing forward the “revolutionary” concepts of the Natural Law (by Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, others), every man is born free, equal and innocent, power shall emanate from the people and not from divine right, education is a right of everybody, there shall be separation of state and church, and basic human rights shall include freedom of thought, of speech, of assembly, of worship, the right of “habeas corpus” , among others. Eventually as a product of Masonic ideas and activities, the old political systems were overturned, the colonies became independent countries, democratic constitutions, patterned on Masonic Principles, were adopted: examples are the American revolution and eventual independence of USA, the French revolution, and progressive dismantling of all the absolutists political systems in Europe, Central and South America, and the Philippines. Freemasonry provided the Ideals, the principles and motivation *Liberte’ Fraternite’ Egalite’* (Freedom, Universal Brotherhood and Equality) and the Masons fought for it, often at the cost of their lives, and succeeded to change the world : George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire the French Jacobins, Mazzini and Garibaldi, Jose Rizal, Marcelo Del Pilar, Emilio Aguinaldo, Simon Bolivar, are but few among the multitude of Masons who introduced democracy to their Countries. Also Dr Sun Yang Sen, the father of modern China was inspired and driven by the ideals and principles of Freemasonry . Freemasonry was then (1700 and 1800) relevant and respected, as the catalyst of political and social change, the motivator of democracy, the protector of basic freedoms and human dignity.

The 1700 and 1800 were also the years when Masonic rituals, as we practice today, were created and codified. We often hear and read about the legendary origins of Masonry dating back to ancient Egypt and further back: in reality Speculative or Philosophical

Masonry as we know and practice today, with Grand Lodges as regulatory bodies, dates back to 1717, year of the foundation of the Grand Lodge of England. However the most important component of freemasonry, its Initiatic Philosophy and nature date back several millennia, to the ancient school of mysteries, the initiatic philosophical schools of antiquity among which, for two Millennia, the most famous was the **Mysteries' School of Eleusis (1600 BC – 400 AC)**, where the initiates had to progress thru three degrees, with a fourth degree reserved for priesthood. From "Eleusis", over the two millennia of its existence, "graduated" a multitude of the great men of antiquity, including one of the Apostles. The Schools of Mysteries, thru constant practice, the teachings of the Masters, meditation, and the show of dramatic performances were bringing the initiates to a progressive status of purification of the soul, and illumination of the intellect, toward that status of perfection and inner happiness, which was expected to allow the initiates, after death, as Plato (Himself an Initiated) stated in "Socrates' Phaedo", "to commune with the Gods".

We have seen, how relevant has been Masonry in the past centuries, the demiurge who has fought and defeated the old absolutist monarchies, has molded modern democratic societies and given back dignity to the common man

The path that Freemasonry sets for the initiates, thru the rituals of conferrals, has the same target of the ancient schools of mysteries, that of reaching, thru various stages of purification and study, the final status of Harmony, Perfection and Illumination, all of which allow the soul of man to regain that original spark of divinity, which was given to man at creation and had become "dormant" with the allegorical ejection from the Garden of Eden.

The path to perfection for Masons starts at the opening of the Lodge on the first Degree, with the WM asking : Bro SW. what came you here to do ? and the SW answering : ***"To learn to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry"***. This in a nutshell is the program set for each and every Mason: to learn

to subdue our passions,[greed, arrogance, violence, avarice, egotism, gluttony, bad temper, bigotry among others] and improve ourselves in Masonry, by practicing Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, by actively participating Masonic meetings, ceremonies, and the various activities of the Lodges.

It is of paramount importance that we Masons learn by heart Masonic Symbolism, in fact Masonry has hidden into the its Symbols enormous amount of wisdom, and in fact, the entire Philosophy of Masonry. Masonic Symbols point us Masons to the path leading to spiritual perfection. Freemasonry teaches humility "a poor blind candidate" and encourages patience "await a time with patience", indicates which "way" we shall follow "from west travelling East", where East is the source of "Light", symbolically intended as the Light emanating from God; the letter "G" suspended in the East. Masonry motivates brethren to improve themselves in Masonry, to be enlightened, "desire to be brought from darkness to light", sets the target "in search of more light in Masonry". We shall note that not all the symbols of Masonry are tools, in fact one of the most powerful and most frequently used symbols is "Light", light as opposed to darkness, light representing knowledge, as opposed to ignorance; "Light" representing a status of grace, of spiritual illumination, as opposed to "darkness" which symbolizes ignorance and lack of spirituality. Masonry has infused and hidden into symbols (example letter "G"), and tools (example Plumb, level, square, compasses, 24 inch gage, the rule, the Apron, the Gavel, the Trowel), into certain words (example Light, West, East, five points of fellowship), and into "Allegories" ("Pay the Craft their WAGES, if any be due, that none may go away dissatisfied, Harmony being the strength and support of all Societies"...i.e. give merits where due, the wages of Masonry being of spiritual nature) all the teachings that are necessary for us to be good masons, which is to be Good Men on a life-long path leading "EAST", toward the "LIGHT", trying to achieve "SPIRITUAL PERFECTION" that is to find the LOST WORD and the LIGHT : ***"John.1 [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."***

[4] *In him was life; and the life was **the light** of men.*

[5] *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”*

The Symbolism is clear, for the learned or “well informed” Mason, the “lost Word” symbolically representing that “lost” spark of DIVINITY, the Eternal Soul, given by GOD to man at creation by blowing His Own Spirit into man’s nostrils to give him life, [Genesis Chapter 2, Verse 7 **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”**] That spark of divinity which was allegorically lost, or had become dormant, when man, allegorically, was exiled from the Garden of Eden, [Genesis Chapter 3 Verses 22-23-24 “ [22] **And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: [23] Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. [24] So he drove out the man”**]. The material body of men eventually dies, decomposes and becomes dust, while the spirit or soul of men is of divine and eternal nature, [ECCLESIASTES Chapter 12, Verses 5 & 7 : [5] **....man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: [7] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”]**

The “Poor Blind Candidate’s” quest for Masonic “LIGHT” had started with the brethren’s solemn prayer **“Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Father of the Universe,and grant that this Candidate for FM may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us....”** and eventually at the end of the “Tragedy” of the third degree and before the Raising that is its culmination, the Master and the brethren again pray over the candidate, imploring God : **“Oh Lord ! have compassion on the children of Thy creation ; administer them comfort in time of trouble ; and save them with an everlasting salvation. ”** The Guided path to perfection which the candidate had started by knocking at the door of the

West Gate, humbly asking access, by **“his own free-will and accord”**, as a **“poor blind candidate desiring to be brought from darkness to light”**, had continued when, as an “Entered Apprentice” he again knocks at the west gate , seeking further light in Masonry as Fellow-Craft, and the quest for more light in Masonry brings the candidate to continue traveling East, toward the source of “light” and the Raising to the Sublime Degree: the cycle is concluded, the candidate has been taught to subdue his passions, that is, he has acquired the capacity to empower his Spiritual Nature and by it to have total control over his material nature; the ability to tame his base instincts, to subdue his passions. On the Altar, and symbolically in the life of the Master Mason, **both points of the Compasses are now above the Square**, the good man who had humbly knocked at the West Gate of the Lodge in search of Masonic Light is reborn as a Better Man, raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Then, has the “poor blind candidate” completed his search for “light” ? Has he found the symbolic “lost Word” ? **Is the Raising to the Sublime Degree the end of the search for Light and Perfection ?** The answer is given to the Newly Raised Masons by the WM **“The Eyes of the Fraternity are now upon you”**. Being raised to the Sublime Degree, being allegorically reborn as a Master Mason marks the beginning of a new life, where every Master Mason has to consider himself an **“exemplar”**, **“Be Faithful, be Just, be true, and convince the world by your acts that upon becoming a Master Mason you have become a better man”**: the journey through Masonic Life has just started. THE SEARCH FOR MORE LIGHT IN MASONRY shall be, for Masons, a lifelong quest for Spiritual PERFECTION, the allegorical ascension of Jacob’s ladder leading to Heaven, toward Light, to Perfection, to GOD. [GENESIS 28 .12-13 **And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it**].

Masonry was, Masonry is, and Masonry will continue to be RELEVANT in all ages, until there will be good men who truly desire to become better men.

REDEDICATING OURSELVES TO THE IDEALS AND TENETS OF FREEMASONRY

*VW Jeoffre W. Acebido, JGL, CDDGM
(Delivered in Cagayan de Oro Lodge No. 298 on August 10, 2015)*

Almost fifteen years ago today, I was raised as a Master Mason and that day stands out in memory as one of the most significant days in my life. Since then I have sought to learn about Freemasonry—its origin and teachings. To date, I am still continually in search and some of my elders have been instrumental in aiding me in finding some of the answers.

The Very Worshipful Brother who introduced me enumerated the positions I had occupied as a Master Mason. Indeed, these positions had given me opportunities to learn more about our noble Institution, the Lodges and the brethren.

When I was appointed as the Centennial District Deputy Grand Master, I sat in the East among other dignitaries during stated and special meetings. In the East, I was afforded the opportunity to observe the whole of the proceedings. Because a District Deputy Grand Master normally does not take an active part but sits as an observer in the meetings, unless his presumed wisdom is sought, I got the chance to view the works and reflect on them.

As the Centennial District Deputy Grand Master of Masonic District RX-A, I had the chance to attend several Special Meetings of the Lodges of the district which were called for the purpose of conferring degrees. During these meetings and during my lonesome moments in the East, I got to be reminded of the lessons illustrated in each degree and wondered how many Master Masons among us have still retained them. I got to be mesmerized again by

the allegorical verses of the perambulations lifted no less from the Book of Holy Writings, one of the great lights in Masonry, and pondered on how many Master Masons, newly-raised or not, have discerned their meanings beyond their prose and their poetry.

As District Deputy Grand Master, I got to observe the different styles of Worshipful Masters in the conduct of Stated and Special Meetings. Indeed, no two Worshipful Masters are alike. There are good Worshipful Masters; but there are simply much better ones. While some might have been slow in walking, it was fortunate that they never walked back.

In several fellowships after every Lodge Labor, I would sit among relatively young brethren who, believing that a District Deputy Grand Master is a repository of great and vast Masonic knowledge and experience, would ask questions just about anything, Masonic or not, that came to their minds. In these situations, although put in a spot groping for answers, I get to happily realize that there are brethren whose thirst for Masonic knowledge and excellence seems unquenchable.

“It has been said that the purpose of Freemasonry is the pursuit of excellence. All of the teachings of Freemasonry are directed to excellence in performing our duties to God, our country, our neighbors and ourselves. The continuing effort to improve oneself is the true mark of a Mason.” (Standard of Masonic Conduct)

One Masonic luminary, whose name escapes me for now, had said that “Masonry is like life, in that we cannot get more out of it than what we put into it. The mere ceremony of becoming a Master Mason makes no man any better than he was before. It is the earnest endeavour to live up to the beautiful teachings of Masonry that makes any man better.” This reminds us that it is our obligation as Masons to aspire for excellence in all our doings so that the world may know that in becoming Masons, we had become better men.

But let me pose these questions: Are we still making good men better; men known to the world as men to whom the burdened heart may pour out its sorrow, men to whom distress may prefer its suit, men whose hands are guided by justice and whose hearts are expanded by benevolence? Are we making good men better when we are not discriminating against depraved and immoral petitioners whose reputations had been known to the brethren who vouch for them? Are we making good men better by denying men admission into our Noble Institution by the flimsiest of excuses which are not even Masonically based? How can we make good men better if we could not handle petitioners and candidates properly in JUNIOR GRAND LECTURER’S CORNER their formative years, that is, from the time they submit their petitions up to the time they are raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason? How can we make good men better when we circumvent our rules and regulations so that we may ballot favorably a petitioner who is not entitled to our privileges? How can we make good men better when we circumvent our rules and regulations in order to ensure the admission of petitioners who are not entitled to our rights and privileges?

Something is wrong and something must be done fast; otherwise, we will someday wake up to find the honor of our Fraternity at its lowest ebb. We should act fast; otherwise, our Noble Institution will be taken over by unscrupulous individuals parading as brethren who have no right, in the first place, to be among us or to continue to dwell among us.

Recognizing that reforms are needed in our Noble Fraternity, our Grand Master adopted the theme: “A Revitalized, Relevant, and Revered Freemasonry: Our Commitment, Our Covenant”. Pursuant thereto, the Most Worshipful Tomas G. Rentoy III unveiled during the 99th Annual Communication in Legaspi City his three reform agenda of Guarding the West Gate, Guarding the Lamp and Guarding the Ballot.

It is without doubt that some of the edicts issued by the Grand Master in line with his three reform agenda do not sit well with some of our brethren. I have attended several seminars on these edicts and the reactions were quite similar. While there were some negative reactions, the general sentiment was to give the edicts a chance to prove their wisdom.

There have been several violations of these edicts and penalties have been meted out. In our jurisdiction, there are still brethren who take pride in defying these edicts aimed at reforms because of the belief that no sanction is forthcoming if no one reports or complains about these violations. This line of thinking simply has no place in a Noble Fraternity such as ours. We were sworn to maintain, support and enforce the Constitution, edicts, laws and regulations of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. I need not say more on our obligation relative to these edicts.

On a personal note, there would have been no need for these reform agenda if every Mason in our jurisdiction had remembered that in every moment and aspect of his life, he is a Mason who has in trust the reputation of Masonry. It would have been unnecessary to issue these edicts for reforms if every Mason took note that non-Masons who know us will judge each of us, and Masonry itself, by the way in which we conduct ourselves. As Masons, we vowed that “nothing in our conduct or demeanor shall in the least reflect discredit on Freemasonry, or tend to destroy, or even diminish, our capacity and power for doing good.”

WE FREEMASONS ARE NOT AFRAID TO DREAM

By VW Flor R. Nicolas, PSGL

An American author has provided us with the following verses:

*Don't be afraid to dream;
For if dreams die,
life is like a broken-winged bird
that cannot fly.
Don't be afraid to dream;
for if dreams go,
life is like a barren field
covered with snow.*

Indeed, in every age and country, Masons have dreamt of bringing about a universal league of mankind or establishing upon earth a true brotherhood of men of diverse countries, sects, and opinions under the Fatherhood of God.

To paraphrase a definition found in the German *Handbuck* (1900), Volume I, p. 320, we Freemasons are closely united men who tirelessly and selflessly work for social welfare and human progress by proficiently using symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, and who endeavor most earnestly to help our ancient and honorable fraternity accomplish its self-imposed mission mentioned above by striving morally to ennoble and exalt ourselves, as well as to induce others to do the same. We aspire to exhibit ourselves even now as a microcosm of the universal league of mankind -- or the brotherhood of men of diverse colors, creeds, socio-economic conditions, and political or ideological persuasions under the Fatherhood of God -- which our fraternal order has sought to bring about or establish.

In the following paragraphs from his monumental work, *The Builders* (1918), Rev. Dr. and Ill. Joseph Fort Newton, 33°, a Doctor in Literature, poetically explains the aim, mission, and spirit of Masonry:

"Since civilization or history is as old as architecture, it is but fitting that the idea and art of building was made as the basis of a great order of men which has no other aim than the upbuilding of humanity in Faith, Freedom, and Friendship, and which, seeking to ennoble and beautify life, finds in the common task and constant labour of man its sense of human unity, its vision of life as a temple 'building and built upon', and its emblems of those truths which make for purity of character and the stability of society.

"One of the most impressive and touching things in human history is that certain ideal interests have been set apart as especially venerated among all peoples. Guilds have arisen to cultivate the interests embodied in art, science, philosophy, fraternity, and religion; to conserve the precious, hard-won inheritances of humanity; to train men in their service; to bring their power to bear upon the common life of mortals, and send through that common life the light and glory of the Ideal -- as the sun shoots its transfiguring rays through a great dull cloud, evoking beauty from the brown earth. Such is Masonry, which unites those high interests and brings to their service a vast, world-wide fraternity of free and devout men, built upon a foundation of spiritual faith and moral idealism, whose mission is to make men friends, to refine and exalt their lives, to deepen their faith and purify their dream, to turn them from the semblance of life to homage for truth, beauty, righteousness, and character. More than an institution, more than a tradition, more than a society, Masonry is one of the forms of Divine Life upon earth. No one may ever hope to define a spirit so gracious, an order so benign, an influence so prophetic of the present and future upbuilding of the race.

"Masonry, the eldest and most widely spread order, is broad and tolerant in its teaching, deep in its faith and plea for liberty, and optimistic in its vision of the meaning of life and the mystery of the universe. Gentle, gracious, and wise, it seeks to form mankind into a great redemptive brotherhood, a league of noble and free men enlisted in the

radiant enterprise of working out in time the love and will of the Eternal.”

Indeed, to convince other men that we Freemasons are *“linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection,”* we endeavor most earnestly to make our fraternity known far and wide as *“a realm of peace,”* precisely because harmony, or unity of purpose and action, is its strength, support, and beauty, and to prove to all and sundry that it is *“one of the forms of the Divine life upon earth”* since it rests upon God, who is the sovereign and supreme Reality. Therefore, we strive hard to persistently live by its invaluable ideals, pure principles, and precious precepts, as well as to obey with all our heart its useful laws, rules, and regulations.

As symbolic Lodges or Masonic Districts, and even as an entire Craft, we strive hard to transform ourselves into *“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.”* Besides, we have but one aim, namely, *to please one another and unite in the grand design of promoting happiness* – not only our own happiness and that of members of our families, but also that of the Masonic Fraternity or Family, as well as that our local, national, and even international communities.

Both individually and collectively, we try our level best to faithfully and conscientiously fulfill our charge strenuously to enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to the timeless and timely tenets of Masonry, particularly Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, as well as to practice and disseminate widely among our fellowmen, many other ideals, principles or values which it advocates and teaches. In other words, to help our noble brotherhood bring about a universal league of mankind, we ardently aspire to exhibit ourselves even now as a microcosm or smaller version of such a league.

Once Masonry has accomplished its self-imposed mission, the very purpose of humanity dictated by God, which the universal peace and harmony among His creatures, at long last will be attained.

Considering all this, we don't really mind if other men regard us as incurable romantics. On the contrary, we even concede that we are like Don Quijote de la Mancha, the protagonist of Miguel de Cervantes' well-known novel, who relentlessly pursued his *“impossible dream”* of reforming the world “out there.” Like him, we are quite determined *“to create a world in which there is no hatred, but love; one in which there is no division of classes, but fraternal cooperation; one in which there are no monopolies*

for the few, but opportunities for all; one in which nobody interferes with the belief of others.”

Such is the One World which our foremost national hero, Brother Jose Rizal, envisioned to eventually emerge within a few centuries. We should recall that in his second novel, *El Filibusterismo*, through the idealistic student Basilio, Brother Rizal predicted that when mankind would have become enlightened, when there would be neither colonies nor mother countries, neither slaves nor oppressors, science alone would reign supreme, and man would have become a cosmopolite or citizen of the world, and the word patriotism therefore would be considered a disease, and he who prides himself on patriotic ideas would be considered a menace to society.

Like St. Augustine, the wise bishop of Hippo in Africa, who wrote about a wonderful world he called City of God, we Freemasons are highly resolved “to help the Fraternity establish a world order in which everybody may profess the ideas he considers best if within the law; one in which everyone may freely adore his God in his own way; and one in which everyone may visibly practice the command of ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’, charity towards the needy, tolerance and humility towards the powerful, as well as justice and truth towards all.”

Like St. Tomas More, the idealistic author of the classic work entitled Utopia, we are very determined *“to help Masonry establish a brotherhood of mankind under the Fatherhood of God -- one in which all will understand that morality is not expressed in words, or even in thoughts, but in daily needs, in every industrial, commercial, agricultural activity – in short, in every phase of human existence.”*

That is the seemingly “impossible” dream we want to realize. Is it possible for us to launch that dream into a reality? Possible or not, we fondly hope to help our beloved fraternity bring about the ideal world described above. To bring that hope to fruition, we are pretty determined to promote among non-Masons the invaluable ideals, timeless tenets, priceless precepts, and pure principles which Masonry advocates and teaches with such patience and perseverance as to cause long-lasting peace and sincere fellowship, as well as true friendship, to prevail among all of God's creatures.

To paraphrase a statement popularized by Brother Alexander Pope, the hope that Freemasonry will attain its long-term goal or accomplish its self-imposed mission, which is the eventual emergence of a universal league of mankind or the establishment upon earth of a true Brotherhood of Man under the Parenthood of God, springs eternal in our Masonic breasts.

PHILIPPINE MASONRY NEEDS LEADERS WHO ARE “TOUCHED WITH FIRE”

by Edgar P. Borje, JGL and Flor Ramos Nicolas, PSGL

“Both the spiritual and material progress of mankind is due to those dedicated men and women who at some time in their lives have become immersed in a great cause and who, as a result, have been ‘touched with fire’. Such men and women have strong hearts that are open to a great cause; develop a consuming passion for something outside themselves; and believe in something for which they will live – and something for which they will die if called upon to do so.”

Thus stated the late Ill. Raymond C. Elis, 33°, a Past Grand Master of Masons in the jurisdiction of the State of New York, USA, and an erstwhile Active Emeritus Member of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite in the Northern Jurisdiction of the USA, in his article published in the November 1972 issue of **The Northern Light**.

Needed at all levels of the Craft (Blue Lodge, Masonic District and Grand Lodge) are brethren with such specifications – brethren who disinterestedly and devotedly promote the welfare of the Masonic Fraternity or Family in this sovereign jurisdiction (oftentimes referred to as Philippine Masonry).

Invariably, brethren “touched with fire” ensure a bright future for their respective Lodges by helping promising, intelligent and dedicated members thereof prepare themselves for leadership roles not only in their respective Lodges and Districts but in our M.W. Grand Lodge as well.

Such brethren believe in and therefore persistently practice in daily life the invaluable ideals, pure principles and priceless principles of the Fraternity. They believe in principle rather than expediency. When the chips are down, they are ready to stand up and be counted, as well as to work hard and sacrifice much, if only to improve the situation or condition of the Craft at all levels.

It has been observed, however, that not a few

Lodge officers are so feeble and timid that they cringe at the mere sight of an important issue or a pressing problem. They seem to be afraid to make risky or even unpopular decisions because the consuming passion of their lives is not a great cause, but rather their own personal popularity comfort. Apparently, their ambition is to get by in peace and quiet and take no stand that can be subject to question. Some of such officers even suffer themselves to be dictated or imposed upon by Past Masters who seem to have not really relinquished the gavel of power even long after their descent from the Oriental Chair.

But we Past Masters must not impose our own wills on the Worshipful Master and his officers. Rather, we ought to grant them the opportunity to exercise and enjoy their right to make their own decision, as well as to commit mistakes in making decisions; for, after all, as Nikki Giovanni has correctly pointed out, *“Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to error that counts.”*

Ergo, we must allow the WM and his set of officers to learn from their mistakes. They have but one year to carry the Lodge’s torch. If we dictate or impose on them, never will they learn to develop themselves into leaders who are “touched with fire,” nor will they be able to become “candles of the Lord” as they endeavor most earnestly to advance their Lodge’s honor, reputation and usefulness or to advance its credit.

Yes, we Past Masters must whisper wise counsel in the ears of the officers of our Lodge, particularly its three

Lights. By precept, we must motivate them to work together as a team that is equal to the challenge of improving our Lodge's performance. This task requires them to engage themselves in critical analysis and positive planning.

To admonish them to come up with a many-sided program of year-round activities with some out-of-the-ordinary projects – one that redounds to the growth and development of the brethren and their families – is a duty incumbent upon us. As they put together such a program, we should fraternally remind them that they cannot get good attendance and active participation from the brethren by pushing them into the lodge hall, and that only if and when they have put together a program of meaningful projects and activities and they work hard to implement the program they have put together can they pull the brethren into the lodge hall. Such projects and activities are, after all, the lifeblood of every Lodge.

We should, moreover, suggest to the Worshipful Master and his officers that the program they are to put together should have the following objectives:

1. To conduct meetings in an efficient, educational, enlightening and entertaining – but business-like – fashion;
2. To create and make prevail in the Lodge an environment that attracts intelligent and even influential young men of promise to seek membership therein;
3. To enhance the value and importance of the degrees of Ancient Craft or Symbolic Masonry;
4. To get the commitment of the members of the Lodge to make the third or Master Mason or sublime degree the worthy goal which every candidate must “earn”;
5. To provide both old and new members with continuing Masonic education and training;
6. To make the Lodge attractive to non-Masons and relevant to the times;
7. To achieve substantial long-term membership growth;

8. To involve members of the brethren's families in Masonic endeavors; and
9. To carry out community outreach projects in order that residents in the community will feel once more the benevolent and relevant presence of the Craft in their midst.

The program which the Worshipful Master and his officers are to put together should have a 10th aim, namely, to provide the brethren and their families with opportunities to have fun together and at the same time to extend kind care, love and protection one to another. This objective is basic. We must enjoy our participation in our Lodge in particular and in the Craft in general because if we want to participate in Masonic activities, then we are taking our involvement in the Lodge and in the Craft seriously, and we take things seriously when we enjoy what we are doing, and while we are having fun together, we are reminded of the fact that when we became Master Masons, we were commended to the kind care, love and protection of other Master Masons throughout the world.

The last statement makes us recall, as stated by the Masonic Service Association (MSA), *“The Mystic Tie is the essential characteristic of Masonry, and the cabletow is the great symbol of the Mystic Tie which Masonry spins and weaves between men, making them brothers and helpers one of another. When the cabletow of each Mason is joined with that of every other Mason, and all are united in one Cable of Kindness, it makes a bond of brotherhood, the might of which no mortal can measure.”*

As brethren of the Mystic Tie, we should share the good times with one another. Together, we should look out for the welfare of our fellows in Masonry, so that they will appreciate Masonry as we do.

As individual Masons, we must persistently and perseveringly develop ourselves into men who are “touched with fire.” To become such men, we must be so strong-hearted as to be open to a great cause. We should develop a consuming passion for something outside of ourselves --something for which we will live and for which we will readily die, if need be. And that something may as well be to bring about a revitalized and relevant Philippine Masonry that is highly revered by the residents of our communities, both local and national, if not global.

AN “Open Letter”

TO A YOUNGER BROTHER MASTER MASON

By VW Flor R. Nicolas, PSGL

I WANT TO EXPLAIN to you the message of ECCLESIASTES XII: 1-7, the passage on which the Holy Bible is opened at the Altar during a Lodge of Master Masons and which is recited aloud by the Senior Deacon during the perambulation in the Tragedy of the GMHA.

The passage strongly suggests that when you are old, you suffer not only from physical infirmities but from mental, as well as spiritual, anxieties as well because you are now aware that (1) the opportunity for you to learn has practically passed away; (2) the time for you to labor is almost over since the spiritual temple you have been striving to erect in your heart is now nearly completed; and (3) you await only *“the arrival of that momentous hour when the fading taper of human life shall faintly glimmer in the socket of existence.”*

The passage starts with this advice: *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not*

darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.”

In other words, you should adore and love your Creator now that you are still young, when you still have the ability and stamina to do so. Don't wait for the approach of the troublesome times, when you will become weary with age and will say, *“I no longer have pleasure in life; all desires and enjoyment of my youth have left me.”* Rather, serve, fear, and revere God while your eyesight is still good; while your outlook on life is still bright, or while you are still idealistic or optimistic; and while you are still able to overcome difficulties that arise before the clouds of old age set in.

Secondly, the passage counsels you not to wait for *“the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows shall be darkened.”*

This means that you must dedicate and devote yourself to the all-important concern of preparing for eternity while you still have the time and

opportunity to do so because when you are old, you become decrepit and feeble; your spine now bends with the weight of age, and your legs bow; your teeth decay and are removed, so that you will find it difficult to bite and masticate your food; and you will soon be unable to see because your eyesight is failing, and you will no longer be able to reason with accuracy.

Thirdly, the passage stresses that you should serve, fear, and adore God during your youth because when you are old, *“the doors shall be shut t in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he (the old man) shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.”*

This means that when you are old, you no longer travel as you used to; you have slowed down in your movements and activities because you are now feeble; you no longer require the sleep which you did in your younger days; although you do not hear the birds, you awaken with them at daybreak; your hearing is failing badly, and you do not receive all the sound of voice or music because the treble scale goes first.

Fourthly, the passage reminds you that when you are old, you *“shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his home, and the mourners go about the streets.”*

This means that when you are old, you can no longer climb as you used to, and the hills are now a concern to you because your equilibrium is failing; you are afraid of what you cannot do, and many of your physical pleasures and desires are no longer of interest to you; your hair turns to white like the blossoming almond tree; any weight, such as that

of a grasshopper, is a burden to you, just as keeping and looking after your own self is a burden; and you know that you will soon die, and your friends and mourners will be left to this mortal domain.

Fifthly, the passage reminds you that when you are old, *“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken on the cistern.”*

The *“silver cord”* refers to the spinal marrow, the loosening of which is the cessation of all nervous activity; the *“golden bowl,”* to the brain, which is rendered incapable of performing by the approach of death; the *“fountain”* or the *“cistern,”* to the heart; the *“pitcher,”* to the great vein that carries the blood to the right ventricle of the heart; and the *“wheel,”* to the great artery which receives the blood from the left ventricle.

Finally, the passage provides you with this biblical reminder: *“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”*

Indeed, you must ever remember that, like any other man, you were created by God from dust and are returned to dust after death, and that your soul or spirit is returned to God who gave it as His loving gift to you. Thus reminded, you, as well as any other man, should realize the essential necessity of directing your special attention to the all-important concern of preparing for everlasting life with your – and all other men’s -- all-powerful and all-loving Creator in *“that blissful Lodge which no time can close and which, to those worthy of admission, will remain open during the boundless ages of eternity.”*

e.F.R.eN

HISTORY OF BATANGAS LODGE NO. 35 F&AM

In 1893, in the last period of Spanish rule, Freemasonry came to Batangas province. Two (2) masonic triangles were organized; Kumintang No. 3 in Balayan, Batangas under Worshipful Master Sixto Lopez and Kalumpang No. 66 in Batangas, Batangas under Worshipful Master Leon Apacible. Twenty years later, in conformity with the authority vested in the Gran Oriente Logia Regional de Filipinas by the Gran Oriente Espanol of Spain, through the initiative of the Worshipful Brother Miguel F. Avelino, then bookkeeper in the Provincial Treasurer's Office and Bro Juan M. Gutierrez, engineer of the Manila Railroad Company and with the cooperation and support of the Bro Joseph W. Crow, the Provincial Treasurer at that time, thirty two (32) courageous and enthusiastic brethren members of Nilad Lodge No. 144 were gathered to constitute as founders and the Batangas Lodge No. 383 was organized, established and chartered on February 16, 1916.

Back in the early 1900's the operations of masonic groups under foreign jurisdiction did not prove conducive to the real objectives of Freemasonry. After a careful study of the then existing situation, the Grand Officers of the masonic groups concerned, happily found a solution to settle the question by fusing two groups into one body, naming it Grand Lodge of F&AM of the Philippine Islands under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California. One of the basis of the agreement was that in the election of its Grand Master, Americans and Filipinos alternate. This practice was carried up to 1974 and was known as the "Gentleman's Agreement". As a consequence of this fusion, subordinate lodges were recognized which resulted in the change of name of Batangas Lodge No. 383 to Batangas Lodge No. 35 which was chartered on February 1, 1917.

The members gradually increased and real worthy ones were drawn to the fold. The late Worshipful Brother

Wenceslao Trinidad (Grand Master in 1924), President Jose P. Laurel, Congressman Gregorio Katigbak, Governor Braulio de Villa were among those initiated, passed and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason.

The progress of the lodge from the date it was establish was beyond question. In 1920, through the initiative of WB Wenceslao Trinidad, a site on P. Burgos Street covering an area of 2,363 square meters was acquired and an adequate building was provided. In 1991, a two (2) hectare property in Brgy. Pallocan, Batangas City was acquired. This will be the future site of a Masonic City where a new Batangas Masonic Temple, Events Center and Columbarium will be constructed.

Though the years, the members of the Lodge initiated community projects, youth development programs and provided assistance to victims of natural disasters with more action and less fanfare. The annual free harelip and cleft lip surgical operation which was started in 1989 brought smiles and self esteem to hundreds of children beneficiaries. Furthermore, poor but deserving students were provided free education and a bright future through the scholarship program of the Lodge. These projects and programs are properly implemented because of the sound financial posture of the Lodge and the unity and cooperation of the brethren. The tenets of Freemasonry which are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth has been practiced in the province for the last 100 years. As we look to the years ahead, we are full of hope and optimism that Batangas Lodge No. 35 will go from strength to strength. We will continue to embark on a program of civic and humanitarian works; we will make good men better which will embody the highest ideals of Masonry – **A Brotherhood of Men under the Fatherhood of God!**

RECENT EVENTS

VISAYAS MULTI-DISTRICT CONVENTION



VISAYAS

Sept. 4-5, 2015

Host: MD RVIII-B

Venue: Children's Place, P. Burgos St., Tacloban City





SOUTHERN MINDANAO MULTI-DISTRICT CONVENTION



“Thank You Brethren for giving me the opportunity to preside before you in our 2015 Southern Mindanao Multi-District Convention and to live my greatest dream of all by doing it.”

-VW Leopoldo P. Lugtu



SOUTHERN MINDANAO
 Sept.25-26, 2015
 Host: MD RXII-A
 Venue: JC Complex, Kidapawan City

MCCCI: ONWARD TO 1ST CENTENARY IN THE SERVICE OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

By Janica L. Caldonga, MCCCI Staff



*Behind: VW Benito K. Tan and Paulo Saycon
Front: L to R: MCCCI Medical Director Dr. Michael Z. Rivera,
Mr. Pastor "Boy" Saycon and MW Tomas G. Rentoy III.*

For 91 Years in service, Masonic Charities for Crippled Children, Inc. (MCCCI) trustees headed by MW Tomas G. Rentoy III celebrated its 91st Anniversary on August 5, 2015 at China Place Restaurant. With a theme "Onward to our 1st Centenary in the service of Differently Abled Children" extending Masonic Charities to indigent indifferently abled children.



MW Tomas G. Rentoy III presented the Plaque of Recognition to Dr. Wang of PGH.

The event was attended by Dr. Reynaldo E. Ang, Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Edward H.M. Wang, Chairman of PGH Department of Orthopedics; Dr. Bernardino Alpuerto II, PGH Dept. of Orthopedics Chief Resident; and VW Dr. Manuel Agulto, PGH Former Chancellor, Resident Physicians and nurses. It was also graced by VW Alfred Li, CEO of Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Noble Francis Blanco, Mabuhay Shiner's Temple Administrator. Former MCCCI Beneficiaries Mr. Pastor "Boy" Saycon, Ms. Regine Valdez, Ms. Ma. Emmanuelle Bravo (daughter of VW Emmanuel Bravo) and other Masonic Dignitaries were in attendance.

MCCCI provides Medical, Surgical and Rehabilitative Assistance for ailments such as Club Foot, Bow Leggedness deformity, Hip Deformity, Limb Deformity, Congenital Rickets, Juvenile Cataract and in partnership with Smile Train, Inc.- New York we accepts Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate patients.



L to R: VW Lucas T. Ty, VW Jose Avelino Magbanua, Noble Francis Blanco, VW Arlen De Guzman.

PHILIPPINE GRAND YORK RITE HOLDS 2015 ANNUAL GRAND REUNION

On October 16-17, 2015, the Grand York Rite of Freemasonry in the Philippines held its Annual Grand Reunion.

After the opening of the Grand Chapter by the Manila Chapter No. 2, RAM, the following were formally received into the Abad Santos Hall: M.E. Fernando V. Pascua, Jr., Grand High Priest (GHP); visiting York Rite and other Masonic dignitaries; and Past GHPs.

The flag ceremony over, Grand High Priest Fernando Pascua gave the welcome address, and then MW Tomas G. Rentoy, III, Grand Master of Masons in the jurisdiction of the Philippines, delivered the keynote address.

After the roll call and

determination of quorum, the Grand Representatives of Sister Grand Chapters were presented to the Grand High Priest, who in turn duly acknowledged them. R.E. Emmanuel R. Bravo, Grand Representative of the RAM of Canada Saskatchewan, gave the response in behalf of his fellow Grand Representatives.

The 2014 Annual Proceedings having been approved by the delegates, Rt. Rev. Genesis V. Aquino, Grand Chaplain, delivered a joint necrological address.

Next, the 2015 Distinguished Service Medal Award and the 2015 Capitular Mason of the Year Award were presented to Gavino L. Plopenio of Isarog Chapter No. 23, RAM, and to Erwin Pepino of Third Pyramid



Chapter No. 36, RAM, respectively.

The Grand High Priest, the Grand Treasurer, and the Grand Secretary then presented their respective annual reports to the assembly. Committee reports and presentation of resolutions ensued.

After GHP Pascua had delivered his valedictory address, the Grand Chapter Officers for 2015-2016 are installed.

The newly-installed GHP, M.E. Edgar D. Lim, delivered his inaugural address.

A fraternal fellowship luncheon, hosted by GHP Edgar Lim, capped the 63rd Annual Grand Convocation.



For any questions or inquiries, please contact:
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April 28 - 30, 2016
Taal Vista Hotel
Tagaytay City

MW TOMAS G. RENTOY III VISITS BATANGAS LODGE NO. 35

MW Tomas G. Rentoy III, Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines, with his party from the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, visited Batangas Lodge No. 35 in Batangas City on November 7, 2015 to attend the Kick Off Ceremony for Centennial Anniversary of the Lodge.

The event which was dubbed as “100 days before 100 years” was attended by more or less two hundred (200) brethren, family members and friends of masons. All of them were happy that the Grand Master, despite his busy schedule, found the time to be the Guest of Honor and Speaker of the activity.

MW Tomas G. Rentoy III in his speech lauded the brethren for their show of unity and strict adherence to the tenets of Freemasonry. He congratulated them for reaching the milestone. He also explained the rationale behind the edicts he issued and appealed for the strict implementation of these edicts which were all designed to strengthen the craft and the Fraternity.

Dinner and fellowship followed after the program proper which gave the brethren photo opportunities with the Grand Master and exchange of pleasantries with him. The success of the event further confirmed that Freemasonry is as strong as ever in the province of Batangas.



ANCOM GLOC 2015



Welcome at the Airport



Welcome Party



Sun Moon Lake



Tea Factory



After Dinner Fellowship



Alisan Tour

ANCOM GLOC 2015



Flag Raising



Reception



Delegates



Grand Banquet

ANCOM GLOC 2015



Proceedings



Awarding of Token



Installation

Grand Lodge of California





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- Exclusive access to Club Lounge
- Express check-in and check-out
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- Business and concierge services
- Two-hour complimentary use of the meeting room
- Complimentary broadband internet access
- Discounts on food & beverage, laundry, dry clean & minibar consumption

*Valid upon presentation of Lodge I.D



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NORTH LUZON



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SOUTHERN MINDANAO

MULTI DISTRICT CONVENTIONS 2015