

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope you are all staying safe and sane as we continue into each phase of this pandemic. Stay healthy and continue to reach out to your members and common ties. Keep up the good work.

This is Monday. As I prepared to start my message to you, there is so much I wished to say after our Sunday Zooms. From my room, I attended the installation of officers of Mesa Chapter Order of DeMolay, then our regular meeting of Grand Chapter elected officers.

Before I started, I thought to open my e-mails and found a post to the New Mexico Masons from RW Brother Bill Pogue SGW. What he said conveyed so much of what I wanted to say that I called him and asked that it be posted to our face book page and OES Web page and he agreed, so the following is in its entirety from our Senior Grand Warden RW Bill Pogue. Thank you, Brother Bill: Brethren,

We are set in the middle of a pandemic that will change the course of our history and the manner in which we approach ourselves and our relation to the world around us. We had settled into a world of social and intellectual arrogance. We convinced ourselves that we had conquered the atom and begun the age of artificial intelligence. We convinced ourselves that human intelligence and ingenuity had conquered nature. Then came a simple virus...

A strain of the Covid 2 virus mutated, became Covid-19 and placed the world in panic. This virus demonstrated its ability to jump from animal to human and back; from human to human with astonishing rapidity: and capacity to inflict lethality on a recently unknown scale.

We reacted with governmental requirements of social spacing and business lockdowns. These showed positive effects. When governmental agencies responded to economic and political pressure and began to open commerce, only then did they require that we wear facial masks in public. We are doing what we believe to be all that is humanly possible to contain this pandemic.

What we are missing are some basic truths: While we have been concentrating on conquering science and technology, God (aka nature) has controlled everything all along. While we have promoted the idea that human thought and intelligence can overcome all obstacles, we forgot that we cannot anticipate all the challenges that nature has in store. When we believe that we are all powerful, we realize that we can only accomplish what is humanly possible.

Technology has become increasingly reliant on science to facilitate human interaction. First, telegraphy and telephone separated us from human to human interaction. This was followed by the internet and the applications that gave us the illusion that we were electronically if not communally interconnected.

Then came Covid 19. Our confidence in our intellectual, scientific and technological ability to predict and control our future has been undermined. We retreated behind technological adaptations. We retreated to Face book, Twitter, video games and Zoom. We became virtual human beings. We thought we had conquered God. But then we realized we needed God. We needed human interaction and we needed ourselves.



A simple biological adaptation has turned our existence into chaos. Our rules for survival changed. We left the world of mortal certainty and entered the world of existential uncertainty. The moral, ethical and business “situational ethics” devolved into provisional hoarding and “survival of the fittest”. Our confidence in ourselves and our fellowman is being tested. Our belief that we can predict and control our world is disputed by natural facts. We no longer can rely on human control of nature to predict our future.

If we lose that belief in mortal certainty, we can only enter the world of faith. When we enter the world of faith, we have only our reliance in the God we choose to worship and then of ourselves. We can enter the world of faith through the churches, mosques and synagogues in which we approach our faith. But where can we approach our faith in our God and in ourselves? Freemasonry offers that opportunity.

Freemasonry promotes a core set of values, beginning in a belief in our Supreme Being, and belief in ourselves. Freemasons believe in self-reliance protected by our Creator. We acknowledge our government’s efforts to protect and provide for us but prefer to do those things ourselves. The tenets we hold were formed by our strongly held faith in a Supreme being and the values and standards that we hold as representatives of our faiths.

We are challenged by a world in turmoil, but, can take assurance in the Masonic standards and beliefs that have provided confidence and direction through many centuries. While avoiding discussion of specific beliefs, the strength of Freemasonry is that none of our beliefs involve “situational ethics”. Our moral and ethical standards should care not for the situation, but for the man.

We are challenged as lodges, men and Freemasons. The world we knew in January 2020 is not the world we know today. Most of the medical, social and environmental realities we assumed in January have been disproved. What stands is that Masonic values and ethics have not changed. Freemasonry still exists in its non-situational form. One man was asked, “What animal is the strongest, the Lion or the Tiger?” The answer was, “The Tiger, because he is the largest and strongest of the big cats.” The next question was, “Which is the likeliest to survive?” The answer was, “The Lion, because he works as a Pride. Our “survival of the fittest” standard is that we stand together within our values and ritual.

Most of those who bested the Spanish Flu pandemic or the Great Depression knew that their greatest challenge was not to overcome the flu or economic depression, but to overcome themselves. Our challenge is to reach back to gain momentum to go forward. We have the choice of seeing our current situation as a handicap to Freemasonry or the advantage to regain our identity as standard bearers of integrity and morality and improve our brotherhood. I hold to the saying that, “If you can’t run with the big dogs, stay on the porch.” Freemasonry is and has always been about leading the big dogs.

We are confronted by many unknowns. Unknowns cause fears. And fears cause doubts. We have only ourselves to overcome the fears of COVID-19 unknowns and return our efforts to overcoming that adversity. But we have more to do. We have a responsibility to our communities and to ourselves. We have concentrated our efforts on maintaining our membership. What we need to do is regain our leadership. I believe America and the world have placed their faith in human ingenuity and technology. What we represent is human values integrity.

“Lead, Follow or get out of my way,” but that is a standard that we need to guide our path.

Please join us in the Lead.

Fraternally,

Bill Pogue  
Senior Grand Warden

Hope to see you all personally soon, so stay safe, stay healthy.

Fraternally and with Star Love,  
Don Sulzemeier  
WGP