

Civility in our Standard Work

Here is the third installment of examples of references to civil behavior from our Standard Work. We ask the District Deputies of the Grand Master forward this email to Lodge Masters and Secretaries. It is hoped that the Deputies of the Grand Master, Lodge Masters and Secretaries will use the attached information to promote civility in their Lodges and communities. Additionally, I am forwarding a short Power Point presentation announcing May as National Civility Month and outlining the Civility project.

As I mentioned in the previous emails, the Grand Lodge F&AM of Washington has partnered with a number of Grand Lodges across the United States and Canada and the National Civility Center to promote civility in society. These organizations have expended considerable effort in preparing to take the lead in fostering principles meant to encourage civil dialogue, respect for disparate opinion, and recognition of human dignity. We, as Freemasons, possess the philosophical underpinnings necessary to lead the way in this endeavor. The ceremonies we practice, the obligations of our degrees, and our signs and symbols, serve to illustrate our commitment to respecting each other and serving the good of humanity. Who better than us to carry the standard for this effort to reverse the evident decline in civil behavior in today's society?

In order to promote civility and the civility project, our Grand Master asked that examples from our Standard Work be offered to demonstrate our commitment to principles of civility. We intend to forward excerpts from the Standard Work with suggested virtues on a monthly basis.

You may wish to look at the National Civility Center website at <http://civilitycenter.org/index.html> to learn more about our partners. You can also find information about the civility movement and locate toolkits for solving problems of uncivil behavior and promoting civility in our lodges and in society. I am sure that there is much information there that you will find useful in lodge and in everyday life.

Here are a few examples from our Standard Work:

-- "The square teaches morality; the Level, equality; and the Plumb, rectitude of conduct."

Virtues: Morality, Equanimity, Civility

-- "The three great tenets of a Mason's profession are: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."

Virtues: Friendship, Benevolence, Honesty

-- "Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. To be a good man and true is the first lesson taught in Masonry. On this theme we contemplate, and by

its dictates endeavor to regulate our conduct; hence, while influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us, sincerity and plain-dealing distinguish us, and heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare and rejoicing in each other's prosperity."

Virtues: Honesty, Fidelity, Sincerity

-- "Prudence...should be the peculiar characteristic of every Mason, not only for the government of his conduct while in the Lodge, but also when in the world."

Virtues: Prudence, Civility

-- In the Charge to an Entered Apprentice Mason: "As an individual, you are charged to practice the domestic and public virtues. Let Temperance chasten, Fortitude support, and Prudence direct you, and Justice be the guide of all your actions. Be especially careful to maintain, in their fullest splendor, those truly Masonic ornaments, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth."

Virtues: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence

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