



THE GAVEL

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Volume 21 Issue 11

"The Oldest Masonic Lodge in the Rockies" Organized May 8, 1851

November 2021

From the East...



From the East

Over the past month, I have been observing the far southern slant of the sun as it nears its Winter House. The Winter House, or winter solstice, marks one of the four major way stations on the Earth's annual journey around the sun. On this seasonal journey, the sun appears to travel along the horizon about the length of one sun's diameter each day. The sun travels along the morning and evening horizons all season long except for a three day period at both its southern and northern extremes when it appears to stand still for a three day period. These are the Summer and Winter Solstices happening around June and December 21st. Set at the midpoints between these Solstice extremes are the Spring (ca. March 20-23) and Fall (ca. September 20-23) Equinoxes marking the midpoints of the sun's journey either northward or southward from the Solstice extremes. The Hopi have designated Sun Chiefs whose job is to observe the daily rising and setting of the sun watching for these important points of the seasonal round. Their observation of the sun governed the planting of crops and the observance of ceremonies and rituals all year long. As Past Master Mulligan noted during his talk on Chaco, entire buildings may be orientated to these points to aid in designating the progress of the sun. The annual turning of the wheel of the year: winter, spring, summer, fall—birth, growth, waning, death. Changing Woman of the Navajo personifies this cyclical path of the seasons as she is annually born, matures, grows old, and dies, only to be reborn again on a new yearly rotation of the seasonal wheel.

Our present seasonal station at the Winter Solstice is the lowest point of the sun on the southern horizon and traditionally marks the first day of winter, the shortest day of the year, and the longest night of the year. Shadows are long contrasting with the short shadows of Summer when the sun is nearly directly overhead. Now darkness triumphs; and yet, gives way and changes into light as the sun turns and begins its journey back to the north. This time has long been celebrated by cultures from around the world. Ancient Egypt's temple of Karnak was built to align with the winter solstice more than 4,000 years ago. Stonehenge has a 24 hour real time video vigil so that thousands of people around the world can watch the solstice sunrise from this prehistoric monument. Neolithic monuments, such as Newgrange in Ireland and Maeshowe in Scotland, were aligned with sunrise on the winter solstice, when the dawning sun sent a beam of light into the burial shaft as a sign of resurrection. The Zuni Indians of our State celebrate the winter solstice with the Shalako ceremony. This ceremony has been enacted

Continued on Page 3

2022 DUES

Brethren: Please take note that 2022 dues are now due and payable. They are now **\$130.00** (\$75 + Grand Lodge per-capita).

Regular Meetings

RECURRENCE

First Monday
Fourth Wednesday
Second Tuesday
Third Tuesday
Second Wednesday
First Thursday

EVENT

Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 6:00 PM
Property Management Board at 6:00 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM
Regular Communication at 5:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM
Regular Communication at 7:00 PM, Dinner at 5:30 PM

ORGANIZATION

Montezuma Lodge No. 1
Montezuma Lodge No. 1
York Rite Bodies
Santa Fe Shrine Club
Cerrillos Lodge No. 19
Santa Fe No. 19 Eastern Star

We have been holding our Quest meetings every Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Quest Club is a forum for everyone. Mason and non-Mason alike can voice ideas and discuss any topic.



Special Notices And Events

Property Management Board

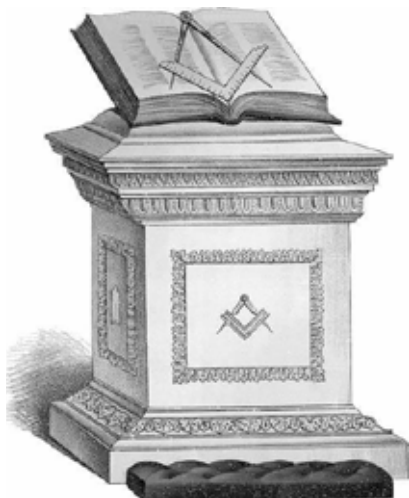
The monthly meeting of the Property Management Board was held on **Wednesday, January 26th** at 6:00 PM. in the library.

Proficiency Examinations

At the stated meeting on December 6, 2021 Brother Nathan W. Methany presented his proficiency examination as an Entered Apprentice. He was found to be proficient and his Fellowcraft degree will be conferred on him in the near future.

1/3/2022 DINNER

AreminderBrethrenthatourfirstregularcommunication of 2022 will be held on Monday, Janusry 4, at 7:00 PM. Start the New Year off right by getting back in the saddle with good ole Montezuma Lodge. For those interested, we will be meeting for diinner at the El Sabor restaurant in the Alley at DeVargas Mall at 5:20 PM.



In This Issue

From the East	1
2022 Dues.....	1
Special Notices and Events	2
Property Management Board.....	2
Proficiency Examination.....	2
Dinner January 3, 2022.....	2
Photos from the Joint Installation of Officers, December 11, 2021	3

From Southern California Research Lodge

SCRL - Cover Page.....	7
SCRL - Cover Story	8
SCRL - The Second Tenet - RELIEF	9
SCRL - Ritual Text on Relief.....	10
SCRL - Masonic POP Culture	12
SCRL - Masonic Charities	13
SCRL - Symbology	14
SCRL - Fragments.....	15
SCRL - The Rite of Destitution`	16
SCRL - A Ladder of Relief.....	18
SCRL - Final Word.....	20
Dinner Menu	21
Lodge Officers.....	21



From the East (continued)

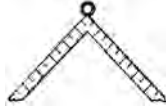


Continued from Page 1

from prehistoric times and continues to attract people from around the world during its annual celebration. Our own Masonic tradition incorporates the Solstices with the Holy Saints John, whose feast days correspond with the Summer and Winter Solstices. I enjoy observing seasonal sunrises and sunsets at this time from various archaeological and rock art sites standing in the footsteps of those who came before.

So Good Brothers, I am proud of our efforts of creating Christmas Boxes for the needy at this special time. I hope you have all had a happy and merry Holiday and Solstice season as the darkness withers and we begin to experience Light, and More Light.

Most Fraternally,
Chuck Hannaford
Worshipful Master



Photos from the Annual Joint Installation









Southern California Research Lodge

Fraternal Review

NOVEMBER 2021



RELIEF

HOW DO WE DEFINE RELIEF IN OUR CRAFT?

COVER STORY



“Relief,” as a principal tenet of Masonry, is taught in the Entered Apprentice degree ceremony—in part through a Rite of Destitution, discussed in detail in this Fraternal Review on pages (12-13).—Ed.

The Entered Apprentice practices the Rite of Destitution before he hears the beautiful words of the lecture descriptive of the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder: “the greatest of these is charity; for faith is lost in sight, hope ends in fruition, but charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity.” ...

Masonic giving to the destitute is not confined to alms. Putting a quarter in a beggar’s hand will hardly extend beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity!

Masonic charity does indeed include the giving of physical relief; individual Masons give it, the lodge gives it, the Grand Lodge gives it. But if charity began and ended with money, it would go but a little way. St Paul said: “And although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

If the charity of Freemasonry meant only the giving of alms, it would long ago have given place to a hundred institutions better able to provide relief.

The charity taught in the lodge is charity of thought, charity of the giving of self. The visit to the sick is true Masonic charity. The brotherly hand laid upon a bowed shoulder in comfort and to give courage is Masonic charity. The word of counsel to the fatherless, the tear dropped in sympathy with the widowed, the joyous letter of congratulation to a fortunate brother, all are Masonic charity—and these, indeed, extend beyond the grave.

Often an Entered Apprentice believes that the Rite has taught him that every Mason must give a coin to every beggar who asks, even though they line the streets and need as many dimes as a pocket will hold. Such is not the truth. The Mason gives when he meets anyone “in like destitute condition.” It is left for him to judge whether the appeal is for a need which is real or one assumed. In general, all calls for Masonic charity should be made through the lodge; machinery is provided for a kindly and brotherly investigation, after which lodge or Grand Lodge will afford relief. Individual charity is wholly in the control of the individual brother’s conscience.

But no conscience need control that larger and finer giving of comfort and counsel, of joy and sadness, of sympathy and spiritual help. Here the Mason may give as much as he will and be not the poorer but the richer for his giving. He who reads the Rite of Destitution in this larger sense has seen through the form to the reality behind, and learned the inner significance of the symbol.

[Carl H. Claudy, *Introduction to Freemasonry I, Entered Apprentice*. (Burlington, N.C.: The Temple Publishers, Inc., 2011, first

The Second Tenet RELIEF (CHARITY)

By C. Douglas Russell

Relief is one among the many traditions of modern speculative Masons that were inspired by centuries-old practices of operative masons. For example, a guild or association of German stonemasons included these words in the Regensburg Statutes of 1459: “if anyone gets into trouble with courts or in other matters, relating to the Fraternity, then shall every one, whether he is a Master or fellow, afford him aid and relief, as he is bound to do by the oath of the Fraternity. If a [brother] ... is afflicted with protracted illness and wants for food and necessary money, then the Master who has charge of the funds shall lend him relief and assistance from the funds [of the Fraternity].”¹

In 1769, at the founding of a new lodge in England, the townspeople were invited to a meeting, and charitable funds were distributed, with this explanation in a speech by Provincial Grand Master Thomas Dunkerley: “*Charity* is the basis of *our* order; it is for this purpose we have a Grand Lodge. ... A laudable custom prevailed among our ancient brethren; after they had sent their donations to the *general* charities, they considered the distresses of those in *particular* that resided in their respective neighborhoods, and assisted them with such a sum as could be conveniently spared from the *lodge*. In humble imitation of this masonic principle, I recommend the present charity to your consideration.”²

In last month’s *Fraternal Review*, the Cover Story quoted our great 19th century Brother Albert G. Mackey, who noted that the tenets are illustrated for a candidate “at every step of his progress.” Below are examples of ritual language about relief (charity) from each of the three Craft lodge degree ceremonies.

In the 1st degree, Relief is described in a paragraph that is analyzed sentence-by-sentence in an article you’ll find in this issue on pages 6 to 7. During the 1st degree lecture, the Master explains symbolism of the lodge room: “The Form of a lodge is oblong. It extends from east to west and from north to south, and it is said to be thus extensive to denote the universality of Masonry and to teach us that a Mason’s charity should be equally extensive; for in every country and in every clime are Masons to be found.”

The “lodge” is not confined to the physical space of the lodge room: “The Covering of a lodge is no less than the clouded canopy or star-decked heaven where all good Masons hope at last to arrive by aid of that theological ladder which Jacob, in his vision, saw, reaching from earth to heaven, the three principal rounds of which are denominated Faith, Hope, and Charity, which admonish us to have faith in God, hope of immortality, and charity for all mankind.” (In Masonic teachings, Jacob’s ladder has rungs of Faith, Hope and Charity, “and the greatest of these is Charity.”)

In the 2nd degree, a reading focusing on charity, intoned by the Chaplain during the rite of circumambulation, includes this (from I Corinthians 13:2): “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Later in the ceremony, a speech with descriptions of operative and speculative Masonry states, “By Speculative Masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the Square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity.”

In the 3rd degree, we find these words on the symbolism of the beehive: “It teaches us, that as we came into the world rational and intelligent beings, so we should ever be industrious ones; never sitting down contented while our fellow-creatures around us are in want, especially when it is in our powers to relieve them, without inconvenience to ourselves.” Toward the end of the degree, the Master delivers a charge to the candidate regarding the Masonic tenets: “Duty and honor now alike bind you to be faithful to every trust; to support the dignity of your character on all occasions; and strenuously to enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to the tenets of Freemasonry.”

¹ “The Regensburg Statutes,” in Guy Chassagnard, *The Old Charges of the Craft*. (Segnat Editions, 2016), 102.

² Thomas Dunkerley, Esq., “A Charge, delivered to the Members of the Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, held at the Castle-Inn, Marlborough,” in Wellins Calcott, P.M., *A Candid Disquisition*. (London: James Dixwell, printer, 1769), 137-138. The italicized words are all italicized in the source quoted.

RITUAL TEXT ON RELIEF

BY BRO. ROBERT SACHS

The Master's lecture to the newly initiated Entered Apprentice lays out the tenets and moral virtues found in all of this world's holy writings that we should—especially because of what we are electing to obligate ourselves to in Freemasonry—abide by. Of the three principal tenets of Masonry—Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth—this essay will focus on “Relief.” To do this, I shall break down the text in the lecture line by line that pertains to this tenet. The text is in italics below.

“To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection.”

The “common good.” Without an awareness of such, we only extend ourselves to those we prefer and the result can degrade to a “dog-eat-dog” barbarism, whose social chain—if one even exists—is forged less by affection, than by partisan collectives seeking dominance. All the toys, spoils, and privileges should serve us first. And, if there are crumbs left over that matter to us not, then we can feign benevolence, albeit in a limited way.

But here our ritual casts the net wider. Although Grand Lodges have coded legislation and by-laws that relate to tending—by duty—to the distress of Master Masons, and—by discretion—to the needs of Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts, we are reminded that we are a part of creation and a much larger family, so inclusively and aptly described in the tenet of Brotherly Love. Thus, while there is a specific duty that we as Masons have towards our Master Masons and that duty is graced with that special and sweet quality of affection, that duty is but a fragment of the greater duty we have towards all of creation. Affection aside, as a Mason we are bound by duty to the “common good.”

“To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the great aim we have in view.”

By “great aim” we are speaking of noble intention. It is not that everyone of us is endowed with sympathetic attitudes or empathy. But, knowing the varied fates and fortunes of those around us, it behooves us all to train in, stretch ourselves to experience, or at least acknowledge that even a glimmer of this intention expressed allows one to more effectively influence individuals and the common good.

Now I'll elaborate on this point both personally and philosophically.

When I first entered what was my first and to become my home Lodge, I was struck by an attitude of what in the Buddhist mind science that I practice is called a “Mahayana” attitude. “Maha” means “great.” “Yana” means “vehicle.” This “great vehicle” is, if you will, distinguished by its *aim*. This *aim* is rooted in empathy and a concern for others, with the goal of eliminating suffering.

One may assume that these qualities, empathy and concern for others, are obvious and that we should all agree upon them and support them in all our doings. But, according to the Buddhist tradition, most of us pay mere lip service. According to tradition, there are five families of beings, the first four being self-preserving and self-serving. Only the Mahayana family bears the qualities of genuine altruism whose intention is to exhibit empathy and concern for others. And, this family is the smallest in number. Mahayanists or, if you will, those who uphold a

“great aim,” as we see in our ritual, are a rare breed. As Masons, we should consider this most seriously, as it could well alter our approach towards prospects, and even to doing business within our Lodges.

Focusing on the first concern mentioned, “to sympathize with their misfortunes,” there is the empathic phrase, “There, but for the grace of God, go I.” This is a more detached understanding, well worth developing. But in the face of another’s misfortune, the “great aim” is to sympathetically strive to bring about, or support, a solution and to let the sufferer know that your care and concern is with them here and now. A drowning man does not need to know if you are feeling his pain and distress. He is just hoping that you care enough to throw him a rope!

“To compassionate their miseries...” is an odd but dynamic way of expressing the term, “compassionate.” Not only do our actions and words come from a passionate heart, that is with (“com”) them, but you are definitely—in this situation—empathically doing so. This phrasing makes me reflect more on the phrase of “standing witness,” which is more often than not what a person in a state of misery remembers in the presence of one who is just there for them, without any particular agenda.

How does one “restore peace to their troubled minds...”? Rarely is it that we accomplish this by “fixing” their problem. Having an understanding, standing witness to another, creates space, a supportive space for a person’s mind to relax, and thus be in a more peaceful state to discover within themselves the solutions that have thus far eluded them. This may require a change of circumstance, some assistance on your part or that of others. But, without a peaceful mind, problems have a greater propensity to return. As John Lennon sang, giving “peace a chance” is usually the first best step in sustainable solutions. It is, after all, the long-range goal of the “great aim we have in view.”

“On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections.”

Centuries ago, the great Buddhist teacher, Gampopa, once said “It is the sign of a superior man that he treats all with equanimity, yet still has a few good friends.”

In spite of the existential truth that we are all of one family in this creation, it is fanciful and unrealistic to think that everyone will like us or that we do or should like everyone. In our myriad of mind states and circumstances, it is noble if not virtuous to adopt the “great aim” that we endeavor to aid, assist, and relieve those who suffer wherever possible, regardless of whether they be friend, foe, or the multitude who we regard in either way. For, if we deny the absolute fact that we are connected to the high and the low, and only cater to those with whom we have a bond of affection, our partisan actions will lead to divisions and the many problems that self-serving interests will inevitably lead to in the future.

But, the sweetness of friendship?

As we trustingly arise, feel the arm of our guide and begin our first circumambulation of the Lodge, we hear “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

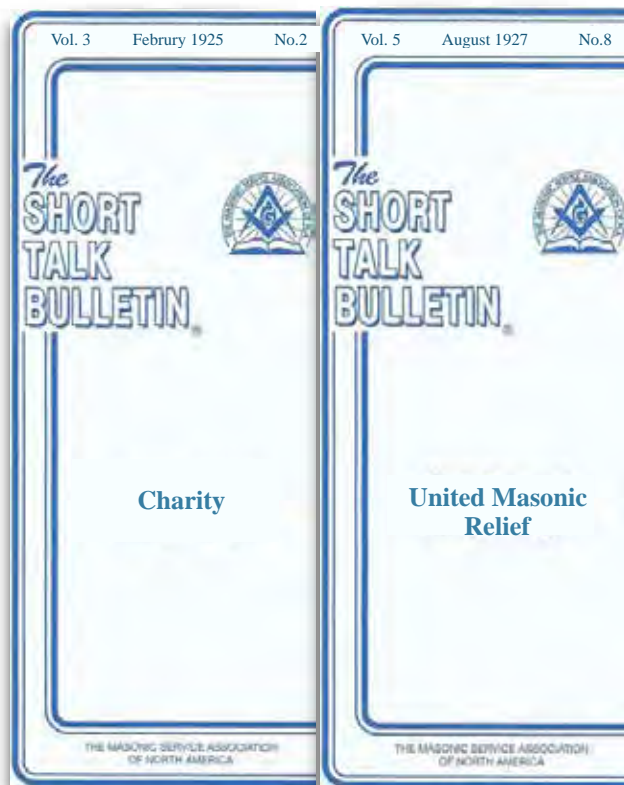
Holding steadfastly to this view, we should be wary of any smugness whereby we ignore, diminish, or abdicate what our “great aim” unconditionally, “on-the-level,” calls us to do: Relieve.

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MASONIC POP CULTURE

READ IT

Short Talk Bulletins on Relief



This month we recommend issues of *The Short Talk Bulletin* (STB) instead of a book. More than 20 of them address the many aspects of Masonic Relief. Our readers will find a list of these *Bulletins* on our website here: <https://www.theresearchlodge.com/short-talk-bulletins>—along with complete text of the two STBs pictured at left, made available courtesy of the Masonic Service Association of North America. Here are a few words about STBs excerpted in the pages of this *Fraternal Review*, along with titles and publication dates.

Page 9, the facing page: We provide some history of Masonic Charities in the U.S., and list many of their services. STBs quoted or paraphrased are: “Masonic Relief Association of the U.S. & Canada” (Jan. 1990), about services for traveling Masons; “United Masonic Relief” (Aug. 1927), about founding of the Masonic Service Association; and “Masonic Welfare Work with the Armed Forces of the United States” (Jan. 1941).

Page 11, Fragments—3rd item: Besides this brief excerpt from “Relief” (Dec. 1964), the author writes of fund raising by lodges, noting that a Mason’s donating of money to a Masonic Home or Hospital could best be followed by a visit to that institution. “Only such a visit will make relief a working doctrine for him.”

Pages 12-13: “The Rite of Destitution,” (Nov. 1923) by eloquent and prolific author Bro. Joseph Fort Newton, includes all but four paragraphs of this inspiring essay.

Page 16, Final Word: This excerpt is but a few lines from “Charity” (Feb. 1925), about “brotherly aid” among Masons who are “meeting on the level.” In just over five pages, the author emphasizes non-financial aspects of charity. He tells the story of how charity developed as the ancient Roman Empire expanded. He considers charitable behavior among modern Masons to include assisting each other in learning and understanding Masonic teachings, as illustrated in a



SEE IT

YouTube:
**Masonic Charitable
Foundation**
Numerous short videos

Many videos by this Relief organization are less than 5 minutes long. They report on fundraising and the wide range of services provided, with testimonials from recipients of their aid.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/MasonicCharitableFoundation>



HEAR IT

The Greatest of These
By Bro. Carl H. Claudy
Short Talk Bulletin
19 minutes, April 1937

Many *Short Talk Bulletins* have now been read and recorded as podcasts. This one discusses the third rung of Jacob’s Ladder, Charity, and explains why it is considered the greatest of the three virtues—Faith, Hope and Charity. <https://shorttalkbulletin.com/the-greatest-of-these-v15n4/>

MASONIC CHARITIES

BY C. DOUGLAS RUSSELL

Here is some historical context for the development of Masonic groups that assist brothers and their families—with examples of services provided in the jurisdictions where SCRL meets. —Ed

By the late 1800s, travel in the U.S. by land and sea was increasing. Frontier and seaport towns had been growing rapidly. It became apparent that a central point in the community should be established to assist sojourning or transient Masons and their families when they suffered some kind of misfortune. Masonic boards of relief, sometimes called “service bureaus,” were formed to provide that assistance. In 1896, the Masonic Relief Association of the United States and Canada was established “to centralize communication and activities for the relief of worthy Masons.” By 1990, the Association had the support of 42 grand lodges and regularly published a bulletin sent to over 14,000 lodge secretaries. The relief administered has now included hospital and nursing home visits, assistance with memorial services and burials, assisting grand jurisdictions in the distribution of benevolent funds, and assisting brothers who were victims of crimes while traveling.

The Los Angeles Masonic Service Bureau (LAMSB) was formed in 1881. Services listed on its website (<https://www.lamsb.org>) include: relieving the distress of Masons from other jurisdictions and their widows and orphans while residing in the Los Angeles area; making investigations requested by Lodges of this and other jurisdictions; visiting sick sojourners; and sponsoring an annual Grand Master’s breakfast in Southern California—the second-largest annual gathering of California Masons, after the Grand Lodge Annual Communication. Other services include staffing Child ID events; facilitating grand lodge resolution discussions; supporting Masonic Homes, Masonic youth orders, and the Midnight Mission (providing services to the homeless); maintaining a publication notifying lodges of local Masonic community service events; and assisting local lodges with strategic planning.

The Masonic Service Association of North America (MSANA) was originally named the “Masonic Service Association,” founded at the end of World War I, after Masons found themselves helpless to provide aid to brothers in uniform serving overseas. The U.S. Department of War saw the Masonic fraternity as disjointed, with no central coordinating body for charitable work, and would not issue separate permits to jurisdictions in 49 states. In 1918-1919, heads of grand lodges and appendant bodies formed MSANA, which has since provided a wide range of services at the national level, both for our military and for disaster relief after major hurricanes, floods and fires. They meet with grand masters whose jurisdictions are suffering and assist with fundraising and coordination of services. The *Short Talk Bulletin* “Relief” (Aug. 1927) has an itemized list of contributions from Masonic bodies all over the U.S. totaling nearly \$500,000 for brothers and their families affected by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 that devastated 27,000 square miles over four southern states.

Besides disaster relief, MSANA has continued to provide services to grand lodges that they could not provide as easily individually. Their programs include a Masonic Information Center and Hospital Visitation Program. They have been a leader in Masonic education, distributing their monthly *Short Talk Bulletin* and other materials nationwide since 1923. For more information, see <https://www.msana.com>.

Masonic organizations in the U.S. raise more than \$2.6 million a day for charity, including support for public education, and for 22 Shriners Hospitals providing care for needy children regardless of their ability to pay. This author is a member of lodges in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California Masons, and has seen members doing community service projects as a group, such as preparing care packages for those in the military stationed overseas; serving meals to the homeless during the holidays; donating books and supplies for elementary school classrooms; and hosting dinners honoring local community leaders and first responders. The many charitable programs of the Grand Lodge of California have included fundraising to aid Masons suffering hardships during the Covid-19 pandemic; donating \$1.2 million in a recent three-year period to support literacy among elementary school children; and supporting Masonic Homes of California that provide a broad range of social services programs, including residential senior communities for Masons.



SYMBOLGY

The Indissoluble Chain

By John L. Cooper, III, PGM, California

"To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection."

In the Lecture of the First Degree of Masonry we encounter for the first time the symbol of the *chain*. The *chain* is one of the more neglected symbols of Masonry, but that should not be so. It is, in fact, one of the more powerful symbols through which Masonry teaches an important lesson. It actually has many meanings in Masonry, but in this context, it is associated with "a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons." In order to truly understand our obligation to *relieve the distressed* we need to understand the meaning of the Masonic "chain."

The first, and perhaps the most easily understood aspect of this symbol, is that a chain consists of the separate links of which it is composed. In the lecture, the second of the three principal tenets of Freemasonry, Relief, follows that of Brotherly Love, which is the first. The placement is purposeful. Without understanding the dimension of brotherly love, a Mason would have little concept of the chain which links him to other Masons. The "chain" of Freemasonry is not the chain of the prisoner nor of the slave; it is the voluntary assuming of a link in the chain of brotherhood, which he has promised to support of his "own free will and accord." The chain which binds him to his brethren will only be broken by death, but it is still voluntary. It is this "brotherly love" to which the "indissoluble chain of sincere affection" refers. The obligation to relieve the distressed grows out of the Mason's understanding of this "brotherly love," which encompasses not only other Masons, but their families and—by extension—any who are in need.

There is, however, a deeper symbolism of the chain within Freemasonry. According to some Masonic writers, it is associated with the "silver cord" of life itself, and with the Cabletow, another symbol of brotherhood. In the Masonic Memorial Service, we make reference to the fact that death has "loosed" the silver cord. We also make reference to the fact that a link in the "chain" binding a Mason to his brethren has been broken. That "lost link" is related to "relief" because, having passed beyond this earthly life, the "chain of sincere affection" has been broken, and this has, in turn, altered forever the possibility of the brother continuing to extend relief to others. Or has it? The very nature of a chain is that broken links can be, and are, replaced. Every new Mason who assumes his Obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason becomes a new link in the Masonic chain. The link is broken, but the chain of brotherhood is not. In fact, we explain this to the candidate when we inform him that "the greatest of these is charity ... [for] charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity." Indeed it does. The ability to extend relief does not therefore cease with our individual ability to extend it, but rather continues because the chain itself is renewed through the addition of new links in it.

In some times and in some places, Masons have assembled around the Altar at the closing of the lodge and joined hands in a symbolic representation of this "chain of sincere affection." It is a powerful symbol that, when we leave the lodge, and "return to our respective places of abode," as the ritual says, we will shortly return to the world where Freemasonry will be practiced by our individual efforts. The chain is not broken, even though we drop hands with a brother, because the chain which binds us together can never be broken, until death brings about the final separation. But we are reminded, upon leaving the lodge, that we have a duty to perform. We are to perform that duty which is incumbent upon all men—but particularly upon Masons. From this understanding have arisen the great Masonic charities with which the world is familiar. We have built homes for the aged and infirm amongst us; we have offered medical services to children in need; we have given scholarships so that young people may learn; and we have done much, much more. We demonstrate that *relief* is not an idle principle for Masons. It is one of the three *essential* characteristics of a Mason.

May the symbol of the chain remain a powerful and important one in our understanding of Freemasonry!

FRAGMENTS

While it happens that now and then some Brother, through misfortune and no fault of his own, becomes more or less incapacitated and unable to support himself and his family, and under such circumstances is cared for by his Lodge or the Masonic Home, such cases are the exception rather than the rule and are not what is meant by the tenet Relief. The qualifications required of our petitioners for entrance into the Craft are such as are likely to exclude the type of man who, through indolence or vice, may be expected to lapse into poverty.

Masonic Relief takes it for granted that any man, no matter how industrious or frugal he may be, may through sudden misfortune, or other conditions over which he has no control, find himself in temporary need of a helping hand. To extend to him such a helping hand is not what is generally described as charity, but is one of the natural and inevitable acts of Brotherhood. Any possible conception of Brotherhood must, in the very nature of the case, include as part of itself this willingness to give help, aid and assistance. Thus Relief, as Masonically understood, is in strict truth a Tenet. If we are going to have Brotherhood at all, we shall expect this free and cordial spirit of helpfulness to be a part of it.

[“The Tenets of Masonry,” *Grand Lodge of Scotland Yearbook*, 1964, published online here: <https://www.facebook.com/GrandLodgeScotland/posts/the-tenets-of-freemasonry-brotherly-love-relief-and-truth-the-principal-or-chief-/2007784835973754/>, dated November 19, 2018, accessed on 3/27/2021.]

The Charity taught in Lodge is the charity of thought, the charity of the giving of self, and “like its sister mercy, blesses him who gives as well as him who receives.” It is a virtue “which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason’s heart.” It is something personal, transmitted from person to person, and in no way concerned with the dispensing of financial aid. It consists of a noble love for fellow man, and a desire to improve all mankind. It flows continuously, forever, incited not by a need but by a goal.

It is a spiritual activity of the Soul, which results in the brotherly hand laid upon a bowed shoulder, in a tear dropped in sympathy, in a joyous letter of sincere congratulation. It overlooks the brother’s faults, closes its ears against slanderous reports, admonishes the falling brother and locks his sins and follies in its breast.

It is this Charity, synonymous with love, and not concerned with the act of giving physical relief, that “shall cover the multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8). For a charitably disposed Mason will cover up and hide his brother’s faults, and at the worst will put a charitable construction upon what may be doubtful. In conclusion, let it be stated again that it is necessary to differentiate true Charity—or love—from the vanity which can be and frequently is associated with relief and the box of benevolence.

[Dr. George H.T. French, “Charity, Attributes of Charity,” *The Texas Freemason*, April 1974, Vol. XII, No. 4, 7-8.]

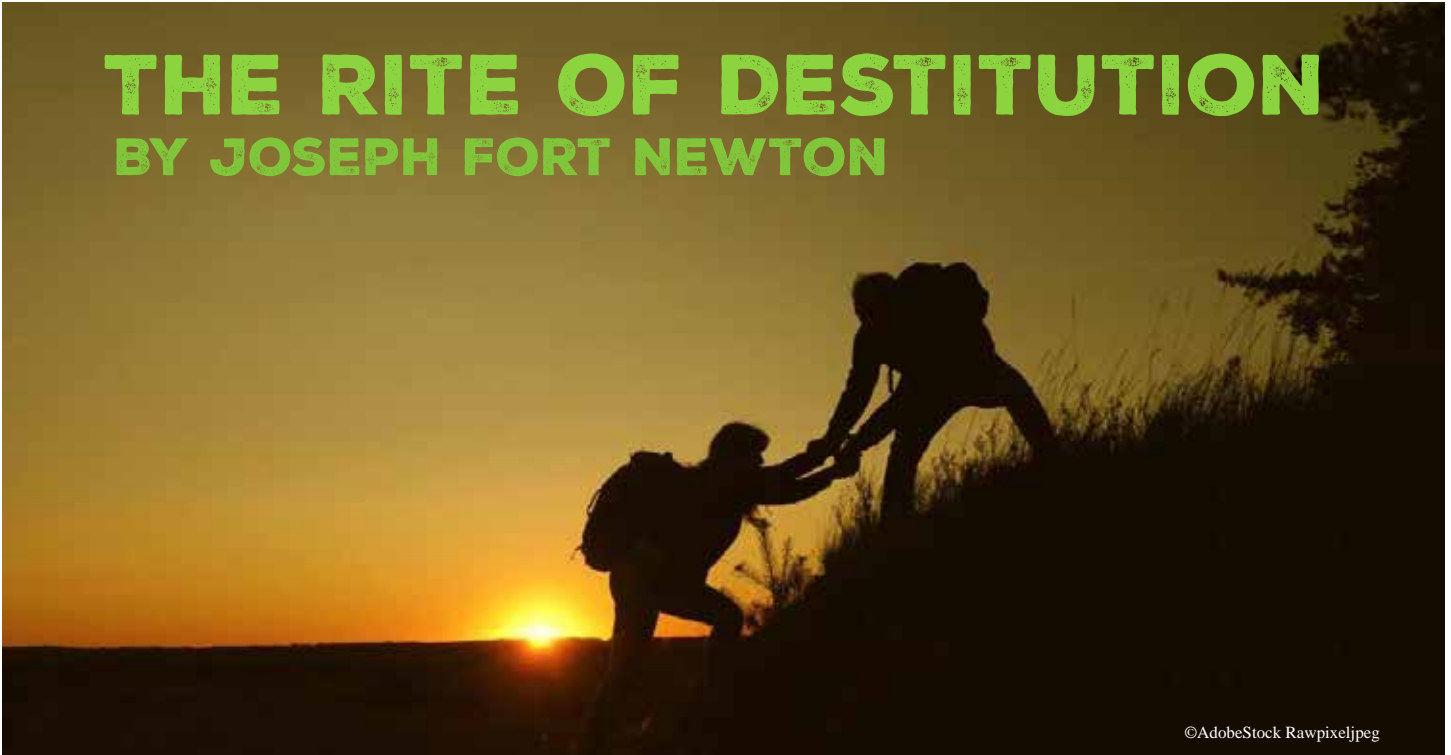
Destitution ... may be a matter of the spirit as well as of the pocket. Everyone is challenged much more frequently to give comfort, encouragement, hope, kindness, patience, praise, sympathy, and understanding than to contribute money to alleviate distress. ... Once a Mason has really trained himself to regard every man as his brother, it becomes natural for him to feel the impulses that prompt him to relieve the distressed, whether they suffer physical wants, fears, sorrows, wrongs, or bitter grief. ...

The monitorial lecture concludes its description of this subject with a statement that makes relief more than a moral obligation incumbent upon Masons; it lifts the idea to the level of a universal spiritual principle: “To restore peace to troubled minds is the great aim we have in view.” That requires more than a piece of silver in the collection box and more than a check for a charitable institution. That requires an individual commitment to a way of thinking and feeling that will affect a man’s personal relationships with every other human being, because every man has some need that requires love and understanding.

[Conrad Hahn, “Relief,” *The Short Talk Bulletins III*, Volume 42, Number 12, December 1964. (Burtonsville, MD: The Masonic Service Association of North America, 2015), S. Brent Morris, Ed., 620-623.]

THE RITE OF DESTITUTION

BY JOSEPH FORT NEWTON



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A rite is an “act of performing divine or solemn service, as established by law, precept or custom; ... a ceremony; as the rites of Freemasonry.” ... Several rites are said to be performed in Masonic ritual work, e.g., the rite of lustration (purification), of circumambulation, discalceation (uncovering the feet when approaching holy ground), investiture (clothing—with an apron), and destitution. “Several of these rites may be combined to form the rite of initiation or the Entered Apprentice rite.”¹

Nothing in Freemasonry is more beautiful in form or more eloquent in meaning than the First Degree. Its simplicity and dignity, its blend of solemnity and surprise, as well as its beauty of moral truth, mark it as a little masterpiece. Nowhere may one hope to find a nobler appeal to the native nobilities of a man. What we get out of Freemasonry, as of anything else, depends upon our capacity, and our response to its appeal; but it is hard to see how any man can receive the First Degree and pass out of the lodge room quite the same man as when he entered it. ...

Like every other incident of initiation, it is in the light of the larger meanings of Freemasonry that we must interpret the Rite of Destitution. At a certain point in his progress every man is asked for a token of a certain kind, to be laid up in the archives of the lodge as a memorial of his initiation. If he is “duly and truly prepared” he finds himself unable to grant the request. Then, in one swift and searching moment, he realizes—perhaps for the first time in his life—what it means for a man to be actually destitute. For one impressive instant, in which many emotions mingle, he is made to feel the bewilderment, if not the humiliation, which besets one who is deprived of the physical necessities of life upon which, far more than we have been wont to admit, both

depend. Then, by a surprise as sudden as before, and in a manner never to be forgotten, the lesson of the Golden Rule is taught—the duty of man to his fellow in dire need. It is not left to the imagination, since the initiate is actually put into the place of the man who asks his aid, making his duty more real and vivid.

At first sight it may seem to some that the lesson is marred by the limitations and qualifications which follow; but that is only seeming. Freemasons are under all the obligations of humanity, the most primary of which is to succor their fellow men in desperate plight. As Mohammed long ago said, the end of the world has come when man will not help man. But we are under special obligations to our brethren of the Craft, as much by the promptings of our hearts as by the vows we have taken. Such a principle, so far from being narrow and selfish, has the endorsement of the Apostle Paul in his exhortations to the early Christian community. In the Epistle to the Galatians we read: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” It is only another way of saying that “charity begins at home,” and for Masons the home is the lodge.

So, then, the destitute to which this Rite refers, and whose distress the initiate is under vows to relieve, as his ability may permit, are a definite and specific class. They

are not to be confused with those who are poverty-stricken by reason of criminal tendencies or inherent laziness. That is another problem, in the solution of which Masons will have their share and do their part—a very dark problem, too, which asks for both patience and wisdom. No, the needy which this Rite requires that we aid are “all poor, distressed, worthy Masons, their widows and orphans”; that is, those who are destitute through no fault of their own, but as the result of untoward circumstance. They are those who, through accident, disease or disaster, have become unable, however willing and eager, to meet their obligations. Such are deserving of charity in its true Masonic sense, not only in the form of financial relief, but also in the form of companionship, sympathy and love. If we are bidden to be on our guard against impostors, who would use Masonry for their own ends, where there is real need our duty is limited only by our ability to help, without injury to those nearest to us.

A church, if it be worthy of the name, opens its doors to all kinds and conditions of folk, rich and poor alike, the learned and the unlearned. But a lodge of Masons is different, alike in purpose and function. It is made up of picked men, selected from among many, and united for unique ends. No man ought to be allowed to enter the Order unless he is equal to its demands, financially as well as mentally and morally, able to pay its fees and dues, and to do his part in its work of relief. Yet no set of men, however intelligent and strong, are exempt from the vicissitudes and tragedies of life. Take, for example, Anthony Sayer, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. Towards the end of his life he met with such reverses that he became tiler of Old King’s Arms Lodge, No. 28, and it is recorded that he was assisted “out of the box of this Society.” Such a misfortune, or something worse, may overtake any one of us, without warning or resource.

Disasters of the most appalling kind befall men every day, leaving them broken and helpless. How often have we seen a noble and able man suddenly smitten down in mid-life, stripped not only of his savings but of his power to earn, as the result of some blow no mortal wit could avert. There he lies, shunted out of active life when most needed and most able and willing to serve. Life may any day turn Ruffian and strike one of us such a blow, disaster following fast and following faster, until we are at its mercy. It is to such experiences that the Rite of Destitution has reference, pledging us to aid as individuals and as lodges; and we have a right to be proud that our Craft does not fail in the doing of good. It is rich in benevolence, and it knows how to hide its labors under the cover of secrecy, using its privacy to shield itself and those whom it aids.

Yet we are very apt, especially in large lodges, or in the crowded solitude of great cities, to lose the personal touch, and let our charity fall to the level of a cold, distant almsgiving. When this is so charity becomes a mere perfunctory obligation, and a lodge has been known to vote ten dollars for the relief of others and fifty dollars for its own entertainment! There is a Russian story in which a poor man asked aid of another as poor as himself: “Brother, I have no money to give you, but let me give you my hand,” was the reply. “Yes, give me your hand, for that, also, is a gift more

“Freemasons are under all the obligations of humanity, the most primary of which is to succor their fellow men in desperate plight.”

needed than all others,” said the first; and the two forlorn men clasped hands in a common need and pathos. There was more real charity in that scene than in many a munificent donation made from a sense of duty or pride.

Indeed, we have so long linked charity with the giving of money that the word has well nigh lost its real meaning. In his sublime hymn in praise of charity, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, St. Paul does not mention money at all, except to say “and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” Which implies that a man may give all the money he possesses and yet fail of that Divine grace of Charity. Money has its place and value, but it is not everything, much less the sum of our duty, and there are many things it cannot do. A great editor sent the following greeting at the New Year:

“Here is hoping that in the New Year there will be nothing the matter with you that money cannot cure. For the rest, the law and the prophets contain no word of better rule for the health of the soul than the adjuration: Hope thou a little, fear not at all, and love as much as you can.”

Surely it was a good and wise wish, if we think of it, because the things which money cannot cure are the ills of the spirit, the sickness of the heart, and the dreary, dull pain of waiting for those who return no more. There are hungers which gold cannot satisfy, and blinding bereavements from which it offers no shelter. There are times when a hand laid upon the shoulder, “in a friendly sort of way,” is worth more than all the money on earth. Many a young man fails, or makes a bad mistake, for lack of a brotherly hand which might have held him up, or guided him into a wiser way.

The Rite of Destitution! Yes, indeed; but a man may have all the money he needs, and yet be destitute of faith, of hope, of courage; and it is our duty to share our faith and courage with him.

¹ Paraphrased and quoted from Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia*. (Richmond, VA: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., Inc., 1961, 1996), 525.]

[Joseph Fort Newton, “The Rite of Destitution,” *The Short Talk Bulletins I*, Volume 1, Number 11, November 1923. (Burtonsville, MD: The Masonic Service Association of North America, 2013), S. Brent Morris, Ed., 44-46.]

The Ladder of Relief: A Contemplation on Acting in Truth and Brotherly Love

By C.R. “Chuck” Dunning, Jr.

The idea of this Principal Tenet, Relief, seems fairly simple—we should help others when we see that they are overburdened, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. Yet, if we contemplate this idea, we can find that there is much more.

The Principal Tenets can be categorized according to three capacities of the human being: (1) the perceptual, (2) the behavioral, and (3) the emotional. The perceptual capacity includes not only the ability to use our senses, but also our intellect in recognizing what we sense, and is therefore most aligned with Truth. The behavioral capacity accounts for what we do, with all its elements of preparation, execution, and termination, which naturally corresponds with Relief. The emotional capacity accounts for the psychophysiological energies that move us to respond to our perceptions, such as feelings of attraction, repulsion, affection, animosity, joy, sadness, peace, anger, and so on. Brotherly Love associates with this capacity. It is important to note that these capacities and tenets are interrelated; they are constantly affecting each other and one cannot be fully understood without reference to the others. For example, while Brotherly Love may be most immediately experienced through emotions like affection, it also has behavioral and perceptual aspects.

To explore their interconnectedness, let us add a useful element of imagery to this contemplation, visualizing the Principal Tenets and corresponding capacities as the parts of a ladder. The two rails are Truth/perception on one side, and Brotherly Love/emotion on the other, with Relief/behavior being the rungs between them. The rails provide direction while the rungs connect them and offer a path of

movement between them. As with an actual ladder, the strength, stability, and utility of this metaphorical ladder depends on each rail and rung being sound and securely connected.

The perceptual rail of Truth represents the facts of the situation in which we consider offering Relief to another. It includes all the contributing factors, possibilities of what can be done, and the potential consequences of our actions or inaction. Truth also encompasses the thoughts and feelings of the person we intend to help, and the strengths and weaknesses of our own abilities and resources.

The emotional rail of Brotherly Love corresponds to our feelings of care, concern, and the desire to help. It also consists of empathy, the ability to feel with the person we wish to assist. The intensity of feelings—the other’s as well as our own—is relevant because it relates to the sense of urgency.

The behavioral rungs of ascent in performing Relief are not only about what we physically do, such as walking, shaking a hand, giving a hug, lifting, typing, listening, or speaking. In this context, behavior also includes the internal actions of managing our thoughts and feelings, integrating our perceptions and our emotions, and making the decisions that lead to other actions.

Because Relief is behavioral, and wise behavior is virtuous, we now consider the rungs of Relief in correlation with the Four Cardinal and Three Theological Virtues. While this correlation could be arranged in various ways, the following set has a logical sequence.

1. Faith is suggested as the first rung because, in its

most basic sense, it is the trust needed to take any meaningful action in life. With regard to Relief, Faith is trust in ourselves, in the truthfulness of our perceptions, in the loving nature of our desires, and in our abilities to do something good. It is also trust in the blessings and assistance of Deity. This first step requires our faith-fullness to act on our beliefs and values, or to “walk the walk, not just talk the talk.”

2. Justice is not simply law and order, not simply about punishments to fit crimes. Justice is also about the basic level of care and concern for all others that makes for good relationships and a good society. This virtue serves the principle that it is simply inhumane, or unjust, to ignore another’s suffering. In Relief, Justice therefore entails acting not only with Faith, but also with real motivation to be actively caring, even if it is inconvenient or not personally profitable.

3. Prudence is necessary to provide Relief wisely. It is comprehending the pertinent circumstances as clearly as possible, avoiding assumptions, and exercising forethought in determining what is and is not genuinely helpful. This virtue therefore requires thoughtful communication, especially with the one to whom we offer Relief. While Prudence generally encourages circumspection, it also accounts for urgency and makes appropriate adjustments in cautiousness versus risk-taking.

4. Hope, based on prudent consideration, is an optimistic vision for a beneficial outcome from our efforts. It provides an inspiring reference point, a goal to guide one’s actions. Hope also helps sustain and renew our motivation for Relief. Furthermore, Hope is infectious and can lift the spirits of those we wish to serve and help rally others to our cause.

5. Fortitude is the commitment and perseverance necessary to follow through and keep working toward fulfillment of our Hope, even when things are more laborious, complicated, or time-consuming than expected. It is about continuing to serve one’s vision despite resistance or unforeseen obstacles. Rather than always overpowering problems, Fortitude is also adaptable in



finding skillful methods to make progress in providing Relief.

6. Temperance means exercising moderation, avoiding doing too much or too little. It also promotes consistency, maintaining a steady and stable effort. The convictions of Faith, the motivation of Justice, the intentions of Prudence, the vision of Hope, and the zeal of Fortitude can all combine to make us very passionate in performing Relief. Yet, even our most positive passions must be kept within due bounds lest they become either ineffectual or harmful. Among other things, Temperance helps keep the “cure” of Relief from being worse than the “disease.”

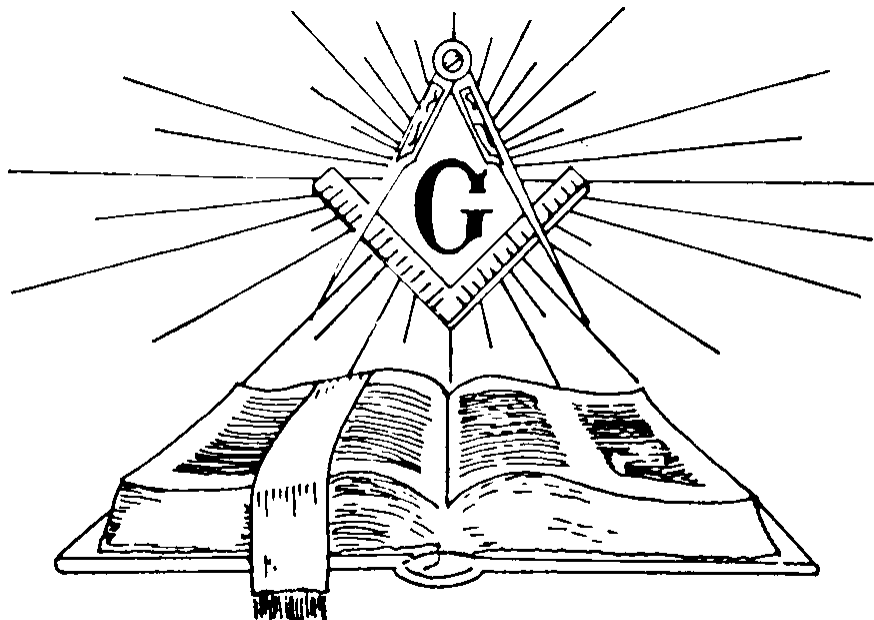
7. Charity, in its theological meaning, is unconditional universal love. It is love for others that reflects and participates in all-encompassing Divine Love, and it is also love for God with all that we are. It is a whole and complete love, and every step along the way of Relief, every actualized virtue, is part of it. Thus, Charity is the fulfillment of Relief. With such a lofty definition, it is apparent that Charity is more of an aspiration than a final destination. It is a light constantly showing us the way to greater integration of Truth and Brotherly Love in all that we do, and thereby making Relief a more present reality among us.

FINAL WORD

Charity, or brotherly aid, ... as applied to Freemasonry, is different from the usual and accepted meaning. All true Masons meet upon the same level, regardless of wealth or station. In giving assistance we strive to avoid the too common error of considering charity only as ... [donating money] to assist the poor and unfortunate. ... Its Masonic application is nobler and more extensive. We are taught not only to relieve a brother's material wants, the cry of hunger, etc., but to [engage in] fellowship with him upon our own level, stripped of worldly titles and honors. When we thus appeal to him, giving spiritual advice, lifting him up morally and spiritually with no sense of humiliation to him, we set him free from his passion and wants. To such charity there is a reciprocity rich in brotherly love and sincere appreciation.

[Excerpted & paraphrased from Norman B. Hickox, "Charity," *The Short Talk Bulletins I*, Volume 3, Number 2, Feb. 1925. (Burtonsville, MD: The Masonic Service Association of North America, 2013), S. Brent Morris, Ed., 104-106.]

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December Dinner Menu



Dinner before the stated meeting on Monday, January 3, 2022 will be at the El Sabor restaurant in the Alley at DeVargas Mall at 5:20 PM.



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What is the purpose of Freemasonry?

“To admit, make and pass Freemasons according to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Grand Lodge. To advance the moral and social interests of its membership; to foster good citizenship, honest industry and upright living; to cultivate the exercise of charity in its best and broadest sense; to assist the widows and orphans of its deceased members; to stimulate friendship, harmony and Brotherly love and generally to promote, in its own way, the happiness of mankind — it is a fraternity of good men, linked together by honorable and indissoluble bonds, to accomplish these noble purposes, eschewing all interests in factional politics and sectarian religion and free from the dictation of both.”

For more information about Masonry:

- ☐ Call the Lodge at 982-0971
- ☐ Stop by the Lodge
- ☐ Visit our website @ www.montezumalodge.org
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