

Masonic Etiquette And Decorum

(Last of four installments)

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In our Jurisdiction the Inspector of a lodge is an assistant to the District Deputy Grand Master. As such, he shall assist the latter in the performance of his duties. He shall visit the lodge to which he is appointed Inspector or whenever he is requested by the said lodge, or the DDGM, or whenever he deems it necessary to visit the lodge. As an important officer of the Grand Lodge, every honor or token of respect due to the DDGM should be accorded him. When visiting the lodge, he should be escorted to a seat in the East.

Emblems and Symbols

The lodge should see to it that the Emblems and Symbols are of correct designs, well taken care of and properly placed in correct positions.

The Altar should be in the center of the room; its sides parallel to the sides of the room.

The Great Pillars should be placed on each side of the Inner Door. The Pillar bearing the Celestial Globe stands at the right of the candidate as he enters.

The Ashlars should be on the Master's plat-form, or on one of the steps; the perfect Ashlar is placed near the Southeast corner and the

Rough Ashlar is placed toward the Northeast.

The letter G should be of tasteful design and placed above the Master's chair.

The appurtenances used in the Middle Chamber Lecture of the Second Degree should be adequate in size, dignified in appearance, correct in design, and replaced when worn out from use. Slides should not be used in the Middle Chamber Lecture as a substitute for the physical participation of the Candidates.

The Holy Bible should be handled with care and reverence. When any of its pages become soiled, it should be cleaned; if some pages are torn, a new Bible should be procured and used. The marker should be removed after the Bible is opened and replaced before closing. Nothing should be placed on top of an open Bible, except the Square and Compasses.

Jewels, regalia and aprons should be kept in good order. Aprons should always be laundered if they become soiled. After using them, Masons should not just throw them scattered about the Lodge room. In filing out of the lodge room, every member should see to it that the

aprons are neatly stacked in their proper place.

No individual Mason who has his own theories concerning the Emblems and Symbols should be permitted to violate the requirements and time-honored usages, customs and traditions of the Craft.

Applause

To break into applause because a Degree Team has made an impressive work, or a brother has been raised, destroys the mental panorama formed in the mind of the candidate. Further, it reduces the ritual to the level of a play, an empty ceremony without meaning or significance. Any form of levity will ruin the effect of the work. A team or a brother does not take part in the degree work in his own person or name. Individuality should be put aside, lest the Mason concerned intrude himself between the candidate and the ritual. A brother raised has done nothing to merit the applause. He and the Degree Team can be congratulated when the lodge is called from labor to refreshment.

Gifts

The presentation of gifts to the newly made Master Masons immediately after they are raised seems Un-Masonic, except if such presentation is given by the lodge itself to all the candidates. The lodge is not the proper place for the presentation of presents from the members of the families of the candidates, or even from the members of the lodge, unless each candidate is given a present by the lodge.

We teach equality in Masonry. If there are two who have been raised, and only one is given a present, instead of imparting a sense of equality, we create a sense of discrimination. The candidates may feel that such is not the fault of the lodge, but it is humiliating nonetheless for the one to stand with the favored brother while he receives nothing.

Advancement

There is neither law nor tradition which gives any officer of the lodge the right to be advanced. Just because a brother is the Senior Deacon, it does not become logical and fair that he should be the next elected Junior Warden. This may work for the advantage of the lodge, only if fitness is considered as the criterion for advancement. The sole and only general requirement for advancement is that the possible office holder does have the necessary fitness, especially with regard to his having attained proficiency in our ritualistic work. If such brother is found unfit or unqualified for advancement, he should not take offence if he is not advanced to a higher position in the lodge.

Some officers believe that if one of their members is absent, the officer occupying a lower rank should occupy the chair of the absent one. Apparently, this constitutes an advancement by right. If the SW is absent, the JW does not ex-officio fill the West. Since it is the duty of the WM to set the craft at work, it is necessary that he should have

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he active support and wholehearted cooperation of all the officers. If any officer is absent, the WM who has the full power to select from among those present, must pondently appoint one whom he knows is competent in discharging the duties of the absent officer.

In closing, let me instill further in the minds of our less informed brethren the absolute necessity of devoting sufficient time for reading and studying our Monitor. A good working knowledge of our rituals, laws, edicts and other pertinent information on Masonry would enable these brethren to have a clear idea or concept of the Masonic system. Such knowledge and understanding would help them very much in the proper discharge of Masons. Too, they could be of great assistance in degree work. It is not amiss to mention here the fact that a Mason who is well prepared to assume any position during the exemplification of any of the three degrees could be truly a tremendous asset to his lodge and an invaluable member of our honorable fraternity.

By and large a truly well informed Mason who lives and practices those noble moral virtues inculcated deeply in his mind could contribute to a large measure in the creation in the public mind a beautiful picture of Masonry, an image that could reflect or bespeak of dignity, of honor, of gentleness, of gentlemanliness, of respect, of decency, of tolerance, of humaneness and of humility!



WB Felix J. Torres, P.M., of Nilad Lodge No. 12, died of coronary thrombosis on October 6 at the Far Eastern University Hospital. Funeral services were held at Plaridel Masonic Temple, Manila, by the Grand Lodge at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of October 11, and interment took place after the ceremonies. A large attendance of Brother Masons, relatives and friends of the deceased was present at the services as well as at the North Cemetery where he body was interred.

The Deputy Grand Master, RW Pedro Gimenez, is recuperating in Baguio after several weeks' stay at the Veterans Memorial Hospital. He will soon be up and around to his usual tasks as Auditor General of the Republic, according to reports.

Plans for the Golden Jubilee of the Grand Lodge are nearing completion. Lodges are earnestly urged to send delegates to the celebration which will be held at the new Philamlife Building at Isaac Peral St., Manila. The celebration promises to be a memorable event. It has been suggested that the participation of lodges in this celebration be one of the points to count in awarding the Grand Master's Trophy during the Annual Communications.

Makiling Lodge No. 72 of Calamba, Laguna was the victim of robbery and vandalism on the evening of September 21. Practically all the furniture, tools paraphernalia and records were stolen while office