

The Fermi Paradox

A Guest Message from Sir Knight **John William McNaughton**, 33°
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The Fermi paradox has been described in the scientific community as the contradiction between high estimates of the probability of the existence of extraterrestrial beings and the lack of evidence for, or contact with, these beings.

The age of the universe and its vast number of stars certainly suggest that if the earth is a typical planet, extraterrestrial life should be quite common. In 1950, the physicist, Enrico Fermi, questioned why, if such advanced civilizations exist within just the Milky Way galaxy, evidence such as spacecraft or probes are not seen.

Since its inception in 1984, the mission of the SETI (search for extraterrestrial intelligence) Institute is to explore, understand, and explain the origin, nature, and prevalence of life in the universe.

One possible method to resolve the Fermi paradox would be for an organization such as the SETI Institute to find evidence of the existence of extraterrestrial life. However, to date, no such efforts have proven successful.

The great silence remains.

Is there a Masonic paradox? And would it be defined as the contradiction between the belief in the existence of what was once a great Fraternity and the lack of proof of its existence in the 21st century?

The age of the Fraternity and its large number of members suggest that Freemasonry was once a place of great fellowship, joy, and enlightenment. However, today it is better described as a place where the perfection of ritual is stressed, behavior control of its members (for their own good, of course) is emphasized, the advancement of charities that benefit the secular world is the norm, and few of its members ever attend.

Some day, our Masonic leaders will realize that they alone can advance the renaissance of our Craft by stressing the importance of fraternity and the vows we all took at the altar of Freemasonry. At the same time, they must understand that the recitation of perfect ritual and maintenance of the sacred landmarks are not our core values and will never attract new members. Throughout the ages, good men have petitioned the Masonic Fraternity and will continue to join our Craft, because they see value in belonging to a great organization where they benefit from these important lifelong friendships.

While there is yet time, as Jim Collins suggests in his *Built to Last* book, the Masonic Fraternity must eliminate our misalignments, those that drive our members away from the core ideology of our Craft and those that impede progress toward the envisioned future.

If the Fermi paradox is ever resolved, future generations might spend ages discussing its scientific implications and details, but the issues within the Masonic paradox must be resolved much sooner. In Ecclesiastes 3, we read that there is a season for everything. May all of our Masonic Leaders have the wisdom to realize that the season for renaissance is now.

Let us hope and pray that those who come to join the Masonic Fraternity in future ages will still understand that the core values of the Masonic Fraternity are a belief in God, the assistance of a worthy Brother in distress, and the care for his widows and orphans.

Are we alone?

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