

**AM
I
A
MASON?**

Talk of
Vice-Governor
Timothy D. Chaokas
to the
Freemasons
of
Bontoc,
Mountain Province
on the
Installation
of Their
Officers

I CONSIDER this a rare privilege and opportunity to speak before your brotherhood. But I must say that after I accepted your kind invitation thru Past Master Victorino N. Ringor, I started to wonder if I fall within the norms of your organization. I doubted my worthiness of this honor extended to me as your guest speaker today. Until now I am still puzzled and I do hope that I shall not be a total disappointment to you in the course of my talk.

There is no stage in this magnificent hall rendering you unable to see me well delivering this short speech. I assure you, however, that I am not sitting giving it. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here standing before you.

Membership in Freemasonry is not solicited as you all know. Men are attracted into it because of its lofty teachings, ideals and principles. I do believe that each one of you joined it not because you have campaigned, but because after some honest examination of yourself you became convinced that you were ready to meet the stiff standards of the Craft and that you have pledge to live up to its teachings. Perhaps some of you joined it to strengthen your Christian life and character.

Freemasonry teaches its members to "practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the down-trodden, shelter the orphan, guard the altar, support the government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love all human

beings, fear God, implore His mercy and hope for happiness." I trust that you agree with me that because man is weak, it is humanly not possible that a Craft can put into practice all of these things. To believe in the perfectness, purity and saintliness of a man is to believe that there are living saints among us.

But while no man is sinless, while man is prone to commit errors, and while man is quick to see other's mistakes and faults but slow to recognize his, there is plenty of room for his improvement. When he strives for self correction and improvement, he minimizes his weakness and his errors. It is only when man recognizes his errors and prayerfully atones for them can he improve.

As a public servant, perhaps this is a propitious time for me to appeal to each and every one of you and to the Craft as a body to dedicate some tangible and sincere support to our government. This appeal is hinged upon and motivated by one of the Masonic teachings — that of "support the government." I have no doubt that all know what this means.

More than ever before, our government has been in need of honest and upright officials, employees and citizens. The difficulty in attaining this standard has been due to the fact that many of us Filipinos today contribute to the corruption of officials. In a corrupt society it is hard to develop honest officials.

Masonry can be an effective deterrent against the commission of abuses and anomalies in the government. Many of you members of

this Craft are government officials and employees. You can do much to help us stop dishonest practices in this corporate society. You do not need to join physically in the crusade, but by being honest officials and employees yourselves in the performance of your duties and in dealing with other people you will have complied faithfully and religiously with some of the lofty ideals and principles of Masonry — those of supporting the government, inculcating morality, love of man, and fear of God. You can be the staunchest supporters of the government if you entirely divorce yourselves from direct or indirect participation in the commission of anomalies against the state.

Those of you who are not in any way connected with the government can equally be strong and effective supporters of it even as private citizens. When you have the opportunity to serve in the way of undertaking projects and in furnishing supplies and materials for the government thru competitive bidding, that occasion should be taken as an opportunity to serve and not an occasion to make illegitimate profits thru tricky manipulations.

In the maintenance of peace and order in the community, Masonry can also be a strong instrument. By your demonstration by deeds, of love of man, respect of friendship and fear of God you can contribute to the tranquility and peace of the locality. By doing so you can be more effective than a peace officer who, instead of being symbol of love, protection, justice and uprightness, is himself a problem in society.

At this juncture, I would like to remind you that in many places of the world today, great strides in science, industries and business have been achieved because of capable and responsible leaders developed through Freemasonry. It is said that these leaders developed dynamic personalities because they have been and are still guided by the tenets of Freemasonry. They succeeded because they are constant to the teachings of Masonry that a leader must possess socially-accepted code of morals and ethics, a balanced education, harmonious personal relations, and the mastery of speaking sincerely and convincingly before others. Through Masonry, they have learned that a good leader does away with jungle tactics, but must be a man of good will toward his associates, must be honest and sincere in his approach to problems that confront him, moderate in all things, yet fearless in the face of adversity, diplomatic and tolerant, fair in making decisions, not egocentric but aware of his limitations, and humbles himself in seeking Divine guidance. How much success can our government officials and employees attain, and how much more beautiful our free and democratic government would be if you and I, and all others, put into practice the teachings of Christianity, Freemasonry and all other similar fraternal organizations in our daily life.

Perhaps it is ambitious, day-dreaming and wishful thinking for anyone of you to endeavor to equal the achievements of Freemasons of their lands insofar as material accomplishments are concerned. But

certainly, the accomplishment of even lesser things could be achieved by anyone of you even by merely remembering that you are a Mason steadfast in the tenets of Christianity, and adamant to the lofty ideals, principles and teachings of Freemasonry whenever you are confronted by evil temptations. Whenever you are enraged recall that you are a Mason. Whenever you think you have been wronged recite "love man" instead of taking the law into your hands. In order to be able to do this your actions and thoughts should be tempered by your being a Mason.

The hardest thing to do is to strictly and religiously follow the teachings of Christianity. Your conscience will bear me out that you have faltered in your efforts to abide by the teachings of Freemasonry. This is true to every Christian and perhaps true to every Mason, and every member of a fraternal organization with similar aims and purposes for that matter. But again, I say that if we are constant and steadfast in seeking Divine guidance we can minimize our wrongs and truly recognize our faults.

My friends, I have spoken to you with all candour and frankness as a friend. I am not a member of your Craft, but I must admit that I have read with keen interest some of the teachings and publications of Freemasonry, and this spell my frankness to all of you. My very limited knowledge of the ideals, principles and teachings of Freemasonry has contributed very much to my norm of conduct as a public servant and as a private citizen.

In parting, may I ask each one of you to ask your good self this question: AM I A TRUE MASON, OR AM I JUST RIDING ON THE GOOD NAME OF FIEE-

MASONRY? I should think that this is a good question to ask ourselves whenever any face of temptation glitters before us anytime, anywhere.



Bulusan Lodge No. 38 Establishes Own Cemetery

According to a report received by the Grand Lodge from WB Lorenzo N. Talatala, Worshipful Master of Bulusan Lodge No. 38, the brethren of the Valley of Sorsogon are now assured of a final resting place, just in case... with the establishment of a brand new Masonic Cemetery at the capital town of Sorsogon, just over the concrete fence and alongside with the present Roman Catholic Cemetery.

The cemetery site consisting of 3,296 square meters was donated to the Lodge by WB and Mrs. Estanislao Gabarda of Bulusan Lodge No. 38. WB Gabarda has been twice Past Master of Bulusan Lodge and also a 32° Scottish Rite Mason. During the 1963 Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge last April, WB Gabarda was the recipient of a Certificate of Merit from the MW William H. Quasha, PGM, for outstanding and meritorious masonic service during the 1962 Masonic Year. To WB and Mrs. Gabarda, the brethren of Bulusan Lodge No. 38 and all the sojourners in this Valley will be eternally grateful.

Negotiations for the establishment of this Masonic Cemetery was started on January 18, 1960 under the untiring and energetic leadership of WB Gabarda. Requirements after requirements which were asked of the Lodge on installment basis by proper authorities caused the much-delayed realization of the project. With the arrival in Sorsogon, however, of WB Lorenzo N. Talatala, present Master of the Lodge, the efforts of WB Gabarda was greatly reinforced. The combined efforts of the two of them with the full support of all the brethren of the Lodge was amply rewarded on June 5, 1963 with the final approval of our long cherished hope — a Masonic Cemetery which we can call our very own. January 18, 1960 to June 5, 1963 — many would have been discouraged and would have dropped their tools down in disgust! *Muy terrible ... hombre!*