



## **ANTI-MASONRY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: Integralisms, Business and Media**

**paper delivered at the Second Regular Meeting *May 22, 2004*  
by R.W. Bro. Bruno Gazzo PAGM**

W.M. Quatuor Coronati Lodge #112 for the years 2002-2004

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The Master of a Lodge - who, when addressed, is given the honorific title of "Worshipful" - presides over the meeting of Masons.

The term is one of respect and has nothing whatsoever to do with "worshipping" of an individual. It is an ancient word usage with a meaning similar to the honorific "Your Honour". The use of the word "worshipful" continues today in titles as "The Worshipful Lord Mayor of London" - who is not worshipped in the traditional sense nor is he necessarily a secular Lord - and is certainly not a Lord in a religious sense by anyone's stretch of imagination.

Religious Intolerants try to make much out of the title "Worshipful" arguing in turn that Masons:

are required to do the Master's bidding in all things;  
are worshipping a man rather than Jesus;  
or/and are part of some sort of cult where a "worshipful master" presides.

On masonicinfo.com you read: "Masons are required to obey the Master of a Lodge as much as but no more than any member of any voluntary association or organization is required to obey the President of that organization. There is nothing more and nothing less involved. Can the President of the local Rotary club direct how you should live your daily life? Of course not - and neither can the Master of a Lodge! Would he compel you to do anything against your religious beliefs or political intentions? Hardly...."

What about that claim that Masons are "worshipping" a man rather than Jesus - as some of our more dogmatic 'religious intolerants' would assert? Just as you would not worship the president of your company, neither would any Mason "worship" the person who is essentially the 'president' of his lodge. Rationally considered, it is a total non-issue. It is, however, one of the hooks that religious intolerants use in order to damage Freemasonry's reputation.

After a year (or perhaps two) the Master leaves the office and a replacement is elected, generally by secret ballot, from amongst the membership. In a small Lodge after a few years all the members held the charge of Master. According to religious fundamentalist we should be all worshipful and meantime worshipping and worshipped. It is ridiculous.

And it is ridiculous to hear on History Channel History's Mysteries presentation entitled The Secret Brotherhood of Freemasons:

...."The symbolism of Freemasonry which Pike declared was to be revealed only to the highest level Masons was explained in 1959 by Rev. E. Cahill in Freemasonry and the Anti-Christian Movement".

"Most of the Masonic symbolism, in its original and proper meaning, refers primarily to the Solar and Phallic worship. This fact is testified to by the great authorities of Anglo-American Freemasonry — Pike, Mackey, Thomas Webb Smith, William Preston, Hutcheson, etc. Jean B. Marie Ragon, the 'Sacred author' adds his testimony to that of the Anglo-American writers. Ragon expressly says that the Masonic god is the God of the Pyramids, thus identifying the Masonic cult with the religion of the ancient Egyptians"....

"According to the vast majority of the great Masonic authors, the Masonic secret cult is derived from the ancient 'mysteries' of India, Egypt, Persia, Greece. These mysteries are nothing more or less than those obscene and indescribable forms of worship, in which the generative process of nature, symbolized by the human organs of reproduction, was the object of licentious homage. This worship is the real pivot of the Masonic religion, the centre of Masonic ritual and symbolism. The Masonic deity, called the Great Architect is closely connected with the most hideous and degraded of the pre-Christian cults, one of which is commonly believed to betray the direct and immediate influence of the Evil One....."

## Religious Integralism

If the success of an organization can be judged by the opposition to its existence, Freemasonry began as a successful institution long before its formal launch. In 1698, nearly two decades before the Grand Lodge was formed, a pamphlet was distributed warning Londoners..of the Mischiefs and Evils practised in the sight of God by those called Free Masons...They are the Anti Christ....

A clear example of Anti-Masonry founded on religious basis is The New Catholic Encyclopaedia. NCE was first published in 1967 as an update to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, which first appeared in 1907 in the United States. Four supplements to NCE have been published over the intervening years, the latest in 2002. Not simply an encyclopaedia of Catholicism, although it certainly refers to the Catholic doctrine and the history of the Church, NCE includes information about persons, institutions, cultural phenomena, religions, philosophies, and social movements that have affected the Catholic Church from within and without.

At Volume 6 pages 132 through 139 inclusive we read:

"Freemasonry is a politically powerful financial organization operating under the guise of an all encompassing religion, generally open, at least at some levels, to everyone but atheists. Their goal is the domination of the world from a deistic perspective. Freemason's concern for morality is focused in relationship to their own membership, not upon morality in the world. While they allow membership to those who have belief systems that recognize the existence of a god or god's ranging from the Christian universal creator, most lodges will not allow the name of any god to be mentioned at meetings....."

"....Their goal, world domination, is sought through control of currency, through control of major corporations including banking, media, entertainment and communications, through control of educators and textbooks, and most importantly the infiltration of religions....."

Attacks to Freemasonry come not only from religious fundamentalists but also from the "official" Christian Churches.

In another article from the New Catholic Encyclopaedia with the Imprimatur of Patrick A. O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington, on August 5, 1966, we read:

"....Freemasonry is the largest worldwide secret society. .... Freemasonry displays all the elements of religion, and as such it becomes a rival to the religion of the Gospel. It includes temples and altars, prayers, a moral code, worship, vestments, feast days, the promise of reward or punishment in the afterlife, a hierarchy, and initiation and burial rites. .... The Masonic candidate for the entered apprentice degree seeks "light" when he enters the lodge room. He is assured that the Masonic lodge will provide the light of spiritual instruction that he could not receive in the Church. He is told that if he lives and dies according to Masonic principles he will reach the haven of the celestial lodge."

On December 2002 the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England R.A.H. Morrow writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury:

"Dear Archbishop

I write in response to the reports in The Independent newspaper of your views on Freemasonry.

According to the reports:

- a) you have doubts on the compatibility of Freemasonry with Christianity and believe that elements of the ritual may have a Satanic basis
- b) you believe Freemasonry to be both a secret society and a self-serving network
- c) you have in the past not appointed to sensitive senior posts candidates who are Freemasons and intend to continue that practice.

For nearly 300 years Freemasonry has existed in an organised way in England and Wales. During that period hundreds of thousands of committed Christians (clergy and laity) have found no incompatibility between their Christian faith and the principles and practices of Freemasonry. Indeed many have testified that their membership of Freemasonry has strengthened their faith and, in some cases, brought them back into active church membership.

The prime and inalienable qualification for admission into Freemasonry is a belief in God. An individual's religion is a matter for his conscience, and Freemasonry will not interfere in or in any way comment on religious matters. As a result our membership encompasses Christians of all denominations, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who meet together in harmony, knowing that their religions differ but not allowing those differences to come between them on Masonic occasions.

The suggestion that Freemasonry is "Satanically inspired" in its rituals would be risible were it not for the fact that it questions the basis of the faiths of over 300,000 Freemasons under the United Grand Lodge of England, whatever their religion may be. Even a small amount of elementary research would have shown how nonsensical this dreadful assertion is, and would have enabled you to avoid giving deep and gratuitous offence to so many who are encouraged in every form of Freemasonry to be true to their God above all other considerations.

As for the claim that Freemasonry is a "secret organisation", it must surely be a very peculiar "secret" society which makes its rules and aims available to the public; publishes annual lists of its national and local leaders together with the dates and places of meeting of all of its units; opens its national headquarters to the general public on a daily basis; maintains national and local web sites on the Internet; gives regular briefings to the media; and provides spokesmen to speak anywhere about its nature and activities. Each Freemason is at perfect liberty to tell whomsoever he pleases that he is a Freemason. Indeed Freemasonry is one of the few organisations to have been specifically declared not to be a secret society. In July 2001 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that (a) Freemasonry was neither a secret, criminal nor an illegal organisation, and (b) that in making appointments or promotions it is illegal to discriminate against a candidate simply because he is a Freemason.

Rather than being a self-serving network, the opposite is true. On at least six occasions during the process of becoming a Freemason the new member is told that it is contrary to our principles and rules to use his membership to gain any form of advantage for himself or anyone else. Any attempt to do so will result in disciplinary proceedings, with sanctions running from admonition to irrevocable expulsion.

I have enclosed two booklets and some leaflets, which explain the background to Freemasonry and how it relates to society in general. The booklet "Your Questions Answered" deals in particular with the myths which surround Freemasonry.

I also extend to you an invitation to meet privately with some senior Freemasons to discuss at the true source any doubts you may have, in preference to simply putting your faith in secondary and unreliable information. Your three immediate predecessors each came here for lunch and found it an interesting, stimulating and enjoyable experience. I realise that you have much to consider at the present, and that it may not be convenient to accept this invitation immediately. I trust that you will permit me to write to you again after your Enthronement to reaffirm our wish to welcome you here and show that your doubts about Freemasonry have no justification in fact.

Yours sincerely  
R A H Morrow  
Grand Secretary

The Archbishop of Canterbury replies with this letter:

23 January 2003

Dear Mr Morrow

I have been sorry to learn of the distress of a considerable number of Freemasons. It is true that a great deal of upset and hurt has been caused by the newspaper reports about my purported views on Freemasonry. In replying to private correspondence, I had no intention of starting a public debate nor of questioning the good faith and generosity of individual freemasons and I regret the tone and content of the media coverage.

Much of the distress has been due to what amounts to a serious misrepresentation of views I am supposed to hold. The quoted statements about the "satanic" character of Masonic ceremonies and other matters did not come from me and do not represent my judgement. Since my late father was a member of the Craft for many years, I have had every opportunity of observing the probity of individual members.

Where anxieties exist, however, they are in relation not to Freemasonry but to Christian ministry, and, my letter simply reflected a personal unease about Christian ministers subscribing to what could be and often is understood (or misunderstood) as a private system of profession and initiation, involving the taking of oaths of loyalty. Concerns like these have led to a number of debates within the church in recent years and it is clear that there are still widely differing views held with sincerity and honesty about the compatibility of certain aspects of Freemasonry with Christian belief, ministry and, service.

My statement about resisting the appointment of freemasons to certain posts in Wales needs to be understood against the background of the belief that the church and I had deliberately advanced the cause of Freemasons. In saying that I had resisted the appointment of Freemasons to certain posts I was not suggesting that people had been blackballed, but asserting that I was satisfied that membership of the Craft was neither a disqualifier nor an advantage.

I welcome the manner in which Freemasons have engaged in debate and especially the increasing openness of recent years. Their commitment to charitable causes and the welfare of the wider community is beyond question.

Yours sincerely,  
Rowan Cantuar

On the other side of the earth, the 46th Anglican Synod held in Sydney the 20th October 2003, voted the following resolution:

Resolution 25/03 - Freemasonry

Synod, noting the 1988 Report to Synod entitled "Freemasonry Examined" and subsequent resolution 9/88 of that Synod -

(a) affirms that Freemasonry and Christianity are fundamentally and irreconcilably incompatible, and  
(b) affirms that Freemasonry teaches and upholds a system of false religious and spiritual beliefs that are contrary to biblical Christianity.

Synod encourages ministers and other Christians to take every opportunity to reach out in love to all Freemasons and share with them the gospel of Christ.

Synod encourages all Christians who are members of a Masonic Lodge to demonstrate their commitment to Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God and as the sole way of salvation, by withdrawing from the Lodge.

Synod encourages ministers not to participate in, nor allow in their church buildings, any religious services or activities that uphold, condone, promote or encourage adherence to Freemasonry.

Synod requests the Councils of all Anglican Schools to consider any association that their school may have with any Masonic Lodge, and to withdraw from any such association. Synod further requests that Anglican Schools neither participate in any activity that may uphold, condone, promote or encourage adherence to Freemasonry, nor give publicity to any such activity, nor allow the name of the school to be used in association with any such activity.

Synod requests Standing Committee to undertake the preparation, production and distribution of a clear and unambiguous booklet suitable for wide distribution, examining the key rites, teachings and beliefs of Freemasonry and explaining why they differ from Biblical Christianity, and explaining why it is wrong for a Christian to belong to the Lodge.

(The Rev Bill Winthrop - 20.10.03)

The day after Tony Lauer, Grand Master of New South Wales & ACT, Australia, in a media statement replies:

A resolution by the Reverend William Winthrop of Lithgow proposing that all Anglican Freemasons withdraw from their Lodges or sever all connections with the Anglican Church was passed last night by the Diocesan Synod in Sydney.

"The resolution is pure discrimination, smacks of bigotry and religious fundamentalism and is a betrayal of all Freemasons who practice the Anglican Faith," says Tony Lauer, Grand Master of the NSW & ACT Freemasons, "especially since a great percentage of Freemasons throughout the State are Anglicans."

"Furthermore, this seems a one man vendetta on the part of Reverend Winthrop, over a local issue and very petty situation – that received widespread publicity – which occurred in Lithgow last year."

"This resulted in all local Freemasons being publicly not welcomed at the local Anglican Church," says Mr Lauer.

"The stance taken is based on total ignorance and is a misrepresentation of what Freemasonry is all about," says Mr Lauer.

"First and foremost, Freemasonry is tolerant and respectful of all religions and admits all men of good character who have a commitment to self improvement and to serve their community. Our one requirement is that they have a belief in God as the 'supreme being'. We do not question their other beliefs," continued Mr Lauer.

"We accept members of all faiths as Freemasons, as long as they have this belief, hence many of our Lodge members work within their communities with men of many faiths including Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Catholics and Muslims," added Mr Lauer.

"I would like to point out to Reverend Winthrop and the Synod, that many high-ranking ministers of religion, including Anglicans, have been – and are – Freemasons," said Mr Lauer.

"I ask Mr Winthrop and the Diocese, whether these men are now to be considered not to be Christians because they are Freemasons," said Mr Lauer.

"Freemasonry teaches tolerance, equality, compassion and brotherly love. If Reverend Winthrop's and the Synod's interpretation of 'Christianity' disagrees with these teachings, does this mean that the Sydney Anglican Church does not believe in the basic principles of compassion, brotherly love and above all – truth?" challenges Mr Lauer.

"Over the last 200 years Freemasons have played a significant role in shaping the fabric of Australian Society, and have been prominent in all areas of Australia's proud history including politics, commerce, sports, armed services."

"In fact since Lachlan Macquarie became Governor of New South Wales in 1809, each State has had one or more Governors who were Freemasons."

"Three of Australia's Governors General have been Freemasons as have 10 out of 25 Prime Ministers, since Federation."

"Are these distinguished Australians now to be branded as 'non-Christians' by the Anglican Church?" asked Mr Lauer.

Mr Lauer added that "I would also like to point out that Freemasons in this state alone each year distribute more than \$1,000,000 to non-Masonic worthy causes, community initiatives and charitable organisations – irrespective of their connection to any Church Group."

"The world, as we have come to know it today, is undergoing very alarming, uncertain and chaotic times, fuelled mainly by religious fundamentalism."

"Surely, in this civilised society the church's role is to teach love, compassion, unity and tolerance of one's fellow man, and not to promote division, hatred, alienation and down right bigotry," concluded Mr Lauer.

The Churches find it impossible to accept that we are not in competition but that we are supportive of religion and encourage each Brother to increase his interest in his own beliefs. We

have no theology, do not have sacraments, do not engage, as Freemasons, in worship in our Lodges and cannot offer the means of salvation through good works or in any other way.

On the contrary of the Christian Churches declaring Freemasonry a religion, the anti-masonry of the Islamic fundamentalism has political basis: "How the World Has been Intelligently Controlled?" is the title of a section dedicated to Freemasons of the strictly linked to Al-Qaida website Allaahuakbar.net.

On this "amazing essay" we read:

"...Historically the control and manipulation of political opinion has been the Free Masons main weapon in gaining control of countries and states. Once in control of the rulers and politicians of a country laws and political structures could be changed in accordance with their agenda however since restricting the body does not necessarily mean restricting the mind. The Free Mason recognizes that their plan for a Global government hinges completely on subduing the masses to their agenda and thus eliminating opposition to their cause and the greatest threat to their plan causing more danger than any army or law is a threat of a free thinking mind. In order to eliminate this threat and to achieve their objective the Masons have set about the boldest plan ever devise the complete control of every aspect of human life, Your Life and the weapons they are using against you are in your very homes entertaining you and your children and gradually indoctrinating you without you even realizing...."

"...The products of the Masonically controlled music industry are riddled with subliminal satanic messages. ....The Free Masons through the governments controlled by them already have access to a vast array of information about you. They can already find out who you talk to on the telephone, where you work, where you shop, what you eat, what you wear, how much you are worth, what you earn and the list goes on and on...."

"...The Free Masons also play with peoples lives in this manner. Evidence exists showing that many viruses have created or mutated in military labs and later used an experiment on human beings and it has been established that AIDS is a man made tool used to suit the purposes of Masonic West..."

The consequence of such fundamentalism?

March 2004, Istanbul, Turkey by Associated Press:

Explosion at Masonic lodge kills 2 people, wounds 5 others in Istanbul.

A bomb exploded at a building housing a Masonic Lodge Tuesday, killing at least two people and wounding five others, reports said, months after four suicide attacks struck this city.

NTV television said police blamed the attack on a suicide bomber. CNN-Turk said a man chanting, ``Allah, Allah," entered the building and detonated a bomb.

It is always the same old story: Freemasonry is a religion and conspires to achieve the domination of the world.

But what Freemasonry states about religion?

The Basic Statement of the United Grand Lodge of England concerning the relationship between Freemasonry and religion is:

Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. It demands of its members a belief in a Supreme Being but provides no system of faith of its own.

Freemasonry is open to men of all religious faiths. The discussion of religion at its meetings is forbidden.

The names used for the Supreme Being enable men of different faiths to join in prayer (to God as each sees Him) without the terms of the prayer causing dissention among them. There is no separate Masonic God; a Freemason's God remains the God of the religion he professes.

Freemasons meet in common respect for the Supreme Being, but He remains Supreme in their individual religions, and it is no part of Freemasonry to attempt to join religions together. There is therefore no composite Masonic God.

Freemasonry lacks the basic elements of religion:

a) it has no theological doctrine, and by forbidding religious discussion at its meetings will not allow a Masonic theological doctrine to develop.

b) It offers no sacraments.

c) It does not claim to lead to salvation by works, by secret knowledge or by any other means. The secrets of Freemasonry are concerned with modes of recognition and not with salvation.

Freemasonry is far from indifferent to religion. Without interfering in religious practice it expects each member to follow his own faith, and to place above all other duties his duty to God, by whatever name He is known. Its moral teachings are acceptable to all religions.

Freemasonry is thus a supporter of religion.



And what about politics?

Always the UGLE states:

"The basic principles and the statement of Freemasonry's aims show that the rule that forbids Masonic discussion of politics is designed to prevent regular Freemasonry becoming involved in any way in affairs of State, whether they are domestic or external. Great care must be taken to ensure that nothing is done that might allow it even to seem to be so involved.

Whilst individual Freemasons will have their own views on politics and state policy, Freemasonry as a body will never express a view on either. The discussion of politics at Masonic meetings has always been prohibited.

There are groups in other countries who call themselves Freemasons and who involve themselves in political matters. They are not recognised or countenanced by the United Grand Lodge of England and other regular Grand Lodges who follow the basic principles of Freemasonry and ban the discussion of politics and religion at their meetings."

The statement is very clear, while regular Freemasonry thus inculcates in each of its members the duties of loyalty and citizenship, it reserves to the individual the right to hold his own opinion with regard to public affairs. But neither in any Lodge, nor at any time in his capacity as a Freemason, is he permitted to discuss or to advance his views on theological or political questions.

Regular Freemasonry, as practised for instance in Italy by Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, has always consistently refused to express any opinion on questions of foreign or domestic State policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be, which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government.

## **Business**

In the early days of Freemasonry, there was nothing as a Book of Ritual. The first book like this, an official ritual accepted as a lodge manual, is attributed to George Claret and was published only in 1835. In 1838 he published another ritual book, which included the three degrees, questions before Passing and Raising, and the Installation of the Master and officers.

It is rather ironic that before that date Freemasons used Masonic exposures - publications disclosing the supposed secret activities of the Masons - as ritual books. The earliest of these exposures, first published in October 1730, was Samuel Prichard's "Masonry Dissected". The fame of this booklet lies in the fact that it reports for the first time the text of Hiram's legend as we practice it today. It reveals, in detail and in form of catechism, all the three degrees. It is the first effective ritual book of the new degree, the third, only recently introduced and now available in print.

"Masonry Dissected" was an exceptionally successful book. It went into three editions in eleven days, which is quite remarkable, considering that this was a period when much of the populace was illiterate and Freemasonry was only one of the numerous fraternal organisations.

Why the success of this particular book?

The inevitable conclusion is that Freemasons themselves purchased the book because it gave them an opportunity to learn in a better way their ritual, for which there was no other written source available at the time.

The irony of this situation is that there probably is a similar truth concerning some recent publications that attack Freemasonry. The success of these books is determined by the Freemasons themselves, who purchase the volumes for their libraries while public in general remains uninterested, or even bored, on the subject!

Nowadays on the Internet there are several Anti-Masonic websites selling Masonic books. The buyers? Curious people, Freemasonry opponents and.....the Freemasons.

In the United States, the "Ephesians 5:11" and "Ex-Masons for Jesus" are fellowship organizations of men and women who have left the Masonic Lodges and the appendant bodies, such as the Order of the Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, the Order of Rainbow for Girls and the Order of DeMolay for boys. They work with other Christian groups in order to equip their members to lead

the Masons within their sphere of influence, with the aim to have them leave the Masonic Lodge. Their motto is: "How can you lead Masons away from the Masonic Lodge?"

They state:

"The Masonic Lodge is the largest group among the subversive one that deny being a religion. Other similar groups include the "Odd Fellows" and the Rosicrucian orders. Our biggest attention is for the Masonic Lodge and the Rosicrucian Order, two of the most prominent groups".

But since business is business:

"We provide our adherents, called "The body of Christ", with treaties, books, video tapes and other materials, in order to bring our minister to those Masons and Rosicrucians who claim to be Christians. ....Most of the books available on our Cdroms are easily found in Masonic libraries. Please note that all of these books contain Masonic heresy. You should avoid putting them in the hands of anyone who is not a mature Christian. They are here provided for apologetic purposes",

and, I add, to make money. A set of 3 Cdroms with the texts of Masonic books as "Morals and Dogma", by Albert Pike, and the Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry, by Albert Mackey, plus Masonic Rituals costs 57 US dollars!!!

Another organization is "Saints Alive In Jesus". They state on their website:

"We are an apologetic group, evangelical by nature, and we produce research and study materials by comparing cult groups with Christian orthodoxy ....We are a Christian non-profit corporation founded upon the call of God to witness Jesus to those who have lost Him becoming Mormons, Freemasons or members of other cults"

They obviously sell online anti-Masonic books as "The Dark Side of Freemasonry" or "What You Need to Know About Masons", both written by Ed Decker (the founder of this group) at the price of 24 US dollars each.

"The Order of Former Freemasons" is a non-profit organization, or at least thus they state on their website.

"We do not benefit in any way from the purchases made through this site, except for the blessing of knowing that this material has helped to bring someone to a careful and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Nevertheless, they sell a video titled: "The Masonic Lodge: What Goes on Behind Closed Doors?"

"...Six half-hour video programs on a single VHS cassette dealing with the first three degrees of Freemasonry, the Blue Lodges. Key portions of the ritual are re-enacted and explained in the light of Scripture, comparing Christianity and the Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge.....The clash between Christianity and the Masonic Lodge...The God of the Masonic Lodge is not the God of the Christian faith.....The Masonic Lodge turn men away from Jesus Christ...We can prove that Freemasonry is a religion..."

And so on. The price? 60 US dollars for the "Masonry Package". A bargain isn't it?

### **The misguidance of some Media**

On March 2004 there have been reports in the media of a shooting occurred during a ceremony at "South Side Lodge No. 493". The tragic event took place in Suffolk County in the State of New York and was not as reported. The Grand Master of the State of New York has issued a letter to all his Lodges with the correct facts.

- a. The tragic event took place not in a Lodge meeting but during a social event in the building in Patchogue, New York, where the Lodge meets.
- b. The social club involved is not a Grand Lodge sanctioned by the Masonic organisation.
- c. The Grand Lodge of the State of New York has only one approved ritual which must be used by all Lodges. Firearms do not, and never have, played any role in any Masonic ritual in New York State."

Let's see how some media reported the news.

The Associated Press launched two different headings:

"A man was shot in the face and killed during a Masonic initiation ceremony by a fellow member who mistakenly

pulled out a real pistol instead of a blank gun" and "Man Killed During Masonic Initiation".

They are both are wrong since it was not a Masonic initiation but a social event not in Lodge.

The New York Times headline was: "A Ritual Gone Fatally Wrong Puts Light on Masonic Secrecy".

"The ritual initiations at the Masonic Lodge had been plunged in secrecy over the years. The climax of Monday night ceremony was to be a simple prank. A new member of the Fellow Craft Club, a selected group within the Lodge, would sit in a chair while an older member stood 20 feet away and fired a handgun loaded with blanks. That ritual went terribly wrong inside Southside Masonic Lodge No. 493. The shooter, a 76-year-old Mason, Albert Eid, was carrying two guns, a .22-caliber handgun with blanks in his left pocket, and a .32-caliber gun with live rounds in his right pocket. He reached into his right pants pocket, pulled out the wrong gun and shot William James, a 47-year-old fellow Mason, in the face, killing him, the authorities said."

The title wants to highlight that thanks to a ritual gone wrong we have more light on Masonic secrecy and in the body of the article it is underlined that Freemasons carry firearms for their rituals. A misguidance due to ignorance or to "free will"?

Furthermore in a television program on CNN aired Tuesday evening, March 9, 2004, it has been said:

"A man fatally shot in the head inside a Masonic lodge has police saying it was a secret initiation rite gone bad. It happened Monday at a Mason's lodge on New York's Long Island. And in a statement, the fraternal organization told us, 'This was not a Masonic lodge meeting, and no formal and approved Masonic ceremonies were scheduled to take place. Firearms play no role in Masonic lodge meetings or Masonic events of any kind.' But who are the Masons? Well, in the U.S., on the numbers, almost two million folks in the organization. And they have such famous living members, such as Bob Dole, Arnold Palmer, Sam Nunn, but it is still an organization shrouded in secrecy".

Another bad service to Freemasonry: the tragic event was not absolutely in Lodge during a "secret initiation rite gone bad".

But what really happened? I have above reported the official letter sent by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York to all of his Lodges with the facts. It is correct, but what was the "social event" mentioned?

Throughout the United States, there are many 'clubs' composed of lodge members whose primary purpose is to provide a 'club' environment within the Lodge building. They go under a variety of names: "Square & Compass Club", "Lunchtime Club", "Fellowcraft Club", and sometimes have the same name of the Lodge.

In the 1950s and 1960s, such clubs were extremely popular owing to the desire of men to find a place where they might enjoy friendly company either during the day or in the evening.

Some of these clubs - very few indeed - even went so far as to develop their own initiation rituals. Most were simply organizations that most members of the lodge(s) in the building chose to join since a minimal due contribution also helped keeping the lodge building funds in better shape.

It is within this context that Mason William James, 47, who had become a member of South Side Lodge #493 in Patchogue, New York was elected to join the club that had existed in that building for some 70 years. This "Fellowcraft Club" had an initiation ceremony that involved a lesson of 'trust'. In Freemasonry, a member learns to trust the words and actions of a Masonic Brother knowing that no harm will ever befall him. Following on that theme, it appears that the club had a ceremony which involved firing a pistol with blanks at a couple of tin cans on a shelf. When the shots were fired, the cans (completed with pebbles in them to make noise upon hitting the floor) were knocked down by someone standing nearby.

Mason Albert Eid, a 76 year old Mason who was also a Past Master of the Lodge, reached into the wrong pocket and fired his own gun rather than the 'prop' gun at the candidate - killing him.

Since to bring a weapon - offensive or defensive - into a Masonic building is against Freemasonry's basic teachings and since many - if not most - of the members of the Lodge knew of the un-masonically format of the club's ceremony, the Grand Master of New York ordered the Lodge's charter had to be immediately removed.



## An amazing conclusion

Sometimes the anti-Masonry organizations come into conflict with each other!

The Japanese terrorist organization AUM, whose leader Asahara ordered the sarin gas attack in the Tokio subway on March 1995, stated in the nineties that after the Japanese State, the United States, the Jews and the Freemasons were the main targets:

" The Freemasons are manipulating the United Nations to achieve the universal control",

but on the Islamic integralist website Allaahuakbar.net we read:

"....and the Freemasons have ordered the sarin gas attack in the Tokio subway...."

Dear Anti-Masonic organizations, please try to find a mutual agreement, meantime I wish humbly remember to the "anti-Masonic party" that Freemasonry is allowed and is prosperous where there is a democratic society and the civil rights are granted.

More, it is just in these nations that Freemasonry can play its role of "Third Pillar of Civil Society" according to the definition given by the Grand Master of the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy M.W.Bro.Fabio Venzi:

"The democracy of modern times, in addition to liberty and market economy, is in need of a "Third Pillar", that of the "Civil Society".

But one has to take into account that in an open society, our life, by and large, is bound to revolve around private associations, which remain beyond the nature and the scope of State institutions. In fact, an important difference between the model of totalitarian state and that of an open society; lies in the very fact that, whereas in the former everything becomes an organic part of the State, and thereby, nothing but the State is in existence; while in the other, instead, within the possibility recognized and offered to individuals, divers and autonomous associations may exist, one next to the other, within the pluralism of democracy, without being whatsoever obliged to pursue one single and same objective only."

The enemies of Freemasonry are the enemies of democracy as Freemasonry is a society of free men concerned to improve their moral and spiritual values. We strongly believe that improving ourselves, the civil society also will benefit.

The exercised appeal over the men by the omni-comprehensive ideologies and overall by religious and politics fundamentalism, speaking and acting in the name of abstract and collective entities, these are the real menaces to the Civil Society, not Freemasonry indeed.