

The Mentoring Corner (January, 2021)

Hello, Brethren:

As we write this, we are still ruminating about *the unacceptable events* that took place in *Washington DC, two days ago*, when *mobs invaded and vandalized the Capitol building*. As a citizen, *I cannot accept or justify such acts*. As a Mason, my *Obligation of Love of Country compels me to take action*. This article tries to analyze the issue from *a Masonic point of view*.

This is not a political issue. Whether we support or antagonize President Trump, or we feel indifferent about him, we should be disturbed with the images of the Capitol we saw in our TV screens. *Citizens have the right to peacefully protest*, whatever their reasons are (be them about Black Lives Matter, or the Presidential Election results), and whether we agree with them or not (*this falls into our Obligation to be Tolerant of others*, especially of those who disagree with us).

But events have exposed that *inside these protests* there are at least *two types of participants*. Probably most are true *believers* in the justice of their protest. And these tend to be *peaceful and lawful* individuals. But a few *others infiltrate* these movements to *advance their own interests*, be them personal or political: to steal, vandalize or create problems. *Brotherly Love Obligation* does *not cover those individuals*. And it is precisely because of the latter, that *we are contrived to act*.

The *Social Fabric* is formed both *by individuals, and by their organizations*. The grouping of the latter is called *Civil Society*. *Social Fabric provides unwritten laws that regulate the behavior* of its members. We do not steal or kill because we are put in jail. We do not use foul language or take our clothes off in public because it is *socially unacceptable*: we are *censured and ostracized*.

The leaders of Civil Society could have made declarations or taken Ads in major newspapers *condemning*, in no uncertain terms, *the entry and desecration of the Capitol building*. The *failure to publicly react* to this unacceptable action *signals their weakness and ineffectiveness*.

A *strong Civil Society response* is far more than cosmetic. It *sends a message* to both, our *political leaders*, and to individuals participating in protests. The former *care about re-election*, and will take into consideration *voter's opinion*. Good faith *demonstrators* will be *more careful* to join, and *organizers* will become *aware of public rejection*, which *goes against their intent*.

Freemasonry constitutes a special case. We are not just another irrelevant club. We are an *Institution that prides itself in core principles* such as *Love of Country, Tolerance and Brotherly Love*. Our *principles*, in addition to being *Obligations*, *constitute a formal part of our laws and regulations*. *This latter and particular condition differentiates The Craft* from other groups, and has both a positive and a negative side. The *first side attracts good members*: we want to belong to something noble. The *second side* is that, *if our proclaimed Institutional values are seen* by the outsiders *as empty statements*, they will portray Freemasonry in a *very poor light*. And that is not good for *recruiting or retaining new members*, or for self-image. *We need to do something*.

This *Mentor proposes developing a series of simple Zoom presentations* about a theme at the core of US founding: *the Federalist Papers* (<https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text>). They discuss *the main concepts of the American Constitution*, document that governs everything. But, how much *do we actually know* about these papers? *How many* were they? *When* were they written? *Why? By whom?* We could prepare a cycle of *Zoom talks* and *open them to the public* at large. This would *provide The Craft good community exposure*. If interested, send me an Email.

May GAOTU keep us safe until we become vaccinated and can again meet in our Lodges.

Jorge L. Romeu
Onondaga District Mentoring Chair