



Grand Council of Cryptic Masons
State of New York
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Greetings Companions,

I want to thank you all for being here this weekend at our 198th Grand Assembly. Being here in person is truly a wonderful thing. I know it is difficult to acknowledge but due to this pandemic, this last year and a half has been Hell on all of us! We have gone from having Lodge and Council Meetings, to no-meetings, to meetings via the Internet. Our in-person meetings have been exchanged for Zoom sessions. Our password of greeting "My Brother" has been replaced with - "You're still muted!"

We have seen our Masonic lives become completely upended and much to our dismay we have allowed ourselves to get out of the custom of going to meet our Brethren.

We must realize that what we do next will be critical to the Care and Survival of our Craft. We need to endeavor to restore what we have lost.

Companions, my theme, or rather my plan for this year is "Commitment". Within my Grand Masters pin, it is symbolized by two Brotherly hands clasped.

From the pages of our Ritual, I wish to present to all of you two important passages from our Charge as Select Masters:

"... you have passed the Circle of Perfection in Ancient Craft Masonry. In the capacity of Select Master you must be sensible that your obligations are increased in proportion to your privileges."

along with:

"...and will enjoy the high satisfaction of having acted well your part in the important enterprise in which you are engaged"

Companions there are three vital foundations circumscribed by that Circle of Perfection, that I want all of us to act upon:

Commitment to our Fraternity & Ourselves,
Commitment to our Cryptic Councils, and
Commitment to our Symbolic Lodges

For our Fraternity & Ourselves:

Make the personal commitment to re-engage with Freemasonry and your Councils in particular. We have gotten out of the “habit” of meeting our Companions. We must fight that inertia and make every effort rejoin and participate. Some have said that the world needs Freemasonry now more than ever, on that I completely agree, however I need to add that - We need Masonry back in our lives now more than ever!

For our Councils:

Go back to attending your meetings. Restore the habit of joining your Companions. Feel that welcoming grasp of a Brotherly Token. To our Illustrious Masters and Council Recorders I am adding one more task to each of your list of duties:

Illustrious Masters – Reach out to all companions. Tell them about the upcoming meetings and events. Use whatever tools you have available: phone, email, text, postal mail or even a knock on the door. Let them know that you miss them.

Council Recorders - Take your minutes electronic or paper and send them, or a summary of them, directly to the Companions. Let them know what has happened in their Councils. Do not make use of Web sites, Facebook or public facing media. Directly keep them informed and keep engaged with them. Do not let the only correspondence our Companions receive be the annual dues notice.

For our Symbolic Lodges:

I charge all our Companions to engage and support your local Symbolic Lodges. As the Select Masters of Freemasonry, it must be our commitment to shape the future. There are men out there, young and “not-so-young”, who realize they are missing something and are starting to look and search for what they themselves are not sure of. They are finding Freemasonry!

I want all of us to become the Lodge mentors or shepherds. Work side by side with the new Masons as they start their Masonic degrees. Help them, train them, Mentor them! Then at that point when they start to expand their sphere of Masonic learning, they will want to learn more about “what else is out there? Who will they turn to? The Mason who has been at their side since they started their Masonic Journey. You will be at a very unique time to tell them about the

bodies of the York Rite. How our degrees increase their Masonic knowledge and complete the Mystic Circle.

This path will not be a short term fix but a long multi-year commitment we make to our Masonic Brothers and our York Rite Companions. But like grape vines that take time to grow and mature, we will create some wonderful vintages!

On a personal level I am dedicating this Year to my wife Deborah for it has been with her support over all these years, that allows me to be here today as your Most Illustrious Grand Master.

Finally in closing, I again ask all my companions to remember these commitments to Freemasonry. For we are members of the Greatest Fraternity in the World and with our commitments to our Brothers we will do great things.

Thank you all very much.

Zealously,

M: I: John A. Gallant

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