

The Brotherhood of Free Men

WB ALBERTO DE LA CRUZ, WM
Magat Lodge No. 65

*Distinguished Guest of Honor,
Officers of the Grand Lodge, Dignitaries of the East, Fellow Masons, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

We are again here assembled tonight to observe with profound solemnity the traditional investiture of Masonic mantle upon those who shall in the year to pass, shoulder the task of spreading the tenets of the *Ancient Craft of Freemasonry* so that those heretofore, have labored in the dark as to its true message and purpose shall no longer walk in the dim path of ignorance.

The *Ancient Craft or Freemasonry* has, thru centuries of its noble existence, been the subject of so much ridicule, criticism, constructive or otherwise, some meant to debase and degrade the *Craft* while others sought to destroy the institution itself. Indeed, there are countless people including Petitioners to the fold who have no conception of what Freemasonry is or seeks to do and who use it only as a springboard from which to gain a prestige symbol.

There are those who claim that ours is too secretive a society which no one can just penetrate to understand the inner workings of the organization and thereby lead to charges of heresy, anti-religion, an association comprised of Godless heathens whose every guiding principle contradicts religious dogma and teachings.

All these imputations are obviously a case of misinformation, a lack of proper understanding of the workings of *Freemasonry*.

It is a policy borne out of necessity that the right to carry the Masonic symbol, the right to be a Freemason is a mere privilege granted only to those deserving and worthy of the Craft. It is not a natural right which all men can demand. To belong to the fold is a great privilege because to be accepted to the *Fraternity* is evidence that the Petitioner is possessed with spiritual and moral traits of the highest order. Only those worthy, those whose breeding and character can best exemplify *Freemasonry* are extended the privilege of wearing the Masonic emblem. And it is because not all can enter the portals of Masonic Lodge, not all men can have the privilege of joining this fraternity that we are thus charged of being some sort of a secret society whose principles must necessarily contravene the accepted norms of social order.

It behooves therefore upon us *Freemasons* not to remain complacent and indifferent to the accusations and henceforth strive to enlighten the public of the real philosophy of *Freemasonry*.

It is a pity that so many of those who do not belong to the fold have found fault with an organization whose fundamental principle is the promotion of fraternal brotherhood of men — the *Fellowship* — that sweet and precious jewel which we ought to share with our fellowmen so that, in the words of a great Grand Master, we can stand together in times

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of adversity, rejoice in prosperity, do things together — *But Always Together*. And we can achieve this grand design of *Freemasonry* if we can erect a moral edifice within the heart of man because as aptly stated, the entire philosophy of *Freemasonry* is built around the individual. Indeed, the Ancient Craft of *Freemasonry* will always withstand any tempest of time because if we can make an individual wiser, better and consequently happier, there will be no more room nor reason for a man to lose that feeling of fraternal brotherhood towards his fellowmen.

Even the nations of the world with clashing ideologies, creed, and culture have seen fit to band together into one gigantic structure like the *United Nations* in order to give validity to man's aspiration for human dignity. Today, racial conflicts between people of divergent races and colors and wars between nations of contrasting ideologies are daily bread to our news thirsty minds. These wars on race and ideology arise because of man's incessant desire to be treated with human dignity by his fellowmen — that he is co-equal with any man alive and that he is entitled to the same degree of respect and consideration irrespective of whether his skin is white, yellow, brown or black.

These conflicts will easily come to pass if all men shall treat each other as *Brothers*, if all the people on earth shall render due respect to the dignity of his fellowmen. And if we shall always be guided by a sense of fellowship towards others, if we shall promote, at all times, fraternal unity among brothers, if we shall always be in constant awareness of *God's* commandment to "*Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*", perhaps this world will never find itself in constant turmoil and wars shall be a thing of the past.

It is in the light of present day

events where we find the greatest need for all people to understand *Freemasonry*. Because if men shall abide, as we do, by the principles and teachings of *Freemasonry* these racial and ideological conflicts will not find any root from which to grow.

It is one of the doctrines of *Masonry* that before one can be a *Mason* one has to pass the standards by which a *Petitioner* ought to measure himself not only in terms of the moral and the material but principally in terms of the spiritual. And so it is said that to "be a *Freemason* you have to inquire into your own heart and conduct and keep careful watch over yourself that you go not astray. If you harbor ill-will and jealousy, if you are hospitable to intolerance and bigotry and churlish to gentleness and kind affections, opening wide your heart to one and closing its portals to the other, it is time for you to set in order your own temple, or else you wear in vain the name and insignia of a *Mason*, while yet uninvested with the *Masonic* nature."

Indeed, *Freemasonry* acquires greater significance because it accomplishes charitable acts or deeds without any fanfare or the blare of trumpets. This absence of any ostentatious display of acts of charity spells the difference between *Masonic* charity from the rest of the civic organizations of the world. It is not a meaningless or tasteless gesture for it springs from the very ultimate of our human existence — *The Heart of Man*. And so we can claim that ours has greater wisdom and significance because it is extended borne out of *Love* for our fellowmen.

I am happy therefore, that my humble self has been extended the rare privilege of steering our *Masonic* Lodge. And I shall assume the discharge of my office not with an eye to *fame* or any prestige symbol but

I shall take it as a challenge ever conscious of the fact that I am here to serve and not to be served by my fellowmen. This office surely can lend me what the world calls *Fame*, but for myself I seek not the fame because to paraphrase a writer, I shall always look upon fame as something to be used in accomplishing good.

But it is not only the performance of charitable deeds or acts of mercy that we ought to concern ourselves within the limits of our Masonic Lodge. We shall likewise try to preserve and see to it that *Freemasonry* is ever a Pearl of Great Price, "worth a great deal of effort, a great deal of sacrifice, a great deal of waiting," in the words of the Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Indiana. The Fellowship of *Freemasonry* cannot be achieved if we shall take lightly that fraternal unity among brothers.

"There can be no genuine brother-

hood without mutual regard, good opinion and esteem, mutual charity, and mutual allowance for faults and failings." It is those only who learn habitually to think better of each other, to look habitually for the good that is in each other and expect, allow for, and overlook, the evil, who can be Brethren one of the other, in any true sense of the word. Those who gloat over the failings of one another, who think each other to be naturally base and low, of a nature in which the evil predominates and excellence is not to be looked for, cannot even be friends, and much less *Brethren*.

And to you my brethren let me give this pledge that in placing this hood of office upon my shoulders I shall always place my heart and mind to the tenets of *Freemasonry* ever *mindful of what is written* —

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." △



LIST OF NEW BRETHREN FOR JANUARY 1966

| Name | Lodge | Address | Date Raised |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. Robert Samuel Adams | Loo Choo Lodge No. 172; | Koza, Okinawa | 1/6/66 |
| 2. Jerry Lynn Larsen | Loo Choo Lodge No. 172; | Koza, Okinawa | 1/6/66 |
| 3. Amos Ray Fields | Pilar Lodge No. 15; | Imus, Cavite | 1/8/66 |
| 4. George H. Jones | Pilar Lodge No. 15; | Imus, Cavite | 1/8/66 |
| 5. Daniel B. Sta. Ana | C. Norte Lodge No. 107; | Daet, C. Norte | 1/8/66 |
| 6. Harvey Horita | I. Wood Lodge No. 105; | Clark Air Base | 1/14/66 |
| 7. Willard Shockley | I. Wood Lodge No. 105; | Clark Air Base | 1/14/66 |
| 8. Robert Peig | Abra Lodge No. 86; | Bangued, Abra | 1/15/66 |
| 9. Manuel Severo | Abra Lodge No. 86; | Bangued, Abra | 1/15/66 |
| 10. Roberto C. Alarcon | Pintong Bato Lodge No. 51; | Bacoor, Cavite | 1/22/66 |
| 11. Dante Z. Evangelista | Pintong Bato Lodge No. 51; | Bacoor, Cavite | 1/22/66 |
| 12. Horace Theodore Cole | Kanto Lodge No. 143; | Tokyo, Japan | 1/26/66 |
| 13. Florentino C. Concepcion | Kasilawan Lodge No. 77; | Manila | 1/29/66 |
| 14. Martin G. Espina | Kasilawan Lodge No. 77; | Manila | 1/29/66 |