



A View of Masonry

Cannon Lodge No. 104

True Masonic ritual, as it always was intended to do, teaches the great lessons of life: the importance of honor and integrity, of being a person on whom others can rely, of being both trusting and trustworthy, of realizing that you have a spiritual nature as well as a physical nature, of the importance of self control, of knowing how to love and be loved, of knowing how to keep confidential what others tell you so that they can "open up" without fear. In short, Masonic ritual teaches us to reach for a higher standard in conducting our lives.

Freemasonry has sometimes been referred to as a "secret society." This is an inaccurate statement. Freemasons certainly don't make a secret of the fact that they are members of their Lodges. We wear rings, lapel pins, and tie clasps with Masonic emblems like the Square and Compasses, the best-known of Masonic signs that, logically, recall our early symbolic roots in stonemasonry. Masonic buildings are clearly marked and usually listed in the phone book. The only thing that could be referred to as "secret" -- although we prefer the word "private" -- are the methods of recognition such as grips, words, signs, and our ritual by which we induct new members.

Over the centuries, Freemasonry has developed into a worldwide social and community service organization, emphasizing personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy. During the late 1700's, it was one of the organizations most responsible for spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment: the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual, the right of all persons to worship as they choose the formation of democratic governments, and the importance of public education. Masons supported the first public schools in both Europe and America.

The 3.5 million Masons worldwide continue to help men and women face the problems of the 21st century by building bridges of brotherhood and instilling in our communities ideals for a better tomorrow.