

March 1, 2007

A KNIGHT MAY NOT ALSO BE A MASON

For many years now, for various reasons, there has been confusion among Catholics regarding Catholic laymen becoming members of a Masonic organization. It should first be noted that Masons (also known as Freemasons), like the Knights of Columbus, have a proud history of fraternalism within its membership as well as service to the community. It is encouraging to note that Knights and Masons sometimes congregate at a joint function, such as a meal to enjoy each other's company. This is a wonderful development in recent years and certainly encourages tolerance amongst fraternal organizations and Christian religions.

There are many elements of concern, however for Catholics to be affiliated with Masons or to become members. The reasons, according to the Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, published April 19, 1985, include the following:

“Masonry's regard for God. The Masonic God is a neutral ‘Great Architect of the Universe,’ not the personal God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, nor the Father of Jesus. In Masonry, man's "relationship with God is relegated to a position that is even pre-deistic.’

“Masonry's regard for Jesus Christ. Masonry does not recognize Jesus' special spiritual claims. It honors Jesus as it honors Socrates, Buddha or Mohammed.

“Masonry's regard for truth. ‘The possibility of an objective knowledge of truth is denied by Masons.... The relativity of every truth represents the basis of Freemasonry.’ There can be, therefore, for the Masons, neither divine Revelation nor any dogmatic formulation of truth.

“Masonry's regard for religion. Masonry looks upon all religions as competitive attempts to explain the truth about God, who is, in the final analysis, unattainable. Human nature and reason alone should be the sole guides of men's actions. As such, for a professing Christian, Masonry represents a retreat from the Gospel of Christ. “However, as mentioned above, Freemasonry itself is a naturalistic religion that sees itself as **the** universal religion. It denies anything has been taught by God but claims it has the superior path to spiritual advancement and the superior morality.

“Masonry's regard for Christianity. Christianity is simply another of the dozens of sects whose ‘particular opinions’ have divided mankind over the ages. Masonry explicitly maintains that Christianity is a derivative of the primitive astral religion of the Babylonians and the Sumerians. There is no room in Masonry for a God Who reveals Himself.

“Masonry's concept of salvation. Masonic ritual words and symbols give the impression that an objective transformation of man is carried out under the symbolic rites. This impression ‘has all the character of a form of competition with his sacramental transformation.... Perfection is...so separated from grace that there is no space left for man's justification according to the Christian conception.’

“Masonry's use of oaths. In an oath required of a Master Mason, the candidate solemnly swears to keep Masonic secrets and do or not do various things on penalty of being

killed, having his body severed in two, and then having his bowels removed, burned to ashes and scattered to the winds.”

Indeed, Pope Benedict himself, in his role as Prefect on behalf of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, declared the following on November 26, 1983:

“...Therefore the Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic associations 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 enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion...”

It is, then, not surprising that the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus has maintained that its members may not also be members of a Masonic organization. It is worth noting that there may indeed exist Knights in subordinate councils within Iowa who are also Masons. If this fact is discovered, the Grand Knight should be notified who should then, in turn, notify the offending Knight that his Masonic membership is forbidden under the laws of our Order. This Knight should be given a reasonable period of time to resign his Masonic membership. Notification of the offense should carefully occur, with consultation from the Local Chaplain and State Chaplain, if necessary, in order to (a) ensure that the rules of our Order are kept, and (b) make all attempts to allow the brother Knight to rectify the situation and, hopefully, maintain his membership in the Knights of Columbus.

This in no way detracts from the good deeds performed for and within our communities by Masonic organizations. It simply and clearly delineates the difference between practical Catholic gentlemen in union with the Holy See and pagan convictions from an earlier era.

Vivat Jesus!

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