

The Miter and The Trowel

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Author's Preface

I am not a Catholic. I have been a Freemason for nearly forty years. During that time I have repeatedly been asked the same two questions:

- "Why are the Masons anti-Catholic?"
- "Why is the Catholic Church anti-Masonic?"

The answer to the first is that "Modern regular Masons are not anti-Catholic; they will accept any man of good character who believes and puts his trust in a Supreme Being." This answer is usually received with skepticism by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Even some Freemasons, I am sorry to say, are skeptical. ("Regular" Freemasons are those having their membership in a Lodge under the jurisdiction of a generally recognized Grand Lodge.)

The answer to the second question is simply that the Church found itself in direct opposition to most of the goals of the Enlightenment, and Freemasonry (and the Carbonari, a secret political society in Italy during the 18th century; now probably extinct) was the only identifiable body whose goals generally supported those of the Enlightenment. Thus, by association, the Church was opposed to Freemasonry.

Condemnation of Freemasonry held one additional advantage; it was safe.

Traditionally the Craft refuses to defend itself against scurrilous attack. Therefore it is always a safe target. [This continues to this day. Witness recent attacks by some extremist religious elements in the United States.]

The Church's condemnation was spearheaded by a [series of 21 bulls](#) published between 1738 and 1902. In them, the Church condemned Freemasonry for:

- Supporting public education
- Supporting separation of Church and State
- Supporting equality of all men, including clergy, under the law
- Complete religious tolerance
- Advocating or condoning overthrow of Church and State.
- Having sacrilegious and obscene practices as part of its ritual
- Practicing Satanism

This list is, in effect, a condemnation of the entire Enlightenment, the first four points being linchpins of the movement. The Craft is certainly "guilty" on these four counts.

The last two, vis-a-vis Freemasonry, have been fabricated from whole cloth, any possible connection between the Craft and the outlawed Knights Templar notwithstanding.

The fifth point, advocating or condoning overthrow of Church and State, may possibly have some basis if one makes the error of equating the Italian Masonry of the period with the entire Masonic Fraternity. From their founding, the Latin Grand Lodges, if not explicitly anticlerical, were strongly (at times, militantly) political. Thus it is quite possible that there may have been some basis in fact for the charge.

Unfortunately, the disparity between the Latin version of Freemasonry and that practised by the Teutonic and the English speaking Grand Lodges completely escaped the notice of the Church. Thus, for nearly 200 years we have had two world-wide organizations, both of which are striving for the betterment of mankind, locked in an antagonistic relationship. I am reminded of the opening lines of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet:

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

I am neither a professional historian nor a profound scholar. I have been able to deduce tentative answers to the questions of how and why this antagonism was allowed to flourish and to persist for so many years. In presenting my deductions for public scrutiny, my hope is that any resulting discussion may facilitate mutual understanding and possibly reconciliation. That some day these two great institutions may reach a modus vivendi.

Preface

Freemasonry defines itself as:

"A system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols"

While this definition is universally true, it must be realized that there is no single entity known as "Freemasonry." Freemasonry is made up of men ("speculative" Masons) who assemble in "Lodges."

[The word "Lodge" Masonically carries two meanings;
(a) a group of Masons organized to work, and
(b) the location in which such a group meets.]

Lodges since 1717, in turn, have been organized into autonomous Grand Lodges. The Grand Lodges practice Masonry, each in its own way, but all according to certain fundamental principles. The chief among these for all regular Grand Lodges is a belief in "The brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God." Further description of the fundamental principles of the Craft may be found in a non-secret portion of the ritual of the second (Fellow Craft) degree of Freemasonry. It begins with a recognition that there exist two kinds of Masonry; operative and speculative, and typically continues (the exact wording depending upon the specific Grand Lodge):

"By Operative Masonry we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength, and beauty, and from which will result a due proportion and just correspondence in all its parts. It furnishes us with dwellings and convenient shelters from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons; and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the sundry materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man, for the best, most salutary and beneficent purposes.

"By Speculative Masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion as to lay us under obligations to pay that rational homage to Deity which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of the Divine Creator.

"Our ancient Brethren wrought in Operative as well as Speculative Masonry. They worked six days before receiving their wages. They did no work on the seventh, for in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh.

"The seventh day, therefore, our ancient Brethren consecrated as a day of rest from their labors, thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to contemplate the glorious works of creation, and to adore their great Creator."

Since shortly after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England (the first Masonic Grand Lodge to be formed - in 1717) and the subsequent formation of the Grand Lodges of France and Italy, the Roman Catholic Church and the Masonic Fraternity have been at odds. The Church, looking at global Masonry

from the vantage of Rome and therefore seeing primarily Italian and French Masonry, has looked on Freemasonry as a repository of anticlericalism and political activism, and of supporting (or at least condoning) conspiracies against Church and State.

The Church's condemnation of rationalism, religious tolerance ("indifferentism" in the terminology of the Church), cancellation of special legal status for the clergy, and the neutralization of Church influence in government placed all Freemasons (regardless of Grand Lodge affiliation) in direct and immediate conflict with the Vatican.

All Grand Lodge Freemasonry of the 18th century, but most especially that of the Latin countries, was a child of the Enlightenment. Latin (i.e., Italian, French, Portuguese and Spanish) Freemasonry saw the Church, especially as embodied in Clement XII and Leo XIII, as a source of obstructionism. The Church saw Freemasonry, which advances a consistent, well defined moral and ethical system, as a potential rival for the hearts and minds of men.

The Church failed completely to recognize the fragmented nature of Freemasonry. Thus it could not see that many of the views of Masonry which it found offensive were, in fact, unique to Latin Masonry. In many instances, more specifically to Italian or French Masonry.

Thus, in condemning all Freemasonry for the actions of a few Grand Lodges, the Church precipitated a needless conflict. Latin Masonry, in its refusal to attempt to lead rather than force change, thereby made itself, and thus all Masonry, a party to the conflict.

English/Irish/American Masonry did not recognize that there actually was any problem.

In the beginning ...

The Masonic and Secular Worlds

The beginnings of Freemasonry are, quite literally, lost in time. The earliest known references place the Craft's origins prior to A.D. 932, some time during the reign of King Athelstan.

The earliest unequivocal reference to Freemasonry, the "Regius Poem," outlines much of the conduct of the Craft at the time of its writing. It has been reliably dated at 1309 (coincidentally very close to the time of the suppression of the Order of the Temple). The language used in the poem suggests that the Craft had already been in existence for an indefinite (but long) period of time prior to the 14th century. The language also gives a strong hint of the relationship which the Craft had with the Church at that time. In particular, it invokes the Virgin Mary, refers to the Trinity, and gives instructions for observing Mass.[1] At that time, and up until approximately 1600, the Craft was exclusively Catholic.

Though tradition holds that Masonry traces its genesis back to the craft guilds of the European cathedral-building period, this is almost certainly a fiction. Current historical research indicates, rather, a confluence of traditions resulting in that

which we now recognize as "FREEMASONRY." The most prominent of these were the European "Craft Lodges" (as opposed to the guilds) of Stone Masons, the Knights Templar (following their suppression in 1307), and, much later, the Jacobite supporters of "The Young Pretender" - Bonnie Prince Charlie.

By the time of the suppression of the Templars, Robert the Bruce had already been excommunicated. Thus, the Papal ban on the Templars would have had no effect in the lands controlled by Bruce. Celtic Scotland was a made-to-order haven for the proscribed Templars.

As might be supposed, during this entire period the Craft was strongly Catholic. This position softened somewhat, however, following the Protestant Reformation. Masonry required its members to adhere and support the "religion of the country in which they were living and working." It was still strongly Christian, "aggressively" Christian has been one description, but no longer exclusively Catholic.

This orientation persisted until about 1600 A.D., at which time a new view came to be held; a view which required only a belief in a Supreme Being, leaving the name of this Being and the manner of worship solely to the conscience of the individual.[2] This, the present view, was later formalized (1723) in the so-called Old Charges, one of the foundation stones upon which modern Freemasonry rests. The first of the Old Charges reads (with the spelling modernized):

"A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine. But though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, or men of honor and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the center of union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance."

Now move to the year of our Lord 1680 and the burgeoning of the Age of Enlightenment. The decades ahead will see an explosion of original political and social thought. Locke, Hume, Newton, Spinoza, Voltaire and others will challenge conventional wisdom in the areas of philosophy, government, and religion. More and more the idea of rationalism (human reason is the only possible guide to wisdom) will be discussed and accepted. With it, anticlericalism will become a force to be reckoned with in Rome. As direct results of these ideas (in no particular order):

- Newton has extended Galileo's findings about the properties of falling bodies, until they now reach the limits of the universe. The universe has become mechanistic.

- The ideas of original sin and the necessity of Divine redemption have been summarily rejected by some Enlightenment philosophers, to be replaced by the idea that the human condition can be improved through the effort of individuals; human nature, and hence society, is infinitely perfectible.
- Voltaire advances the idea of equal rights under the law, and completely rejects the concept of any absolute authority. He is a firm anticlericalist, considering the Church to be among greatest oppressors of mankind because of its absolutism; its insistence that it has the only truth and its demand for complete obedience.
- Montesquieu promotes the idea of a government based on separation of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial branches with checks and balances.
- John Locke publishes his Second Treatise on Civil Government, rejecting the idea of Divinely inspired or sanctioned government.[3] In his view government is a human compact of convenience, invented to encourage individual liberty and rights. Second Treatise thus provides the theoretical foundation for the American and French revolutions as well as for the Italian War of Unification.

The list goes on

A few years later February 1717 is a landmark for Freemasonry. The Grand Lodge of England is formed by the four Lodges existing in London. Anthony Sayre is elected Grand Master during a general meeting held on the next feast day of St. John the Baptist. These events mark the beginning of the modern Masonic fraternity.

Six years later, 1723, sees the formalization of the foundations of Freemasonry; the Old Charges mentioned above are published. This event finalizes the movement of the Craft from its earlier status of an exclusively Catholic body to its present character as a common meeting ground for all who believe in a Supreme Being, however they wish to worship. It also completes the transition from Masonry's Operative beginnings to its present Speculative workings.

A short twenty-six years after the formation of the English Grand Lodge, in 1733, Charles Sackville, Duke of Dorset, establishes a Masonic Lodge at Florence, Italy. He apparently did this completely on his own initiative, for no trace of any warrant empowering him to do so has ever been found. The fortunes of the Craft are shaky at first, until Sackville initiates the Grand Duke of Tuscany into the Order. The prestige of the Grand Duke greatly improves the prospects and growth of the Craft in Italy. From this first beginning, Italian Masonry is outspokenly political.

By 1735, Lodges have been established in Milan, Verona, Padua, and Venice, comprising with Florence the major population centers in northern Italy. In addition, there is a Lodge in Naples, to the south.

By 1737 the membership of the Lodge at Florence includes among its members the best of local society; men of liberal education, learning and culture; poets and painters; priests and politicians. The unconventional views and the wealth of some of the members has already attracted the attention of the Inquisition. In June of that year, at a conference of Cardinals held in Rome under the

chairmanship of the Chief Inquisitor of Florence, the first bull to condemn Freemasonry, "*In eminenti*" is drafted, ...

The Church's World

It is the year of our Lord 1737. A conference of Princes of the Roman Catholic Church is being held in Rome, under the chairmanship of the Chief Inquisitor of Florence.

For over one thousand years, the Inquisition has been de facto autonomous many times. During these periods, it was not even answerable to the Pope except as a formality. In these periods of Inquisitorial autonomy, the leading role taken by the Chief Inquisitor at this meeting would not have been remarkable. But this was the mid-eighteenth century, not the mid-thirteenth!

The Inquisition could trace its origins back to the fifth century. Originally set up to discover and punish heresy, its power began to decline in the sixteenth century, generally coincident with the rise of the Reformation. By the eighteenth century it could usually be ignored with impunity. The rise of naturalism, rationalism and anticlericalism which characterize the eighteenth century carries with it a loss of much of the power of both the Church and the Holy Office. An absolute power, regardless of its origin, could no longer command a strong hold on the lives of the people of post-Renaissance Europe.

With this loss of power, the general populace has no incentive to discover and report on real or suspected heresy. The decreased number of trials being performed naturally causes a sharp decline in revenue.[4] Divided between the Church and the State, these revenues were historically the primary source of funds for Inquisitorial salaries. Thus there is a strong motivation to find new opportunities for Inquisitorial predations.

Since we are examining events in which the Chief Inquisitor of Florence took a leading part, we should be examining the contemporary records of the Florentine Inquisition. Unfortunately these records have, for the most part, been lost.[5] Using other nearby Inquisitions as models, however, some tentative conclusions may be drawn. These models graphically reflect a diminution of power and influence,[6] as measured by the number of trials being conducted. The reduction in number of trials correlates directly with the rise in naturalism, rationalism and anticlericalism which characterize the Age of Enlightenment in Europe.

These records show, for example, that the Venetian Inquisition fell from a high average of 35 trials per year during 1586-1630 to an average of only 3 per year during 1721-1794. Similarly, the Neapolitan Inquisition fell from a high average of 35 per year during 1591-1620 to 5 per year during 1701-1740.[7]

The War of the Worlds

With this background it is understandable that ambitious men would be alert for opportunities to re-capture their earlier power, influence, and wealth. The drafting of *"In eminenti"* is not only understandable but perhaps even inevitable. Unfortunately for the Church, its effect was the antithesis of that desired. At the time of Clement XII and *"In eminenti"* many of the European, especially the Latin Lodges and Grand Lodges were Jacobite. However, the Craft was growing in influence very quickly, while the influence of the Church was declining. Thus it would be natural for the Church to forbid its adherents to join the Craft.

While there was limited compliance from among the Jacobite faction, the bull was ignored elsewhere. Thus the departure of the Jacobite faction created a power vacuum within the continental Grand Lodges of the Craft. This vacuum came to be filled by, among others, the Templar influence. The Templars were quite naturally anticlerical. Thus the bull had much the opposite effect to that desired. Instead of weakening the Craft and its influence, and slowing its growth, the effect of *"In eminenti"* was to purge the Craft of the Catholic elements which might have moderated the anticlericalism. The strengthening of the anticlerical element carried with it a stiffening of the political element.[8]

What basis did *"In eminenti"* set forth as the basis for the condemnation?[9]
Specifically, Freemasonry was condemned because:

1. it is formed by "men of any Religion or sect, satisfied with the appearance of natural probity"
2. [the members] have pledged "by a strict and unbreakable bond which obliges them, both by an oath upon the Holy Bible and by a host of grievous punishment to an inviolable silence about all that they do in secret together"
3. "... they do not hold by either civil or canonical sanctions; ..."
4. there are " ... other just and reasonable motives known to Us; ...
"

The first point, tolerance of alternative religions, has been given the name "religious indifferentism" by the Church. Religious indifferentism must be condemned by the Church, since the Church believes that it holds to the only Truth and therefore may tolerate no contrary opinion.

The second point, requirement for secrecy regarding portions of the ceremonials, must be condemned by the Church, since it believes that it must act as the intercessor (and the only intercessor) for the forgiveness of sins following confession and repentance. Therefore there can be no subject barred to the confessional.

As to the third point, Freemasonry does not even permit political or religious discussion to take place within its walls.[10] The Fraternity's goal is to sharpen its Members' awareness and senses, that they might work to eliminate tyranny and injustice as individuals. But it does not and never has take any institutional position on these matters.

The last point, quoting the King of Siam from the musical *The King and I*, "is a puzzlement".

By this time in its history, the Church had long held to a doctrine of exclusivity. It alone was granted the wisdom and knowledge to interpret God's will for the faithful. Centuries of persecution under the Roman Empire had welded the faithful into a coherent band possessing near unanimity of religious thought. The trauma wrought by the Reformation and the subsequent Counter Reformation had further hardened this position.

The Church, thus oriented in its thought and belief, could not be expected to understand or be sympathetic to an organization which accepted men of any religious stripe into its ranks.[11] Masonry guaranteed to its membership complete freedom of religious thought. Masonry absolutely requires that any candidate for membership believe and put his trust in a Supreme Being. But it has traditionally refused to ask anything more about an individual's religious beliefs.

An additional impetus can be found for the condemnation. Some of the fugitive Templars are known to have been instrumental in the victory of Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn. The participation of the fugitives appears to have been generally recognized at the time.

Now recognize that Robinson was correct in his conclusion that there was a strong Templar influence in the early development of Freemasonry.[12] [The Order of the Temple (Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon; Knights Templar), was an order of warrior monks prominent during the Crusades.]

At the time of their arrest and suppression in 1307, the Templars were undoubtedly the richest organization in the known world. By simply calling a small portion of their outstanding loans they could have bankrupted France, put the Church into serious financial difficulty, and upset the financial stability of much of the rest of Europe. On their suppression almost none of their vast known treasure was discovered and confiscated. One theory is that it was carried off by the Templar fleet, which is known to have put to sea several days before the mass arrest and was never seen again. (In addition to Bruce's Scotland, there was no vigorous suppression of the Templars throughout much of Europe,[13] with many rulers dragging their feet or openly defying both the Pope and the King of France.[14])

Now since the Freemasons were a party to the concealment of the Templars, they were automatically guilty of heresy. They might also have access to at least some of the lost Templar treasure. Now there is, in addition to the political motive, both a religious and an economic motive for suppression.

The Interregnum

Regardless of what set of motives one ascribes to the generation of "*In eminenti*"; whether it was an Inquisitorial document imposed on an infirm Pope, or was a Papal document; its effect was directly the opposite of that desired by the Church. Thus, it is not especially surprising that no further strong Papal denunciations occurred for many years. The Church had placed itself in opposition to the Craft. The manner in which it was done fostered a virulent anticlericalism within Italian and French Masonry. The Church must now learn to recognize and deal with the chimera it has helped to create.

Thus, after a rather luke-warm confirmation of "*In eminenti*" with the publication of "Providas" by Benedict XIV in 1751, nothing of significance is heard of an anti-Masonic nature until seventy years later.

In 1821 "*Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*" is published by Pius VII. But "*Ecclesiam*" is not primarily directed against the Freemasons. Rather, it places the "Carbonari"[15] (an Italian secret political society) under the same penalties as the Freemasons.

Another five years with only minor activity. "*Quo graviora mala*" (1826 by Leo XII) mentions Freemasonry, although it, like "*Ecclesiam*", is again primarily directed against the Carbonari. It accuses both of being societies with "oathbinding secrecy and conspiracies against Church and State."

Another four years. "*Litteris altero*" (1830, Pius VIII) condemns Masonic influence in education. The specific point at issue seems to be that the "Masonic influence" advocates removing explicit and mandatory clerical control from the educational process.

Ten years later, in 1840, the Italian war of unification begins. Sardinia sends troops to assist in driving the Hapsburgs out of Tuscany. While this specific adventure failed, it reflects the rise of strong nationalistic sentiments in Italy. These sentiments are inextricably linked to the feelings of rationalism and anticlericalism mentioned above. Events in Italy are quickly coming to a head. "*Qui pluribus*", published in 1846 by Pius IX,[16] even though making no explicit mention of Freemasonry, provides an outline of the roots of the coming clash. Fifteen years after "*Qui pluribus*" (1861), Italy (with the exception of the Papal States) has been unified through the efforts of the combined Italian armies under the leadership of the Freemason Giuseppe Garibaldi. He has been stopped from conquering the Papal States and bringing them into the unified Italy only because they fall under the protection of France and Napoleon III.[17] In the eyes of the Church, the fact that Garibaldi was a Freemason must have been the final element in the proof that Freemasonry was inexorably in opposition to the Church.

Four years later, in 1865, Pius IX published "*Multiplices inter*", which, in addition to condemning Masonry once again, reproves secular governments for not uprooting and suppressing it.[18]

Shortly after this, in 1870, an event occurs which is equally important to the Church and to Freemasonry. Specifically, the Franco-Prussian War breaks out, forcing Napoleon to withdraw his protection of the Papal States. With the door thus left open, the Italian army under Garibaldi enters Rome. The Church is stripped of the last of its temporal domains and authority. Again, the villain is the Freemason Garibaldi. Again, the question of whether Garibaldi is an Italian who is also a Freemason, or whether he is a Freemason who happens to be Italian, is never asked. Again, there is a failure to distinguish between Latin Freemasonry and that practised elsewhere.

One year following the City's capitulation (1871), Rome is declared the capital of a united Italy under Victor Emmanuel II. With this declaration, the Papacy enters a voluntary exile inside the Vatican from which it will not emerge until the signing of the Lateran Treaty in 1929. By this time, Mussolini's Fascist party is in control of the Italian Government.

In 1878 Leo XIII is elected to succeed Pius IX who has died after a reign of approximately 34 years. Leo's election marks the end of the "interregnum", and the beginning of full scale attacks by the Church on the Craft.

The New Crusades

On his election in 1878, Leo XIII must have felt himself under grievous political pressure. His predecessor, Pius IX, had lost control of the Papal States. With their loss, the Vatican had been stripped of the remnants of its temporal domains. It is easy to imagine Leo feeling that, though history might brand Pius as the Pope who lost the Papal States, it would look on him (Leo) as the Pope who failed to recover them.

Leo (Vincenzo Pecci)[19] had advanced rapidly in the Church following his ordination in 1837, being named to his first important post only a few weeks thereafter. In less than four years he was named delegate to Perugia.[20] His initial tenure in Perugia was only two years, but in that short time he established a solid reputation as a liberal, and a social and political reformer.

In 1843 he was appointed nuncio to Brussels where he served for three years. Much of his time and energy during this period was spent in mediating an educational controversy which had been raging for some years. That he was successful speaks well for his skill in diplomacy and his tact.

He was appointed Archbishop of Perugia in 1846, only nine years after being ordained. He was named a cardinal priest in 1853 by Pius IX.

During his entire priesthood in Italy, he worked tirelessly to improve both the intellectual and the spiritual level of the clergy, and to achieve some measure of social reform.

Somewhat later his further advancement was compromised by his very lukewarm support of the Syllabus Errorum, which had been published by Pius IX in 1864. He was re-established to favor in 1870, however, by his vigorous protests against the seizure of the Church's properties and the loss of the Pope's temporal

powers. In 1877 he was appointed camerlingo[21] and brought back to the Vatican.

Following the death of Pius IX in 1878, Pecci was elected Pope on the third ballot. Presumably, the Sacred College was concerned by the possibility of interference in the electoral process by the Italian government; hence felt itself under pressure to conclude the election as quickly as possible. Sixty- eight years old at the time of his election, he must have been regarded as a short term fill-in. In one of history's ironic twists, he reigned for twenty- five years.

During his reign, Leo significantly advanced and liberalized Catholic education and politics on a world wide basis. He worked to arrive at an accommodation between science and the Church. In all areas, however, he seemed to be unable to recognize that natural science or education or political science exist on an equal footing with the Church.[22][23] In his view, the Church must always be supreme.

One must sympathize with Leo, whether or not one agrees with him. He was a liberal and a reformer by inclination, but had committed himself and his life to a conservative institution. He had given his life to the Church, and had seen the Church stripped and beggared. He had seen the Church, which had never hesitated to use both its political and spiritual power to achieve its ends, forced now to rely strictly on its spiritual power. The political power was gone. The ability to use political power for spiritual ends, or spiritual power for political ends was gone. The Church was groping, trying to learn the rules of a new ball game. The Church to which Leo had committed his life in 1837 was not the same Church which existed after 1870. With the Age of Enlightenment sweeping the world, he was an essential liberal bound with unbreakable ties to a conservative institution.

In an attempt to come to terms with his times Leo issued a series of pronouncements. During his reign he issued a total of 117 bulls and encyclicals, or an average of nearly five per year. This almost doubles the number written by any preceding Pope.

Leo's more important pronouncements [in terms of their effect on Freemasonry] are: * *Diturnum* (1881)[22] * *Etsi nos* (1882)[23] * *Humanum genus* (1884)[31] * *Officio sanctissimo* (1887)[24] * *Ab apostolici* (1890)[25] * *Custodi di quella fede* (1892)[26] * *Inimica vis* (1892)[27] * *Praeclara* (1894)[28] * *Annum ingressi* (1902)[29]

A curious parallel exists between the emotions reflected in these pronouncements and the set of emotions through which an individual passes while dealing with extreme trauma or loss.[30] "*Diturnum*" sees him denying the effects of the Enlightenment (nationalism, religious tolerance, ...), seeing them only as minor perturbations on the political scene. "*Etsi nos*" sees the denial continue, but with the beginnings of anger. The anger peaks in "*Humanum genus*". "*Officio sanctissimo*" to "*Inimica vis*" sees the progression from anger through bargaining (with political powers and the national bishops primarily) to, finally, depression. The depression comes through quite clearly in "*Inimica vis*"

and "Praeclara". And finally he receives the blessing of acceptance. This acceptance is seen in "Annum ingressi"; not acceptance of the Enlightenment or of nationalism or of Masonry, but acceptance of the idea that there exist things which cannot be changed, even when wielding the total power of the Catholic Church. Leo finally seemed to realize and accept that the Church he knew as a young man was gone forever and that the new Church must find a new path. He was forced to watch the encroachments of the effects of the Enlightenment, especially nationalism, on the prerogatives Church, and was powerless to halt them. He was a prisoner of the times. His voluntary imprisonment inside the Vatican was but a pale reminder of that more galling prison, the times in which he lived. Freemasonry, in many ways the visible embodiment and bulwark of ideas which were hateful to him, must have become to him the symbol as well as the agent of the wanton destruction of that which he held dear.

The publication of "Humanum genus" is now quite understandable. This bull, published in 1884, is held up within the Masonic Fraternity as the archetype of anti-Masonic propaganda, and Leo XIII as one of the chief persecutors of the Craft. As in the case of "*In eminenti*", "Humanum genus" accuses the Craft of many things of which the Craft is actually quite proud; advocacy of separation of church and state, freedom of conscience and religion, equality of all people under the law, &c.[31] By implication, since the Church condemns Freemasonry for its defence of these ideas, frequently the Masonic perception is that the Church is unalterably opposed to them.

Unfortunately, the inaccuracies and distortions contained in "Humanum genus" have driven a wedge between the Fraternity and the Church which has thus far been impossible to totally overcome.[32] But in fairness, "Humanum genus" must be seen as but one of a series of pronouncements which are products of the times as much as of the man.

Within a very few months of the publication of "Humanum genus", the American bishops, meeting in plenary council in Baltimore, published a pastoral letter not only vigorously supporting "Humanum genus", but also effectively shutting off any debate by the faithful.[33] The problem is that such a document only serves to exacerbate the lack of understanding between the Church and Freemasonry. For whatever reason it was written, the ultraconservative message it conveys runs counter to the core teachings of Freemasonry. Hence, it magnifies the distance between the Church and the Craft.

A New Dawn?

In 1903 Leo XIII dies and is replaced by Pius X, who ruled for eleven years. Pius' successor, elected in 1914, was Benedict XV.

In 1917 Benedict promulgates a new code of canon law, containing Article 2335. Article 2335 explicitly forbids access to Freemasonry, under punishment of automatic excommunication.[34] Nothing further is officially heard from the Church for many years.

The election and regime of John XXIII in 1958 seems to signal a change in wind direction, but there is no change in official position. This must await the election of Paul VI in 1963, which sees a partial relaxation in the Church's position on many items. "Unitatis redintegratio" and "Nostra aetate" are published, recommending tolerance and open dialog with non-Catholic believers.[35] This spirit is carried further by Vatican II, as proclaimed in the declaration "Dignitatis humanae".[36]

This new spirit of openness under Paul even permits the clergy to openly disagree with the hierarchy. This is nowhere better exemplified than in a book written by the Spanish Jesuit J.A. Ferrer Benimeli, S.J. His book, *La Masoneria Despues del Concilio* (Masonry since the [Vatican] Council), published in 1968, argues that the bans of the Papal Bulls should not be extended to the regular Grand Lodges.[37]

In 1971, two English Freemasons are specifically permitted by the Holy See to join the Church without renouncing their Mason affiliations.[38] This had happened before in many parishes, but 1971 marks the first occasion on which the Vatican had explicitly given its permission.

The capstone, however, comes in 1974. In that year, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reinterprets Article 2335 of the code of Canon Law, saying that it only pertains to Lodges known to be hostile to the Church.[39]

Further formalizing this more permissive attitude, the new code of Canon Law is published in 1983. Article 2335 is replaced in its entirety by the new Article 1374, which only forbids association with organizations known to be hostile to the Church.[40] It appears that major accommodations have been reached between the Church and the Masonic Fraternity.

The End of the Story

With the pronouncement of 1974 and the wording of the new Article 1374, there is general feeling that the door is open for cooperation and brotherhood between the Church and Freemasonry; that the period of ill will of the past two-hundred years is at an end. This optimism is soon called into question.

The twenty year period of toleration and dialog beginning with the election of John XXIII in 1958 is placed in jeopardy in 1978 with the election of the conservative John Paul II.

Only days before the new Article 1374 is to go into effect at the end of 1983, a new pronouncement ("Quaesitum est") is issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under a new Prefect, supposedly "clarifying" the 1974 pronouncement; actually reversing it. This same pronouncement also compromises the wording of Article 1374, in effect saying "The Article doesn't really mean what it says. Nothing has changed." [41] As a result many Catholics are basing their actions vis-a-vis Freemasonry on the 1974 pronouncement, ignoring the 1983 "clarification".

Since that time (1983) there have been numerous voices within the Catholic Church calling for a relaxation of the Church's attitude toward the Fraternity. Also, some dioceses are rejecting the authority of "Quaesitum est", basing their decisions regarding Masonic membership only on Canon 1374. The rationale for this stand is that "Quaesitum est" was promulgated prior to the effective date of Canon 1374; hence Canon 1374 supercedes "Quaesitum."

Nothing has emerged from the Vatican of an official nature, however. So, while the future appears promising, the end of this bit of history has not yet been written. When and how the book will be closed must rest, as must all things, in the hands of the Grand Architect of the Universe.

Notes

1. Claudy, C.H., *Introduction To Freemasonry*, Temple Publishers, Washington, 1931; p105
2. Masonically the Deity is frequently referred to as "The Grand Architect of the Universe." The term has often been siezed on by anti-Masons as "proof" that Masonry worships a strange God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Masonry, while most definitely not a religion, opens and closes its ceremonies with prayer. It uses prayer as an integral part of all its ceremonies including the conferring of its degrees. The term is used in recognition of the disparate religious traditions which frequently are attending meetings. By using a term which has no association with any specific sect or body of faith, each individual attendee is free to mentally assign his own name to the Deity; to frame the prayer in the way which is most meaningful to him. Rather than being separatist, the use of the term reflects the Craft's attempt to accommodate all religious tradition.
3. This idea is attacked in the bull "*Diturnum*"[22] published by Leo XIII in June, 1881.
4. ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA (1959), vol. XII p. 379, Inquisition, states:

"Soon the papacy managed to gain a share of the spoils, even outside the states of the Church, as is shown by the bulls ad extirpanda of Innocent IV and Alexander IV, and henceforward had, in varying proportions, a direct interest in these spoliations. In Spain this division only applied to the property of the clergy and vassals of the Church, but in France, Italy, and Germany, the property of all heretics was shared between the lay and ecclesiastical authorities. Venice alone decided that all receipts of the Holy Office should be handed over in full to the state."
5. HENNINGSTEN, G. and TEDESCHI, J., *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, Northern Illinois Univ. Press, DeKalb, 1986; p. 131, "Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries" states:

"If the Roman Holy Office was a victim of Napoleonic looting, other important provincial Inquisitions, in Florence, Milan, or Palermo, were victims of Jacobin riots or suppression of the religious establishments which housed them. The consequence was the large-scale destruction or disappearance of their records."

6. HENNINGSTEN, G. and TEDESCHI, J., op. cit., pp 144-147

7. HENNINGSTEN, G. and TEDESCHI, J., idem., The figures quoted draw only on the period of the 16th through the 18th centuries. No attempt has been made to reflect trends from the 15th or earlier periods; that is a subject for an entirely different study.

8. We know nothing of the arguments with which the Pope was persuaded to give his assent to publication, however his agreement is quite out of character. Clement XII is a friendly and outgoing man. A measure of his character and personality lies in his ability to maintain, even after his election, a warm, cordial relationship with the rabidly anticlerical Voltaire. But at the time of his election in 1730, he was already 78 years old and sick. By the time of the publication of "*In eminenti*" in the eighth year of his reign he was, in addition, blind. Despite his infirmities which required him to conduct most of the affairs of the Vatican from his bed, he was generally an able Pope. His ability, however, lay in areas of administration, trade and finance. In areas of politics and diplomacy Papal influence continued the downward spiral which had been evident during the reigns of his several predecessors.

9. "*In eminenti*" states the penalties as:

"Wherefore We command most strictly and in virtue of holy obedience, all the faithful of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity or pre-eminence, whether clerical or lay, secular or regular, even those who are entitled to specific and individual mention, that none, under any pretext or for any reason, shall dare or presume to enter, propagate or support these aforesaid societies of Liberi Muratori or Francs Massons [i.e., Freemasons], or however else they are called, or to receive them in their houses or dwellings or to hide them, be enrolled among them, joined to them, be present with them, give power or permission for them to meet elsewhere, to help them in any way, to give them in any way advice, encouragement or support either openly or in secret, directly or indirectly, on their own or through others; nor are they to urge others or tell them, incite or persuade them to be enrolled in such societies or to be counted among their number, or to be present or to assist them in any way; but they must stay completely clear of such Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles, under pain of excommunication for all the above mentioned people, which is incurred by the very deed without any declaration being required, and from which no one can obtain the benefit of absolution, other than at the hour of death, except through Ourselves or the Roman Pontiff of the time."

10. As an interesting sidelight, there are many recorded occasions when Freemasons in the military on both sides of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War would meet together as Masons, exchanging fraternal aid and assistance.

11. Some authorities state that prior to the union of the two English Grand Lodges to form the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, only Christians (but not necessarily Catholics) could become Freemasons, and that this requirement was removed to its present condition with the unification.

Mackey [Mackey, A.G., ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FREEMASONRY, Jews, Disqualification of] disputes this, stating that only in some of the German Grand Lodges, most especially the Prussian, was the restriction imposed. The restriction was removed at an early date due to objections from the rank and file membership.

12. ROBINSON, J., *Born In Blood*, M. Evans, New York, 1989

13. To cite one remarkable example, see:

LEA, H.C., *A History Of The Inquisition In The Middle Ages*, New York, Harbor Press, v. 3 p. 317:

"Portugal belonged ecclesiastically to the province of Compostella, and the Bishop of Lisbon, commissioned to investigate the Order [of the Temple], found no ground for the charges. The fate of the Templars there was exceptionally fortunate, for King Diniz, grateful for their services in his wars with the Saracens, founded a new Order, that of Jesus Christ, or de Avis, and procured its approval in 1318 from John XXII. To this safe refuge the Templars and their lands were transferred, the commander and many of the preceptors retaining their rank, and the new Order was thus merely a continuation of the old."

14. LEA, H.C., *op. cit.*, p. 316,

"In Castile no action seems to have been taken until the bull *Faciens misericordiam* of August 12, 1308, was sent to the prelates Fernando IV then ordered the Templars arrested, There was no alacrity, however, in pursuing the affair, for it was not until April 15, 1310, that Archbishop Gonzalo of Toledo cited the Master of Castile, ..., to appear before him at Toledo. ... The only judicial action [in Europe, outside of France] of which we have notice was that of the Council of Salamanca ..., where the Templars were unanimously acquitted, and the cruel orders to torture them issued the next year by Clement seem to have been disregarded."

15. NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA (1967 ed.)

CARBONARI (art.)

One of the most influential of the numerous secret societies in 19th-century Italy aiming at political and social betterment.

...

Origin, Organization, Membership. Many obscurities remain concerning the Carbonari (literally charcoal burners). ... It is doubtful, however, that the Carbonari anteceded the late 18th century. and it is possible that the society was introduced to Naples early in the 19th century by returning exiles or by French troops. ... Most Carbonari were middle-class, militaries, petty bureaucrats, or peasants. Their aim was to win national independence, institute constitutional and democratic reforms, and broaden the franchise. Professedly they were Christians, although anticlerical, and they utilized Christian symbolism. ...

16. *Qui pluribus*

Published by Pius IX on November 9, 1846

(To all bishops: on contemporary errors and the means of combatting them)

Declares objective is to protect religion; to guard papal possessions, rights, privileges. Attacks compromises of indifferentism; condemns rationalism and unlimited "progress"; condemns assault on celibacy of clergy; warns against false teachers; points out communism as contrary to natural law. Reminds rulers of duty to protect, encourage, and foster religion. Expresses his concern over the philosophical perversion of the young; warns against the contamination of anti-Catholic society.

17. Burns, E.M., *Western Civilizations; Their History and Their Culture* third edition (1949), New York, W.W. Norton, p.618 ff

18. *Multipllices inter*

Published by Pius IX on September 25, 1865

(At the Consistory: condemnation of Freemasonry and other secret societies)

Accuses Masonic association of conspiracy against the Church, God, and civil society; reproves Catholic sovereigns for not uprooting this sect; attributes revolutions and uprisings to Masonic activity. Warns against designs of secret societies; denounces clandestine meetings, secret oath, sanctions against violation of rules; renews previous condemnations.

19. The biographical information on Pope Leo XIII is taken from: *ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA*, 1959, vol. 13, p. 928 ff

20. Perugia at that time was a known center of anti-Papal secret societies, so it may be assumed that it was during his two years in this post where he was first exposed to the Carbonari. It is possible that he was also first exposed to Freemasonry during this period. While it is not known if there were Lodges in Perugia at that time, there was a significant level of dual membership between the two organizations.

21. The camerlingo is chief financial officer of the Vatican. Always a Cardinal. Between the death of a Pope and the election of his successor, or at any other time when there is a vacancy in the Papacy, the camerlingo is in charge of Vatican affairs.

22. *Diturnum*

Published by Leo XIII on June 29, 1881 (On the origin of civil power)

Maintains Christianity is safeguard to political order; right to rule comes from God; people respect legitimate authority; rulers seek common good. Denies theory that civil society has arisen from free consent of men; asserts all authority comes from God even though men have a certain freedom to choose such forms of government as they deem necessary; condemns naturalism as culminating in socialism, communism, nihilism, leading to government based on force and fear. Urges bishops to instruct laity, to warn them against forbidden sects, secret societies.

23. *Etsi nos*

Published by Leo XIII on February 15, 1882
(To the bishops of Italy: on conditions in Italy)

Sets forth dangers to Catholicism: interference with Church; expulsion of religious from convents; confiscation of Church property; sanction of civil marriage; elimination of Church control of education. Maintains Catholicism and nation fall together: Christianity inherent in public life, source of unity, safeguard of justice. Urges bishops to stir people to work for preservation of the faith by: 1) promotion of associations for religious instruction, Catholic life, charity; 2) use of press to disseminate truth; 3) care in selection and education of priests.

24. *Officio sanctissimo*

Published by Leo XIII on December 22, 1887
(To the bishops of Bavaria: on the condition of the Church in Bavaria)

Surveys history of Bavaria; deplores present hostility toward Church; offers counsel. Stresses education of clergy in tradition of Fathers of the Church: appropriate to vocation, to contemporary apostolate of example, teaching, refutation of error; emphasizes obedience to hierarchy, respect for civil authority. Urges education of children under auspices of Church; warns against Freemasonry.

25. *Dall'alto dell'Apostolico seggio [Ab Apostolici]*

Published by Leo XIII on October 15, 1890
(To the bishops and people of Italy: on the destructive work of the Freemasons in Italy)

Recapitulates facts of warfare of Masons against Church: overthrow of civil power of papacy; suppression of religious orders; obligatory military service for clerics; confiscation of Church property; proclamation of civil marriage; State control of education. Enumerates remedies: formation of learned and holy clergy; Christian education of youth; extirpation of evil doctrines: defense of Catholic truths; restoration of Christian family life; exposure of conflict as essentially an attack on religion.

26. *Custodi di quella fede*

(to the Italian people: Freemasonry in Italy)

Published by Leo XIII on December 8, 1892

Details method of working against Freemasonry. Warns Christians to be on guard against first steps; parents to guard homes against infiltration; laity to shun non-religious societies. Urges setting up Catholic schools in opposition to neutral; charity against philanthropy; religious asylums against houses of debauchery; Catholic against impious press; Catholic congresses against sectarian gatherings; Catholic circles against lodges; mutual aid societies against Masonic counterpart.

27. *Inimica vis*

(To the bishops of Italy: Freemasonry in Italy)

Published by Leo XIII on December 8, 1892

Reiterates urgent necessity of combating evils of Freemasonry; condemns claim that the State is superior to the Church and can control property and functions of the Church; entreats bishops to work for conversion of victims of the sect, to arouse in clergy and people zealous love for religion.

28. *Praeclara*

(To the rulers and nations of the world: appeal for religious unity)

Published by Leo XIII on June 20, 1894

Urges union with Church of Rome; calls for unity of faith and government. Appeals to separated Eastern churches, to recent schismatic groups, to those in union with Rome (as safeguard). Warns against Regalism and Freemasonry; enumerates benefits of unity.

29. *Annum ingressi*

(To the bishops of the world: review of his pontificate)

Published by Leo XIII on March 19, 1902

Reviews twenty-five years of pontificate; warns that liberty, peace are illusory apart from religion. Recalls instructions on Christian philosophy, human liberty, Christian marriage, Freemasonry, nature of the State,

Christian constitution of States, socialism, labor question, duties of Christian citizens, and analogous subjects. Encourages bishops to continued resistance of persecutions. Describes existing conditions: disorder in social relations, in family life; prevalence of socialism and anarchism; unjust warring of strong nations against weak; increase of armaments. Urges resistance to atheism and Freemasonry; calls on press for defense of Church; exhorts parents and teachers to give Christian education to children, public officials to demonstrate firmness in defense of principle, integrity of life.

30. K•bler-Ross, E., *On Death And Dying*, MacMillan, New York, 1974 LC #69-11789

31. *Humanum genus*

Published by Leo XIII on April 10, 1884

(On Freemasonry)

Reviews warnings of previous pontificates; recalls own refutations of Masonic opinions. Treats specifically of Masonic society and of organized groups bound to Freemasonry by community of purpose and thought. Defines aim as overthrow of Christian order; teaching as naturalistic: human reason supreme, teaching and authority of Church of no civil consequence; no possible certainty about God, soul, immortality; complete equality of all men; State control of marriage, education; moral license. Confirms previous condemnations of Freemasonry; forbids Catholics to join Masonic sect; prescribes Christian philosophy as protection against error; urges clergy and laity to win men to the Church; recommends membership in Third Order of St. Francis, restoration of Catholic guilds or associations.

32. As one example, "Humanum genus" contains the following:

"Nay, there are in them many secrets which are by law carefully concealed not only from the profane, but also from many associated, viz., the last and intimate intentions, the hidden and unknown chiefs, the hidden and secret meetings, the resolutions and methods and means by which they will be carried into execution. Hence the difference of rights and of duties among the members; hence the distinction of orders and grades and the severe discipline by which they are ruled."

This particular canard is usually attributed to Leo Taxil. "Humanum genus" was published in 1884, however; Taxil did not publish his embellished form of this slander until 1891.

33. Summary of that portion of the pastoral letter of December 7, 1884 which treats of Freemasonry.

Third plenary council of Bishops, held in Baltimore issues a pastoral letter completely supporting "Humanum genus", condemning Freemasonry and all "secret societies". Strongly discourages any lay questioning of the matter, apparently blocking any possibility for exception or compromise; "Whenever, therefore, the Church has spoken authoritatively with regard to any society, her decision ought to be final for every Catholic. He ought to know that the Church has not acted hastily or unwisely, or mistakenly; he should be convinced that any worldly advantages which he might derive from his membership of such society, would be a poor substitute for the membership, the sacraments, and the blessings of the Church of Christ; ... "

34. In 1917 Benedict XV promulgates new code of Canon Law containing Art. 2335, which condemns Freemasons to automatic and irrevocable excommunication.

[I have been unable to find the text of Canon 2335 (1917) in English. The following is a precis prepared for use by the Catholic faithful.]

d) Those who enroll themselves in Masonic sects or other similar associations, the very purpose of whose being, or at least whose activity is concerned with plotting against all lawful authority, and especially against that of the Church, are also guilty of a crime of disobedience. The penalty in these cases is excommunication l.s., reserved simply to the Holy See. Clerics and religious are to be punished as set down in the previous paragraph, besides the fact that such cases are also referred to the Holy Office.

35. The pertinent pronouncements of Paul VI

Unitatis redintegratio

Published on November 21, 1964

Decrees positive Catholic response to ecumenism as a means to bring non-Catholic believers into the Church.

Nostra Aetate

Published on October 28, 1965

Decrees tolerance for, and an exchange of ideas with, non-Catholic beliefs and philosophies.

36. "*Dignitatis humanae*" declaration published by Vatican II on December 7, 1965

"The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. Freedom of this kind means that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every

human power so that, within due limits, nobody is forced to act against his convictions nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in associations with others. The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right."

37. *La Masoneria Despues del Concilio* (Masonry since the [Vatican] Council) published in Spain (1968). Author, J.A. Ferrer Benimeli, S.J.;

"... regular Freemasonry, 'based on belief in God, could not stand condemned under the Papal Bulls', whose charges should be directed only against the irregular Grand Lodges which preach and practise atheism and anti-clericalism."

38. Carr, Harry, *The Freemason At Work*, Lewis Masonic, 1976 (rev. 1992)
In 1971 Bro. Carr again sought an interview with Cardinal Heenan,... Bro. Carr recorded, as nearly as possible, the Archbishop's own words:

"We had a letter some time ago from one of my priests, asking for guidance about a Protestant in his parish, married to a Roman Catholic lady, their children all being raised very respectably in the Catholic faith. The husband, a freemason, out of love for his wife and family, was anxious to be received into the Catholic faith, but without having to give up his Freemasonry. The priest had spoken very highly of both the husband and the wife.

"I answered to the effect that this was a matter for the Holy See to decide, and that I would write to ask for an official ruling, which I did. I am delighted to say that the reply was all that we could have desired. The husband could be received into the Church of Rome 'without restriction', this meaning that he would not have to give up his Freemasonry, and that he would be deemed as good a Catholic as any born in the faith who have practiced it all their lives.

"Within a few weeks after this, a masonic friend of the husband, in the same parish and in exactly the same circumstances, made a similar application and 'both have now been received into the faith'."

39. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith pulls the teeth from Art. 2335 of the Code of Canon Law. (July 19, 1974)

"The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ... has ruled that Canon 2335 no longer automatically bars a Catholic from membership of masonic groups ... And so, a Catholic who joins the freemasons is excommunicated only if the policies and actions of the freemasons in his area are known to be hostile to the Church ...".

This document was signed by Cardinal Seper, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

" ... Suffice to say that in July 1974 Cardinal Heenan received a communication from the Holy See announcing that the Papal ban had been lifted. Roman Catholics everywhere [but not Officers of the Church of Rome] are now able to join the Craft without the penalty of excommunication and already a number of excellent Roman Catholic Candidates have joined the Craft in England." [See Carr's, "The Freemason at Work" pages 277-281].

40. Canon 1374 states that:

"A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty; one who promotes or takes office in such an association is to be punished with an interdict."

41. *Quaesitum est*

(Declaration on Masonic Associations published on November 26, 1983)

The first three paragraphs suffice to give the flavor of the pronouncement:

"It has been asked whether there has been any change in the Church's decision in regard to Masonic associations since the new Code of Canon Law does not mention them expressly, unlike the previous code.

"This sacred congregation is in a position to reply that this circumstance is due to an editorial criterion which was followed also in the case of other associations likewise unmentioned inasmuch as they are contained in wider categories.

"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."

This pronouncement, made during the tenure of Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, returns all of the previous condemnations of Freemasonry; only the punishment meted out to Catholics joining Masonic bodies is changed. It completely nullifies the earlier pronouncement made under the prefecture of Cardinal Seper in 1974, and compromises Canon 1374 in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

Since it was published prior to the effective date of the Canon, however, some Catholic dioceses are holding that the Canon supersedes it. On that basis, they are granting permission for Catholics to join Masonic bodies