

Waiting, waiting . . .

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A newly obligated brother, on being questioned why he joined the Order quite late and not much earlier, had these to say: "At first, I was waiting for either my father or my elder brother, who are both Masons, to invite or convince me to join the Fraternity, but they did not. Then, I was expecting my close friends who are also Masons to do the same, likewise, they did not and so I have to request one of them to recommend me to the Lodge. This time, not only one, but two of them obligingly recommended me and now they are my brothers." These answers were sincerely and accurately given, because he thought then, while still uninitiated, that Masonry like any other organization — social, civic, or religious, campaigns for membership, which he later on found to be untrue. This brother is a typical example of many more prospective candidates who expect that someday, while they wait, someone will come along and invite them to join the Fraternity. Such, however, will never happen. In fact, Freemasonry is the only known organization in the world, having an unbroken tradition, in the manner of admitting membership into it, in that, solicitation of candidates for the degrees in the Fraternity, has always been prohibited, the violation of which in this jurisdiction, constitutes an act of un-masonic conduct, made punishable under the provisions of Edict No 26, Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines, series 1935. This practice which is unique, but nevertheless universal, has existed since Masonry began and is, up to now, being observed with fidelity and

It's Unique

care, by all the members of the Fraternity, that no one might be received at the temple and made a Mason, unless it be of his own free will and accord. To insure compliance with this ancient custom, the candidate, before his actual initiation, is asked if in his joining the Fraternity, he freely and voluntarily offers himself as a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry, otherwise, if not answered satisfactorily, he will not even be able to behold the form of the Lodge within. There have been attempts by some brethren in the past, to do away with this ancient tradition, as to permit the solicitation of worthy and well-known candidates, especially in cases where membership in the Lodge is small, but those attempts, well-meaning as they might have been intended to be, failed to materialize one after the other and the tradition has remained unchanged and unbroken since time immemorial. Thus, Masonry can truly be proud of its unprecedented history of not campaigning, but merely waiting for anyone worthy and well qualified and properly vouched for to knock at its doors, if and when, they seek admission. This has made the image of Masonry what it is now — an imposing citadel of strength and permanence that have endured the countless and relentless vicissitudes of war, persecution, execution, conflagration, time and antiquity.

But then, since membership in the Fraternity is on a purely voluntary basis and devoid of solicitation, how was it able to mass its present force and stature? There can be no doubt that the candidates were prompted to

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seek admission into the Fraternity by the favorable impression they gathered from time to time regarding the organization. The sustained and untiring efforts of the members of the Fraternity to help and protect one another, their united efforts to fight oppression, ignorance, despotism and all the enemies of freedom, and to walk virtuously in the presence of God, have implanted into the minds of all the freedom-loving people, the nobility of the cause for which Masonry stands. During the darkest days of Masonry, during the Inquisition period, when Masons were viciously persecuted like condemnable criminals, an outcry for righteousness and justice, by this oppressed group of people, "echoed" throughout the world, thus exposing to light, the noble cause, the justification and the commendable basis for the existence of Masonry in this enlightened world. The persecution of Masons, therefore, which culminated in the execution of thousands of them and the maiming of thousands of others, had in effect, promoted the cause of Masonry, by exposing and propagating what good it has done, what it is doing, and what good things it is offering for the days to come — all for the sake of our fellowmen, our country and our God. The result is, instead of good people getting discouraged in joining the Order, membership increased everywhere.

It is a well-known fact, that in voluntarily joining the Fraternity, the majority of the brethren are aware of the sacrifices in store for them, yet they continue to hold membership in the organization. On the other hand, some brethren, who joined the Fraternity perfunctorily, if not for mercenary and other personal motives, tend to fade away to inactivity, when they come to realize that Masonry is a continuous sacrifice and not a

profit-sharing organization as they might have wrongfully expected before joining the Fraternity.

We, however, who joined the Fraternity of our own free will and accord and with honest intentions, are expected to cheerfully carry out our respective shares of the cares and responsibilities of our mother Lodge. It is sad to mention however, that the number of brethren who actually make sacrifices for Masonry by attending its meetings regularly, studying and participating in the rituals and paying due attention to the needs of the Lodge and the brethren in distress, constitute the minority. In many of our Lodges in this jurisdiction, one will not fail to notice that during stated and called meetings, the same faces of the brethren may always be seen inside the Lodge, the others do not even show up during the whole year, while a few come to the Lodge every now and then, when invited to do so. While it may be admitted, that they might have joined the Fraternity of their own free will and accord, as all others before us have done, many of them as time passes by, have knowingly been remiss in their duties and obligations to the Fraternity via the same route. It only proves that within us and amongst us, we have some brethren who were prepared below their hearts, it being a common knowledge, that "below a man's heart is the stomach."

As a result, many of our Lodges are dwindling in number, some are in real distress, meetings become dull and monotonous and at times could hardly muster a quorum to open a Lodge. These things can not happen if only all the members of the Lodge have the same objectives in gaining membership therein. There is plausible reason to believe, that perhaps, some brethren may have freely and volun-

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trily joined the Fraternity, but that, in the ensuing association with the other brethren and after joining the activities of the Lodge, they discover, to their consternation, that the objectives of Masonry are not the answer to the motives they have in mind when they sought admission into it, and so they lose interest and shy away.

To forestall this eventuality in the future, it behooves the Investigating Committee appointed by the Master of the Lodge, to explain fully to the candidate, that Masonry is not a profit-sharing organization, but rather a chain of sacrifices for the good of our fellowmen, country and mankind. Knowing these at the very start, and should he still persist in joining the Fraternity of his own freewill and accord, then we can rest assured that we have won over to our side a brother who can be relied upon to place the interests of the Order at heart, over and above personal interests. △

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SURGERY FOR RHEUMATOID KNEE.

The pain — and early deformity — of rheumatoid arthritis of the knee may be relieved by surgical removal of a joint membrane (the synovium) inflamed and swollen by the disease. So reports Dr. Leonard Marmor in the *American Journal of Surgery*. He performed the operation on 130 patients. Most obtained excellent knee motion and relief of pain; two previously in wheelchairs, could walk without discomfort. Most patients walked when leaving the hospital one week after surgery.

— Lawrence Galton in
Family Circle.

ways been for total ecumenicity. For over a century, the two fraternal organizations have always been at odds, but lately, the ecumenical movement in the churches has crept into the fraternities. Here in the Philippines as in the United States and Europe, the leaders of the two fraternal organizations have reached friendly understanding. They break bread together in their fraternal breakfasts or dinners. Masons are invited to speak at meetings of the Knights of Columbus and Knights of Columbus are invited to speak at meetings of Freemasons.

Among Freemasons, with all this ecumenical spirit, sometimes they cannot understand why some priests and Knights of Columbus whom they invite to speak at their meetings do not accept their invitations. It is not that they do not wish to; it is only that they cannot obtain permission from their bishops in time for the meetings. Some bishops readily give permission while others would rather not. The authority of a bishop within his diocese is as clear as that of a Grand Master within his grand jurisdiction.

We agree with MW Dwight L. Smith that the matter of acting on petitions of Catholics to join Freemasonry should be on the same basis as acting on the petitions of others of different religious beliefs and affiliations. △

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A nation is no stronger than its beliefs. Every internal and external enemy we have knows the advantage of destroying a nation's standards.

—Henry J. Taylor

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If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.

—Chinese Proverb