



IN HOC SIGNO VINCES

# KNIGHT TEMPLAR

SPRING 2025



BIDEN MADE A MASON AT SIGHT

**MASONIC PENALTIES**

**EXCOMMUNICATION**

AND THE CHURCH'S OFFICIAL POSITION ON MASONRY

**THE IMMEMORIAL DISCUSSION**

ROD, CORD, PENDULUM

# SEE FURTHER



## KNIGHT TEMPLAR MAGAZINE COVER PHOTO CONTEST

Submit photos to: [ben@ktmag.org](mailto:ben@ktmag.org)

Get your work featured on the cover of the **Knight Templar Magazine**.  
Read by over **65,000 households** nationwide.

- 
- ⚡ Must be 300dpi at 8.5 x 11 with 0.25" bleed
  - ⚡ People subjects preferred (e.g. portraits)
  - ⚡ Must be well lit and well composed
  - ⚡ Templar themed a plus

# CAS Iberia™ Steel Making History for 40 Years™

In 2025, CAS Iberia celebrates four decades as the world's leading manufacturer and distributor of the top swords and accessories. The CAS family of sword brands are renowned for their quality, authenticity and durability. From east to west including hand-forged Japanese katana to Scottish claymores and medieval European broad swords, CAS Iberia is steel making history for generations to come.

**Legacy  
Arms**

Legacy Arms - Templar Sword  
SL0033 - MSRP: \$329.00



Red Dragon - Temple Church Sword  
SR7056 - MSRP: \$385.00

Our Temple Church sword is a replica of a sword found in the River Thames in London. The sword, forged in the period between 1300-1350, was discovered opposite Temple Church, the headquarters of the Knights Templar in England. Comes with a premium leather scabbard.

Visit our website to see all our swords, chainmail and armour, wearable suits of armour and our period appropriate clothing and shoes. Dealer inquiries are welcome, as well as organizational discounts by contacting Bro. Patrick Shipley [pshipley@casiberia.com](mailto:pshipley@casiberia.com) Ext 208, Mon-Fri 8:00am to 4:00pm EST.

Free Ground Shipping to the contiguous 48 U.S. States.

Visit our website for details <https://casiberia.com/> Or call 800.635.9366 [info@casiberia.com](mailto:info@casiberia.com)



YOU SEE THIS. ADVERTISING WORKS.  
**PLACE YOUR AD HERE**

# Grand Master's Message

**Sir Knight David J. Kussman, GCT**

Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

To the Sir Knights of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar  
**Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!**

## A PROMISE MADE...A PROMISE KEPT



**A**scension Day is the fortieth day of Easter. It occurs thirty-nine days after Easter Sunday. It is a Christian holiday that commemorates Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven according to Christian belief.

I suggest that, in a sense, Ascension Day is as important or even more important than either Christmas or Easter or Good Friday. The reality is that all these events are critical for Christians, and particularity to members of our Christian Order.

Without Jesus dying, there could be no Resurrection. No Easter. Without Jesus being born – without Christmas – there is no way He could die. So, it is a series of events that must all take place. In that order.

### Ascension Day – forgotten or ignored?

But what about Ascension Day? This is an impressive event. Jesus returned to Heaven. If the “only” thing Jesus did was come back to life, the Christian goal of eternity in Heaven would not be accomplished. So yes, this is important.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” (John 14:1-4 ESV.)

Jesus coming back to life only to remain on earth forever does not accomplish the mission. When Jesus is our example – our proof that what He says is true – the things in

this passage must be completed.

There must be “many rooms” that have been prepared for us. There is no way Jesus could begin to explain Heaven to us living on Earth. Remember, He really only ever spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven in parables.

Further, Jesus said He was going to return to Heaven to prepare a place for us. If Jesus could not return to Heaven – if He stayed here Resurrected but still walking the Earth – He could not prepare that place. And if Jesus weren’t capable of getting Himself back to Heaven, how could we ever hope He could get us there?

And so, Ascension Day is a huge deal. Without Jesus being able to ascend back to Heaven, everything else He said in John 14 would have been idle talk.

Now we see, the full sequence, for Jesus, must be:

- Born – Christmas
- Die – Good Friday
- Resurrected – Easter
- Returned to Heaven – Ascension Day

And yet, many Christians around the world do not celebrate Ascension Day. I wonder why?

### Remembering Ascension Day

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32 ESV.)

Remember Ascension Day. Celebrate Ascension Day. It is proof that Jesus can do what He promised. That He does have a place prepared for us. And that He will return for us, to take us there. It is proof of the culmination of everything Jesus came to Earth to accomplish.

Even if it is not a public holiday, we can still celebrate it.

And even if it is not on a Sunday – Ascension Day is always on a Thursday – we can still remember and celebrate it as a special day for God.

Every day we are alive is a gift from God.

They should all be celebrated. Some of them, like Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter have “extra” meaning. Well, so does Ascension Day.

Our Order has celebrated this important day for over two hundred years. In church services, private commandery celebrations, and public invited gatherings, Ascension Day events have embraced its true significance.

After all, Jesus was born, suffered, and died, then was raised back to life – to Ascend back to Heaven. Then later, when the time comes, He will have a place for us and bring us to that place as well. That is what Ascension Day is all about. It should not be a forgotten holiday. It should take place as one of the four incredibly important events of Jesus’ short time on this earth.

Yes – Jesus died to pay the price for our sins. But there is more: He also promises us that after that price is paid, we can and will spend eternity with Him. The price was paid on Good Friday. Easter – Resurrection Day – is when Jesus came back to life. But Ascension Day is the day Jesus proved there is a path to Heaven.

Ascension Day is an important day. Please, as Knights Templar and the true Defenders of our Faith, join with others of our Order and Celebrate the Promise made and the Promise kept.

Our journey continues . . .

David J. Kussman, GCT  
**Grand Master**



# KNIGHT TEMPLAR

VOLUME LXXI SPRING 2025

Grand Encampment of Knights Templar  
of the United States of America



**David J. Kussman**  
Grand Master

**David Studley**  
Grand Captain General  
& Publisher

## ADDRESS CHANGE OR CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP

Please report all changes in  
membership to the Grand  
Recorder:

**Lawrence E. Tucker**  
Grand Recorder

Grand Encampment Office  
3 Sugar Creek Center Blvd  
Ste 410  
Sugar Land, TX 77478  
Phone: (713) 349-8700  
Fax: (713) 349-8710  
E-mail: larry@gektusa.org

Magazine and correspondence to the editor  
should be sent in electronic form to the  
managing editor whose contact informa-  
tion is shown below. All photos or images  
should be property of the author, or used  
with permission or under license by the  
author, unless expressly noted otherwise.

**Ben Williams**  
Managing Editor

Laughing Lion  
1100 W Littleton Blvd  
Ste 440  
Littleton, CO 80120  
Phone: (720) 328-5343  
Fax: (720) 328-5297  
E-mail: ben@ktmag.org

visit our website at:  
**knightstemplar.org**



The **KNIGHT TEMPLAR** (USPS 25735) (ISSN 2994-7189 (print); 2994-7170 (online)) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter by Laughing Lion LLC, 1100 W Littleton Blvd, Ste 440, Littleton, CO 80120, on behalf of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: KNIGHT TEMPLAR MAGAZINE, GRAND ENCAMPMENT OFFICE, 3 SUGAR CREEK CENTER BLVD, STE 410, SUGAR LAND, TX 77478.

© 2025 Grand Encampment  
Knights Templar

YOU SEE THIS.  
ADVERTISING WORKS.  
**PLACE YOUR AD HERE**

# Mitchell Fleming Printing

*Printing & Binding Since 1859*

Specializing In Printing, Mailing And Fulfillment  
For All of Your Masonic Needs

- Rituals
- Proceedings
- Transactions
- Catalogs
- Books & Magazines
- Dues Cards

**And So Much More!**

Give us a call @ (317) 462-5467  
Or send us an email @ [Info@mitchell-fleming.com](mailto:Info@mitchell-fleming.com)

## Are you a Royal Arch Mason?

**... of course you are!**

Are you a subscriber to  
The Royal Arch Magazine?  
Well... you should be!!

- ¥ Capitular news
- ¥ Photographs
- ¥ Book Reviews
- ¥ RARA Charity updates

**2 years  
for only  
\$10.00**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_  
city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Tina Miller, RAMM, PO Box 205, Maxwell, IN 46154-0205 along  
with a \$10.00 check and get started now!

# Grand Prelate's Message

**Sir Knight Paul Erickson, GCT**

Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

**Hebrews 10:23-25 (NASB)**



**D**ear Sir Knights, as I write this my thoughts are looking forward to our upcoming Easter Observance in April. We will again have a Good Friday service, and (weather permitting), we won't be crowded into the

auditorium, but will be outside for the service, with all Sir Knights marching up the pathway. It should be a beautiful sight, with everyone in their uniforms. I'm looking forward to celebrating our Savior's Resurrection with all of you.

I thought I would share one of my favorite passages from the Holy Bible. It always leads me to think about "fellowship," and how important



A.I. Generated Image

much money. Besides, when fellowshiping with new acquaintances, you might make a lifelong friend or better yet, *friends*.

We are also fellowshiping when we are

Also, please note that these prayer requests are not just for Sir Knights, but they are for anyone you know who needs prayer. Blue Lodge, York Rite, Shrine, Scottish Rite, neighbor, friend, it doesn't matter – we will pray for anyone. After all, it just gives us another reason to talk to God, and He loves to hear from us. You, me, the prelates, it doesn't matter, He wants to hear from all of us.

when fellowshiping with new acquaintances, you might make a lifelong friend or better yet, *friends*.

it is. I recognize this passage refers to church, and not wishing to get into a doctrinal discussion, and using the magazine as a platform for that, it does apply to us as Masons, and Knights Templar. After all, we do gather together, and in the process of those gatherings, we do stimulate one another to love and good deeds, and we also encourage one another. So, like a key in a lock, it fits.

Recently I was at Masonic week, and there was definitely a lot of fellowshiping going on there. Granted, during the meetings it would be very disruptive to fellowship with one another, but afterwards, if you stepped out of the room, the vendor area is a great place to meet and chat. You also get to fellowship with the vendors, see their new wares, and maybe spend a little too

carrying for sick friends, visiting shut-ins, or doing hospital visitations. Which leads me to the "40 Miles Project." In the past there had been some issues with the website with requests not being forwarded to me, or broken links. Now, however, with the new Grand Encampment website up and running, all requests for prayer are not only getting through to me, but the Webmaster has also included Grand Prelates Rob Elsner and Terry Plemons on the list, whereas before, they were coming to just me. So, even though you can reach out to each of us individually using our personal email addresses, it is better to go through the website because it creates a record that I import into a form, allowing me to follow up with the requestor or the person in need.

Blessings to you all,

*Paul*

Paul Erickson, KGC  
**Grand Prelate**

<https://usagekt.org/40miles/>





# ZERO TOLERANCE TO PLAGIARISM

**D**ue to repeated submissions of plagiarized articles, and at the direction of the Executive Committee of the Grand Encampment, the *Knight Templar* magazine hereby provides notice of its **zero tolerance for plagiarism** policy.

Be aware, if you submit plagiarized content for publication in these pages, **you will be banned from any future submission** and subject yourself to **charges of unknighly conduct** with a recommended penalty of **suspension for at least six months**. Your name may also be printed in this magazine as a plagiarist.

Plagiarism is **not** acceptable. Plagiarism is fundamentally dishonest. Plagiarism constitutes theft. It is no different than stealing a Brother Master Mason's ring.

In an academic forum, plagiarism is grounds for expulsion.

If you rely on someone else's work or research, you *must* give them credit. Further, you must rewrite content in your own words. You cannot simply cut and paste someone else's article or work, or change a title, and pass it off as your own!

Not only is such conduct unknighly, it may subject the *Knight Templar* and the Grand Encampment to liability for copyright infringement. This is not a small matter. The *Knight Templar* and the Grand

Encampment take plagiarism seriously. The *Knight Templar* and the Grand Encampment will take all reasonable measures to protect the Grand Encampment from copyright infringement claims, including seeking contribution from violators of this policy.

## USE OF AI

Similarly, use of Artificial Intelligence to author your work is also problematic. Several large and important suits for copyright infringement are ongoing in federal courts over AI's use of copyrighted material in preparing generated text.

Thus, if you use AI to write anything you submit to the Knight Templar, you must certify in your correspondence that the text was generated or edited by AI.

Failure to make such a certification may result in your being banned from submitting future articles for consideration and similarly subject you to charges of unknighly conduct.

# GUIDELINES FOR CLEAR WRITING

**T**he Knight Templar suggests the following guidelines for authors seeking representation in this magazine.

1. Use the active voice. *E.g.*, "The voice which was used was active." No. "The active voice was used." This is a common problem unfortunately, probably because new writers affect an academic pretense which, compounded by nineteenth century Masonic texts, positions passive phraseology. But this is archaic. Strive for clarity. Except in rare circumstances, active voice is best.

2. Avoid tautologies. *E.g.*, "There is a method or way to accomplish clear and lucid writing." No. "There is a method to accomplish clear writing." Strive for economy of language – delete redundant or unnecessary terms. *E.g.* "He moved with conscious intent." No. Intent is already conscious. "He moved with intent." Good writing is structured and succinct. Reduce via necessity. Try not to waste a word.

3. Avoid adjectives wherever possible. *E.g.* "It was a very warm day." No. "It was a hot day." Do not gush. "It was so very good to see the Knights assemble." No. "It was good to see the Knights assemble." Better yet: "The Knights

assembled."

4. Do not use the first person (unless you are writing a column). "In my research I discovered . . ." No. "Research showed" or "Research suggested." Objective voice removes the personal article. The writing is not about you, but about the content.

5. Show don't tell. *E.g.*, "He was confused." Better, "His brow furrowed." "He was cold." Better, "He shivered." Use images to communicate feeling, not abstractions.

6. Strive for exactitude. "Very hot." No. "*Torrid*." "Extremely convoluted." Why not "labyrinthine"? "A long way," "*far*."

7. Use a shorter word if one is available. Use a common word unless exactitude requires otherwise.

8. Do not use *etc.* or other Latinate abbreviations (except in rare circumstances). Obviously, *e.g.*, and *etc.* are applicable in this column.

9. Do not include two spaces after the period. Ever.

10. Put punctuation on the inside of the quotation marks, even when citing, except for the semi-colon: "A.I. is only an iterative intel-

ligence: it cannot understand sarcasm or the subjunctive mood," and "what does this mean"; it could be anything.

11. Recognize your article type: News, feature, editorial. **News:** short, active voice. Who, what, where, when (in that order). Inverted pyramid (conclusion is almost first, leading into facts and storyline. Lesser facts follow important facts. What is the essential issue? That is the Lede.) **Feature:** longer form, developed structure (introduction, body (or analysis), conclusion). Position important facts as part of the narrative. More room for storyline, epigrams, wordsmithing. **Editorial:** much more persuasive language, sounding a voice (typically avoids the personal pronoun, but not always, depending on the column).

12. Always proofread. Watch for homonyms (*E.g.*, their, they're, there).

13. Read and emulate good journalism. The *Economist*, the *Spectator USA*, *Wired*. Not *USA Today* or *Time*. Always look up words you don't know (don't construct meaning from context). **KT**

# CONTE

## CONTRIBUTORS



**Timothy J. Whipple** lives in Des Moines, Iowa. He is a past master of Legacy Lodge No. 678 in Des Moines, Iowa, a member of the Scottish Rite and York Rite, and a member of several invitational bodies. He is currently the master of Iowa Research Lodge No. 2. He is a shareholder at the law firm of Ahlers and Cooney, where he practices utility law.



**Michelle Snyder** is a symbologist, bestselling author of fifteen books, a speaker, artist, and co-owner of White Knight Studio Publishing. She is the founder and Vice President of The Foundation for Re-search of the Enzmann Archive. She has spoken internationally, taught workshops, written for newspapers and magazines, created a podcast and video classes, written six unique, fascinating books on the subject of Symbology, and her fiction series is mesmerizing. Visit her at [thesymbologist.com](http://thesymbologist.com).



**Josh Payne** competed in the X Games four times, both summer and winter. He has worked on over 5,000 songs and audiobooks and is a member of the Grammy selection committee for production and engineering. He has worked on numerous independent and major films and video/TV series. He became a Master Mason in February, 2017, at Winchester Hiram Lodge No. 21 in Winchester, VA. He's a member of the Scottish Rite in Alexandria, VA, the Royal Arch and Commandery in Winchester, and numerous other Masonic bodies.



**George Marshall, Jr.** is a retired Research Physicist from the U.S. Army Missile Command in Huntsville, AL. He is a widower and has a son, two daughters, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He is a fifty-six-year member of the Masonic Order and a fifty-four-year York Rite Mason. His current research interests are Ancient Egypt, Medieval History, and the Crusades. His leisure hours include walking, reading, Masonic ritual work, and providing room and board to his American Bobtail cat, Millie.

## Editor

**Ben Williams** is a Registered Patent Attorney based out of Denver, Colorado. He's a Past Department Commander for the Northwest Department and has held many Masonic offices in his home state of Colorado. He's married to his patient and caring wife, Tiffany, a history teacher. They have a daughter, Adelyn, and a beagle, Warwick.



On the Cover: .

## NEWS

President Biden Made a Mason at Sight by GLSCPHA . . . . . 13



Thirty-Two New Knights in Front Royal Virginia . . . . . 16



Bellfower York Rite Feeds the Hungry for Twenty-Five Years . . 12



B. Chris Ruli Inducted Into Order of Clairvaux . . . . . 18





# EVENTS

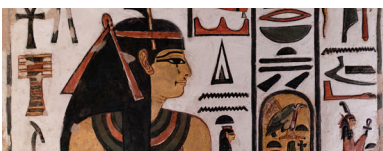
## EXCOMMUNICATION AND THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON MASONRY

by Ben Williams ..... 26



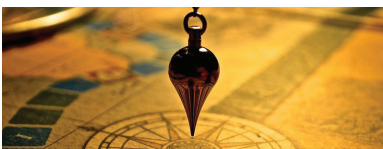
## SYMBOLISM OF MASONIC PENALTIES

by Tim Whipple ..... 21



## MA'AT AND THE ETHOS OF EGYPT

by George Marshall ..... 24



## CORD, PENDULUM, AND ROD

by Michelle Snyder ..... 40



## THE IMMEMORIAL DISCUSSION

by Ben Williams ..... 43



## SOOB

..... 46



## EYE FOUNDATION

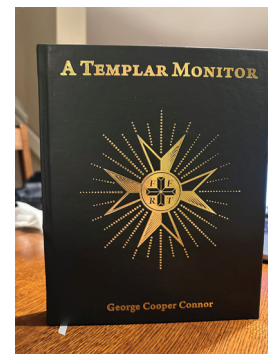
57th Annual Campaign  
by Richard Jernigan..... 49

Grand Masters & Grand  
Commander's Clubs ..... 50

## ART & REVIEW

Flash Fiction: *Citizens in Arms*  
by Ben Williams ..... 45

Limited Edition of Leatherbound  
*A Templar Monitor*  
by Ben Williams ..... 48



## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the *Knight Templar*. In this issue, among other things, we present a special report on the Catholic Church's official position on Freemasonry (see Special Report, page 26). This article was prompted by former president Biden being made a Mason at sight by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of South Carolina, Prince Hall Affiliate on January 29 (see page 13).

Much buzz abounded online – additional to the political division entrenched between Brethren of the Craft, with predictable bombast from both sides, the main controversy seemed to concern whether Biden would now be excommunicated as a result of becoming a Mason. This led your editor down the proverbial rabbit hole to determine, once and for all, the Catholic Church's actual position on the Fraternity.

Most well-informed Brethren are familiar with the proscriptive Bulls against the Fraternity originated by the Church. But, tracing the Church's recent missives on the subject back to Clement XII's *In eminenti apostolatus*, one thing becomes clear: present day, the Church's position is *not* clear; its arguments are deeply flawed and problematic.

*In eminenti* outlaws membership outright, but the encyclical *Humanum genus*, issued by Pope Leo XIII a hundred years later, sets forth the only rationale the Church has forwarded regarding its prohibition of the Fraternity. This "reasoning" is worthy of study, centuries of consternation are based on it.

The fact is, *Humanum genus* is outdated and ill-informed. Leo's diatribe seems aimed, not at the Fraternity, but at the modern world and the industrial revolution. His encyclical reads like a polemic against science and

modernity, against representative government and personal sovereignty, against medicine and physics. The sense is an overentitled monarch clinging to his skirts, ruing the loss of temporal authority as new elected governments usurp the Church's influence over temporal affairs. Leo complains about how ill-treated the Papacy is, how the Church's interest in temporal and municipal governance is being usurped by people who are not competent or capable of representing themselves. And who is responsible? Atheist Freemasons!

From the benefit of a modern world view, *Humanum genus* is disturbing. It's difficult to see how the Church can uphold its prohibition based on such obsolete ideology. It's past time the Church reviewed this document thoroughly and withdrew its suppression of Freemasonry – at least "regular" Freemasonry which, contrary to Leo's misguided opinion, requires a belief in a supreme being.

Additionally, we present features by Tim Whipple (on the symbolism of the Masonic penalties and high treason in medieval England); George Marshall, Jr., on the negative confessions of Ma'at; and Michelle Snyder, on the symbolism of the Masonic rod and cord.

Whipple (page 21) suggests the gruesomeness of the Masonic penalties likely harkens to punishments enacted during the Middle Ages for high treason. The similarities are interesting. Certainly, the oaths taken by Masons are not unusual from this perspective; craft guilds required oaths of admission, councils oaths of office. It should not be surprising, then, that the penalties of the Craft degrees find some semblance with punishments for treason exacted around the time the guilds gained preeminence.

Marshall (page 24) provides insight into the morals of ancient Egypt, under the goddess Ma'at, synonymous with truth. If you are unfamiliar with the forty-two negative confessions of Ma'at, you will enjoy acquainting yourself with this code of conduct and prototype for other commandments common to religions expression.

Snyder (page 40) presents symbolism of the rod and cord and pendulum, an intriguing contemplation of ancient time keeping by which civilization was originally wrought. Are these themes encoded in the officers' rods and jewels?

During All Masonic Week, B. Chris Ruli was inducted into the Grand Encampment's Order of Clairvaux. This Order was created during the 68<sup>th</sup> Triennium, to recognize scholarship in Templary. Its first member was Brandon Mullins, of Ann Arbor Commandery No. 13, Ypsilanti, MI, inducted for his paper regarding the symbolism of the skull in the Order of the Temple.

Ruli was awarded the honor at the Triennial session last year for his research into Templary in the District of Columbia but was unable to attend due to other commitments. Thus, the honor was conferred in Alexandria, VA, at the George Washington Masonic Memorial during All Masonic Week.

Because we support both hemispheres of the brain (science and art), I've included a flash fiction piece I wrote over twenty-years ago, just for fun (and to fill up a page!). It's a short piece, one that fit the space. If you like seeing flash fiction in these pages, please let me know. I believe this magazine should foster the arts and sciences, inspiring our members with an avenue to express themselves by the written word and visual arts. So, if you have a short

story (1,000 to 3,000 words), feel free to send it in.

It is a sad fact that we needed to include a notice regarding plagiarism in this issue. We've had a number of submissions that were plagiarized. It's important that all submissions constitute original work. We cannot publish plagiarized material. Plagiarism is *theft* – it's *per se* unknighly. The same goes for using generative A.I. Recently, the U.S. Court for the District of Delaware held that generative A.I. does not constitute fair use, and underlying copyrighted work used by A.I. to generate responses constitutes copyright infringement (see *Thomson Reuters Enter. Ctr. GMBH v. Ross Intel. Inc.*, No. 1:20-CV-613-SB, 2025 WL 458520, at \*2 (D. Del. Feb. 11, 2025)).

We of course encourage submissions, but you must use your own words, take time to write your own ideas, and always give credit when you rely on work by others! This is not just the right thing to do, plagiarized content exposes the Grand Encampment to copyright claims. Damages in copyright can be substantial. Please don't do it.

Finally, please send us your photos! Our cover shots are typically portraits, requiring good lighting and composition. If you're a photographer – even just an amateur – please send us your photos. You might get to see it on the cover of the *Knight Templar*.



Ben Williams  
Editor

# Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.



## How to join the Grand Commander's or the Grand Master's Club

**Grand Commander's Club:** Any individual may send a check in the amount of \$100 or more specified for the purpose of beginning a Grand Commander's Club. (Make payable to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation). This initial contribution will begin your Grand Commander's Club membership. In addition, members of the Grand Commander's Club pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more.

**Grand Master's Club:** Once contributions total \$1,000, the individual is enrolled in the Grand Master's Club. Membership is open to individuals only, and commandery credit is given for participation.

## Qualified Charitable Distributions

Congress has now made the qualified charitable distribution (QCD) option permanent for those who wish to make direct contributions from their IRA to charity. The tax law allows individuals required to make minimum distributions due to age to transfer up to \$100,000 a year from their IRA to a qualified charity. This distribution counts toward their required minimum distribution but isn't added to their adjusted gross income the way a normal IRA distribution is. This can provide a tax savings of up to 40% depending upon an individual's tax situation. Please discuss with your tax professional whether this option could benefit you in your charitable and retirement planning.

## Planned Giving - Create a Charitable Legacy

Your Foundation now has a full web site dedicated to Planned Giving which you can access from our web site, shown at the bottom of this page. So if you're thinking of ways to make a lasting legacy for yourself please check out the tab on the home page that says "Planned Giving". Leaving your mark on the future is so simple with a gift in your will. To leave a gift in your Will or Trust

it is as easy as asking your attorney to include a sentence that says:

**I bequeath (lump sum) or (%) of my estate to:**

**Knights Templar  
Eye Foundation, Inc.**

3201 Cross Timbers Road  
Bldg. 4 Ste. 300  
Flower Mound, TX 75028

[ktef.org](http://ktef.org)



# BELFLOWER YORK RITE BODIES

## FEEDING THE HUNGRY FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

by Ben Williams

**BELFLOWER, CALIFORNIA** – Members of the Bellflower York Rite bodies, including Bellflower Lodge No. 320, gathered at Catholic Church on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, for their food drive.

The annual event supports the underserved in Los Angeles county and has been ongoing for twenty-five years.

“I view this as part of our obligation to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted,” said Sir Knight David Kussman, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment, who has participated in the food drive since its inception.

From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., the Sir Knights and Brethren present supplied approximately twenty-five chicken dinners to members

of the community whom the parish had identified in need.

The program started as a canned food drive, and was an impetus of Sir Knight Kenneth G. Hope (now deceased). Over time, it evolved into a charitable give-away, including clothing, school supplies, and hot food.

“The mission stays the same,” Sir Knight Kussman said. “We’re partnering with the community – it’s not just food, we have prayer sessions, anoint people, pray for healing; it’s just a magnanimous event,” he said. “Since conception, the focus of the Knights Templar has been to give what we have to help others; to share our time, our prayers, and our resources to improve conditions for those who are in need.” **KT**



# FORMER PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

## Made a Mason at Sight

by Ben Williams



Source: Getty Images

**CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA** – Sunday, January 19, 2025, on his last day as President of the United States, Joe Biden was made a Mason at sight by Most Worshipful Brother Victor C. Major, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, Prince Hall Affiliate. Biden attended the ceremony in person.

Making Masons at sight, though controversial, is generally recognized as a prerogative of Grand Masters, enshrined by famed Masonic scholar, Albert G. Mackey (1807-1881), in his *Twenty-Five Landmarks* (1858) (“Landmark No. 8: The prerogative of the Grand Master to make Masons at sight”). However, the practice is used sparingly – typically for terminally ill persons unable to participate in ritual or earnest members of the military set to deploy.

Making Masons at sight seems a favored means of inducting famous people, too, who are otherwise too busy or aloof to attend Lodge the requisite times needed to attain the degrees in succession. For example, Astronaut John Glenn petitioned Concord Lodge No. 688 in his hometown, Concord, Ohio, and was elected to membership in 1964. But his schedule was such that he was unable to appear for initiation. So, fourteen years later, on August 19, 1978, he was made a Mason “at sight” by Grand Master Jerry Rasnor. Hundreds of Masons attended the ceremony, hosted in an “Occasional Lodge” opened in a high school gymnasium in Chillicothe rented to accommodate them all.

Examples in England extend chiefly to the nobility. For example, Lord Blayney, Grand Master,

convened an Occasional Lodge at the Horn Tavern in 1766 to make the Duke of Gloucester (grandson of King George II) a Master Mason in one sitting; Deputy Grand Master John Salter, acting as the Grand Master, conferred all three degrees on the Duke of Cumberland in 1767, who, twenty years later, became Grand Master and conferred the degrees “at sight” on the Prince of Wales in the Star and Garter Inn in Pall Mall, London, in 1787.

The Dukes of Lorraine and Newcastle may have been made Masons at sight earlier, in 1731—they were “raised” Masons at an “Occasional Lodge” convened by Lord Lovel, Grand Master, at Houghton Hall, but whether this act completed earlier, unfinished work is not presently known. As recently as 2011, actor Richard Dreyfuss was made a Mason at

sight by the Grand Master of the District of Columbia, Most Worshipful Bro. Jesse Villarreal, after the actor’s participation in a documentary about the Fraternity.

The prerogative – which reaches the plenary power of Grand Masters – first appears in print in 1777, in the *Book of Constitutions of the Antients Grand Lodge of England*, wherein the Grand Master is expressly granted the power, as well as the power to grant dispensations to subordinate Lodges for the purpose. It is not universally understood, and there appears no specific form for the ceremony, which is traditionally taken as a conferral of all degrees in a day during a special meeting convened for the purpose, but has also come to mean a formal pronouncement by the Grand Master in some manner.



John Glenn was made a Mason at sight in 1978 in Chillicothe, Ohio.

How Biden was raised is not presently clear. But after reports began circulating online, headlines abounded across the internet, focusing on Biden's Catholic faith and the purported risk of excommunication his Masonic affiliation now poses. This is an exaggeration. According to its own definition, the Church does not specifically "excommunicate" Masons anymore. (Fortunately, it doesn't torture and execute them anymore, either. See Special Report, on page 26.)

The confusion probably stems from the Catholic Church itself, which is not clear on this subject (other than saying Freemasonry is essentially incompatible – or "irreconcilable" – with the Christian faith). See our **Special Report** on the Church's position against Freemasonry on page 26. The Church's final disposition against the Fraternity was issued on November 26, 1983, by then-Cardinal Ratzinger (before he became

Pope Benedict XVI), when he headed the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith (rebranded from its former name, the Inquisition). In that Declaration, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that the Church's judgment against the Fraternity remains "unchanged":

[T]he Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enrol [sic] in Masonic associations are in a grave state of sin and may not receive Holy Communion.

This position was again ratified a couple of years ago, in response to an inquiry raised by the Bishop of Dumaguete in the Philippines, Julito Cortes, who had reached out for guidance regarding the proportion

of Masons active in his diocese. Cardinal Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery of the Faith (formerly, the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith, and, previously, the Inquisition), wrote in a note for an audience with Pope Francis, dated November 13, 2023, that "[o]n the doctrinal level, it should be remembered that active membership in Freemasonry by a member of the faithful is forbidden because of irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry." The note cites Ratzinger's 1983 Declaration. "Therefore, those who are formally and knowingly enrolled in Masonic Lodges and have embraced Masonic principles fall under the provisions in the above-mentioned Declaration."

That is, they "are in a grave state of sin and may not receive Holy Communion." Note that eternal damnation by excommunication (or execution) is not expressly stated as a penalty (any more).

This is a far cry from previous centuries. The first official pronouncement against the Fraternity by the Church was issued in 1738 by Pope Clement XII in his Bull *In Eminenti Apostolatus*. Principal concerns devolved to the secrecy and obligations Masons assume. Clement quotes John 3: 20: *Qui male agit, odit lucem*: "he who does evil hates the light."

Now it has come to Our ears, and common gossip has made clear, that certain Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles called in the popular tongue *Liberi Muratori* or *Francs Massons* or by other names according to the various languages, are spreading far and wide and daily growing in strength; and men of any Religion or sect, satisfied with the appearance of natural probity, are joined together, according to their laws and the statutes laid down for them, by a strict and unbreakable bond which obliges them, both by an oath upon the Holy Bible and by a host of grievous punishment,

to an inviolable silence about all that they do in secret together. But it is in the nature of crime to betray itself and to show itself by its attendant clamor. Thus these aforesaid Societies or Conventicles have caused in the minds of the faithful the greatest suspicion, and all prudent and upright men have passed the same judgment on them as being depraved and perverted. For if they were not doing evil they would not have so great a hatred of the light. Indeed, this rumor has grown to such proportions that in several countries these societies have been forbidden by the civil authorities as being against the public security, and for some time past have appeared to be prudently eliminated.

By his own admission, relying solely on hearsay, Clement condemns and prohibits Masons. Clement goes so far as to forbid and condemn any of the faithful from aiding or assisting Freemasons in any capacity. Everyone must "stay completely clear of such Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles, under pain of excommunication . . . which is incurred by the very deed without any declaration being required, and from which no one can obtain the benefit of absolution, other than at the hour of death, except through Ourselves or the Roman Pontiff of the time."

Thus, excommunication was self-executing, the act of joining the Fraternity itself the trigger; no pronouncement by mother Church was necessary.

Alarmingly, Clement then enjoins "Bishops and prelates, and other local ordinaries, as well as inquisitors for heresy" to "investigate and proceed against transgressors of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity or pre-eminence they may be; and they are to pursue and punish them with condign penalties [*i.e.*, torture and murder] as being most suspect of heresy."

As a result of these words,

Masons were tortured and hanged by the Inquisition as late as 1743 (e.g., Damiao de Andrade, Manoel de Revelhos, and Christoph Diego, hanged March 8, 1743, in Portugal, and Bros. Thomas Brasle and Jacques Mouton who the Church tortured to death).

The papal ban on Masonic affiliation was ratified by Benedict XIV, Pius VII, Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI, and Pius IX. The next official pronouncement, however, was not issued until 1884, by Pope Leo XIII, in his Bull, *Humanum Genus*. Here, Leo XIII expressed concerns that Masons were working to “overthrow . . . the whole religious and political order of the world” condemning the “Masonic federation,” not because of any actual contemptible act, but “by the sum of its pronounced opinions.” These opinions were the pursuit of natural philosophy (i.e., science) and Humanist reason (i.e., representative governance and rule by the meritorious). Leo’s chief concern seems to be the humanist ideal that the “Church and the State ought to be altogether disunited,” a tenet of modern polity almost universally adopted in the modern day. Thus, the Church’s ongoing opposition to Freemasonry (which scientific advancements in general and socio-political implementation in particular have proved misguided) must largely be due to upholding the doctrine of infallible Popes. The problem arises where anachronistic views jibe with modernity. After all, scientific discovery is a process, one that advances through time to yield clearer understandings which have undeniably extended the freedom and longevity of the masses.

However, all Leo’s concerns have been disproved in the passage of time (or maybe the Masons succeeded in their “pronounced opinions,” which were themselves preferable: separation of Church and state is widely adopted as a fairer and freer form of governance). See **Special Report** on page 26 for more on this subject.

Thus, it is unlikely that Biden

will be technically *excommunicated* by virtue of his membership. The resulting scrutiny would not work in the Church’s favor. Rather, it would compound the issues the Church is facing.

It should be noted that the denial of communion to Masons is not universally enforced, either. The unspoken rule seems to be that prohibition is left to individual dioceses to determine (although this is contrary to Ratzinger’s Declaration in 1983, which stated “[i]t is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided [by the Church]”).

Thus, some Catholic Masons openly attend mass and are not denied communion. The major-

---

Biden’s membership raises questions of regularity and amity – a somewhat thorny and muddled area of Masonic jurisprudence.

---

ity of dioceses, however, probably excludes Masons from the wine, if not the bread. Regardless, excommunication (and by extension, eternal damnation) is not expressly enumerated as the penalty for membership (as it was in the eighteenth century).

It should be noted that not all religions or denominations of the Christian faith abhor Freemasonry so, and to a certain respect the same prohibitions as modernly assigned the Masons by the Catholic Church apply to Protestants.

Other questions, though, are raised by the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A.’s action. Apparently, Biden does keep a house on Kiawah Island in South Carolina, so he is subject to Masonic jurisdiction there. However, the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. is not recognized by the Conference of Grand Masters in North America because the Grand Lodge of South Carolina A.F. & A.M. has not recognized Prince Hall.

This presents something of an inconsistency because the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. is a “regular” Prince Hall Grand Lodge under the Prince Hall transmission. The Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. was formed by legitimate warrant in 1868, and recognized by Prince Hall jurisdictions nationwide. (Note, this is not the case for the Grand Lodge of Louisiana P.H.A., which has been pronounced irregular by other P.H.A. Grand Lodges. This is why the Grand Lodge of Louisiana F. & A.M. is in the curious position of recognizing the Grand Lodge of Maryland P.H.A., but not the Grand Lodge of Louisiana P.H.A. Essentially, the Grand Lodge Louisiana P.H.A. is at present an irregular body. The Grand Lodge of Louisiana F. & A.M. has

joined the rest of the Conference of Grand Masters in North America by essentially recognizing Black Masonry in the United States.)

Biden’s membership raises questions of regularity and amity – a somewhat thorny and muddled area of Masonic jurisprudence. For example, the Grand Lodge of Colorado A.F. & A.M. recognizes Prince Hall Masonry as regular, but the Grand Lodge of Colorado A.F. & A.M. does not recognize the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A.. The requirements for regularity *are* met, but amity is withheld due to a course of dealing wherein exclusive jurisdictions must first recognize each other as coextensive within the same area before recognition will be extended via the Conference of Grand Masters in North America and, by extension, the United Grand Lodge of England.

In other words, until the Grand Lodge of South Carolina A.F. & A.M. recognizes the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A.,

and vice versa, the Conference of Grand Masters in North America won’t recognize the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. Until the Conference of Grand Masters in North America recognizes the Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A., the Grand Lodge of Colorado A.F. & A.M. won’t recognize it either.

That leaves the situation prone to a seemingly insensible incongruity. The Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. is regular according to the Grand Lodge of Colorado A.F. & A.M.’s criteria, and therefore is logically recognizable just like all other P.H.A. Grand Lodges. But, like other members of the Conference of Grand Masters in North America, the Grand Lodge of Colorado A.F. & A.M. does not recognize them for reasons that aren’t really explainable other than in deference to the Grand Lodge of South Carolina A.F. & A.M.

It should be noted that the Grand Lodge of South Carolina A.F. & A.M. is not solely responsible for the lack of recognition. The Grand Lodge of South Carolina P.H.A. doesn’t want to recognize the A.F. & A.M. jurisdiction, either. It is, after all, a two way street.

What this means, for practical purposes, is Joe Biden will not be visiting any A.F. & A.M. or F. & A.M. Lodges anytime soon. The fact that his membership was honorary, however, presupposes “Brother Joe” probably wouldn’t be visiting Lodges despite these recognition issues.

Of course, these nuances will be lost on the public at large (and a good few Masons, too, no doubt).

In the end, Biden’s acceptance of honorary Masonic standing is publicity for the Fraternity, whether you agree with it not.

The only thing that could make it a bigger deal?

If the Church actually did excommunicate him. **KT**

# COMMANDERY FESTIVAL KNIGHT



## FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA

– A festival of the Orders was held at Unity Lodge No. 146, A.F. & A. M. on January 18, 2025.

The day began early, around 7:30 a.m., with a light breakfast. Then the conferral of the Orders immediately commenced. Thirty-two Knights Templar were added to the ranks, representing eight Commanderies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The first two orders were conferred in short form. After the Order of Malta, the Lodge was set up for the chamber of reflection. When all the candidates had completed their time in the chamber, the Sir Knights present were asked to take a moment to share thoughts about the chamber and the objects therein. About five to ten minutes was allotted to each Sir Knight, and many of the Sir

Knights accepted.

The Order of the Temple was conferred after lunch. At the conclusion of the ritual, three lines were set up to accommodate the knighting. Sir Knights Dewey Cole David, Scott Lyons Fielding and John Harmon “Jon” Austin performed the honors.

During the knighting, the Grand Master’s Sword of Merit was presented to Sir Knight Raymond

Douglas Steele for his generous donations to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. The Sword of Merit (a large blade) was used by Sir Knight Scott Lyons Fielding, Grand Commander of Virginia in 2024, to knight a portion of the Sir Knights. Afterwards a presentation and explanation of the sword and jewel was given to the approximately one-hundred Sir Knights present.





# TS 32 IN FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA

by Joshua Payne



Photo by Corey Curtis

Sir Knight Raymond Douglas Steele donated his first \$1,000 toward the Knights Templar Eye Foundation in 2012. Over the next several years he donated to many philanthropic causes, but he always made donations toward the Grand Encampment's prime charity.

Sir Knight Raymond Douglas Steele is a husband, father, grandfather, and mentor to many men in the Masonic fraternity as well

as throughout the community at large. Sir Knight Ray continues to lead by example, always demonstrating what it means to live the tenants of our fraternity and its chivalric Orders. The Grand Commandery of Virginia is proud to count Sir Knight Ray a member. He takes time to get to know every Sir Knight he meets and exemplifies the difference we can make in our community, inspiring each of

us to take a moment, open our eyes, step forward, and see how to become involved to make a difference.

The Grand Commandery of Virginia will be convened May 2-4 at the Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center, in Harrisonburg, Virginia. All are invited to attend. **KT**



# AUTHOR CHRIS RULI INDUCTED INTO THE ORDER OF CLAIRVAUX by Ben Williams



Sir Knight Chris Ruli, fourth from left, is inducted into the honorary Order of Clairvaux in recognition for his scholarship in Templary. Ruli is the author of *The White House & The Freemasons* and *Brother Lafayette*. His upcoming history of the Knights Templar in Washington D.C. is coming soon. From Left: Sir Knights Sid Leluan, Past Department Commander; Aaron Shoemaker, Grand Encampment Education Committee Member; Adam Hathaway, Grand Encampment Education Committee Member; Chris Ruli, Order of Clairvaux Inductee; Jeff Bolstad, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Encampment; and Brandon Mullins, inductee for the year 2021.



**CAPITOL HILL**– Sir Knight B. Chris Ruli, author of *The White House and the Freemasons*, was inducted into the Grand Encampment’s Order of Clairvaux on February 7 after a joint installation of officers for the District of Columbia’s three commanderies, hosted at Naval Lodge in the heart of the nation’s capital.

The Order of Clairvaux is an honorary society of Templar scholars. Membership is restricted to just one Sir Knight each Triennium and is granted for exemplary contributions to the written word.

Ruli was awarded the honor at the Grand Encampment Triennial in August last year for his research on Lafayette, his contributions to this magazine, and for his research into the history of Templary in Washington D.C. but was unable to be present to receive the award.

As a result, the award was presented during All Masonic Week, an annual gathering convened under the Allied Masonic Degrees in Crystal City, alongside other ancillary Masonic

outfits, that brings Masons together from across the country and from around the world. It’s a favored destination among regular Masons worldwide.

At least twelve commanderies were represented at the event.

The Order of Clairvaux was founded during the 68th Triennium, under the auspices of then-Grand Master Jeffrey Nelson, who charged a Grand Encampment Education Committee be formed, initially to get an online learning module operational.

Coursework developed as part of that module required essay submissions. It was suggested that the highest scoring paper submitted should be recognized, be printed in this magazine, and the author be invited to present the paper at the subsequent Triennial Conclave. After presenting the paper, the Order of Clairvaux would be bestowed upon the winning author via a short public ceremony, written by Piers Vaughan.

It was hoped such a model would encourage submissions of



Left: Sir Knight Adam Hathaway presents Sir Knight Ruli with the stole of the Order. Right: Sir Knight Mullins confers the honors.

well-researched and interesting material and recognize Templars with a bent for scholarship.

Members of the Order are identified by a white stole (pictured). A medal may be worn, as well. The insignia of the Order is golden quatrefoil Fleur de Lis bounding circle divided diagonally by a red and white checkered diameter on a black field. Around the circle is the *Latin Sunt quoque qui scire volunt ut edificent et caritas est* (“There are also those who seek knowledge in order to edify; and this is love”). The quote is taken from Doctor Mellifluus, an encyclical by Pope Pius XII, given on May 24, 1953, on the eighth centenary of Saint Bernard’s death, a quote Pius XII attributes to Saint Bernard speaking in one of his sermons, *In Cantica, Ser. XIX, 7*.

The Order derives its name from the respected rhetorician, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), nephew of Templar founder, Hugh de Payens. Saint Bernard penned the Templar rule at the Council of Troyes in 1128 and was instrumental in the

Templars attaining recognition by the Catholic Church. His abbey, which he founded at Clairvaux, became renowned throughout the medieval world under his leadership. He is largely responsible for growing the Cistercian order and is venerated in the Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran communions. He was canonized in 1174 by Pope Alexander III.

Sir Knight Ruli is the second inductee into the prestigious group. The first member, inducted at the 68<sup>th</sup> Triennial in Minneapolis, was Sir Knight Brandon Mullins, who scored highest out of all participants for his paper on the symbolism of the skull, submitted as part of the Templar Ritualist course. Additional members include the Education Committee, who were inducted fiat at the Order’s creation to serve as officers and ensure sufficient capacity – otherwise membership would be a solitary title, the Order would cease of its essential purpose, and, as a result, turn defunctive. Total membership in the Order, then, is nine members.

Ruli is an exception. He did not succeed to the induction as a result of participation with the online learning module or submitting an essay for grading. He was selected because of his several contributions to this magazine – well-researched, historically relevant, and well written – but also because of his work into the history of Templary in Washington D.C. His upcoming book, *History of the Knights Templar of the District of Columbia*, is due out later this year. Look for it this Summer, printed through Columbia Commandery No. 2. **KT**





# High Treason

and the

## SYMBOLISM of the MASONIC PENALTIES

By Timothy J. Whipple

**O**n October 11, 1660, Major-General Thomas Harrison was found guilty of high treason, the court sentenced him to the usual penalty which was to be hanged, drawn, and quartered:

The judgment of the court is . . . that you be led to the place from whence you came, and from thence be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, and then you shall be hanged by the neck and, being alive, shall be cut down, and your privy members to be cut off, and your entrails be taken out of your body and, you living, the same to be burnt before your eyes, and your head to be cut off, your body to be divided into four-quarters, and head and quarters to be disposed of at the pleasure of the King's majesty. And the Lord have mercy on your soul.

The student of Masonic ritual will recognize, in that description of Harrison's punishments, a strong resemblance to the signs and penalties of Craft Masonry. This essay describes in detail the gruesome process of hanging, drawing, and quartering traitors in an effort to help the reader identify certain similarities to the Masonic penalties.

### The Process of Hanging, Drawing, and Quartering

**A**n exploration of the possible symbolism of the signs and penalties, though, first requires knowledge of the precise details of hanging, drawing, and quartering. The first part of the process was actually the "drawing." The prisoner was bound to a hurdle, or a wooden gate, and dragged behind a horse from the

prison to the place of execution. Upon arriving there, he was often forced to watch the execution of other convicts before it was his own turn, thus causing extreme fear and mental anguish before the physical tortures even began.

The next part of the process was the "hanging." This stage began by removing the prisoner's clothes and binding his arms in front of him with a rope. He was then placed on a wooden cart or on a ladder, and a noose was tied around his neck. When the Sheriff gave the signal, the cart was moved or the ladder kicked over, leaving the prisoner suspended in the air and strangling. The Sheriff determined how long to leave him hanging from the gibbet before being cut down. Left there too long, the prisoner might die before the rest of the sentence could be carried out. This couldn't be allowed because, as specified in the judicial sentence, he was to be castrated and disemboweled while still alive.

After the hanging, the process moved on to the "quartering." The particular details of the quartering process are very much of interest from the standpoint of Masonic symbolism. After being cut down from the gibbet, the prisoner was dragged or carried over to a fire burning nearby and then strapped or bound to a board next to the fire.

The executioner then performed the most gruesome part of the execution in a carefully prescribed, almost ritualistic manner. First, the prisoner's genitals were cut off and thrown on the fire. Next, his abdomen was cut open, and his entrails and internal organs were removed from the body cavity, also to be thrown into the fire. Then, the prisoner's chest was ripped open, and his heart was cut out. While still beating, the heart was held aloft and displayed to the

crowd before it, too, was thrown into the fire. Typically, the prisoner was still alive and even conscious until his heart was removed.

Then, using an ax, the executioner would cut off the prisoner's head and hold it up for the crowd to see, which was usually met with applause by the assembled multitude. After that, the carcass was cut into quarters by removing the legs at the hips and then severing the torso into two pieces along the spinal column. Lastly, the head was parboiled and mounted publicly, often on London bridge.

### The Punishments for Treason Were Philosophical

**H**istorically, the punishments of hanging, drawing, and quartering were not simple cruelty, they reflected a sophisticated philosophy of punishment in which the criminal's physical body needed to be disciplined because of its role in the criminal's behavior. Indeed, because these punishments had a philosophical purpose, they were carried out in the same prescribed, ritualistic manner in England for almost six hundred years.

It is not necessary to speculate about the purpose of the punishments inflicted for high treason. Sir Edward Coke, the most famous English jurist of the seventeenth century, explained in detail the purpose of each part of the punishment for high treason. Of drawing, Coke said:

First, after a Traitor hath had his just Trial, and is convicted and attained, he shall have his Judgement to be drawn to the place of

Execution from his Prison, as being not worthy any more to tread upon the Face of the Earth whereof he was made: Also for that he hath been retrograde to Nature, therefore is he drawn backward at a Horse-Tail. And whereas God hath made the Head of Man the highest and most supreme Part, as being his chief Grace and Ornament, he must be drawn with his Head declining downward, and lying so near the Ground as may be, being thought unfit to take benefit of the common Air.

As with drawing him, there was a philosophical purpose to hanging the traitor. Again, Coke explains:

He shall be strangled, being hanged up by the Neck between Heaven and Earth, as deemed unworthy of both, or either; as likewise, that the Eyes of Men may behold, and their Hearts condemn him.

After the hanging there was the emasculation, and it, too, had a purpose:

He is to have his privy parts cut off and burnt before his Face, as being unworthily begotten, and unfit to leave any Generation after him.

The purpose of the emasculation was to show that the traitor's acts were so despicable that his descendants must be disinherited of their property and titles because of a "corruption of blood."

After the emasculation, there was the disemboweling and removal of the internal

organs, including the heart. The removal of the internal organs reflected a medieval belief that it was in the body of the traitor that his treasonable thoughts had their birth, and that his entrails must, therefore, be purged with fire. Coke put it this way:

His Bowels and inlay'd Parts taken out and burnt, who inwardly had conceived and harboured in his heart such horrible Treason.

Next, the prisoner's head, which, as Coke said, "had imagined the mischief," was cut off. Lastly, according to Coke:

His Body to be quartered, and the Quarters set up in some high and eminent Place, to the View and Detestation of Men, and to become a Prey for the Fowls of the Air."

In short, each particular punishment performed on each particular body part had its own particular philosophical purpose.

### Public Executions Were Commonplace and the Punishments Were Well-Known

The Masonic penalties, while opaque today, would have required no explanation in the eighteenth century when such executions were common. Hanging, drawing, and quartering was a special sentence reserved for men convicted of high treason, but historically, high treason was not an uncommon crime. For

example, between 1577 and the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign in 1603, over two hundred Catholics were hanged, drawn, and quartered for high treason.

Hanging, drawing, and quartering was not officially ended until 1870. It was inflicted on some of the most infamous traitors in English history: David, the last Welsh Prince of Wales, the Scottish rebel William Wallace, the Catholic insurrectionist Guy Fawkes and the other "Gunpowder Plot" conspirators, the Regicides of Charles I, and the rebels from the Jacobite uprisings in both 1715 and 1745.

Executions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including of notable figures, were public events and could attract as many as 100,000 people. Thus, it is reasonable to suppose, for example, that the founders of the Premier Grand Lodge of England in 1717 might have been present for the hanging, drawing, and quartering of the Jacobite rebels John Dorrell, John Gordon and William Kerr in 1715.

### Conclusion

The philosophical purposes of the punishments for high treason indicate that the penalties in Masonic ritual could have a related symbolic purpose. **KT**



# WRITERS WANTED

Get published in the Knight Templar.



email the editor:  
[orionsg8@mac.com](mailto:orionsg8@mac.com)



# The *Ma'at*, Ethos of the Ancient Egyptians

by George L. Marshall, Jr.



The goddess *Ma'at* in queen Nefertari tomb. Luxor. Egypt

A citizen of ancient Egypt (Kemet) was expected to be a good citizen, adhering to and living in accordance with established beliefs, customs, and social values long established and tried and true. The cement which tied these traditions together and preserved cosmic order was *ma'at* (pronounced may-et).<sup>1</sup> This article will present of what *ma'at* consisted, how it was represented in the form of deity, and how some of its principles carry over into modern Freemasonry.

During the more than 3,000 years of the history of ancient Egypt, the kings or pharaohs ruled as living gods through the acknowledgement and practice of the *ma'at* ethos. Only one, the “heretic king,” Akhenaten attempted to overthrow this tradition. Much has been written about this pharaoh.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

*Ma'at* first appears as a goddess during the period known as the Old Kingdom (c. 2613 - 2181 BC) but no doubt existed in some form earlier. She is depicted in anthropomorphic form as a winged woman, often in profile with an ostrich feather on her

head – or simply symbolized as a white ostrich feather. The feather of *Ma'at* was an integral part of the Weighing of the Heart of the Soul ceremony in the afterlife, where the heart of the soul of the dead person was weighed on the scales of justice against the feather. The feather symbolizes truth. If the heart was heavier, deceit was signified – the soul could be recycled or, if truly base, condemned.

The principle of *Ma'at* was the guiding principle of life and that of *heka* (magic), the power-source which allowed for it. It is for this reason that she is considered more of a concept than a goddess with a specific personality and story like Isis or Osiris. *Ma'at*'s spirit is the spirit of all creation, and if one is in tune with that spirit, one will live well and have reason to hope for eternal peace in the afterlife. If one refused to live in accordance with the principles of *Ma'at*, then one suffered the consequences one brought upon oneself. Her importance is signified by one of the means by which the Egyptians wrote her name. Although she was often identified by the feather symbol, she was also designated by a plinth (usually a square block

serving as a base). The plinth was commonly seen below the thrones of deities but not used to relay their personal names.<sup>2</sup>

If a person's heart weighed more than a feather, a beast named Ammut (or Ammit), consumed the heart banishing them from the afterlife. A light heart was considered joyous and good-spirited. A heavy heart was considered chaotic and evil-spirited.

*Ma'at* was intimately linked with the Pharaoh, as it was the Pharaoh's duty to preserve *Ma'at* and uphold order within society. Pharaohs paid homage to *Ma'at* by performing rituals aimed at securing Egypt's prosperity and stability<sup>5</sup> ... all except Akhenaten, that is.

The superstructure of *Ma'at* was typified in forty-two laws fostering truth. For admission to the Field of Reeds upon death, a soul must have upheld each of these laws throughout its incarnation – not an easy task. As you read them, consider similarities expressed in Masonic ritual.

The Forty-Two Laws of *Ma'at* – Negative Confession (also known as The Declaration of Innocence) – is a list of forty-two

sins that the soul of the deceased can honestly declare it has never committed when it stands for judgment in the afterlife. The most famous list comes from The Papyrus of Ani. This is a text of The Egyptian Book of the Dead, prepared for the priest Ani of Thebes (c. 1250 BCE).<sup>4</sup>

In later years, a list of 42 Positive Ideals was compiled by a group of priestesses as a parallel to the Negative Confessions of *Ma'at*

It is interesting to notice that the Ten Commandments of Judaism can be found, at least implicitly, in several of the below. Also, as “just and upright” Masons, items expressed as points of our obligations are inherent in several of the above. Consider how the “I wills” and “I will nots” of the Master Mason obligation are implicit in some of the below. As Christian knights, enrolled under the banner and sign of his Cross, would we not do well to practice the majority of them as well? **KT**.



1- I have not committed sin  
 2- I have not committed robbery with violence  
 3- I have not stolen  
 4- I have not slain men and women  
 5- I have not stolen food  
 6- I have not swindled offerings  
 7- I have not stolen from God  
 8- I have not told lies  
 9- I have not carried away food  
 10- I have not cursed  
 11- I have not closed my ears to truth  
 12- I have not committed adultery  
 13- I have not made anyone cry  
 14- I have not felt sorrow without reason  
 15- I have not assaulted anyone  
 16- I have not been deceitful  
 17- I have not stolen anyone's land  
 18- I have not been an eavesdropper  
 19- I have not falsely accused anyone  
 20- I have not been angry without reason  
 21- I have not seduced anyone's wife  
 22- I have not polluted myself  
 23- I have not terrorized anyone  
 24- I have not disobeyed the law  
 25- I have not been excessively angry  
 26- I have not cursed God  
 27- I have not behaved with violence  
 28- I have not caused disruption of peace  
 29- I have not acted hastily or without thought  
 30- I have not overstepped my boundaries of concern  
 31- I have not exaggerated my words when speaking  
 32- I have not worked evil  
 33- I have not used evil thoughts, words or deeds  
 34- I have not polluted the water  
 35- I have not spoken angrily or arrogantly  
 36- I have not cursed anyone in thought, word or deed  
 37- I have not placed myself on a pedestal  
 38- I have not stolen that which belongs to God  
 39- I have not stolen from or disrespected the deceased  
 40- I have not taken food from a child  
 41- I have not acted with insolence  
 42- I have not destroyed property belonging to God

1- I honor virtue  
 2- I benefit with gratitude  
 3- I am peaceful  
 4- I respect the property of others  
 5- I affirm that all life is sacred  
 6- I give offerings that are genuine  
 7- I live in truth  
 8- I regard all altars with respect  
 9- I speak with sincerity  
 10- I consume only my fair share  
 11- I offer words of good intent  
 12- I relate in peace  
 13- I honor animals with reverence  
 14- I can be trusted  
 15- I care for the earth  
 16- I keep my own council  
 17- I speak positively of others  
 18- I remain in balance with my emotions  
 19- I am trustful in my relationships  
 20- I hold purity in high esteem  
 21- I spread joy  
 22- I do the best I can  
 23- I communicate with compassion  
 24- I listen to opposing opinions  
 25- I create harmony  
 26- I invoke laughter  
 27- I am open to love in various forms  
 28- I am forgiving  
 29- I am kind  
 30- I act respectfully of others  
 31- I am accepting  
 32- I follow my inner guidance  
 33- I converse with awareness  
 34- I do good  
 35- I give blessings  
 36- I keep the waters pure  
 37- I speak with good intent  
 38- I praise the Goddess and the God  
 39- I am humble  
 40- I achieve with integrity  
 41- I advance through my own abilities  
 42- I embrace the All

## End Notes

1. Whitmarsh, Jason S., "Breaking Maat: Akhenaten and the Battle for Egyptian Tradition and Identity," *Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Issue No. 140, Jan/Feb 2024, pp. 12-19.

2. Mark, Joshua J., "Maat," *World History Encyclopedia*, <http://www.worldhistory.org/Maat/>, 15 Sept 2016, Accessed March 9, 2024.

3. "Maat," Wikipedia Article, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maat>, Accessed March 10, 2024.

4. "The 42 Laws and Ideals Of Maat," *Egypt Connection*, <http://www.egyptconnection.com/42-laws-of-maat/>, Accessed March 9, 2024.

5. Dr. Shakira, "About the 42 Laws of Maat," [http://medium.com/ancientegypt-](http://medium.com/ancientegypt-tunveiled/about-the-42-laws-of-maat-c0de3d4da95a)

[tunveiled/about-the-42-laws-of-maat-c0de3d4da95a](http://medium.com/ancientegypt-tunveiled/about-the-42-laws-of-maat-c0de3d4da95a), Accessed March 16, 2024.

6. Redford, Donald B., *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 1984, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

7. Reeves, Nicholas, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet*, 2001, Thames & Hudson, London, England.

8. Hornung, Erik, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, 1999, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

by Ben Williams

# EXCOMMUNICATED

and the **Catholic Church's** Offense



# UNIFICATION

## Official Position on the Fraternity

Certainly, the Catholic Church continues to oppose membership in the Fraternity. All members are in a “grave state of sin” because, in the Church’s view, Freemasonry is irreconcilable with the doctrines of the Church. But what this actually means in the modern era is not entirely clear. Inconsistent enforcement by the Church, as well as a softening of the Church’s position in its pronouncements against the Fraternity over time, compound the issue.

The first official condemnation by the Church was issued by Pope Clement XII in 1738, just twenty-one years after the founding of the Premiere Grand Lodge of England. The name *Clement* is derived from the Latin *clēmētia*, the same root as the word “clemency.” The Oxford English Dictionary defines “clemency” as “a mildness or gentleness of temper, as shown in the exercise of authority or power; mercy, leniency.” The name *Clement*, then, is meant to signify a merciful and forgiving pope – ironic indeed when you consider Bernard de Got (the first French Pope) also took the name Clement to assist his paymaster, Philip the Fair, to suppress the Templars in 1307. The violence and murder that followed cast a pall through the centuries. It is the very type of injustice execrated in Masonic ritual, which ritual is largely concerned with tolerance, checks and balances against despotic power, and liberation of an enlightened society.

The first Papal Bull was *In eminenti apostolatus specula* (roughly, “from the height” – or “lookout” or “watchtower” – the sense is “far-seeing” – “of the eminent apostolate”). In it, Clement condemns Freemasons and anyone who assists Freemasons to excommunication and “condign penalties” at the hands of the Inquisition. This excommunication is

immediate, *latae sententiae*, meaning it becomes effective in the act of membership, no official pronouncement is required. According to the Bull, absolution can only be given by the Pope himself, or in the hour of death during administration of last rites. Essentially, according to *In eminenti*, membership in Freemasonry is a complete and lifelong betrayal of the Church.

By his own admission, Clement bases this condemnation on “common gossip” which, he says, has “made clear” to him that the Freemasons are “depraved and perverted.” There are rumors, he says, that are of such magnitude and extent that Freemasonry has already been outlawed in some countries (he fails to mention which countries, however). The volume of this outcry against the Fraternity, he says, is sufficient evidence of Freemasonry’s evil. It is, he says, the nature of crime to induce an attendant clamor by which criminality reveals itself to the faithful.

Based solely on hearsay, then, Clement V ordered the Inquisition to “investigate and proceed against transgressors of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity or pre-eminence they may be; and they [the Inquisition and others] are to pursue and punish [the Masons] with condign penalties as being must suspect of heresy.” Essentially, Masons should be tortured and murdered because *rumors* suggest they should be *suspected* of heresy. In 1738, the principles of due process, which today we take for granted in the United States, were apparently of little concern to the Papal state.

It’s interesting to note that the first sovereignties which banned membership in the Fraternity were not Catholic states at all, but protestant: Holland in 1735, Sweden and Geneva in 1738. Then Zurich in 1740. Of course, these bans were temporary. Holland



**His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, who had a confused understanding of the Fraternity and feared the imminence of the modern world.**

may have banned the Fraternity over fears of Jacobite infiltration into the country, suspected of promulgating papist conspiracy through the confines of the Lodge – illustrating a preeminence of Catholic Masonry, perhaps. For example, consider that in 1722, John Erskine, Earl of Mar (Grand Master of the Antients, and a Jacobite), formed the “Restoration Order,” a new “Royal Military Order of Knighthood” meant to restore “Scotland to its ancient military spirit.” He had the blessing of the Jacobite King James III of Scotland. This was during the second wave of Jacobite uprising, in support of the Bonnie Prince Charlie, the “Young Pretender” to the throne of England and Scotland. William III of England (1650 – 1702), also known as William of Orange (for whom carrots were bred orange in

some sort of vegetable propaganda meant to betoken divine appointment), was of course of Dutch origin. William’s ascendancy to the English throne was a victory for the protestant cause: in 1738, the Glorious Revolution (1688-1689) was still an old wound. But it just wouldn’t heal.

Conversely, Clement XII must have had fears of the *Moderns* – Hanoverian Masons – mainly Huguenot refugees from France, escaping Louis XIV – who had supplanted the Stuart cause in England, Scotland, and Wales. Indeed, Bonnie Prince Charlie was living in exile in the Papal States Rome at the time *In eminenti* was penned. The political dimensions here are important – when one looks at the Inquisition’s investigations into the Fraternity through this lens (investigations which, in many cases, turned mortal),

concerns over espionage rather than blasphemy perhaps explain the excesses of Mother Church. Certainly, the Horn Tavern Lodge administered a network of Hanoverian spies across the Continent with a manifest anti-papist agenda. Thus, when John Coustos, was imprisoned and tortured by the Inquisition in 1743 in Portugal, some of the questions (whether recorded or not) may have been meant to illicit confessions of subterfuge, and not just probe the curiosity into the recesses of the Lodge. The record doesn’t show this, but in context of the European power struggles and papal decline, such an intimation seems logical. As well as setting up his Lodge in Portugal, and the Villeroy-Coustos Lodge in Paris, John Coustos was a member of a the Huguenot Lodge at Prince Eugene’s Head Coffee house in

Saint Alban’s Street, London. This might also explain the intercession of King George II to attain his freedom.

Whatever the reason for its utterance, *In eminenti*, remains the most forcible position taken by the Church against the Fraternity. And as late as 1748, Masons were tortured to death and hanged because of it.

*In eminenti* remained Canon law without further enumeration until Pope Leo XIII issued the more comprehensive and detailed encyclical, *Humanum genus* (literally, “the type of man” or “human race”), almost 150 years later, in 1884. This encyclical is perhaps the only official pronouncement from Saint Peter’s throne that details the rationale for the Church’s animosity against the Fraternity. It is, therefore, worthy of some study.

Out the gate, Leo XIII

COUSTOS undergoing the TORTURES.



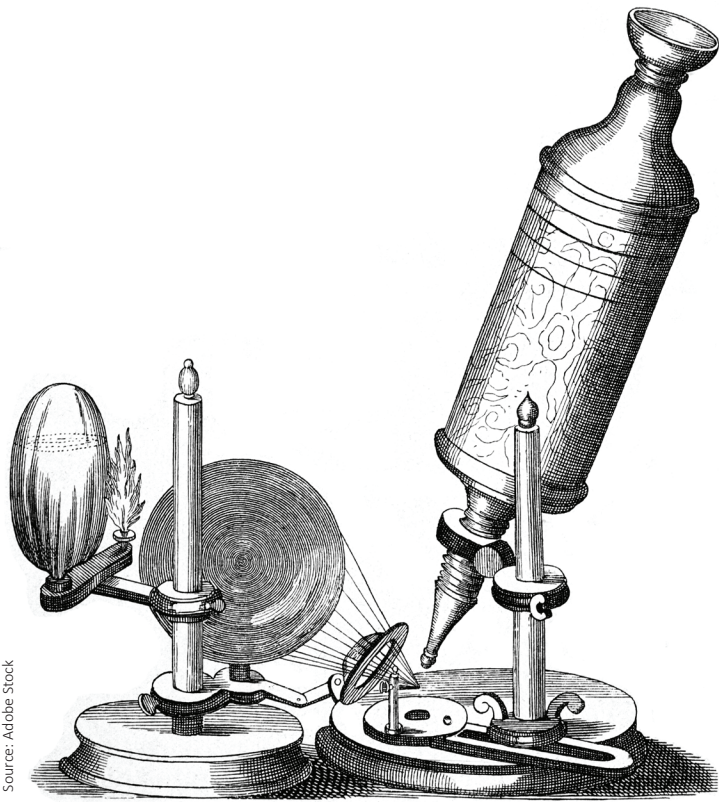
Pub<sup>d</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> April 1810 by J.T. Stockdale at Pall Mall.

Neele sc. Straud.

The three different stages of the torture of John Coustos. Etching with engraving by S.J. Neele, 1810.



**Giordano Bruno, hermetic philosopher, whom the Inquisition burned at the stake in 1600 for, among other "crimes," holding that the Earth was not the center of the universe, that there were innumerable stars, and life on other planets, as well as owning a copy of the *Picatrix*.**



Source: Adobe Stock

**Robert Hooke's microscope, c.1664, by which a microscopic world came into view and, conversely, a larger world emerged.**

divides all people into two camps – essentially sheep and goats. One group “steadfastly contends for truth and justice” while the other, through the “envy of the devil,” runs “contrary to virtue and truth.” One is the “Kingdom of God on earth,” of course, the “true Church of Jesus Christ”; the other, basically everyone else, who comprise “the Kingdom of Satan.” He remarks how these kingdoms have warred against each other, between the love of self and the love of God, of cleaving to earthly things or cleaving to God.

“At every period of time,” he says, “each has been in conflict with the other, with a variety and multiplicity of weapons and warfare, although not always with equal ardor and assault.” But apparently, at the tail of the nineteenth century, the kingdom of the devil had found a new agency by which to propagate its aims – a new weapon to cut a hole in Christ’s side.

At this period, however,

the partisans of evil seem to be combining together, and to be struggling with united vehemence, led on or assisted by that strongly organized and widespread association called the Freemasons. No longer making any secret of their purposes, they are now boldly rising up against God Himself. They are planning the destruction of holy Church publicly and openly, and this with the set purpose of utterly despoiling the nations of Christendom, if it were possible, of the blessings obtained for us through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Leo takes it upon himself, therefore, to “point out the danger, to mark who are the adversaries, and to the best of Our power to make head against their plans and devices, that those may not perish whose salvation is committed to Us, and that the kingdom of Jesus Christ entrusted to Our charge may not stand and remain whole, but may be enlarged by an ever-increasing growth through-

out the world.” Leo’s motivation seems to be, not just to stem the Church’s decline, but enlarge its temporal scope by denouncing who the enemy is. “It is now Our intention,” Leo writes, “to treat of the masonic society itself, or its whole teaching, or its aims, and of its many or thinking and acting, in order to bring more and more into the light its power for evil, and to do what We can to arrest the contagion of this fatal plague.” Strong words: especially by someone not a member.

Leo goes on to frame a sort of confederation of nefariousness, bound together “by community of purpose and by the similarity of their main opinions” which, despite multifarious guises, are yet common enough for identification as Freemasons, “which is a kind of center whence they all go forth, and wither they all return.” Leo is thus able to unite the vast variety of autonomous Masonic institutions, with their multifarious beliefs, rites, and customs, under a common umbrella – basically, *evil*.

His basis for this sweeping condemnation is at first blush the oaths of secrecy all Masons employ. To be a Mason, he says, “it is necessary that the candidates promise and undertake to be thenceforward strictly obedient to their leaders and master with the utmost submission and fidelity, and to be in readiness to do their bidding upon the slightest expression of their will; or, if disobedient to submit to the direst penalties and death itself.”

This accusation illustrates Leo’s complete misunderstanding of the Masonic obligations, which never confine action against a man’s conscience. Certainly, in the U.S., the Baltimore Convention had cemented the Preston-Webb work forty-one years prior to Leo’s Bull, in 1843. The Masonic obligations, then, certainly didn’t exert any tyranny over man’s conscience at the time of Leo’s writing – in fact, the Masonic obligations acclaimed the opposite. Leo’s statements are troubling, to say the least, especially when you consider

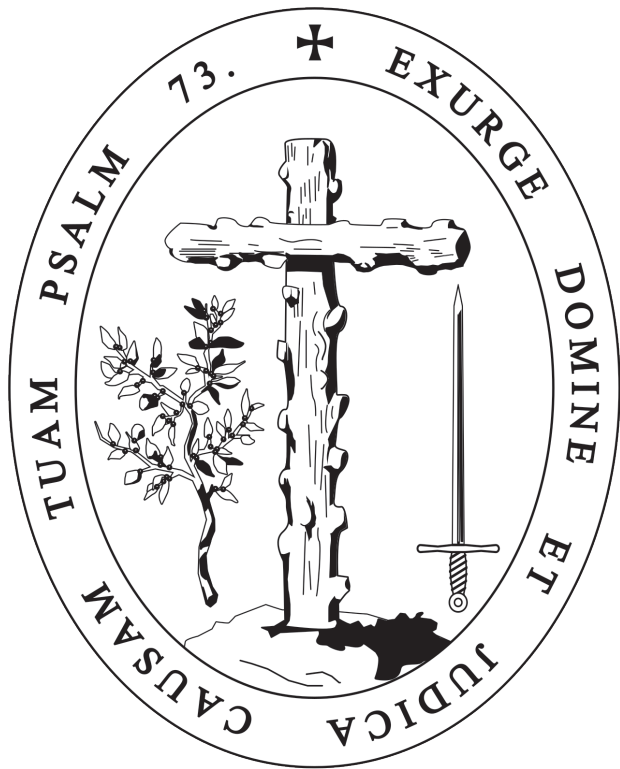
the blind obeisance the Church required of the Jesuits, as just one example, aptly summed by the order’s founder, Ignatius Loyola, who once said, “What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines.”

Leo suggests the ultimate purpose of the Fraternity is “the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced, and the substitution of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere naturalism.” In other words, the Freemasons seem to promote a modern worldview, one governed by natural laws – *i.e.*, science – where the people learn to govern themselves rather than succumb to rule by fiat and ecclesiastical proclamation.

The irony (and even hypocrisy) of Leo’s encyclical must have escaped its author, but history is not as obtuse.

It gets worse. Leo recognizes that not all Masons, as individuals, are “in themselves partners in their [Masons’] criminal acts nor aware of the ultimate object which they are endeavoring to attain,” yet they are still “not free from the guilt of having entangled themselves in such associations.” Thus, the multitude is to be judged by the sins of a few because, and here is the clincher, “for the masonic federation is to be judged not so much by the things which it has done, or brought to completion, as by the sum of its pronounced opinions.”

But didn’t Jesus say that a tree is to be judged by its fruit? (Matt 12:33-37). Apparently not, according to Leo. Indeed, a whole fraternity should be judged by the philosophical writings some of its members may support at the dawn of the industrial age, at the tail of the enlightenment and the age of reason. Leo gives the Masons too much credit: much of this “humanist” philosophy wasn’t even the product of the Masonic institution, rather it was recognized by most thinking men to be prudent and sensible in the face of



Source: Public Domain

**Seal of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Spain. The sword symbolizes punishment of recalcitrant heretics while the olive branch offers peace to the repentant. The Latin is from Psalm 73, "Arise Lord and judge your cause."**

a changing, industrializing world. Whole governments were self-organizing around the principles of representative governance – hardly an unnatural occurrence, despite Leo's claims. And consider the fact that the representative republic precedes the Church by centuries (think of Rome or Athens around 509 BC, for example).

"Now," Leo goes on, "the fundamental doctrine of the naturalists . . . is that human nature and human reason ought in all things to be mistress and guide." Ignoring the fact that God and reason aren't mutually exclusive (in fact, the laws of God are literally *reasonable*, else exegesis would not exist, and neither, then, Church Canon), Leo conflates an antithesis: "they [the Masons] deny that anything has been taught by God" (even though nature must be the manifest appearance of divine agency and divine law) and, the best part, "they allow no dogma of religion or truth which cannot be under-

stood by the human intelligence," nor "any teacher who ought to be believed by reason of his authority." Read that part again. Leo is basically saying, Masonry is evil because it rejects the arbitrary rule of a centralized and despotic authority, one that demands ability to dictate terms insensible to human intelligence.

Of course, the despotic authority empowered with such largesse must be the Church. Leo is clear, "since it is the special and exclusive duty of the Catholic Church fully to set forth in words truths divinely received, to teach, besides other divine helps to salvation, the authority of its office, and to defend the same with perfect purity, it is against the Church that the rage and attack of the enemies are principally directed." In fact, the inverse is true. It's because of the very same reasoning Leo espouses here, apparently, that the Church is entitled to subjugate a charitable organization which

has done much to forge amity in the midst of factious discord, a discord which, by this very Bull, the Church seems intent to invigorate.

Ultimately, Leo is railing against an overall decline of the Church, not because of Masonry, but because of the industrializing world at large. Industry had exacerbated a rate of change which must have been overwhelming – even threatening – to an institution like the Church, an institution filled with tradition and temporal similitude to God who, by virtue of His infinite capacity, is necessarily unchanging. And everywhere, the arbitrary rule of the Church was being questioned – not because of a Masonic conspiracy, but because of advances in scientific understandings that rendered Church Canon inconsistent with the observable universe. The world was in fact round, after all, spinning on its own axis, revolving around the sun. Germ theory was ousting the miasmatic origins of disease – sickness wasn't the result of pestilential vapors or demons; disease was caused by microorganisms – invisible beings not unlike demons, perhaps, but reduced in significance under the microscope – and, not unholiness, but unsanitariness. The bacteriologist, Robert Koch, would publish his Koch's postulates linking microorganisms and disease just one year after *Humanum genus*, in 1884.

Just as Galileo's cratered moon had punched holes in the perfection of the spheres ("I will not look through your telescope, Galileo," the Cardinal is meant to have said, "because if I *did*, I will see these craters of which you speak – *because you put them there!*"), so was the entire fabric of the Church's worldview fragmenting under scientific scrutiny. These were (forgive the pun) Canon balls. But Masonry wasn't shooting them. Leo's mistake was confusing the fact that, while Masonry was quick to adopt science and reason, it sought union not exclusivity.

The Church's blind reliance on its own "inspired" doctrine

(promulgated by human Popes in some cases deluded by attainment of their office) had placed it at odds with a growing humanity. Leo blames the Freemasons. "By a long a persevering labor, they endeavor to bring about this result – namely, that the teaching office and authority of the Church may become of no account in the civil State; and for this same reason they declare to the people and contend that Church and State ought to be altogether disunited." Indeed. The excesses of Inquisition necessitate such prudent action. The Church had proved itself incapable of facilitating the discovery it was powerless to prevent.

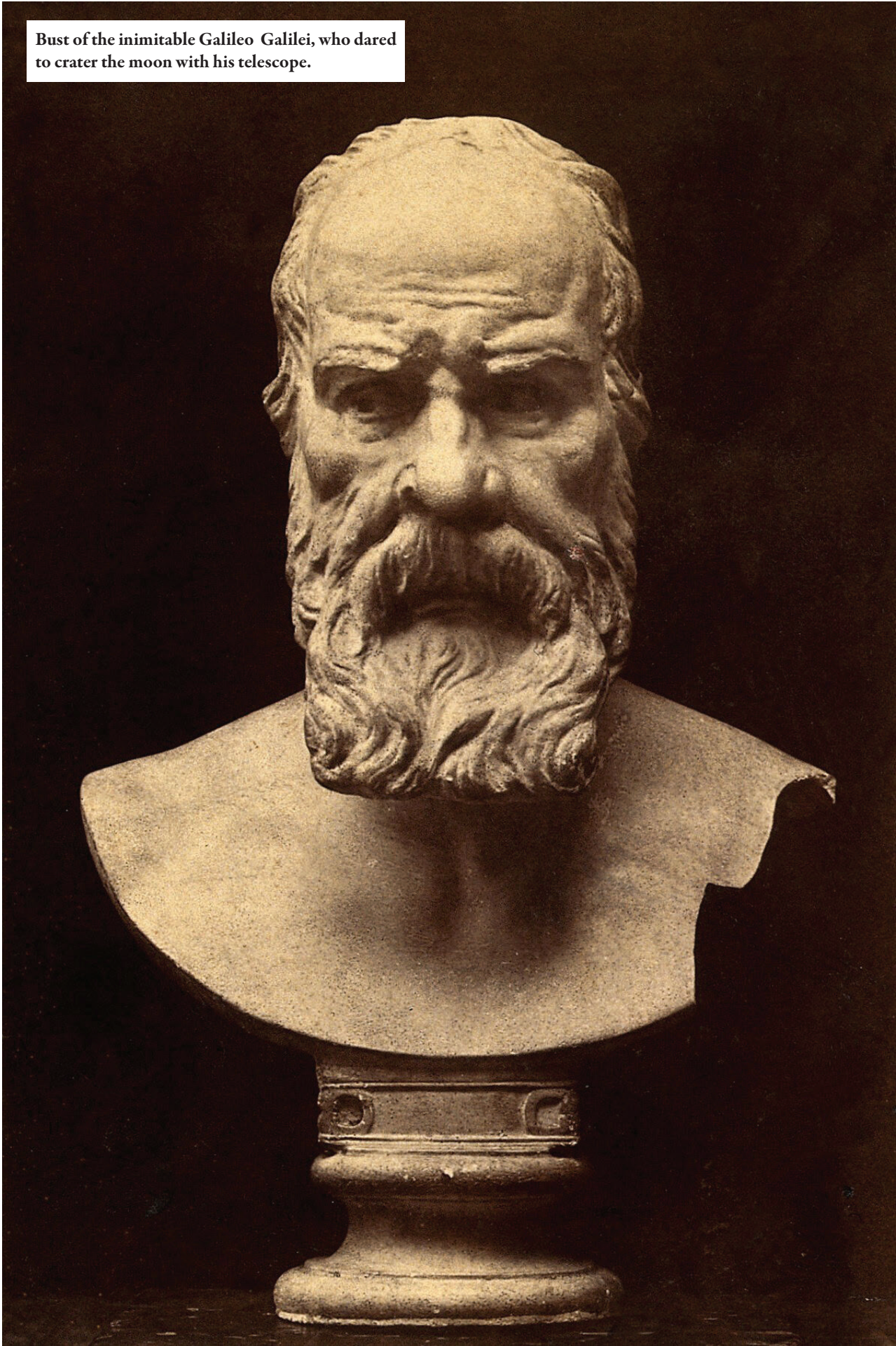
The Inquisition burned Giordano Bruno because he believed there were innumerable worlds circling innumerable suns, and that there was life on other planets; they had done the same to Michael Servetus because, in publishing his discovery of pulmonary circulation, he had contradicted Church teachings; Cagliostro had met his death imprisoned at the bottom of a well at Forte di San Leo; Galileo, imprisoned for observing the sky. The Church's implacable need to be right at all costs had cost the world of all which was now right. The Church's decline was inevitable, some alleged arch-conspiracy of Freemasons notwithstanding.

Throughout *Humanus genus* Leo's subtext brims with the infallibility and supremacy of the Church. The Church is the only legitimate authority over all humanity, he says. No one else has any prerogative. The world itself (the "thing" or "*res*" in Canon Law) belongs to the Church alone. And the Church? It belongs to the Pope.

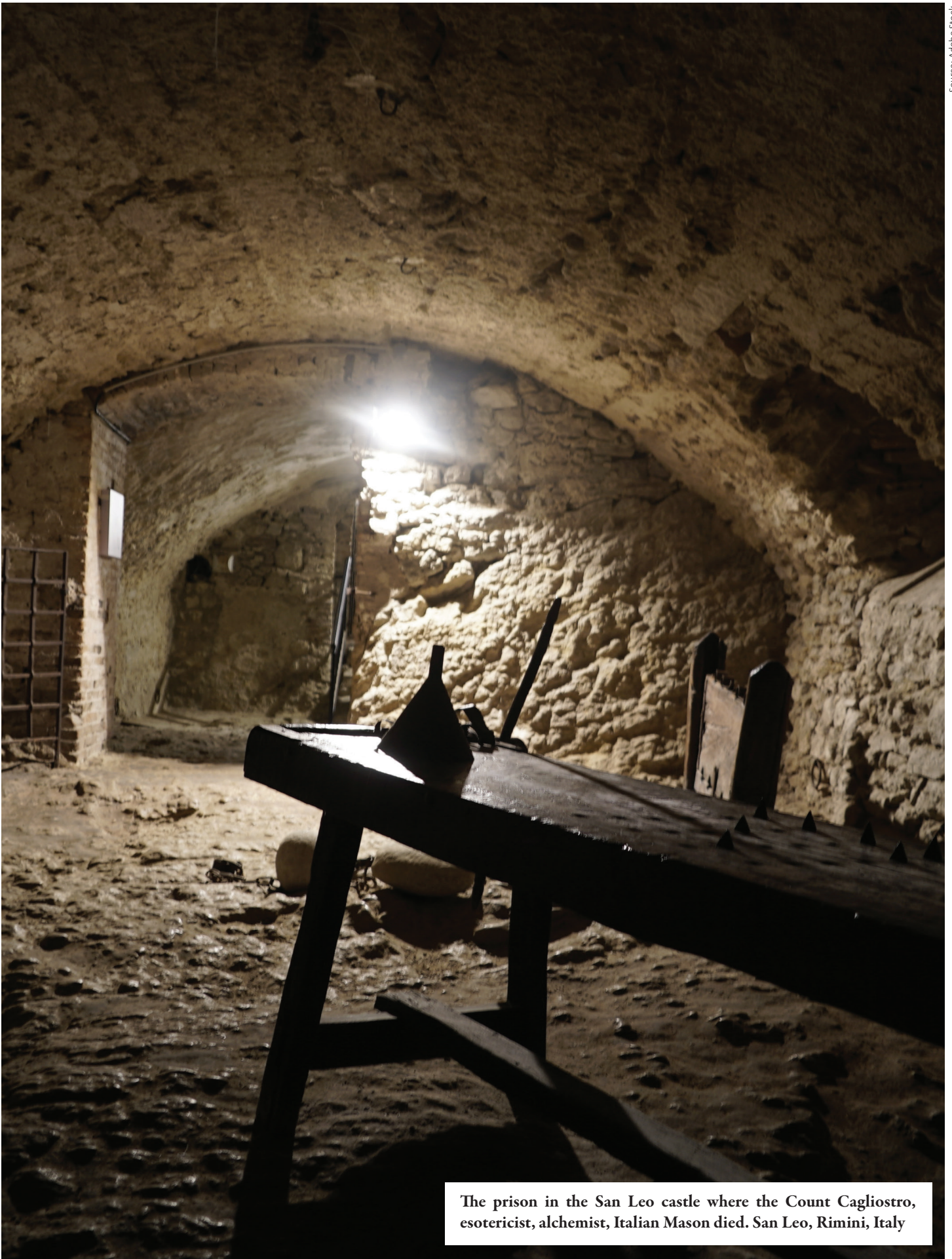
*Humanum genus* is particularly insidious because Leo establishes these causes aren't overtly bad. Instead, there is a secret malevolence hidden inside, sinisterly positioned to undermine and overthrow the Church (and thus God Himself). The layman can't see it – and in fact, this is why it is so terribly evil, because it defrauds and misleads – but thankfully the



Bust of the inimitable Galileo Galilei, who dared to crater the moon with his telescope.



Source: Wellcome Collection



The prison in the San Leo castle where the Count Cagliostro, esotericist, alchemist, Italian Mason died. San Leo, Rimini, Italy

Church, with its superior knowledge and divine inspiration, can expose it and save us all (and, conveniently, perhaps also itself).

This is nonsense, but it's a powerful argument, one that cannot be disproved in the appearance of the contrary. It's an impossible proof. Even the force of history – the evidence of over a century's improvement of the human condition – is not enough to usurp this erroneous view to which the Holy See intractably clings.

The animosity to Mother Church is “done by laws not apparently very hostile, but in reality framed and fitted to hinder freedom of action. Moreover,” Leo goes on, “We see exceptional and onerous laws imposed upon the clergy, to the end that they may be continually diminished in number and in necessary means. We see also the remnants of the possessions of the Church fettered by the strictest conditions, and subjected to the power and arbitrary will of the administrators of the State, and the religious orders rooted up and scattered.”

Leo's fear for his own position becomes express: “The Pontiff was first, for specious reasons, thrust out from the bulwark of his liberty and of his right, the civil principedom;” that is, the Pope was denied autocracy over civil affairs; “soon, he was unjustly driven into a condition which was unbearable because of the difficulties raised on all sides;” this seeming hyperbole must have some personal basis Leo is wont to omit; “and now the time has come when the partisans of the sects openly declare, what in secret among themselves they have for a long time plotted, that the sacred power of the Pontiffs must be abolished, and that the papacy itself, founded by divine right, must be utterly destroyed.”

Leo admits there is no real proof of his self-involved consternation, stating that, “If other proofs were wanting” these claims “would be sufficiently disclosed by the testimony of men well informed, of whom some at other

times, and others again recently, have declared it to be true of the Freemasons that they especially desire to assail the Church with irreconcilable hostility, and they will never rest until they have discovered whatever the supreme Pontiffs have established for sake of religion.”

With the benefit of a modern sensibility, such admission of mere hearsay “evidence” must seem remarkable. Yet men lost their lives in excruciating ways based on hearsay admissible as condemnatory evidence in an unjust world Leo is desperate to maintain.

Leo further decries Freemasonry's ecumenism. He erroneously believes Freemasons debase all religions in likeness when, in fact, Freemasonry celebrates religious diversity, explores theological dialogue, and rejoices in common understanding despite these differences. Such common understanding manifests as *charity*, consistent with Saint James's statement that “pure religion” is “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep [oneself] unspotted from the world.” But Leo remains self-interested, only Catholicism (which includes the Roman Church) is acceptable, “as it is the *only one* [religion] *that is true*,” it cannot “without great injustice, be regarded as merely equal to other religions” (emphasis added).

Leo exposes his gross misunderstanding of Freemasonry when he denounces Masons for allowing members to embrace atheism. “But, indeed,” he says, “the sect allows great liberty in its votaries, so that to each side is given the right to defend its own opinion, either that there is a God, or that there is none; and those who obstinately contend that there is no God are as easily initiated as those who contend that God exists, though, like pantheists, they have false notions concerning Him: all which is nothing else than taking away the reality, while retaining some absurd representation of the divine nature.”

This statement is outright



Source: Public Domain

Poster by the infamous hoaxer, Leo Taxil (whose real name was Marie Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès), with a Masonic “Baphomet” prominent. Taxil made a living by alleging preposterous crimes at the door of the Lodge. A staunch atheist, he published lewd versions of the Bible to ridicule the Church, but after *Humanum genus* was issued, he falsely converted to Catholicism and, due to his anti-Masonic propaganda, gained audience with Leo XIII in 1887.

A decade later, in 1897, Taxil convened a press conference at the Société de Géographie in Paris where he confessed to the hoax. He thanked the many Catholic clergy present (including some Cardinals) for assisting him in his work.

Leo exposes his gross misunderstanding of Freemasonry when he denounces Masons for allowing members to embrace atheism . . . This statement is outright false.

false. Leo can only be speaking of certain *strains* of Masonry, such as promulgated by the Grand Orient of France, not the majority of Masonry as practiced throughout the world under the United Grand Lodge of England's umbrella. Leo's logic is terribly flawed, it's like accusing Native Americans of being degenerate gamblers because Las Vegas exists in America. This alone should be sufficient for *Humanum genus* to be repealed, at least with respect to "regular" Masonry (which requires, as inviolable landmark, a belief in a supreme being).

Much of *Humanum genus* waxes eloquently about the need for Christianity to countermand sin; to inspire an upright life whereby salvation may be broached. But much of Leo's grandiloquence rather supports Masonry's overall object. Leo is clearly confused; he relies on incomplete and unreliable testimony. Consider this statement, by way of example, that shows he has a muddled understanding of the institution when he condemns it as something it actually opposes: "exaggerating rather the power and the excellence of nature, and placing therein alone the principle and rule of justice, they [Masons] cannot even imagine that there is any need at all of a constant struggle and a perfect steadfastness to overcome the violence and rule of our passions." This statement is overtly contradicted in the first degree of Masonry; in fact, the first lesson taught Masons is to subdue the passions and improve themselves, and, essentially, for the same purposes Leo exhorts.

Thus, it is not really clear who Leo is railing against. It's certainly not Masonry, at least not Masonry as we (who are actually Masons) understand it. It's some paralytic apoplexy; some paroxysm of a dying time – an old man lashing out at a world he no longer understands – a future he fears – viewed from a Church in decline – whereby the faceless enemy is given a name for the want of security: *Freemasonry!*

Here is Leo's list of charges against the Fraternity, which is better levied at a secularizing state rather than the Fraternity solely, and seems to confuse spiritual dominion with civic purpose (for example, there are civic implications inherent in marriage, even while there is a spiritual and religious ones, such as consequences of tax, property, and inheritance):

What refers to domestic life in the teaching of the naturalists is almost all contained in the following declarations: that marriage belongs to the genus of commercial contracts, which can rightly be revoked by the will of those who made them, and that the civil rulers of the State have power over the matrimonial bond; that in the education of youth nothing is to be taught in the matter of religion as of certain and fixed opinion; and each one must be left at liberty to follow, when he comes of age, whatever he may prefer.

Again, arguably consistent with divine law where freewill arises a joy in heaven over a single sinner repenting of his own accord – something Jesus says is greater than the probity of ninety-nine righteous men (Luke 15:7).

In alarming hypocrisy considering his previous statement regarding "education of youth" and that "nothing is to be taught in the matter of religion as of certain and fixed opinion" (wherein Leo decries an impulse against indoctrination of a particular creed – and not just any creed, but Catholicism) he then turns the criticism on its head when he writes, "They think that they can easily mold to their opinions that soft and pliant age [*i.e.*, the youth], and bend it whither they will . . ." The irony of his accusation is almost remarkable; while arguing for indoctrination of youth with a "certain and fixed" religious opinion (of the Catholic faith, no doubt), Leo here declares the Masons are, by supporting diverse education of religions ecumenism, where students are free to adopt their own opinions in time after the benefit of free contemplation,



Un auto de fé. (Cuadr)

**An auto-da-fé of the Spanish Inquisition: the burning of heretics in a market place. Wood engraving by H.D. Linton after Bocourt after T. Robert-Fleury.**

attempting to *indoctrinate* the youth, something that should not be countenanced!

It gets better, because Leo then turns his rancor towards the Masons "doctrines of politics" wherein "the naturalists lay down that all men have the same right, and are in every respect of equal and like condition; that each one is naturally free; that no one has the right to command another; that it is an act of violence to require men to obey any authority other than that which is obtained from themselves." The fact that this statement

was not outrageous when Leo wrote it readily shows how wrong Leo ultimately was.

"What, therefore, [the] sect of Freemasons is, and what course it pursues, appears sufficiently from the summary We have briefly given. Their chief dogmas are so greatly and manifestly at variance with reason that nothing can be more perverse."

Leo condemns ideas of social equality, comparing the state to a body where different limbs are devised for different purposes, and so the spectrum of human ability



© do M. Robert Fleury.)

Source: Wellcome Collection

defines a natural hierarchy without which the state is deformed. This sounds awfully like an espousal of eugenics. In his condemnation of Freemasonry, Leo seems contemptible himself.

Nonetheless, Leo ratifies and confirms the Church's prior position "for the purpose of opposing the undertakings and endeavors of the masonic sect." Thus, *Humanum genus* reaffirms *In eminenti*, and provides rationale for the severity of sentence Clement XII imposed one-hundred years before. It is worth reading *Humanum genus* in its entirety because, far from a repudiation of Freemasonry, it reads like a repudiation of the modern world *in toto*,

brimming with racist and classist subtext of a most unchristian and alarming character.

For the next century, this irrational and ill-informed polemic against Masonry simmered away as Canon. Clearly most people haven't bothered to read *Humanum genus*; apparently, all the faithful know is that Masonry is evil and must be condemned because the Pope once said so, never mind why.

Then, on November 26, 1983, Cardinal Ratzinger (who would become Pope Benedict XVI in 2005), wrote the last official word on the Church's position regarding Freemasonry, the Declaration on Masonic Associations. Ratzinger

was then Prefect of the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly known as the Inquisition – modernly rebranded no doubt in avoidance of the litany of abuses perpetrated by that Dominican sect, which seems so prone to fundamentalism and sadism, so troubling and unchristian to behold.

In his Declaration, Ratzinger was clear. The Declaration was issued because the new Code of Canon law, released the same year, didn't mention the Masons expressly (the previous Code did). Did this omission mean the Church's position had come to reason? No. "This Sacred Congregation," Ratzinger wrote, "is in a position to reply that this circumstance [is] due to an editorial criterion which was followed also in the case of other associations likewise unmentioned inasmuch as they are contained in wider categories. Therefore, the Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enrol[l] in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion."

Since it is the only Bull that expressly defines the sentence the Church imposes against Masons, Ratzinger reaffirms *In eminenti*: the penalty of excommunication and to suffer condign penalties at the hands of the Inquisition. Ratzinger doesn't provide rationale, only that Masonic principles "have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church." If so, by the rationale of *Humanum genus*, all modern states (including the United States and the European Union) must also be "irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church." Indeed, if the Church's position has not changed, as Ratzinger states, every person in the United States should be excommunicated by virtue of being a citizen and participating

in elections, and every one of them should be pursued and rooted out and tortured at the hands of the Inquisition.

It's interesting to note, too, that the Church's own position with regard to the language in *Humanum genus* has changed. Canon 1671 § 2 of Canon Law, for example, titled "Cases to declare the nullity of marriage," recognizes that "[c]ases regarding merely the civil effects of marriage belong to a civil magistrate, unless the particular law establishes that such cases, if carried out in an incidental or accessory manner, can be recognized by and determined by an ecclesiastical judge," and Can. 1672 states "In cases regarding the nullity of marriage not reserved to the Apostolic See, the competencies are: 1. The tribunal of the place in which the marriage was celebrated; 2. The tribunal of the place in which either or both parties have a domicile or a quasi-domicile; 3. The tribunal of the place in which in fact most of the proofs must be collected." In other words, it's the State's business under municipal law. This totally contradicts Leo XIII's rant – here we have a civil jurisdiction of marriage, and the Church recognizes the competency and supremacy of civil magistrates with regard thereto.

Such inconsistency should be disturbing to an institution which prides itself on bringing Christ's Kingdom to bear: Christ is not inconsistent – He is ultimate consistency.

Clearly, the Church seemingly doesn't understand its position against the Fraternity. It's untenable argument that fails under its own precepts proved false in the course of time. The only way to make sense of it is through a kind of cognitive dissonance, a schism wherein tenets can be applied inconsistently for self-interested and inconsistent purposes, a fallibility of reason, a reckless facility with truth.

The Church's "negative judgment in regard to Masonic association" has changed – it must have,

the Church is not torturing and murdering people based on their Masonic membership (anymore). Further, if Freemasons *were* excommunicated *latæ sententiæ*, as *In eminenti* requires, then all Catholic Freemasons would be excommunicated without hope of absolution except by the Pontiff (that would be Francis) or upon their deathbed in the admission of last rites.

Note that Ratzinger’s word is, in fact, the last official pronouncement against the Fraternity by the Church. The more recent statement, written on November 13, 2023, by Cardinal Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery of the Faith (rebranded once again – formerly the *Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith* – formerly the *Inquisition*) was a note prepared after an audience with Pope Francis, taken by the Prefect in response to a question from the Bishop of Dumaguete in the Philippines, Julito Cortes, who had inquired about the status of Freemasonry since so many of his congregation seemed to be members and didn’t appear to be the horned, devil-worshipping maniacs *Humanum genus* infers, but rather were decent men and Masons, and good Catholics. The note simply reaffirmed that the Church’s position as set forth in Ratzinger’s Declaration: Masons are in a “state of grave sin” and may not receive Holy Communion. But Ratzinger’s Declaration is woefully incomplete – and internally inconsistent if one views *Humanum genus* as the rationale by which *In eminenti* should be upheld. The Church’s position against the Fraternity *has* changed. And so has its position against the modern world. This is important because, according to Canon law, “If a law is changed after an offence has been committed, the law more favorable to the offender is to be applied.” Can. 1313 § 1. That should be the case, only we don’t know which law is which: it’s all hyperbole and circular reason, as outdated as the plague mask.

Oddly, Ratzinger’s Decla-

ration only says that “Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.” There’s no overt censure under a citable Canon. While this *could* imply “excommunication” (since excommunicates cannot receive the sacrament), the omission of the term “excommunication” itself is perhaps telling. Was Ratzinger deliberately softening the Church’s position? Denial of the sacraments is a censure which, by itself, is not necessarily equivalent to excommunication. But to get into the difference, we must venture deeper into Canon Law.

Canon Law prescribes two types of “penal sanctions” which can be imposed by the Church: medicinal penalties or censures and expiatory penalties. “Excommunication” is a medicinal penalty – that is, a penalty meant to be exacted like medicine, meant to restore a person to health. In some respects this seems like a misnomer since, by effectively banishing the excommunicate from the sacraments and the means of salvation, the censure must deny the restorative. However, we must presume, the idea is that the excommunicate is purged to reject his sinful state and plead absolution to return to

the faithful. The bitter quaff, but less virulent than the medicine of the wrack no doubt.

Excommunication has a legal definition in Canon, enumerated not by its qualities, but by its effects. Can. 1331 § 1 lays it out:

An excommunicated person is prohibited: 1. from celebrating the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and the other sacraments; 2. from receiving the sacraments; 3. from administering the sacraments and from celebrating the other ceremonies of liturgical worship;



Source: Quirinale.it

His Holiness Pope Francis I in 2021

4. from taking an active part in the celebrations listed above; 5. from exercising any ecclesiastical offices, duties, ministries or functions; 6. from performing acts of governance.

taking liturgy or ceremony of any kind.

A literal reading, then, suggests that, if an excommunicate is known to be present, the services must be stopped until he is caused to leave the premises, and

A literal reading, then, suggests that, if an excommunicate is known to be present, the services must be stopped until he is caused to leave the premises, and forcibly if necessary.

That means, basically, if you’re excommunicated, you are not allowed to participate in the congregation in any worship. You can probably walk into an empty church (to expiate your sins and seek absolution, perhaps), but if any rite is underway, “the offender” is “to be removed, or else the liturgical action is to be suspended, unless there is a grave reason to the contrary.”

Simply put, the excommunicate is not to be present in any congregation of worship under-

forcibly if necessary. While this is a far cry from the “condign penalties” Masons suffered as excommunicates under *In eminenti* (and earlier, no doubt), it is a severe enough punishment to wreck devout families and force Masons to either abandon their church or the Fraternity.

But even this attenuated excommunication does not appear to be universally enforced across the dioceses. By omitting the word *excommunication* from his Declaration (and we must assume delib-

erately, since a man like Ratzinger, as Prefect of the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith (a.k.a., the Inquisition), must choose his words with care), Ratzinger has fostered a lack of clarity that manifests variety between congregations.

Even though Ratzinger expressly wrote that “It is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided,” in effect, that is what he has allowed. Thus, some priests deny the sacraments to known Masons among their flock but let them attend the service. Most allow Catholics to marry known Masons. And at least a few, if we are to presume reason prevails over blind obeisance at least to some extent, probably don’t care at all.

Thus, the Church’s position is muddled at best and internally fraught at worst.

First, the Church’s position on Freemasonry *must* have changed despite what Ratzinger and Leo are wont to ply. And manifestly, it *has* changed. Second, the rationale underpinning the Church’s position is as obsolete as the Church’s earlier position on marriage – Canon Law reflects that change (though, apparently, not where the Freemasons are concerned for opaque and insensible reasons). Third, the Church cannot condemn Freemasonry any more than hold all members of every developed nation in a “state of grave sin.”

While it may be the case that the modern world is in a grave state of sin (which is certainly arguable), it is not by virtue of their citizenship that citizens are sinful, but by their individual choices and actions. Masons should be judged likewise.

Ultimately, membership in the Fraternity cannot be reason enough to condemn a person: the Church’s own rationale doesn’t hold up under scrutiny. In fact, the Church’s position in expostulating

the rationale is outdated and, in modern times, itself contemptible. If the Church were to review its own position on the Fraternity objectively and in proper context, to be congruent, the Church would have to revise its position. In fact, it *should* revise its position.

Christ taught that the only Commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, and, equally as important, to love your neighbor as yourself. Matt. 22:37-39.

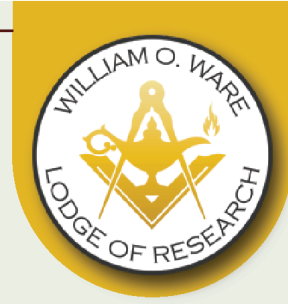
When Christ chose to exemplify neighborliness (Luke 10:30-36), he chose a Samaritan – a member of a heretical sect as far as the Pharisees and Sanhedrin were concerned, and a clear minority in application of contemporary religious law. Yet the Priest and the Levite, types of the faithful, passed by on the other side of the road, leaving the man beset by thieves to perish in the ditch. But the heretical Samaritan – the minority opinion, despised and contemptible by virtue of his beliefs – had compassion, stooped to help the man, treated and bandaged his wounds, set him upon his donkey, and walked him to an inn where he paid for his accommodation to facilitate his convalescence.

What can be more alike Masonry than the Samaritan? Like the Samaritan, Masonry crosses the religious divide to manifest charity.

“Which of these three [priest, Levite, or Samaritan] do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Jesus asked the expert of the law.

“The one who had mercy on him,” the expert replied.

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” **KT**



## BUY A RAFFLE TICKET KENTUCKY LONG RIFLE



KENTUCKY CHARITABLE GAMING  
LICENSE NO. EXE0002699

### Own A Piece of Kentucky History!

Purchase raffle tickets (\$50 each) for your chance to own this stunning Kentucky long rifle.

100% of all proceeds support Masonic research at the William O. Ware Lodge of Research.

Drawing to be held 11/6/25 at 7:30pm at Walt's Hitching Post, 3300 Madison Pike, Ft. Wright, KY at the William O. Ware Annual Festive Board.

Scan  
QR Code



Visit  
Website

[www.wowraffle.org](http://www.wowraffle.org)



by Michelle Snyder

# CORD, PENDULUM, ROD

How the circle is divided by the line, and the birth of keeping time.



A.I. Generated Image

**T**he cord, pendulum, and rod are tools which have become Masonic symbols. Threads spun of filaments and then roved into strings were essential for making circles and measuring time and distance. Their history shows that the mathematics and geometry of astronomy began with spinners and weavers.



For millennia the most time-consuming activity has been making clothes. Textiles began with weft weaving, then ground looms; Magdalenian ladies of the Rhône-Rhine-Danube trade route used weighted upright looms (c. 12,500 BC). During the agricultural revolution men and women still devoted much of their time to making textiles for both their own use, and to trade. The business of creating and trading textiles built entire empires: Acadian, Egyptian, Minoan, Sumerian, Greek, Austrian Fuggers, and British.

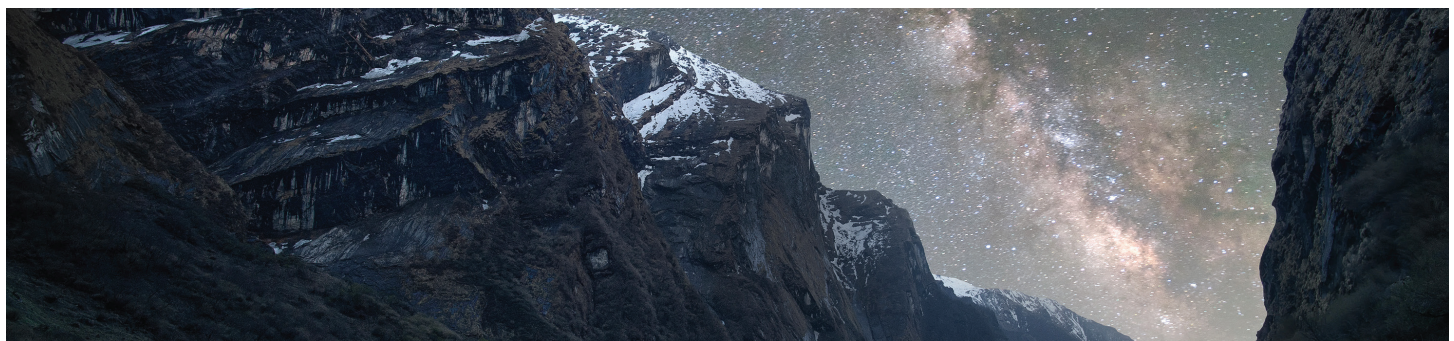
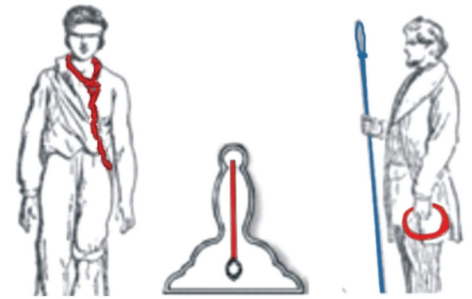
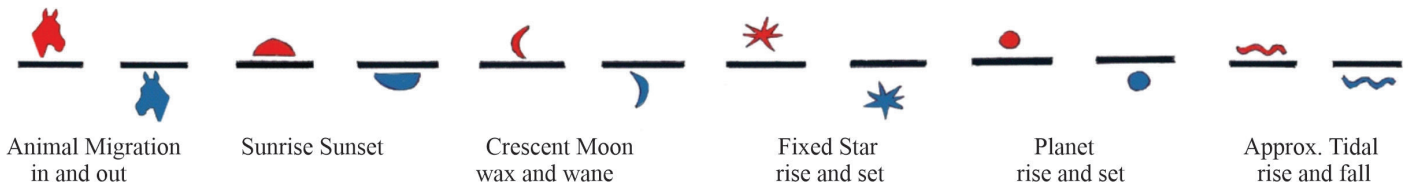
Cords, pendulums, and rods were used for astronomical measurement beginning with solar and lunar cycles, then planets for a seven-day week. Our ancestors named patterns in the sky: the twelve-monthly zodiacal houses (c. 28,000 BC). A few thousand years later the same patterns were clocked through a defined twenty-four hours, then divided into sixty minutes (using the moon, which is  $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$  wide, dividing one  $30^\circ$  zodiac houses into sixty lunar

diameters). Searching for Neolithic numbering systems, Duncan-Enzmann came across symbols which record cyclical astronomical events (c. 4600 – 2500 BC):

Time is measured by the swing of a pendulum. Ancient astronomers timed planetary cycles and named the seven days after them. The length of the cord for the pendulum determined length of the measuring rod, known as the megalithic yard. With these tools, measurements were standardized and used for building megalithic observatories. Rod and cord symbols are evident in many ancient cultures.

Use of the cord and rod for measurement laid the foundation for knowledge of dividing a circle to ten areas. Mathematical exploration by a few geniuses had already discovered that circles based on sunrises – 365 – could not be divided to a single degree (365 factors into 5, 73). Nor could circles based on star-rises (366 factors into 2, 183). A solution was found using a  $360^\circ$  circle (360 factors into 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,





8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 24, 30, 36, 40, 45, 60, 72, 90, 120, 180, and 360). These calculations are difficult with our numbers – imagine doing them with Roman Numerals. And our ancestors didn't even have those.

Clocking measures an interval of time – how long something takes – as with a stopwatch. A clock shows you what will be, and what has been. The pendulum and the right ascension of Venus increased the ability to

divide circles accurately to determine longitude, which increased travel and trade through vastly improved navigation.

A representation of this process was found in the patterns woven by women and in string games like Cat's Cradle; a five-pointed star was created, dividing a circle into 72° sections. Pegs were placed in the ground within a circle, and a cord was stretched around the pegs creating a perfect pentagram. Similarly, Betsy Ross could

cut a perfect five-pointed star from a piece of cloth, knowing how to fold the cloth and where to cut it.

We can see the rod and cord preserved in Masonic traditions today. **KT**



## Illustrious Order of the Red Cross

# THE IMMEMORIAL DISCUSSION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH

by Ben Williams

**T**he oratorical contest held at the court of King Darius is of consequence to the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross. By virtue of his sagacity and well-considered argument, Zerubbabel triumphs in the contest and succeeds in urging Darius to allow the Jewish people to rebuild the city and temple of their God.

Zerubbabel's hazardous enterprise in traversing the Persian dominions (at great personal risk), his elevation of truth above all things, and his refusal to reveal the secrets of Masonry even in threat of his life, secures Darius's admiration, support, and protection for the Jewish people. The ritual is historically and symbolically important – not just as a rubric for moral instruction.

The Immemorial Discussion, as the contest is frequently termed, features prominently in Masonic tradition. It's immortalized in an inscription in Roslyn Chapel (founded 1446), evoking an intriguing pedigree to Masonic lore.

Zerubbabel, as a symbolic type, is almost equal with Solomon and Hiram Abif. Lectures treating symbolically of the second temple appear in a Masonic context probably before the Hiram legend. Zerubbabel's significance, then, should not be discounted. (Consider, for example, that in the United Kingdom the presiding office of the Chapter is not Josiah the High Priest, but Zerubbabel.)

The chief account relied upon in the ritual of the Red Cross is not Ezra, but one relayed by Flavius Josephus, the Roman-Jewish historian, writing in the first century of the common era. The story is of some antiquity, then, if not veracity.

The account in Ezra is short. Ezra records mainly the decree of King Cyrus to free the Jewish captives from Babylon, allowing free passage to Jerusalem to reconstruct the city and temple there. Cyrus also agrees to finance the construction and returns the holy vessels sacked by Nebuchadnezzar seventy years prior. The biblical account supplies the names of the "Trans-Euphrates" governors, Tattenai and Shethar-Bozenai, used in the Jewish pass. But Ezra is silent about the Immemorial Discussion.

The main substance of the ritual comes from Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*. Not only is the ritual synopsized from Josephus's account, Josephus supplies the designation "cousins" used during the investiture of the new Order, the honorific still used by the Knight Masons who, along with the Royal Arch, share significant content as relayed in the Red Cross. In fact, this "Irish" Masonry probably represents some of the oldest "high degree" Masonry, antecedent material perhaps significant in the mysterious Rite of Harodim which, some argue, could be the precursor for

the chivalric Masonic rites. The "Crossing of the Bridge," for example, raises semblance to material in both the Royal Arch and the Red Cross, particularly the latter where the inability to render the countersign subjects Zerubbabel to capture and results in his presentation to Darius bound as a slave.

Curiously, this salient portion of the ritual does not feature in Josephus's work. It's probably purely Masonic invention. Josephus merely relates briefly that Zerubbabel came to Darius, after the death of Cyrus, "for there had been an old friendship between him and the King." According to Josephus, Zerubbabel is granted a position as one of the king's guards. After a night of feasting, Darius awakens in the middle of the night to fall into conversation with the three "guards of his body," one of whom was Zerubbabel:

But after he had rested a little part of the night, he awakes; and not being able to sleep any more, he fell into conversation with the three guards of his body: and promised that to him who should make an oration, about points that he should enquire of, such as should be most agreeable to truth, and to the dictates of wisdom, he would grant it as a reward of his victory, to put on a purple garment; and to drink in cups of gold; and to sleep upon gold; and to have a chariot with bridles of gold; and an headtire of fine linen; and a chain of gold

about his neck; and to sit next to my self; on account of his wisdom. And, says he, he shall be called my cousin.

Darius then charges them with the topic – whether wine, the king, or women were the stronger, "Or whether truth was not the strongest of all?"

In the Order of the Red Cross, Zerubbabel is the one who amends the topics for discussion with the supereminence of truth, another Masonic expedient no doubt.

The arguments as relayed by Josephus are well synopsized in the Red Cross ritual; Zerubbabel prevails in eloquence and persuasion. Curiously, the "almighty force and importance of truth," perhaps the most salient feature of the Order, is not stressed in Josephus's account, although its essential attributes (eternity, righteousness, justice) are mentioned in Zerubbabel's argument.

I have already demonstrated how powerful women are. But both these women themselves, and the King himself are weaker than truth. For although the earth be large, and the heaven high, and the course of the sun swift, yet are all these moved according to the will of God, who is true and righteous. For which cause we also ought to esteem truth to be the strongest of all things; and that what is unrighteous is



Image by Cattette. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International

## Achaemenid Empire c. 500 B.C.

of no force against it. Moreover all things else that have any strength are mortal, and short lived, but truth is a thing that is immortal, and eternal. It affords us not indeed such a beauty as will wither away by time, nor such riches as may be taken away by fortune; but righteous rules and laws. It distinguishes them from injustice, and puts what is unrighteous to rebuke.

That the discussion should devolve to three tangibles (wine, king, women) versus an intangible (truth) presents something of an imbalance. Nonetheless, the important moral is the unchangeability and supremacy of truth in view of the tangible. In quality, truth must be united in sameness. Truth itself is therefore an essential quality; by virtue of truth, something is real. Truth is like light itself, because it reveals things as they are – it is the quality of revelation, revealing other things made knowable by virtue of its extension. It is, in that respect, associable with God, who is unchanging and of perfect unity, alike unto Himself.

Consider also that truth must always be first. This too is like God. Because, if something is to be false, it is false relative to something that is true. Falsity can only exist in imitation. If it is to exist,

---

This is no hyperbole intended for mere dramatic effect. The words, in context of the discussion, are nested logical determinations meant to engender a deeper understanding of a more sublime concept. Consider the order of the arguments presented.

---

falsity must resemble what is true. Just as a counterfeit is made in the likeness of a legitimate object, so falsity can only subsist in usurpation of truth which, to be usurped, must take the position first for the substitution to operate. This is an important concept, because it elucidates the resplendence of deity, who shines in absolute truth, whose revelation is understanding.

As Zerubbabel says in the Order of the Red Cross, “[truth] is the strength, wisdom, power, and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth!”

This is no hyperbole intended for mere dramatic effect. The words, in context of the discussion, are nested logical determinations meant to engender a deeper understanding of a more sublime concept. Consider the order of the arguments presented.

First, wine. Wine has the ability to cloud reality, to change behavior, and elevate and destroy relationships. It is powerful, the Prince Chancellor argues, precisely because it can alter perception.

Second, kings. Kings have

power to govern men (including vintners). God granted power to men to govern all sublunary creatures (that is, all things beneath the sphere of the Moon). “He that is master of those who are masters of all things else, hath no earthly master above him,” says the Prince Master of the Palace. Thus, he argues, even the drunkard, oblivious to regal authority, cannot escape the power of the king, who enforces temporality by rule regardless of individual proclivity or indulgence (or overindulgence).

Third, women. While vintners are men, and men are subject to kings, Zerubbabel observes that kings are but the “gifts of women.” And women “are also mothers of those who cultivate our vineyards.” That is, without women there could be no kings or vintners or anyone else. But Zerubbabel elucidates the power of women further, because men will give up all they own in pursuit of women – and because of the vision of a woman. This beauty is important; it reflects the preeminence of truth (“a good clear vision,” as Hermes Trismeg-

istus tells us), but its beauty is also distinguishable thereby because beauty in object remains subject to time. Beauty fades upon the object; but an objective truth necessarily remains. “Truth alone is unchangeable and everlasting,” Zerubbabel says. Something true is always true.

Thus, absent truth, there is no vision (no contemplation or realization); there can be no women to birth kings who govern vintners. Truth is supreme, it is (as Zerubbabel reminds us earlier in the degree) “a divine attribute,” the “foundation of every virtue.” Truth, then, is an allegorical means by which to contemplate Deity. To comprehend the nature of truth is to contemplate a divine attribute, an appearance in likeness of God.

In many respects, this is not unlike the concept of logos, the “word,” whose utterance is the cosmos. Logos, the root of the word logic; a fundamental art and science, a determinative to the discovery of truth. Further, in emulation of truth – in adoption of its expression – men are rendered righteous and honorable.

Righteousness depends on truth. Justice depends on truth. Honor is truth in application. There is no honor in deceit.

Absent truth, there is no power of the king, which office is meant in pursuit of righteousness and justice. The throne of the king is established – is raised up – on truth. The winged beasts at the corners of the Chariot arise, ever standing, on truth.

“To be good men, and true, is the first lesson taught us in Masonry,” Zerubbabel says to Darius when explaining why he cannot reveal the Craft’s secrets. “My engagements are sacred and inviolable,” he says. Masonry is not just operative. It is an assignation founded in contemplation of the likeness of God.

To be true, then, is not just obeisance to vows of initiation. Or, in another sense of the word, to be level and plumb. To be true is to uphold a revelation of divine cause. **KT**

# CITIZENS IN ARMS

flash fiction by Ben Williams (written in 2004)

On a particularly cold Thursday the edict was announced. It slid through the channels of the congress silently, from hand to hand amid stacks of paper, beneath pen and seal, stood for vote behind one hundred articles, and passed hidden in supercilious verbiage well crafted for so surreptitious an entry to the law.

The members of the parliament nodded agreeably, another great day of lawmaking had ended, and one by one they removed themselves from the fine circular room with the coffered dome – perhaps the finest architecture on the island, and one thing to thank the conquistadors for – to delight in the fine evening that already had swept pastels through the clouds.

Standing by the door in his gray uniform General Alonzo was the last to leave. He had tarried to greet the Ambassador Super (an obsequy he was fond of) and left with an air of complete satisfaction – not even the Ambassador Super, a man prized for his comprehension by many international circles, had protested the Act's passage; in fact he had encouraged it. Only six had voted against it, and now the General had a pretty good idea who they were.

General Alonzo hitched his jacket button closed and noted with gravity the breakers that were streaming in from the headlands as he made way to his car. It was always being remade, this island, he thought to himself, and he knew it was time for it to be remade again.

He combed out his mustaches with his hand, as was his habit, and began his way home.

Once he had reached the town, and cut into the lee of the approaching storm, he had his driver drive down the Esplanade slowly, letting the children gaze at their reflections in his fine black car and watching the beachgoers cross willy-nilly. He liked to watch the parasols stretch their shadows across the stone street

from the tables where the tourists would spend a few hours, or to notice the islanders hanging in darkened doorways watching him with interest – they know, he thought – with their mangy dogs lapping in the heat, long tongues to sponge up the road-dirt, or the swimmers running in, grabbing their towels, glimpsing the flattened waves piling round the headland perhaps, laughing in the wind as their T-shirts snapped like kites, with the couples pulling the sand-crusting limbs of their blonde babies, faces lit with the day's fading sun and the salt-piqued air: *Tomorrow all this will be gone.*

It will be like the time when the armada came, the people will run to the buildings, the beaches will lie empty, only the imprint of his soldiers' boots will cover the berm for the tide to swallow, and the harbor will lie in ruins. He had his driver pull over, he wanted to look at the harbor, see it, see its workings, the very machinery of peoples' lives that tomorrow he'd wrench open, twist up, and leave broken for the assemblage of his men. He watched the fishermen linger along the docks checking the moorings, the masts bobbing above them, shaking halyards and creaking ropes against the swell. The boats jostled and whistled, the stays snapped and the halyards chinked, like a herd of stayed horses – the herd of *his* cavalry – anxious at the bit; as if the vessels sensed the coming wind eagerly with a lust for their design.

The diesel ferry would be captured immediately, and spared if at all possible. He had given the strictest orders not to let the ferry get destroyed or off the island, and had also stipulated four boats to be commandeered for purposes of shipping supplies after the coup had begun. Yes, this harbor would see some action again like the old days, yet there'd be tanks instead of cannons this time. What luck!

He bid drive on, and his driver obeyed with a tip of his

splendid cap, pulling out slowly into the hubbub of the preparation that besets any island in the approaches of a hurricane. Of course, it would not hit until tomorrow, around noon, but already the people had taken heed, and the Esplanade was not its usual nimety of lights and music, but was muted with wooden shutters, upturned chairs and chained tables, between the eateries still catering and the stores that had mostly brought everything inside. There was nothing quite like an island before a storm, the General thought, when the air is fresh, the waves push people out of the sea, into long sleeves and long dresses, windswept hair; it's all quite lovely. And the romance of the impending danger in so beautiful a place; that something so delicate could be rendered so brutal a beating; it's breathtaking. They reached the roundabout at the end, and sped up toward his home.

It was a night of celebration, and the general feasted accordingly. After a three-course dinner with quail and caviar, lamb (an envied rarity on the island), cheese and apple tarts, he took to his chambers with one of his girls. He spent the night lustfully, but was careful to get enough sleep to rise early and be on his balcony by morning, overlooking the harbor from the eastern point of the island, where, in a number of hours, the coup would mark its onset. His men had their orders, yet he was to meet with his colonels this morning for last minute affirmations. Everything should go as planned.

It was very windy on his balcony, even in the lee of his building uncontrollable gusts would whip his dressing gown undone, and he decided to take his breakfast inside. He dressed himself while his orderly prepared his eggs benedict and was ready to greet his colonels as they arrived. He bid them sit down, and give their orders to his orderly.

"I trust you came hungry? I asked that you not eat, but arrive promptly here at ohsixthirty, and I expect you have done so?" He knew this rhetorical question would oblige them his request, whether they were hungry or not, and so offset his misgivings about eating in front of people. If anyone wasn't going to be eating at the table, it would be him!

He began on his eggs benedict while the soldiers ordered their omelets, and watched the white lines stretch out across the sea, way out beyond his balcony where it turned dark blue. He watched a gull struggle in the air, sidle up, and strain almost motionless, before tumbling down in a terrible arc, somewhere out of sight. The wind tapped distant, erratic rhythms on the window. It was picking up, in a few more hours they would start.

"The emergency protocol went through, as you know, the tanks should already be prepared for the hurricane, everyone is in place, the airport is sealed, I really don't see the need for this meeting, do you? The attack cannot be stopped, the weather has already prepared the island for us! So we might as well enjoy our breakfast together, no? You gentlemen should be happy. In a matter of hours, you will be generals!"

The colonels looked over at him as one by one the orderly placed their omelets in front of them. Neither made a motion to eat.

"Now come gentlemen! Gomez is a fantastic cook!" He put down his knife and fork, a troubled frown dawning across his brow.

The shot rang out.

"I am sorry, General," the first colonel replied, lowering the weapon.

"But we are already generals."

KT

# Social Order Of Beauceant

## Joint Installation of Officers in Waco, Texas, Brings Templar Family into Focus by Gary Rock



### Joint Installation of Officers Waco Commandery No. 10 and Waco Assembly No. 199

**Front Row:** (Mrs. Francis) Dorothy Kinsinger, Past President Waco 199; Ms. Wera-Salley Worthan, Past President Waco 199; (Mrs. Bill) Maggie Matyastik, Past President Waco 199; (Mrs. Ray) Cathy Pugh, Waco 199; (Mrs. Jerry) Cynthia Marr, Supreme Marshal. **Second Row:** (Mrs. Thomas) Lynda Derby, Past Supreme Worthy President; (Mrs. Maurice) Terri Blackman, Past President Arlington 189; (Mrs. Robert) Debi Gannaway, Supreme Recorder; (Mrs. Rex) Eilleen Lewis, Past President Dallas 63; (Mrs. CJ) Elisa Laney, Past President Dallas 63; (Mrs. Scott) Rita Prevost; (Mrs. Don) Lois Wollard, Waco 199; (Mrs. Marty) Cindy Curbo Past President Waco 199; Sir Knight Lewis Curbo, Commander Waco 10; (Mrs. Jerry) Charlotte Barr, Waco 199; (Mrs. Allen) Cece Sharp, Waco 199; Ms. Vera Salley, Supreme Outer Guard; (Mrs. Kimberley) Gary Rock, Past President Waco 199; Sir Knight Gary Rock, Eminent Grand Captain General, Grand Commandery of Texas; Ms. Beth Hutchings, Waco 199; Mrs. Becky Murray, Dallas 63; (Mrs. Matthew) Tiffany Fisher, Worthy President, Waco 199. **Third Row:** Sir Knight Jon S. Spann, Aid to Camp, Grand Master David Kussman, Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, USA; Mrs. Jacqueline Harris, Past President Waco 199; (Mrs. Jon S.) Melissa Spann, Past Supreme Worthy President; Sir Knight Matthew Fisher, Temple 41; Sir Knight Scott Prevost, Waco 10; Sir Knight Don Wollard, Waco 10; Sir Knight Marty Aguire, Waco 10; Sir Knight Reggie Parmer, Waco 10; Sir Knight James Tyus, Waco 10; Sir Knight Josh Waller, Waco 10; Sir Knight Marty Curbo, Past Commander Waco No. 10. **Fourth Row:** Sir Knight Ray Esparza, Temple 41; Sir Knight Frank Zepp, Temple 41; Sir Knight Richard Schaufert, Waco 10; Sir Knight Allen Sharp, Waco 10; Sir Knight Brent Watts, Waco 10; Sir Knight Raymond Harper, Waco 10.

**Waco, Texas** – Seventeen Sir Knights, from three Texas Commanderies and twenty-two Beauceant Sisters from three Texas Assemblies gathered for the annual Waco Commandery No. 10 and Waco Assembly No. 199 joint-installation of officers at the York Rite Library and Museum of Texas.

With family members present, total attendance topped sixty.

Sir Knight Marty Curbo, Past Commander, served as

Installing Marshal for his son, the new Commander for Waco Commandery, Sir Knight James Lewis Curbo. Sir Knight Gary Rock, Grand Captain General for the Grand Commandery of Texas, was Installing Officer.

The day was memorable for the new Worthy President of Waco Assembly No. 199, (Mrs. Matthew) Tiffany Fisher, who was installed by fifty-year member (Mrs. Francis) Dorothy Kinsinger, Past President of Waco Assembly

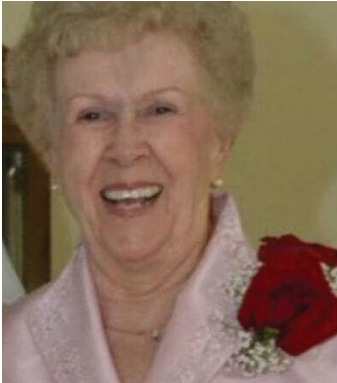
No. 199. Temple Commandery No. 41, presented the colors.

As the day's activities came to an end, the sense of family and shared purpose was palpable. The gathering was not just a meeting; it was a celebration of the collective spirit that fuels Templar Masonry. When people come together with a common goal, they can be a powerful force for good in their communities and among each other. **KT**



## PHYLLIS COOLIDGE HONORED WITH CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL AS WORLD WAR II 'Rosie the Riveter'

Submitted by Erin Marr (with permission from McCook Gazette)



**McCook, Nebraska** – Accompanied by his wife, Andrea and their two young children, U.S. Rep. Adrian Smith honored 102-year-old Phyllis Coolidge with a congressional gold medal in a small ceremony Tuesday at Bryant and Peggy Brooks' home in McCook.

Phyllis recalled how she joined her recently widowed

mother to work in the Grand Island bomb factory, two of the "Rosie the Riveters" who were key parts in the effort to win the war.

Smith expressed his deep appreciation for Coolidge's role in the war, acknowledging that the efforts of Rosies like her were instrumental in ensuring victory. Smith, visibly moved, shared how his recent trip to Normandy for the D-Day anniversary reinforced his understanding of the sacrifices made both on the battlefield and at home.

Coolidge shared memories of her time in the factory, where she and other women donned protective gear and worked long hours to keep the supply lines flowing.

Despite the grueling work, she reflected with humility, noting that it was simply something she had to do for the country.

The presentation of the medal was met with applause from the crowd, which included family, friends, and local community members.

Rep. Smith emphasized the importance of recognizing the legacy of the Rosies, stating that their contributions to the war effort are a testament to the unity and resolve of the American people during one of the nation's most challenging periods.

The ceremony concluded with a celebratory toast in Coolidge's honor, recognizing not only her individual efforts but also the collective impact of the women who kept America's industries running during World War II. **KT**

## Texas Beauceant Association

**T**he Chartered Assemblies of the Social Order of the Beauceant and their Sir Knights are invited to our luncheons. These gatherings are an opportunity to enjoy fellowship between our Assemblies. Each meeting includes discussions on upcoming official visits from our Supreme Worthy President, the Installation of Officers, and the Initiation of new members.

Currently, Assemblies in northeast Texas are represented, including Dallas No. 63, Tyler No. 127, Arlington No. 189, and Waco No. 199. Each Assembly can host a meeting at a location of their choice.

At each meeting, news is shared, health and wellness of our members noticed, and necessary business is undertaken. Each Assembly can announce future events and solicit assistance from other Assemblies if needed. **KT**

## Inaugural Meeting of Texas Beauceant Association

by Lynda Derby

**Forney, Texas** – The first Tri-Annual meeting of the Texas Beauceant Association (TBA) was held at Alfredo's Steakhouse in at 11:30 a.m. On Saturday, January 27, 2025. Mrs. Thomas Derby, Past Supreme Worthy President, chaired the meeting.

Thirteen sisters and five Sir Knights were present. Of four Chartered Assemblies in northeast Texas, three were represented: Arlington No. 189, Dallas No. 63,

and Waco No. 199.

The following officers were elected for 2025/2026: President (Mrs. Jerry) Cynthia Marr, Dallas 63; Vice President: (Mrs. Maurice) Terri Blackman, Arlington 189; Recorder/Treasurer: (Mrs. Thomas) Lynda Derby, Past Supreme Worthy President. Bylaws were discussed and adopted.

All members and Sir Knights are welcome. **KT**

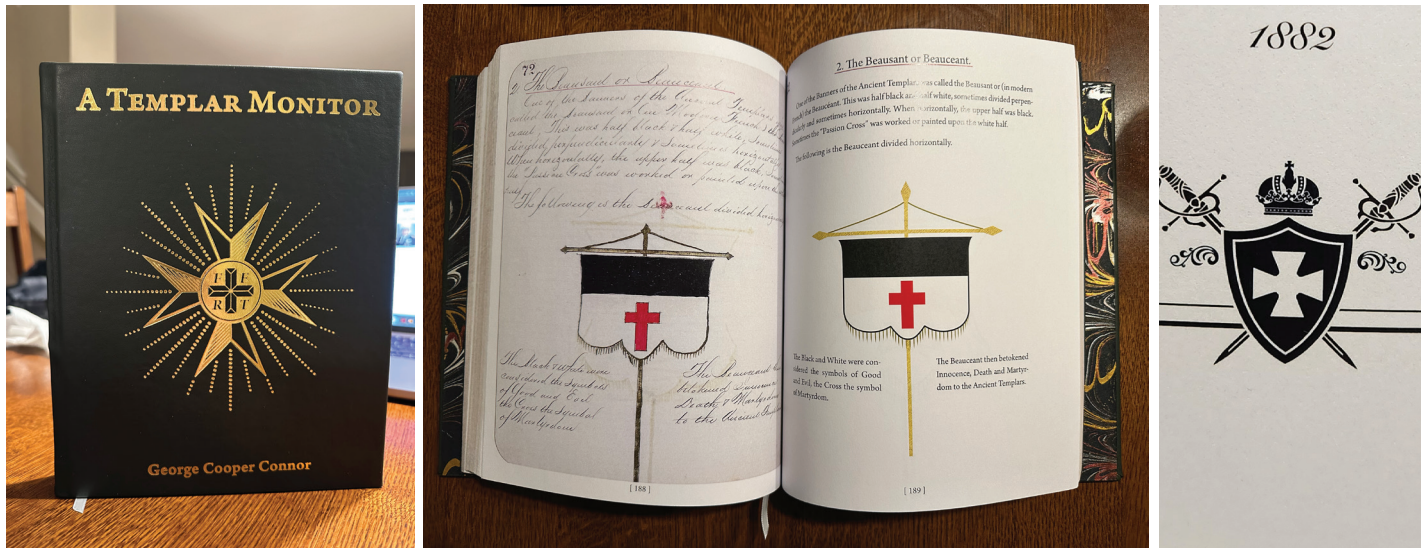


(From Left: (Mrs. Thomas) Lynda Derby, Past Supreme Worthy President; (Mrs. Jerry) Cynthia Marr, Past President Dallas No. 63; and (Mrs. Maurice) Terry Blackman, Past President Arlington No. 189

# ONLY 100 EDITIONS PRINTED!

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation has released a limited edition, genuine leather version of *A Templar Monitor*. Gold stamping on the cover, gilded edges, hubs, and a white ribbon marker make this a quality collectible. Cost is \$300. All proceeds go to the Foundation.

Only one-hundred copies of this collector's edition have been produced. (The original hard-back version is still available for purchase for \$150.)



**A** *Templar Monitor* is a reproduction of the handwritten manuscript prepared by George Cooper Connor in 1882, comprising the Orders in an earlier form prior to their standardization. The standardization of the ritual was based almost entirely on Connor's labor and revisions, adopted unanimously by the Grand Encampment in 1892 in Denver.

Connor was a well-respected Mason, serving as Grand Master of Tennessee in 1878, and Grand Commander the year before. He also served as Grand High Priest and as the first Potentate of the Alhambra Shrine (elected five years in a row). He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland and an early member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 in London, England, the premier research Lodge in the world.

He was raised a Master Mason and exalted a Royal Arch Mason at Atlanta in 1867. He was serving the Grand Encampment as Very Eminent Sword Bearer when he died shortly after his sixtieth birthday on March 9, 1894, from complications from diabetes.

Connor was born in Ireland on October 19, 1834. He emigrated to Canada in 1847, moving to the United States in 1858 to work as an editor for a religious paper based

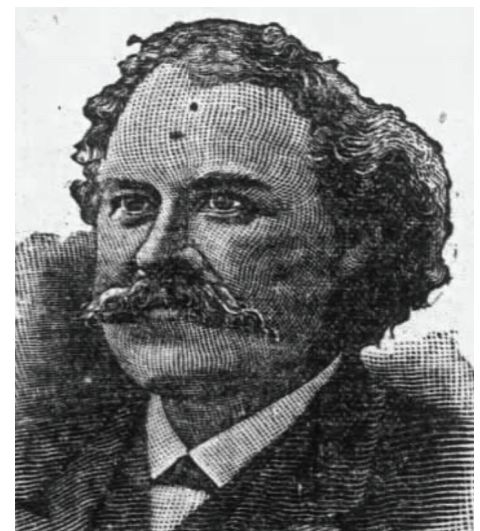
out of Nashville. He took a commission in the Confederacy, fought for the South, and attained the rank of Major of Infantry. Somehow surviving the hail of lead, he settled first in Atlanta, GA, and then in Chattanooga, TN, in 1871, working as general agent for the Western and Atlantic Railroad.

His skills at organization and leadership were put to good use in service of the Fraternity. He was a principal force in the founding of Lookout Commandery No. 14 in Chattanooga in 1871. A man of towering physique and intellect, he is remembered as a forthright, opinionated man who commanded respect and esteem from all he encountered.

Connor is probably best remembered for his *Shibboleth: A Templar Monitor*, perhaps the most comprehensive compendium on Templar ritual, widely distributed and into its fifth edition by the latter nineteenth century. For a time, it was found in every Mason's home nationwide.

The recreation of *A Templar Monitor* reproduces Connor's handwritten document, complete with photographic plates of his original script and painted images laid adjacent the typed equivalent with recreated drawings. The original was discovered in the archives of Lookout Commandery No. 14.

The book is not just a manuscript, or a rendition of ritual of interest to researchers and collectors alike; it is a work of art. The penmanship, Connor's drawings, the layout, and the binding make *A Templar Monitor* a worthy addition to any Masonic library. This leatherbound, gilded, gold-stamped, hub-spined, limited edition is collectible. If you love books, move fast. They won't be around for long. **KT**



GEORGE COOPER CONNOR Chattanooga Daily Times, March 10, 1894



# Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.

## 57<sup>th</sup> Voluntary Campaign

### BRINGING THE LIGHT TO THOSE IN DARKNESS SINCE 1956



**T**o the original Knight Templar it meant the world to belong. To become a true Knight Templar was to give up all worldly possessions, to dedicate and devote your life to a higher cause.

The life of a Knight Templar was not an easy one. You pledged to perform long, hard hours every day to military training, self-reflection, and the study of the teachings of Jesus Christ. It was dirty, unsanitary, unforgiving, and filled with hardships and dangers we can only imagine. It was a life dedicated to something greater than oneself. Your job as a Knight Templar was to protect Christian pilgrims from harm, defend the Holy Lands, spread Christianity throughout the world, and to live your life in such a way as to bring glory to God and His son Jesus Christ. It was a duty not to be taken lightly.

Modernly, as Knights Templar, our lives are quite different. Gone are the long hours of military training, the unsanitary conditions, the need to forgo all worldly possessions. What remains is our dedication to the teachings of Jesus Christ – our obligation to defend the Christian religion, to spread Christianity, help others where we can, and to live our lives in such a way as to bring glory to God and His son Jesus Christ. It, too, is not a life to be taken lightly. Each of us knelt at the base of the triangle and took upon ourselves a pledge that was more sacred and binding than any other. We sealed this pledge symbolically by the blood of Christ thereby giving over our lives to the service of others, to the service of God.

We do this by banding together, by putting aside our differences and standing shoulder to

shoulder to announce to the world that we are followers of Jesus of Nazareth. We stand before the world and state unequivocally and without apology our belief in God. We show the world we believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of all mankind and we make no apologies for it. We support and defend, through our charities and works, those that cannot do it for themselves. We do not condemn, we do not attack, we do not force others into our beliefs, but we stand ready to defend those beliefs. We stand ready, as Brothers in Arms, to guide those seeking the true light of God by virtue of how we conduct ourselves in this world.

When Simon of Cyrene picked up the cross of Christ and carried His burden, it was a sign to us that the burdens of Christ while on Earth were at an end. It was now our time to take what He taught us and bring it to the rest of the world. It was a sign to us to begin our good works, to help others wherever they may be, and to continue the miracles of His loving hand.

One of the ways we assist others is through charity. We give ourselves, our time, our skills, and our earnings to support those in need. There are so many Masonic charities to consider supporting. It is difficult to support them all. They all serve a greater need and are worthy of our efforts. As Knights Templar, we have several charities we support. You have been supporting them in record numbers this year. Your end of year 2024 donations amounted to \$1,026,978.37. That is the highest amount at this point than any other in the last ten years! Congratulations, you are improving the lives of others.

You truly are bringing light to those who sit in darkness.

I encourage you to continue to carry Jesus' burden, His cross. Donate what you can to the Eye Foundation. Have a domino contest to raise funds, try a walk-a-thon event, or a horse-shoe pitching contest. Get the Sir Knights and other Masons together for some fun event and use it to contribute even small amounts to the Voluntary Campaign. Someone, somewhere, is waiting for your help.

Thus far, during the 57th Campaign, we have received \$67,759.01 from your IRA contributions, \$504,494 through the Grand

Commander's Club, and Wills and Trusts have added another \$6,803,315.61! You are doing great work. Did you know, since its inception, Ohio has earned nine Swords of Merit? California has seven, while Texas and Pennsylvania have six? Who will be the first Jurisdiction with double digits?

If you are the Eye Foundation Committee Chairman for your local Commandery, what are you doing to support the Voluntary Campaign? I would love to hear your stories. Send them to me. Tell me if you show a video during a stated Conclave. Tell me about the fund raisers you are trying. Perhaps we can feature one of your stories in the magazine? Success breeds more success. Failure paves the way for success. In recruiting life insurance salesmen, I had to see ten agents to sign one. The nine not interested did not discourage me: they just moved me closer to success.

A failed fund raiser is just paving the way for a successful one. There is a book entitled "Cowboy Ethics." One of the guiding principles of the cowboy way of life was called "ride for the brand." It meant to represent the outfit you worked for as if you owned it.

You are a Knight Templar, ride for the brand!

In His and your service,

Richard R. Jernigan, PGC  
Chairman, 57th Annual Voluntary Campaign



# GRAND MASTER'S CLUBS

## NOVEMBER 2024

AZ Jeffery S. Baker  
CA Joseph L. Andre  
CA Daniel R. Jones  
CA George L. Masson  
CA Robert E. O'Dwyer  
CA Carl H. Reusser III  
CA David W. Studley  
CO Michael P. Rowan  
CT John A. Amarillos  
FL Benjamin P. Minichino  
FL Roy S. Thompson  
FL Luis A. Urrutia  
GA Tommy T. Marshall  
IL Marshall E. Ninmer  
IL Enrique J. Unanue  
IA William R. Clark Jr.  
KS Mark W. Stephenson  
LA David R. Oelschlager  
LA William L. Stroud  
ME Robert B. Ward  
MD Vernon H. Huebschman  
MA/RI Richard W. Van Doren  
MI Jeffrey M. Lewis  
NH Christie Morse  
NJ Charles E. Taylor Jr.  
NY Christopher P. Shelton  
OH Arthur F. Koeniger  
OH Robert R. Rettig  
OK Robert L. Bradway  
PA Blake W. Daniels  
PA John E. Grinnalds  
PA Jabe R. Hammond  
PA Gregory S. Magill  
PA Richard L. Pruitt

PA Rodney R. Rufe  
PA Howard L. Smith  
PA John L. Wagner  
PA Thomas H. Wible  
SC Michael W. Kirk  
SC Richard R. Lee Jr.  
SC Ronny D. Powell  
TN Larry W. Mick  
TN Richard M. Smith  
TX Fred A. Quenzer Jr.  
TX Gary E. Rock Jr.  
UT Monte K. Andersen  
UT Kevin E. Betterton  
UT Michael Clark  
UT Charles E. Persinger Jr.  
VA James D. Bratton  
VA Robert A. Bruce  
VA William Searcy III  
VA Raymond D. Steele  
WA James E. Nero  
WI Stephen Britton  
WI Richard J. Rausch

## DECEMBER 2024

AL Merle L. Wade  
AK Bruce L. Downs  
AZ Donald R. Tapia  
AR John K. Day  
CA Ara Maloyan  
CA Rodolfo C. Nazareno  
CA George G. Ross Jr.  
CA Leland G. Routt  
CA Courtney M. Scandrett  
CA James A. Segerstrom  
CO Michael Tims  
CO Sterling T. Warburton

CT Mark S. Agnew  
CT Alan J. Carlson  
CT James S. McNeely IV  
DC Roger E. Cundiff  
DC Michael J. Kastle  
DC Kevin S. Matthews  
FL Robert H. Eisenhardt  
FL David L. Hubbell  
FL Ronald F. Ranc II  
GA Matthew R. Astin  
GA James E. Stevens  
GA Harry R. Strazzella  
ID Jay A. Leonard  
IL Stephen T. Adamson  
IL John B. Gates  
IN John S. Keeler  
IN Joseph C. Korschot  
IN Jeffrey J. Oesterle  
IN Lawrence J. Williams  
IA Mark A. Clark  
IA David M. Dryer  
IA Keith A. Myhre  
IA Randy L. Tolley  
KS Leslie K. Needham  
KY Wallace E. Fizer  
LA William J. Surls  
ME Paul D. Hamilton  
MD Charles R. Holder  
MD Peter G. Nielsen  
MD John A. Rafine  
MA/RI Edward A. Condon Jr.  
MA/RI Russell H. Dumas  
MA/RI John W. Ruggles II  
MA/RI Stephen D. Whitmore  
MI James E. Hawn  
MI Dean R. McDougal

MI George M. Otis  
MO Charles A. Bottermuller  
MO Stanton T. Brown II  
NV William E. Cook  
NV Thomas V. Hultin  
NJ Jeffrey R. Chan  
NY Theodore H. Jacobsen  
NC Michael T. Aycock  
NC Steven A. Wilson  
OH Paul D. Andrews  
OH David W. Feller  
OH William T. Gilmore  
OH Richard W. Webber Jr.  
OK Robert L. Bradway  
OK Robert E. Goode  
PA Brenden R. Hunter  
SC Richard R. Lee Jr.  
SC Hoyt B. Palmer  
SD Ronald R. Hammer  
TN Walter C. Bowman  
TX Robert V. Barnes Jr.  
TX Cedric J. Cascio  
TX Robert B. Cook  
TX Mark E. Eastwood  
TX Gary E. Rock Jr.  
TX Michael Wisby  
VA James C. Landerkin  
VA Jeffrey L. Sparrow  
WA John S. Burrage  
WA Michael A. Smitson  
WY James L. Sturdevant

## JANUARY 2025

AL John W. Findley Jr.  
AL Benson L. Head Jr.

# GRAND COMMANDER'S CLUBS

## NOVEMBER 2024

CA Rick L. Baca  
CA James C. Clay  
CA Apolinario T. Concepcion  
CA Michael J. Sekera  
CT Mark S. Agnew  
FL William K. Benham  
FL Benjamin P. Minichino  
GA Tommy T. Marshall  
GA James G. Mashburn  
IL Enrique J. Unanue  
KS Alfred B. Buffington  
KS Gary B. Strout  
MI Jeffrey M. Lewis  
MN Philip T. Bodle  
MN Michael A. Hilgert  
MN Ralph J. Luchsinger II

NJ Robert J. Crawford  
NC Michael T. Aycock  
NC Jeff McEwen  
NC Michael J. Orlando  
OH James K. Lawson  
OH Martin R. Trent  
OK John L. Logan  
OR Jack E. Dailey  
PA Blake W. Daniels  
PA Alexander R. Micala  
PA John L. Wagner  
SD Tony M. Larsen  
TN Larry W. Mick  
TN Roy T. Sutton III  
TX Michael Wisby  
VA William Searcy III  
WV Nicholas R. Elswick

WI Richard J. Rausch  
WY Richard N. Lewis  
WY Charles L. Steele

## DECEMBER 2024

AL Thomas R. Bassett  
AL Dane Gilliam  
AZ John F. Gilbert  
AR Thomas A. Flowers  
CA Phillip K. Crumm Sr.  
CA Nicholas C. Rasis  
CA Leland G. Routt  
CO Robert R. Chapman  
CT James S. McNeely IV  
FL Mark C. Mason  
FL George G. Matthews  
FL Ronald F. Ranc II

GA Adam P. Schmidt  
HI Jason R. Stojka  
IL Stephen T. Adamson  
IL Robert O. Kuehn  
IL Steven L. Scaife  
IN Jeffrey J. Oesterle  
LA Jimmy Craft  
ME Michael P. Clinton  
ME Alexander W. Spooner  
MA/RI Charles E. Bradley  
MA/RI Henry L. Farmer III  
MI Greg Weiser  
MN David C. Birkman  
MN Michael S. Hallas  
MN James R. Tuorila  
MO Charles A. Bottermuller  
NV Thomas A. Collins

AZ Michael A. Kofra  
 AZ Fred M. Lohman  
 CO Ricky L. Benish  
 CO Joseph Magoffin  
 CO Michael L. Oldham  
 CT Arnold S. Grot  
 CT Annette P. Ham  
 DC Roger E. Cundiff  
 FL James W. Busby Jr.  
 FL Austin C. Drukker Jr.  
 FL James M. Hafling  
 FL Henry I. Jehan Jr.  
 FL Robert D. Sever  
 FL Efrain Vazquez II  
 FL Dwight A. Wilson  
 IL Joseph L. Pieron  
 IN Joe F. Gust  
 IN Charles M. Kostbade  
 IA Michael D.C. Boomer  
 IA William R. Clark Jr.  
 ME Michael S.C. Baker  
 ME Kenneth A. Caldwell  
 ME Michael P. Clinton  
 ME Gary K. Hemenway  
 ME Thomas S. Hill Jr.  
 ME Paul A. Rollins  
 ME Robert M. Wright  
 MD Gordon A. Davids  
 MD Donald E. Jenkins  
 MA/RI Robert Y. Chan  
 MA/RI Michael L. Curry  
 MA/RI Daniel J.T. Daley  
 MA/RI Geoffrey Kromer  
 MA/RI Edward F. Lavin Jr.  
 MA/RI Andrew T. Lopolito  
 MA/RI Matthew A. Niedermeier

MA/RI William L. Wayne  
 MA/RI John W. Wilder  
 MA/RI Stephen M. Yarosh  
 MI Joseph G. Bonsall  
 MN Roberto S. Gardiner  
 MN Douglas E. Pamp  
 MS James A. Birdsong  
 MO Bernell C. Raye  
 MT William K.V. McPhail  
 NV Kenneth L. Morris  
 NH Thomas X. Tsirimokos  
 NH Dennis A. Tuttle Sr.  
 NJ Richard W. Westergaard  
 NY David D. Goodwin  
 NC John A. Clore  
 NC H. Stetser Murphy  
 OH Kyle J. Binkley  
 OH Eugene N. Bitler  
 OH Edwin D. Dickerson  
 OH Lee D. Kerber  
 OH Robert G. Seibert  
 OK Robert L. Bradway  
 OK Rick A. Moore  
 PA Brenden R. Hunter  
 PA Alexander R. Micale  
 PA Michael M. Williamson  
 PA Michael A. Wolcott  
 SC Richard R. Lee Jr.  
 SC Richard P. Panuska  
 SD Michael R. Argenziano  
 SD Bruce A. Crisman  
 SD Stan H. Schwellenbach  
 TN John R. Allen  
 TN Millard C. Bridges  
 TX Charles E. Campbell  
 TX Fabriel Cisneros

TX F. Harold Entz  
 TX Stephen E. Gooch  
 TX Billy J. Hamilton Jr.  
 TX Gary E. Rock Jr.  
 TX Larry S. Wall  
 VT Ronald L.B. Mack  
 VA William Searcy III  
 VA Peter E. Terrill  
 WA Charles R. Davis  
 WI James J. Burton  
 WI Jerome J. Gebert  
 WI Richard J. Rausch  
 WY Kraig A. Kobert



NH Lewis H. Busell  
 NH James T. Currie  
 NY Walter R. Leong  
 NC Michael T. Aycock  
 NC John K. Morgan  
 NC Patrick R. Terry  
 OH David W. Feller  
 OH William T. Gilmore  
 OH Richard W. Webber Jr.  
 OH William E. Wenner  
 PA Nigel K. Foundling  
 PA Mark G. Mattern  
 PA Howard L. Smith  
 PA Merrill D. Walters  
 SC Ronny D. Powell  
 SD Paul Raap  
 TN John E. Byars

TN Roberts V. Weaver Jr.  
 TX Cary W. Lormand Jr.  
 VA Joel T. Bundy  
 VA Aristos O. Dimitriou  
 VA James C. Landerkin  
 VA Jeffrey L. Sparrow  
 WV Robert L. Hammond  
 WV David L. Tucker  
 WY Sheldon C. Henderson

### JANUARY 2025

AL Chad W. Thrasher  
 CA Jack A. Evangelio  
 CA Alexander C. Georgiev  
 CT Mark S. Agnew  
 FL James M. Hafling  
 FL Luis A. Moran Sr.

FL Scott F. Wallach  
 GA Harry R. Strazzella  
 IL Mark H. Welch  
 IL Mathew L. Winston  
 ME Robert M. Wright  
 MA/RI David H. King  
 MA/RI Michael D. Wolfe  
 MI Joseph G. Bonsall  
 MN Roberto S. Gardiner  
 MS Rex C. Hasty  
 MO Mark R. Johnsen  
 MT William K.V. McPhail  
 MT William H. Rogers  
 NJ Richard W. Westergaard  
 NC Gary L. Smith  
 NC Steven A. Wilson  
 OH Lee D. Kerber

OH Tommy R. Parker  
 PA Lee E. Cooper  
 PA Alexander R. Micale  
 PA Michael M. Williamson  
 SD Michael R. Argenziano  
 TX Charles E. Campbell  
 TX Robert B. Cook  
 TX John C. Elkinton  
 TX Billy J. Hamilton Jr.  
 TX Ronald D. Redmer  
 TX Larry S. Wall  
 VT Ronald L.B. Mack  
 VA William Searcy III  
 VA Peter E. Terrill  
 WI Richard J. Rausch  
 WY Lawrence G. Gill III  
 WY Kraig A. Kobert

