

Hands clasped. . .

• K of C and Freemasons

MW Raymond E. Wilmarth,
PGM

THE FIRST STEP OF A LONG JOURNEY

It gives me great pride and pleasure to give the Opening Remarks for the Freemasons on this memorable occasion. First I want to thank the Master of Ceremonies for his most inspiring introduction; second, I want to welcome all the Knights of Columbus who are with us tonight and those who for one reason or another could not come, but would have, if they could; and third, I want to thank all the Knights and Masons who did turn out for the Golf Tournament this morning and made it such a success.

Speaking of the Golf Tournament, I'd like to tell a brief story as did the Grand Knight in his Opening Remarks. Two weeks ago at our last Stated Meeting of the Luzon Bodies, one of our Brothers during the discussion of our plans for the tournament inquired whether I would play for the Masons or the Knights because of my relationship with the University of Santo Tomas. A few days later on another speaking occasion I was asked the question again. This time I replied that while I would be hitting the ball for the Masons, because I am such a horrible player, my score will be helping the Knights win. This morning I proved my point. In fact the son of the Grand Knight was on my flight and can testify to my unstinting "cooperation", voluntary or otherwise, for the

success of the Knights.

This evening I want to speak about an old Chinese proverb that says: The longest journey begins with the first step. Today we have taken the first step on a long, long journey. But this did not just happen by accident. It happened by design.

It all started when I was Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines in 1966. I came upon a publication containing an address entitled "Let's Scale New Heights of Ecumenism in Fraternalism" by Supreme Knight John W. McDevitt of the Knights of Columbus before a brotherhood breakfast at Corman's Resort, Sharon, Massachusetts, on Sunday, February 27, 1966, sponsored jointly by the Knights of Columbus and the Masons in the last paragraph of which Supreme Knight McDevitt extends an invitation to Masons throughout the world as follows:

"Recalling again the noble example of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, I say that the Knights of Columbus are eager to extend to brothers of the Masonic order an embrace of friendship, an embrace of understanding, an embrace of trust, an embrace of charity that will bring us to new heights of ecumenism in fraternalism."

Inspired by the sincerity of purpose indicated by Supreme Knight McDevitt in his address, as Grand Master of Masons in the Philippines,

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I decided to accept his invitation and on December 23rd, 1966, wrote him asking how we could bring together our two great Fraternities in the Philippines. In his reply, he advised me to contact the State Deputy of the Knights here in the Philippines, which I did. We also requested our Bro. Jose Abejo to make contact with the Knights who were known to him. Time passed until today we have met together and enjoyed this wonderful friendship. That is why I say we have taken the first step, but there is still a very long journey ahead. A century or more cannot be swept aside in one day, but we can set a

new course for the coming generations in future centuries.

A new direction is essential for mankind, if civilization is to survive. Man with his science has been able to invent and develop means to control the material world. He stands at the threshold of extending that control throughout the universe. God has been kind to man, but man has not been kind to himself. He erects great structures which will endure for generations, but continues to find more destructive means to destroy the products of his efforts and his fellow man in war, in politics, in business and even in religion. Man has yet to conquer himself. Man has yet to learn how to control himself. Man has yet to respect the law of God above the law of man.

We Masons are builders. We oppose destruction of any kind. Our ancestors were Operative Masons and as such built many of the beautiful church structures still standing as monuments to the centuries when perfect harmony existed between Masonry and the Church. Then with the industrial revolution came transition and Masonry became speculative. Instead of building temples to house men, we now build temples in the hearts of men. Once the most trusted defenders of the faith against the Saracens was the Order of Knight Templars. After falling into disfavor they were disbanded. When the age of darkness had passed, they emerged as the Christian branch of Masonry, and still continue as such today.

Masonry is a religiously oriented brotherhood of men under the fatherhood of God. It is no more a religion than the Knights of Columbus. But I venture to say that the Knights of Columbus is every bit as much a religiously oriented brotherhood of men

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Chicago March 12 (AP) — The Roman Catholic Church has dropped quietly the penalty of excommunication against its members who belong to the International Order Of Free Masons. The Chicago Daily News said in a story from Vatican City Monday.

The revocation was obtained by a group of Scandinavian Bishops, the daily news said, but no formal announcement has been made in Rome.

The Bishops of Norway, Denmark and Sweden, who obtained the ruling, reportedly are putting it into effect.

The excommunication of Masons was codified in 1918. It imposed excommunication on "Those who enroll in the Masonic sect or in secret societies conspiring against the church or the legitimate authorities."

The Masonic order was condemned first by Pope Clement XII in 1738, then by Pope Benedict XIV in 1751. In 1884 Pope Leo XII in an Encyclical attacked the order's aim of destroying the church.

The dropping of the excommunication of Masons was first proposed at the ecumenical council by Sergio Mendez-Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Tied for First Place... In Their Hearts

They wore red and blue caps, forty-eight of them: 24 Knights of Columbus and the same number of Freemasons, in a golf dual meet on the fairways of Camp Aguinaldo. On the caps, were words and symbols: top line, "K of C - Freemasons' Dual Golf Meet"; middle line: the K of C insignia, hands clasped and the familiar square and compasses; bottom line, "Camp Aguinaldo Golf Club, March 9, 1968".

In the evening, at the Camp Aguinaldo Officers' Clubhouse, they wore white tags, their nick names written in red ink for K of C; blue for Masons. Close to a hundred Knights and Masons with their ladies were in attendance at the dinner-dance and awarding of prizes. Speakers in the program were: Bro. Rodolfo Lejano, KC; Bro. Raymond Wilmarth, PGM; Bro. Oscar Ledesma, KC; and Bro. Conrado Benitez, PGM. Rev. Fr. Damian Ray of the Passionist Fathers gave the invocation and WB Teofilo Abejo, Grand Prior of the Supreme Council, AASR, gave the benediction. Musical numbers were rendered by the Scottish Rite Chorale and some Knights of Columbus who sang the lifting "De Colores". WB Abejo, a Mason and Cursillista, sang with the Knights.

The trophies given away as prizes were donated by Ambassador Oscar Ledesma, Justice Makalintal, Judge Antonio, Bros. Luis Valencia and Ildefonso Yan, Dean Conrado Benitez and Bro. Jose Abejo. Masters of Ceremonies were Bro. Lauro Cruz for the Knights and Bro. Jose S. N. Navarro, Jr. for the Masons.

Agreeably, the speeches of Ambassador Ledesma and Dean Benitez dwelt on community improvement programs in which Knights and Masons

can cooperate, collaborate or coordinate. Ground work for the culmination of this dual meet were laid out by Bros. Turla, Lejano and Castro of the Capitol City Council No. 3695 for the Knights and Bros. Pat Gonzales, Jose Abejo and Bautista of Luzon Bodies, AASR, for the Masons.

Surprisingly, the perpetual trophy for the lowest score by teams was not awarded this year as the two teams tied at 863. Trophies for the lowest net scores were awarded to Bros. Cately, Mason; Capt. Octavio, KC; and Judge Antonio, KC. For the most pars in the 18-hole play, trophies went to Bros. Lacuna, KC; Verzosa, KC; and Morfe, Mason. Bro. De Guzman, Mason, got the trophy for the most birdies. The trophies (?), two good-sized squashes which could make delicious pumpkin pies, one each went to Bro. Verzosa, KC, and Bro. Wilmarth, Mason, who tied for the highest score. The team scores stood at:

<i>Knights of Columbus:</i>		<i>Masons:</i>	
Rodriguez	75	Alejo, F.	79
Lacuna	81	Veneracion	80
Fr. Ortiz	84	Rivera	85
Silverio	85	Del Mundo	86
Makalintal	87	Espejo	88
Bueno	88	Bascarra	88
Lejano	90	Morfe	88
Lim	90	Jaramillo	88
Pilapil	91	Gonzales	90
Wico	92	Abejo, J.	90
Total	863	Total	863

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under the same fatherhood of God as we Masons.

It is therefore my sincere wish that the journey we started here today with this first step be pursued vigorously, hand in hand by Knights and Masons. We must stand out as a working team to manifest to the com-

Vatican Eases Ban on Freemasons

VATICAN CITY, March 12 (UPI) — The Vatican has virtually scrapped an old church law excommunicating Catholics who join the order of Freemasons, Vatican sources said Monday.

The sources said Catholics now are free to join the Masons in the United States, Britain and most other countries of the world.

But the European grand orient lodge form of Masonry, established primarily in Italy and France, is still considered anti-Catholic or atheistic, they said.

Freemasonry, which dates back to medieval times, describes itself as a nonpolitical, nonsectarian movement dedicated to the ideal of universal brotherhood.

5-Million

There are more than five million Masons in the world, most of them in English-speaking lands. The United States alone accounts for nearly four million members.

Pope Clement XII condemned the order in 1738 as atheistic and anti-Catholic, and his action has been affirmed by seven other Popes in 16 different pronouncements.

The Eastern Orthodox Church and

some Protestant bodies also have opposed Freemasonry.

But a move to re-evaluate the Catholic Church's position on Freemasonry began during the second Vatican Ecumenical Council which ended in 1965.

Unofficial

Vatican sources said there had been no official revocation of the excommunication law but the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has let it be known Catholics joining Free Masons orders are no longer automatically excommunicated.

"The church's new attitude has been in effect for more than a year," they said.

The church's code of Canon Law, drawn up in 1918 and presently being reformed, provided for automatic excommunication of Catholics "who enroll in the Masonic sect or in secret societies conspiring against the church or the legitimate authorities."

Vatican sources said this wording would be changed to modify the church position on Masonry when the new code of Canon Law is completed. △

WILMARTH . . .

munity about us, how differences can be forged into unity, when the brotherhood of man is valued more than the individuality of man.

Let us engage ourselves in positive action to discover more similarities, instead of reviving old differences.

Let us not let good ideas remain dormant but translate them into good deeds through action.

Let us be a dynamic force for good rather than passively ignore the evil

that is rampant about us.

Let us join hands together, giving birth this day to a new direction dedicated to extending the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God throughout this land of ours, and in time throughout the world.

Let today be the beginning of the Order of Knights-Masons dedicated to the accomplishment of these things which we as Knights and Masons hold dearest to our hearts.

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