

Sous le laurier et l'olivier 2025



Some word from the Grand Commander



The National Supreme Council of France publishes a newsletter for all members of its Jurisdiction. This publication, which became bimonthly after the COVID crisis, provides information on the life of our Jurisdiction (calendar, events, creations or anniversaries Workshop materials, etc.) and its projects, as well as messages or guidelines set by myself and the Supreme Council. It thus serves as a link between all French Scottish Brothers, demonstrating the vitality and energy of our Order.

Each issue also includes the work of Brothers of all degrees, showcasing the diversity of approaches, experiences and insights into general themes of Scottish Rite Freemasonry or elements of the 4° degree ritual (so that everyone can benefit). It is therefore a space where freedom of thought flourishes, while respecting the principles and values that bring us together and inspire us.

I wanted these Works to be published annually and made available to the public – including non-Masons – via our website.

Fraternal regards

Très Puissant Souverain Grand Commandeur



Christian HERVÉ

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The Soul and Intellectual Knowledge through Visionary Narrative

by Secret Master S.B., 4th

The visionary narrative has been originated in the thought of Persian philosophers, the first of whom to develop it was Avicenna, born 980 and died 1037 AD, who was followed, notably, nearly two centuries later by Shorawardi.

This theme of visionary narrative thus developed in Persia, a land that had welcomed the last students of the Neoplatonic school after its closure by Justinian.

Persia, after centuries of its own culture, beliefs and thought, found itself under Muslim rule, and Avicenna developed a philosophy at the crossroads of Persian tradition and Islam, combining Faith and philosophy, particularly that derived from Aristotle, and combining faith and reason.

The visionary narrative relates the inner experience of the initiate and, in this sense, is an initiatory tale.

As the initiatory path can only be personal, intimate, fundamental and profound for each initiate, the narrative form seems particularly appropriate.

The narrator does not speak in generalities, using concepts that appeal to the intellect, to passive reason, as is the case with philosophy, but recounts his experience, his feelings, which appeal to our intuition, to what Aristotle calls the active intellect, that active part of ourselves capable of grasping the intelligible.

The narrator is both the subject and the content of the story.

We are not just flesh, we are body, soul and spirit.

However, the immortal soul feels alien to this world. It is disoriented, confused by the common norms of this sensible world.

Its goal, its purpose, is to return to its source, to return to the Divine.

The soul cannot make this journey, this return, this conversion as Plotinus calls it, to find the source from which everything emanates, because it is imprisoned, entirely devoted to governing the body.

But the body perceives the world only through the senses, senses that we must mistrust, as they allow us only a partial, even biased, perception of our surroundings.

Our senses set our intellect in motion, nourish our intellect, our ability to reason.

Our observation, through these senses, of the spectacle of the wonders of nature and our understanding of them through the liberal arts allow us to apprehend the laws of nature, the rules that govern our surroundings, including ourselves, with everything having its place, its right place.

We then perceive here below, in the sensible world, the reflection of that world above, a world to which the soul, that part of ourselves, aspires to return.

However, this perception through reason alone is not sufficient, since reason alone, limited to the sensible world, is unable to access the world of ideas.

Worse still, reason alone becomes a weight that holds us back in the material, sensible world and prevents us from taking off, from journeying towards the intelligible, towards the Orient.

This journey towards the source, towards the light, this return from multiplicity to unity, cannot be achieved abruptly, for the light can blind those who wish to emerge from the darkness of their cave.

It must necessarily be achieved in stages, step by step.

For Avicenna, God emanated an Intelligence which is the primordial Being, which he associates with Gabriel, then for and because of this first Intelligence, God created other intelligences, the angels.

The soul will travel towards the Orient, towards its creative source, through ten celestial spheres, each sphere opening up a level of understanding, but each sphere also representing a final stage for the soul, as the journey is so difficult and requires perseverance without any certainty of reward.

The Orient is not a geographical East, but in my opinion, should be understood as the 'orientation' of the soul, that is, an inclination to leave the Occident, the material world, the sensible world.

An orientation taken in the sense of a direction that will be followed by action.

The initiate, in his quest for this return to Unity, embarks on an active process that begins when the soul becomes aware of itself.

Before climbing the mountain, one must descend to the bottom of the well within oneself and visit one's inner land.

There, at the very bottom, at the centre of oneself, stands the 'true self', the 'Self', the companion, the guide on the journey, the star that blazes in its eternal perfection.

Is knowing oneself not detaching oneself from the illusions that surround us? More than that, is it not detaching oneself from our ability to delude ourselves, to deceive ourselves?

Isn't it finding one's alter ego, that other in the mirror?

Finding this Self, one's angel as described by Avicenna, is finding the companion with whom to walk this journey, just as we walked together during our passage to the second degree.

Isn't it the marriage of reason and intuition, of two poles present within us, inseparable, opposed in their understanding level yet complementary?

The earthly, material, sensitive man retrieves the heavenly man.

Ultimately, finding this companion, this angel, this heavenly and eternal, perfect Self, this blazing star, is resuming the inner dialogue with that part of ourselves which alone possesses the necessary language to welcome the Divine, since itself is an emanation of the Divine.

It is being able to detach oneself from the objects onto which desires and passions were projected.

After abandoning these metals, it is perceiving and reading objects on another level. They become tools on the path to Knowledge.

They become symbols, vectors of intangible messages, the elucidation of which marks each time a step forward, a stage in the journey towards the light.

Striving to find the idea behind the symbol so that the being in potential, in becoming, still undetermined in its potentialities, can become a being in action, in meaning.

ooOoo

From Silence to Secret

by Secret Master E.C., 4th

By embarking on the path of Freemasonry, I chose to follow a path steeped in 'symbolism', that of the Alliance between Men and the Divine, of Universal Brotherhood. Today, I am a Secret Master and I continue on my path towards Others, one step at a time.

In Biblical Hebrew, 'Silence' is often translated by the terms Sha Ma, which mean listening and obedience. This work is individual but by no means solitary! When this Silence is achieved, it makes room for the Reception of the Word. Silence therefore appears to me as the First true Step towards Others (I).

The term 'Secret' means 'what is set apart', 'put aside'. Paradoxically, however, this Secret is what binds me to Others and forms the basis of the Fraternal Covenant through the loyalty it imposes. At the level of Secret Master,

Silence seems to change in nature... while paradoxically remaining the condition for Receiving the Word. It is no longer a method of learning practised individually in order to better receive the Word of Others... But a Duty towards Others, to faithfully respect and protect the Secret that binds us... and which has not yet been revealed (II).

Silence: from individual work... to collective duty

Silence: individual work and a Duty that conditions the reception of the Word

In the silence and darkness of the North Column, I as an Apprentice learned to observe, to listen, to immerse myself in a Duty that I now understand as the essential prerequisite for the realisation of my Masonic Path: obedience. I agreed to remain silent, certainly because it is deemed a prerequisite for meditation and internalisation (V.I.T.R.I.O.L., Plumb Line), but also to immerse myself in the rules I had committed to follow.

In the following degrees, although I had left darkness behind and begun my Path towards the Light, Silence continued to be a Duty: on the one hand because I was only allowed to speak when authorised to do so, and on the other hand because of my oath to protect and respect the duty of absolute discretion governing our work and rituals.

But being silent is also welcoming the words of others. In the dream of Gibeon, Solomon asks God to give him 'a listening heart'. The divine response reveals a link to be discovered between listening and wisdom: Since you have asked this... I will do as you say: I will give you a wise and discerning heart... «

If my Masonic Work consists in making my Heart a place pleasing to God, I at first must make room for Him. If it consists in finding the Lost Word, I first must silence all agitation and eliminate all disturbance:

In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was toubou-bobou, darkness upon the face of the abyss, and the breath of Elohim hovered over the face of the waters.

Without this, the Word cannot irrigate my Heart. Silence creates the place where all presence resides, without which no word would have a meaning (Joseph Rassam).

The Silence of the Secret Master: a Duty that binds me to Others

At the Grade of Secret Master, Silence is a Duty. *We must inform you that the Masonic discretion you swore to observe during your initiation and at each of your salary increases is even stricter in this new degree.* It seals the Covenant that binds me to my Brothers, and one day will give me access to a Secret that forms the foundation of Our Temple under construction... the Supreme Alliance between Men.

I have been told that *I will be, in this Lodge, like an Apprentice in a Lodge of the first degree.* In this degree, I learn *to keep the Secret, to be obedient and to remain faithful.* My lips have been sealed with the Seal of King Solomon, that of the Secret.

The symbol of King Solomon's Seal thus reveals the Supreme Unity, but above all, the compelling need to let one's soul be fertilised by the Spirit.

The Ivory Key that has been entrusted to me, which symbolises both possible access to secrets, to the Holy of Holies, to the very seat of Divine Light, is placed against my Heart, the seat of the soul. The *Balustrade* that separates me from the Holy of Holies is only my inability to open my Heart to this Word.

Secret Master and not Master of the Secret: from silence to promise

Obvious signs of God's Presence: the promise of the Secret and not the Secret itself

As a Levite Master, I am *the faithful guardian of the Holy of Holies and one of the seven appointed to replace our Respectable Brother Hiram-Abi in order to continue the construction of the glorious edifice.* I was reminded that until now I had seen only *the thick wall that covers the Holy of Holies of the Temple of God...* That my loyalty, my zeal and my constancy deserved the favour that I had been granted.

A treasure was revealed to me, the Holy of Holies. To the question: *What did you see when you entered the Holy of Holies?*, I replied: *Clear signs of God's presence.* I had indeed seen a Triangle in a large Circle, in the centre of which was a Blazing Star that dazzled me with holy reverence. In this Light was the *Great and ineffable name of the Great Architect of the Universe.*

I was then reminded that Moses alone knew its pronunciation, which he had received from God, and that Moses then decreed by law that the Word should never be spoken, which meant that the true pronunciation was lost. My quest took on a new meaning at that precise moment: I am searching for that true pronunciation, the 'Knowledge of that ineffable Word'. My quest is for the lost Word, the name of God.

A Silence that precedes and consecrates the Secret: the Creative Word

It seems to me that Silence continues beyond my current Degree to constitute the foundation of my legitimacy to pursue my quest for the Secret.

Silence appears as both the beginning and the end of Creation. Silence precedes Creation and its termination. In the same way, when Silence reigns within the Columns, and then among the Secret Masters, isn't it because the work has been completed or perhaps suspended ?

Once again, I am brought back to what appears to me to be the perfect synthesis of the Initiatic Path: the Prologue of Saint John. The Logos, the Word and creative will of God, divine and universal reason, is intended to rejoin the divine part of my soul: transcendence and immanence.

Conclusion

When the Holy of Holies was shown to me, I saw in the centre of the Symbols a Hebrew letter representing the ineffable name of the Great Architect of the Universe. I was also told that this name is above Human Forces. I am wondering. Is the completion of the Temple only possible through the remembrance of the Sacred Word ? Can the Word only be found in Death... this *Ultimate Initiation* ?

More questions flood my mind. If Death is the Ultimate Initiation, can the completion of my Masonic Path only be achieved after this Ultimate Initiation? Is Death the ultimate symbol of my Union with my Brothers, of my Unity with God? I am not sure that this questioning mode is appropriate for a conclusion...

In the Master's Degree, I discovered the Silence of Death, that of Hiram. During the ceremony in which I was welcomed into the 4th Degree, I was once again confronted with the Death of Hiram, but this time, there was no reminder of the misdeeds of evil Companions, no connection to earthly life. I was entering the Afterlife, requiring me to leave behind my sensibilities, feelings, thoughts and desires. *On that day, you will know that I am in You and that you are in Me.* With the Secret, I discover a beginning, a new world, where the beginning and the end come together, Silence and Secret form One, inherent to Knowledge...

ooOoo

Secret, Obedience and Fidelity

by Secret Master D.S., 4th

During the ceremony of my reception into the degree of Master Secret, I was told:

you will be in this lodge, like an Apprentice in a Blue lodge, without obligation to respect silence but to keep the secret.

An injunction for a request for obedience and fidelity.

Reception into the 4th degree requires three things: *to keep the secret, to be obedient and to remain faithful.* A threefold sentence that invites and obliges us. The Seal of Secrecy symbolically sealed my lips as Worshipful Master. My duty is to keep the secret. This requirement commits me to high moral values: I swear an oath never to reveal any of the secrets of this degree to anyone in the world other than those who are entitled to know them, and after being duly authorised to do so. While Masonic doctrine calls for discretion, it is even stricter in this degree of Secret Master. What happens if I break this golden rule? Isn't secrecy meant to be revealed? After all, an undisclosed secret is like unshared wealth or a lost treasure. The Gospel according to Saint Luke lifts the veil on the destiny of a secret:

Everything that is hidden will be revealed, and everything that is secret will be known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light of day, and what you have whispered in someone's ear in a closed room will be shouted from the rooftops.

So let us take care to keep it deep within our hearts, in that sacred space that no one can penetrate, an intimate place where the truth of being resides.

A secret was Prometheus' weapon. It was for offering it to Zeus that he was delivered without Heracles incurring the wrath of the supreme god. The fate of gods and men relied on this secret. Every legend has its secrets. What would the Odyssey be without the "Trojan horse"? A Homeric epic without the psychological lesson of cunning? A secret, once revealed, acquires an incomparable power of domination and confers a feeling of superiority. *Know thyself, and thou shalt know the Universe and the Gods.*

In philosophy, not knowing a secret does not mean being ignorant, but being wise, because one knows that one does not know. It is a sign of sound judgement. Personally, it pushes me to go further, in a kind of immanent, perpetual and progressive quest for knowledge. I am developing a skill that I have definitively adopted, that of learning to learn at any time and in any place. According to Ralph Waldo Emerson¹

No man can learn what he is not prepared to learn... A chemist may reveal his most precious secrets to a carpenter, who will never be any wiser for it, secrets that he would never reveal to a chemist for anything in the world. God always protects us from premature ideas. We are prevented from seeing things that are obvious to our eyes until the time comes when we are mentally mature ; then we see them, and the time when we did not see them is like a dream.

Keeping the secret, being obedient and remaining faithful: obedience is a matter of duty and adhesion to the principles of the Secret Master. Yet obedience seems incompatible with freedom. I suggest another perspective : to obey is also to listen, to accept not to remain self-centred. It is showing openness and even trust towards one's neighbour. Leadership and followership are two sides of the same coin.

Reading the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Christ, though he was a son, learned obedience through his sufferings. And thus, having reached his fulfilment, he became the leader of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. My duty is not to conform through obedience alone, but to form my own opinion, to shape my thought until it dictates my conduct, and until the will of the universe is done. Obedience is an act of faith in the order of the World, to which every initiate contributes and where he will find his place. It is an act of alliance, humility, peace and freedom, to achieve true harmony, within and around oneself. We are part of a process of liberation that we can identify as the gift of self that allows us to remain faithful to the quest for the Lost Word.

Fidelity is nourished by the commitment of a Secret Master to fulfil his duty, as well as by love for his Brothers, for he knows its richness and positive impact. Indeed, love is the only thing in the world that grows when shared. Fidelity engages our moral conscience; it implies loyalty to oneself and to all our Brothers. However, I make a distinction between loyalty and fidelity. The adjective 'loyal' refers to 'law', that is to say, to reason, while fidelity is a matter of the heart. It is the permanence of a feeling, whereas loyalty is the respect of a contract with a beginning and an end. To remain faithful is to take part in the cycle of life and our relationships in complete harmony.

By passing from Square to Compass, from matter to spirit, the Secret Master has changed dimension. From this coveted secret that will reveal the invisible, singular and still incommunicable link with God. From obedience we draw the strength and self-sacrifice of a warrior of light who knows that *a great dream is made up of a multitude of elements, just as sunlight is the sum of the millions of rays that compose it* Faithful, a Secret Master knows that in the silence of his heart lives the order that guides him.

He carries in his heart the Ivory Key, which opens the field of spiritual knowledge. It allows for the understanding of the entire universe and its mysteries. Provided that I prove myself worthy, with the will always within me to welcome the light that will dispel the darkness.

The brightness of day has dispelled the darkness and the great light begins to appear, for no one can reach dawn without passing through the path of night.

Ordo ab Chao, the concepts of order and chaos are linked like the light of day and the darkness of night. They are the expression of a duality that is intended to be transcended in perfect harmony, from inner disorder to right thinking, until the birth of the awakened being.

The Essence of the Scottish Rite

by the Most Illustrious Brother M.-H.C., 33rd

The work in the Lodge of Perfection – and more generally in any Scottish Lodge – most often focuses on the initiatory content of the degree practised, on the symbolic elements that compose it, the formulas or phrases pronounced or exchanged, and more generally on everything that manifests itself in the implementation of its ritualic scheme.

This work, both individual and collective, is part of a broader process of progression through the different degrees of the Rite. Soon the Secret Master knows that his work will lead him from degree to degree to that of Grand Elected of the Sacred Vault, then, in Chapter, to that of Rose-Croix Knight and finally, in Areopagus, to that of Grand Elected Knight Kadosh, the ultimate initiation in Scottish Masonry.

And, if he does not know it from the outset, he will quickly understand at each degree will correspond three rituals (opening, closing and reception), a legendary story based on a myth, specific initiatory content, particular decorations, instruction, an age, passwords or sacred words, a march, a battery, colours... The temporality and spatiality of the Workshop may change, the names and titles, the settings, the words, the ages may be different, the degrees will be based on and nourished by various traditions: *mutatis mutandis*, the Scottish Mason will almost systematically find the same generative matrix and the same operative structure used to present a specific initiatory content in a so-called scalar progression, because, on the one hand, the degrees are not enshrined as in a symbolic Lodge, but are linked together, and, on the other hand, because it is an orderly progression, each degree follows the previous one like the rungs of a ladder.

All of these elements that constitute a degree form the mechanism that unfolds in the space-time of the Meeting. This mechanism being both proposed and imposed on the initiate.

Imposed, because he is called upon to symbolically live the legendary story, the mythical character who carries it, and he has no room for interpretation in this matter.

But proposed, insofar as this framework and its initiatory content are subject to his analysis, his reflection, his thought. Thinking in complete freedom, since we do not profess any dogma, but an exercise in thinking that is radically different from what we are used to.

Indeed, the exercise which we are submitted to at each degree is not solely an intellectual exercise of reflection and analysis of what is suggested to us in the scheme of that degree. We also, and indeed primarily, experience this scheme. The question that arises, then, is that of the very nature of this experience that challenges and grips us in the reality of our presence in the Scottish world.

This raises another question : what is the purpose of this experience ? What is its aim ?

The *Grand Constitutions of Berlin* of 1786 sets the Order's purpose as : *the union, happiness, progress and well-being of the human family in general and of each man individually*. What applies to the Order therefore also applies to each of its members: the union, happiness, progress and well-being of the Scottish Mason. But if this is the purpose or objective, it means that Scottish Masons – as men – know neither unity, happiness, progress nor well-being. And so, from this perspective, Scottish practice must aim to enable Scottish Masons to achieve this objective : to become fully and authentically human. The Scottish Rite therefore calls us to a true ontological transformation, based on a gradual awareness of our presence in the world, of what surrounds us, from the closest to the furthest, surrounds us, from ourselves to the Πάντα ἓν, the Heraclitean One-All.

This then means that each degree of the Rite, through its system, offers us a level of consciousness that is not superior to, but complementary to those already practised.

To describe what is revealed here as the very essence of the Scottish path, I will borrow from Pierre Hadot the term he himself took from Ignatius of Loyola : that of spiritual exercises.

Exercises, because it is based on the lived experience of the degrees practised, which tend to impress us, as one might say of photographic film exposed to light.

And spiritual, because, to quote Pierre Hadot,

the other possible adjectives or qualifiers: “psychic”, “moral”, “ethical”, “intellectual”, “of thought”, “of the soul” do not cover all the aspects of the reality we want to describe.

In fact, he adds, and this seems to apply perfectly to the essence of the Scottish journey,

these exercises correspond to a transformation of worldview and a metamorphosis of personality,

that is, the ontological mutation of the subject we have been discussing.

This means that walking the Scottish path is not simply a matter of learning its rituals, working with symbols, discussing maxims or the initiatory content of the degree in question, but first and foremost of living it fully, that is, opening oneself to the practice of the degree's apparatus, without mental restriction, but as a spiritual adventure. Allowing oneself be dominated, carried away by the practice of the ritual. Making each Meeting a spiritual exercise and our Scottish journey a series of spiritual exercises that are constantly repeated. A true asceticism, in the original Greek sense of the term ἄσκησις: exercise.

This naturally invites us to go beyond boundaries, those of the world of manifestation, the realm of forms, but also those of habitual forms of thought, those of reasoning.

Since Cartesian subjectivism, the old Latin formula of man as animal rationale, a reasoning animal, has been the hallmark of modern times, triumphing with the Age of Lumières and reducing Aristotle's formula of ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, man bearing logos, to simple logic.

However, this thinking based on ratio, on calculation, is opposed by meditative thinking, which does not deny logic, but goes beyond and transcends it, as the only way to liberate man and fulfil him completely, because it constitutes a reflexive return to himself in view to transcend him.

In Masonry – and particularly in Scottish Masonry – it has two fundamental characteristics.

On one hand, this meditation is nourished not only by initiatory content, but also by the transformative practice of ritual. It is irrigated by the substantial changes that the experience of our ceremonies brings about in the soul and imagination of those who experience them. This meditation unfolds between heaven and earth, between manifestation and Principle, between Being and beings through the mundus imaginalis, the imaginal world distinguished by Corbin.

On the other hand, it is based less on the λόγος than on the μῦθος, on μῦθος, because myth, encompassing symbols articulated by analogy, is demonstration, whereas logos is de-monstration. Now, as Plato already noted, where reason is powerless to reach the highest Beings, there lies the space of analogy.

These myths are numerous and support the legendary stories of our degrees, but there are two main ones: the first, known to every Master Mason, is that of Hiram and the construction of the Temple; the second, in which the Secret Master is immersed without yet knowing it, is that of the Holy Empire and spiritual Chivalry. And, as Secret Master, he experiences the gradual transition from one to the other.

In the same way that we do not aim in the symbolic Lodge to materially rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, we do not aim in the Scottish Rite to materially re-establish the Holy Empire, but analogically to achieve mastery of our own empire through the practice and study of those spiritual exercises that constitute our Meetings.

Thus, according to the words of Saint John, you shall all be gods, that is to say, in the interplay between the divine, earth, heaven and men, the Scottish Master will be fully and authentically a man.

ooOoo

Promoting Justice ...

by the Excellent and Perfect Brother X.A., 31st

Which justice are we asked to promote? That of Maât (that of the heart, order and harmony) ? That of Themis (as simple and immanent as justice of the Gods)? That of Dikè (human justice) ? That of Nemesis (seen as retaliation)? Is it the justice of God, of the city, of one or more men ? Is it linked to a principle of law and compliance with it, or is it associated with a moral principle involving respect for others and fairness? Finally, is it natural and universal and therefore independent of human societies and cultural, or can it only be understood, as Heraclitus thought, through the rejection of a state of injustice, itself assimilated to social chaos ?

In these first lines, everything seemed to lead to and, above all, emanate from the Principle. The Good, Just and True were divine in this absolute that I, as a human being, cannot even describe. This Divine, whose justice seemed to be an end as much as a goal and a means, was everything to which my research, my work, my path, my practice towards virtue seemed to lead me. Freemasonry, from the Apprentice degree onwards, had taught me that a Mason must *prefer justice and truth above all else*.

The ritual of Secret Master also suggested me that, after four journeys, I should strive to *promote justice*. The first one told me to go beyond reality, idols, appearances and to judge not with my eyes but with my heart, with love. The second one spoke to me of connection, of listening to all men and above all of fairness and balance, The third one, in the single and multiple law, evoked for me a world order and a place I for sure had to find in order to reach the ultimate journey, the one that would allow me to become a man fair in his action.

Seeing with the heart beyond social appearances and doing good : what Solomon showed me was that the basis of true justice is love, because we always want what is good for the one we love. He had asked only one thing from his God: *Grant your servant a discerning heart to judge your people, to distinguish between good and evil*. Surprised by these wishes, which asked neither for wealth, nor long life, nor the death of his enemies, God gave him a good, reasonable and perceptive heart, so that he could wisely render divine justice, which goes far beyond reality and these two women, whom he did not see as prostitutes, but in their dignity as human beings and mothers.

How cannot we think of the Mason who does not judge by appearances, but by the simple criterion of virtue, ensuring that *esteem is measured only by the constancy and energy that man brings to the realisation of good*. This justice of the heart also reminds me of the moment when the Worshipful Master, during the passage under the blindfold, says:

we would like to penetrate your heart, so we ask you to answer us with complete frankness and according to your true feelings, without calculation or ulterior motives, as any false words will inevitably be punished by our Great Judge.

Promoting justice therefore means promoting the sincerity that is so dear to us, this frankness without calculation, this truthful speech, it means letting your heart speak. Justice is also fulfilling the law defined by Paul, who said that *he who loves others has fulfilled the law...* For us Freemasons, too, our ritual tells us *to do to others all the good that you would have them do to you*

Listen to the voice, listen to all men and do so with fairness and balance, being in one's place in the cosmos: after this justice emanating from the heart, how cannot one think of the law of Maât, which in itself signifies right action, truth, good, respect, fairness (as opposed to selfishness, evil, chaos, lies and all falsification). Its essence is that creation emanating from the Divine is based on absolute truth. It is therefore necessarily order, balance and harmony in both large things (macrocosm) and small things (microcosm). This is what our third journey will allow us to admire in this law of the one and the multiple. The Egyptians, like the Greeks later on, had recognised that the great things of this creation are, in fact, subject to justice ; one only needs to look at the beauty of our natural surroundings and the perfection of man through the functioning of each of his organs to be convinced of this. On the other hand, human nature itself does not always work towards the same correspondence in small things.

Shouldn't this justice that we are asked to promote be understood as a law between man and the Principle? Is not the goal of man and Freemasons on earth to ensure maintaining the balance of creation (between high and low, good and evil, all men) and to do what is right for the good of humanity ? and while writing these words, I am thinking of the goals of our Order :

the purpose of this society is the union, happiness, progress and well-being of the entire human family.

It is also, and undoubtedly, producing and accomplishing actions that bring good and happiness, like Job, who claimed *to have put on the mantle of righteousness because he did good to the poor*. It is listening to all men, as when Zeus told Hermes that he wished to give justice and mercy to all men.

Let us remain with the Greeks for a while. Before this discovery of the order of the world, we undertake a second journey that tells us of fairness, as Aristotle did. This fairness is not so much the balance, symbol of justice, than that of a right medium, between excess and deficiency, and this in all things. We are told: *Do not place blind trust in anyone, but listen to all men...* Neither too much nor too little, 'neither anarchy nor despotism' as established by the goddess Athena when she created the Areopagus court, or also as Horace said, *there is a just measure, there are limits beyond which good and therefore justice cannot exist*. Wouldn't the rule of justice be reciprocity in a measured exchange ? Moderation ? Aristotle defined justice as a virtue of exchange and relationship with others. Would promoting justice not be promoting relationships with others, promoting this being together (the etymology of justice comes from *Jubere*, which means to unite) and rediscovering the Chain of Union and universality proposed by the Masonic path ?,

A final word on the balance of justice through the tree of Sephirot with the right column symbolised by Hesed, mercy (justice that is love and forgiveness), and the left column, which is Din/Geburah (justice in its sense of rigour...). The two being balanced in the central column, Tifferet, beauty evoking a justice (Tsedeq) of conscience, a just middle way, the harmony of peace, which we find in the Tao, the eightfold path of the Buddhists or in the Bivum (Y) of the Pythagoreans... A justice that unites and transcends the three virtues: Prudence, Courage and Temperance.

Promoting a justice of conscience, made up of constant improvement towards spirituality and knowledge, in order to find one's place: Plato attempted to define justice in the first books of *The Republic*. He made a connection between the justice of the soul and that of the city, whereby the microcosm (man and his virtues) is in tune with the macrocosm (the cosmos and the city) ... Being just is to be in one's place in the cosmos, to be in harmony with the natural hierarchy of the world... Adjusting to the world (as the Stoics would say). It is a justice that claims to rediscover the truth of the universe beyond all convention, appearances and hierarchy.

Promoting justice (rather than creating it) implies that this justice is already present within us. *This word is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may put it into practice* (Deuteronomy 30). It means listening to that 'voice that tells me', that immanence that pushes us towards something beyond ourselves. It also means understanding this justice in relation to the transcendence of a model all around us and finding our place in this order, without passion, without excess and without harming anyone. Finally, and above all, it means putting it into practice!

Freemasonry has *freed us from ignorance and prejudice*. From the very first day of initiation, it has shown us (without us being aware of it) how to put this justice into action, into practice, by telling us that :

It is by regulating one's inclinations and morals in this way that one proceeds to give one's soul that right balance which constitutes Wisdom, that is to say, the Art of Living.

This 4th degree reminded us not to follow others, human idols, but to take responsibility for our own actions (and to be accountable for our actions), to trust our own judgement (only declare them to be right if they appear to be so in your own judgement) or to trust only the supreme judge within us. To be just is to be a man applying the law of his own conscience, as in the parable of the 'adulterous woman'; it is to refrain from judging one's neighbour, especially before judging oneself (*our feelings of brotherhood and our awareness of our own imperfections make us afraid to judge our Brothers, except with indulgence. Are we infallible judges ?*). It means practising to recognise what is just in every act of life and not judging with a narrow view of the world, with one's face pressed against the window (Marcus Aurelius), but taking a step back to see that everything is beautiful because everything has its place in the whole.

Promoting Justice ...

by Rose-Croix Knight F.A., 18th

During the reception of the Secret Master, the Thrice Powerful Master pronounces, '*What Masonry asks is to promote justice.*'

To understand the significance of this sentence and put it into perspective in relation to the teachings of the 4th degree, it is necessary to interpret the ritual in order to avoid the pitfalls of common sense.

This sentence is uttered at the pivotal moment of the reception, when the transition from Sublime Master Mason to Secret Master takes place.

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite calls upon a representation of the world in which there is a meaningful chain from the Universe to the Person.

It is in this perspective that the Ritual of Reception of the Secret Master :

- Develops a succession of virtues in the form of maxims: secrecy, obedience, fidelity, the Idea hidden under the symbol, Truth, the single and multiple Law, and Justice.
- Designates the Way of Duty as that of reflection, meditation and respect for one's oaths. The ritual expects from him a commitment and a desire to strive for self-esteem in a spirit of justice, fairness and sharing.

Through his passage from the Square to the Compass, the Secret Master has internalised the teachings of the first three degrees. Now, Duty, Truth and Justice will be his guiding principles, enabling him to define a new asceticism based on truth, reason, virtue and justice.

Justice is the cornerstone of the Secret Master

Justice appears in the phrase to "alert" the Secret Master to its nature as a cornerstone virtue.

This importance is illustrated by the crown of Conrad II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (preserved in the Vienna Treasury and reproduced by the S.C.N.D.F. for its ceremonies).

Indeed, it features gold plates depicting symbolic scenes evoking the cardinal virtues of a sovereign.

The use of the adjective 'cardinal' to also designate the four directions of orientation has distorted the meaning of cardinal in relation to virtues because, although there are four of them, virtues cannot be represented geometrically at the angles of a quadrilateral.

In fact, Plato, in *The Republic*, studied these four virtues, describing them as three plus one: Courage, Temperance and Prudence revolving around Justice.

Therefore, the appropriate geometric representation would be that of an equilateral triangle with Justice as its pivot (cardinal comes from the Latin *cardo*, meaning pivot).

Plato explains that, while Wisdom or Prudence commands Kings, while Courage commands warriors and Temperance commands the working class, Justice stands at the centre because it is the indispensable complement to the preservation, balance and harmony of the first three ones.

This is why Justice 'must be the object of all our research'. Justice then becomes synonymous with Truth, Light and Wisdom.

This explains the path proposed by the ritual to the Secret Master to seek the truth and the lost word.

The order of the virtues of the Secret Master results from the interpretation of the names of God mentioned in the instruction of the 4th degree.

The 4th Degree Ritual invites the Secret Master to interpret the names of God.

The *Torah* highlights two main names of God because they refer to his two attributes that presided over the creation of the World and Man: rigour in action (Eloqin) and goodness or benevolence (Tetragrammaton).

Then, the symbolic significance of these two names allows us to establish a coherence between, on the one hand, the sentences of the 4th degree associated with Duty, which correspond to the rigour necessary for the construction of the Secret Master, and, on the other hand, the phrase 'promote justice', which would be goodness.

After receiving guidance on the path, the Secret Master is endowed with the powers of creation, armed with the virtues of rigour and that related to goodness (Justice)

Thus deciphered, *promoting Justice* constitutes a door half-open to the Other.

In the 4th degree, Justice is targeted as the key to bringing otherness into the work of (re)constructing the Secret Master.

Promoting justice is in reality an injunction to work on our interpersonal relationships in our reality with others, targeting both the Other within and the Other without:

- The Other within corresponds to the double that the Secret Master has been shaping since entering the Cabinet of Reflection and who 'received' Hiram at the end of a palingenesis in the 3rd degree. In the 4th degree, the Secret Master is called upon to continue his transformation by working on these two families of virtues: rigour and kindness.
- The Other outside because the ritual directs his will towards greater Justice and Freedom in order to transcend his relationships, which are themselves constitutive of a brotherhood in a human world that will always be violent and prone to exclusion by denying people their intrinsic dignity. The ethical imperative of brotherhood is expressed in the desire to link the desire for freedom (autonomy) and justice.

The Secret Master is bound to secrecy in order to seek the lost word because he has not yet mastered the virtues necessary for his construction

An explanation can be put forward by invoking a ternary that sheds light on the three dimensions of man: materiality, feelings/emotions and intelligence.

Only by mastering these three dimensions can the Word be born, creating within him a space of freedom that will allow the Secret Master to fulfil his spiritual potential.

Thus, the Secret Master will gradually come to understand that his worldview will depend on his actions and his way of life. From then on, he will have to work on these virtues in order to escape the limitations, temptations and obstacles that his physical existence places in the path of his spirituality. Since his initiation, he has been aware that the most serious threat comes from within.

Conclusion : Secret Master, free yourself !

The ritual triggers a process of self-liberation because achieving true freedom requires constant attention to reject the constant threats against it.

No. 61

The Two Jerusalems

by the Illustrious and Perfect Brother V.W., 30th

The holy city of the Orient is multiplied in a clearly vertical duality, one real here below, the second imaginary in heaven. We are offered the uchronia of their confusion here below, which is a subliminal project, that is to say, below the threshold of consciousness, but starting from their formal, but only symbolic, consideration.

But let us reassure ourselves, these are only images, and on earth the square plan of earthly Jerusalem will require the Square, while in heaven it will be represented according to a circular plan by the magic of the Compass.

Knowing that the Jerusalem of heaven, according to the model of the Garden of Eden, is a circular city of vegetation, and that the Jerusalem on earth is a square city of minerals built with cubic stones, Masonry invites us

to move what is above to what is below in order to achieve this combination, the third element of which will be the potentiality for each stone, for each Mason, therefore, to take advantage of this utopian 'shift' that is always continued through his work, to access the undifferentiated sensation of being part of a harmonious whole where the body and mind of each individual would no longer claim an egotistical singularity, but would assume to have achieved a communion, perhaps regressive, with the divine principle common to each of the other stones of the profane square 'enclosure' below with, I repeat because this word may be important, the spiritual, round and sacred 'enclosure' above. Let us suggest here that the enclosure may be marian, since Freemasons, reborn through initiation, are said to be all Brothers born of the same widow?

We will therefore briefly examine how Freemasons consider overcoming this duality, then how philosophers and theologians have been able to nurture this same oxymoronic project, which is so well summarised by the impossible squaring of the circle, to return to the sole dynamic perspective of this metaphorical 'shift' that invites us to step outside Language in order to transcend its limits, known as aporetic, that is to say, those that seem impossible to cross in order to access the universal through the grace of freedom of thought.

Freemasonry, first of all, which provides the symbols of these two cities that must be combined here below, strives to convince us that the square city is also cubic, because it is no longer only on the plane, but also in space, since it is structured by the number 7, which results from adding the four cardinal points to the two dimensions of the zenith and the nadir, not forgetting to add the number 1 of the unmanifested centre, which is the expression of the Principle. Thus, the number 7 of earthly Jerusalem is already a first demonstration that this city is potentially divine, since the heptagon is closer to the circle than the square alone, and since this number 7, that of the genesis week, is the one that characterises the cycle that the circle activates and which resolutely invites us to unfold the 'displacement' in this causal chain of eschatological evolution that will produce the expected spiritual effect.

Theology, then, in the age of scholasticism, had to restore, through the grace of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the very concept of cyclical causality that had been undermined by Averroes. The latter had argued that the universe, being eternal and infinite, was uncreated and therefore had no beginning and thus no creative principle, which undermined the Christian eschatological vision that had to defend itself against the rational advances of Islam in Christian lands, where Saint Augustine had already sketched out the combination of the City of God with the City of the World. In addition, Averroes also attempted to convince the Sorbonne that, since the intellect was not individualised, the faculty of thought was not personal. This assertion invalidated any consideration of freedom, that of thinking about the cyclic circular causality, which would allow Renaissance humanism to promote the experimental method of science through scientific developments that freedom would offer to rationalism to implement while accommodating this possible contingency of Faith. So here we are back to the idea of the heavenly Jerusalem thanks to the essential evocation of Faith, which, through the detour to Tertullian and his famous sentence: *Credo quia absurdum*, 'I believe because it is absurd', but above all through a stop at that of Anselm of Canterbury: *credo ut intellegam*, 'I believe in order to understand,' which brings us back to the very idea of the 'shift' between the earthly Jerusalem, that of straightforward reasoning, and the heavenly Jerusalem, that of faith in God, whose circumference is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere. It is no longer intelligence that can find Faith, but Faith that would be primarily inspired to seek intelligence. This is the major 'shift', because freedom of thought is only possible here through this reversal, which invites the freedom to pass through, which was already implemented by Adam when he crossed the circular and sacred enclosure of the Garden of Eden by transgressing the prohibition on eating the fruit of Knowledge.

This 'shift' from the dialectical priority of the paradigm of Reason to that of Faith is a reversal signalled by Goethe's «Intelligent Heart», a precursor to the neural combination of the two rational and emotional brains through the third brain, the mimetic brain, which is the guarantee of this dynamic combination between what is above and what is below, already in embryo in *The Emerald Table*. It is precisely a similar invitation that the dramatic hyperbole of the Apocalypse extends to us. It reveals to us the end of a cycle, that of the rational logic of earthly Jerusalem, and the beginning of a new cycle, one that only the Hope of Faith allows, in this elsewhere that is here, but which we can only conceive in the extreme experience of a symbolic, or better still, real initiatory death, such as that experienced by Tolstoy and reported by Chestov, an experience that challenges and shifts the usual priorities of the psychic economy. These two Jerusalems are not topical, they are not places but psychic states of dynamic transition.

Finally, to conclude, I will briefly return from psychoanalysis, which underlies the foundations of the almost marian

‘enclosures’ of our two Jerusalems, to the philosophy of Anca Vassiliu. A few weeks ago, this philosopher gave a seminar at Rue d’Ulm entitled: *Topography put to the test of dialectics: limits and beyond in Plato*. She helped us to shift and broaden the issue of the combinatorial reversal here of our two Jerusalems. The beyond in Plato’s Phaedrus is that moment when immortal souls, standing on the back of the sphere that is the celestial vault, contemplate what lies outside the heavens. Only the eyes of the soul are capable of seeing the divine, since accessing the beyond, that of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is not visible, requires a strictly metaphysical transcendence, a transcendence of being, an attention to supersensible considerations that abolish the very being of the ‘enclosing’ walls of the two Jerusalems, in order to embody, through the experience of the subject’s freedom, the topical confusion to which the two Jerusalems invite us, a confusion that allows for ontic fusion, a fusional rebirth, that of being, in that something universal which Torga says is the universal, *the room minus the walls*. It is now appropriate to explore the path opened up by Laurent Dandrieu in his book *Rome ou Babel*, with a preface by Mathieu Bock-Côté, to find out whether it is still possible to be a universalist while remaining rooted in what the walls of cities extended to national borders provided as «reference points ‘ for spiritual assumptions.

We will not overlook the fact that trees reach up to the sky.

ooOoo

‘It is easier to do one’s duty...»

by the Grand Elect of the Sacred Vault D.A., 14th

The phrase *It is easier to do one’s duty than to know it* confronts us with a profound truth that is at once spiritual, moral and Masonic. Behind its apparent simplicity, it questions the nature of our commitment, the depth of our understanding and the sacred dimension of our actions. It invites us to explore the meaning of duty, not only as an act, but as an inner journey, a mirror of our quest for truth, for ourselves and for the Divine.

It is at the heart of this quest that the space of consciousness opens up, a sacred place of dialogue with God, which in the mystical tradition constitutes the true Holy of Holies, where the soul becomes a sanctuary.

Duty as the Axis of Masonic Life

The ritual of the 4th degree emphasises the fulfilment of duty, describing it as ‘as inflexible as fate, as demanding as necessity, as imperative as destiny’. Such a definition underlines its absolute nature. Duty, in the Masonic context, is not a simple external obligation. It is a profound moral and spiritual commitment, an act of fidelity to oneself, to humanity, and to the Great Architect of the Universe.

In this sense, doing one’s duty becomes a sacred act. It requires a real sacrifice: that of our selfishness, our indifference, our inertia. It is a constant endeavour, an inner as well as an outer work.

Knowing one’s Duty: A Quest for Self and God

Before we can even fulfil our duty, we must first know what it is. This is where the deepest challenge lies. In many spiritual traditions, including Freemasonry, self-knowledge is considered the first step towards knowing God. By understanding the ethical foundations that drive us, we come closer to the divine will.

True duty does not arise from a simple rule or external commandment, but from an inner law, an enlightened conscience.

This conscience, far from being a simple moral authority, becomes a living altar for the Secret Master: a place of listening, discernment, and divine presence. Just as the Levites kept watch in the Temple, we are called to guard and honour this inner space.

This understanding brings us closer to the Divine. Thus, the maxim takes on a theological dimension: knowledge of duty becomes a path to understanding God’s will. It urges us to align our actions with a higher justice, to see in every act an opportunity to serve, to build, to repair.

Action without Knowledge: An Illusion of Virtue ?

The first part of the maxim alerts us: it is sometimes easier to act than to think. We can indeed perform our tasks, carry out our rituals, fulfil our obligations - without really understanding them. In doing so, the action risks becoming mechanical, meaningless, and thus far removed from its spiritual vocation.

To act without awareness is to risk falling into habit, into the comfort of form at the expense of substance. However, Freemasonry is not a theatre of fixed gestures: it is a path of transformation, which requires each Brother to be vigilant and constantly question the 'why' of his actions.

Knowledge as Light and Divine Service

Freemasonry is a school of thought, a quest for light. Knowledge of duty, far from being a given, must be earned. It requires intellectual and spiritual effort, constant dialogue with oneself, with others and with the Great Architect. The light we seek is not only intellectual; it is also divine. It illuminates our responsibility, elevates our consciousness and refines our discernment.

In this sense, awakened consciousness becomes the condition for true mystical union. For it is there, in the secret of the heart, that dialogue between man and his Creator can be established — not through words, but through presence.

To do one's duty without knowing it is to act automatically. But to understand one's duty is to enter a space of truth. It is recognising that our actions can be a service to the order of the world, to divine harmony, to inner and collective peace. Thus, every ethical gesture, every just decision, becomes an incarnate prayer.

Link with the Lost Word

This journey towards the knowledge of duty finds a deep echo in the founding myth of the Lost Word. This Word, which Tradition affirms was lost during a tragic event, symbolises original knowledge, ultimate truth, pure connection with the Divine. It is the profound meaning that humanity lost by cutting itself off from its spiritual roots.

In this context, doing one's duty without knowing it is like acting without the Word, without the light that gives the act its sacred meaning. The action then becomes form without substance, a soulless gesture. The quest for duty thus becomes a quest for the Word, an effort to rediscover what illuminates action, to restore the broken link between the visible and the invisible.

Seeking to understand one's duty is like searching for this buried, forgotten or hidden Word. It is aspiring to a life where words once again become meaningful, where every word, every act, resonates with the cosmic order.

When we will have brought together knowledge and action, when our duty will be both fulfilled and understood, then perhaps we will be able to approach the Word, not as a secret word, but as the living evidence of what is right, true and sacred.

A Moral and Cosmic Responsibility

To know one's duty is also to recognise one's responsibility to God, to others, and to oneself. This commits us to living with integrity, in conscience, and in fidelity to spiritual principles. Masonic duty, in this light, is not a mere human task; it becomes a way of participating in the divine work, of contributing to the balance of the world.

For by fulfilling our duties with fairness and sincerity, we help to restore the harmony symbolised by the chain of union. We respond to a call greater than ourselves. Freemasonry teaches us that the universe is not chaos, but order. And every act inspired by the knowledge of duty reinforces this order, repairs what is broken, unites what is separated.

Conclusion : From Action to Consciousness

Ultimately, this maxim challenges us to go beyond the appearance of action and enter into the depths of consciousness. Do your duty, yes — but know why. And that 'why' connects us to our innermost selves and to transcendence. It guides us towards truth, towards inner unity, towards God.

As Freemasons, we must cultivate this requirement. Let every action be an enlightened act. Let every duty performed be the expression of a lucid and spiritual understanding. For it is in this alchemy of gesture and meaning that the

true progress of man and humanity is born.

Thus is fulfilled the vocation of the Secret Master : not only to do, but to understand; not only to serve, but to commune. And in this silent dialogue between the soul and the Divine, in this Holy of Holies that is our conscience, Union can finally be born.

No. 62

‘May joy be in our hearts!’

by the Most Illustrious Brother L.D., 33rd

Our rituals are treasure troves. As is often the case, we must know how to identify these treasures, then go and find them, bring them to the surface, accept to recognise them, interpret and share them.

There is one, from the fourth degree onwards, and undoubtedly long before that, which we identify all too rarely: Joy. It is a key – and perhaps The Key – to endless discovery, celebration, and the transition to Perfection or a higher reality. It requires great Faith in God and in Man. It liberates and frees the Spirit and fills it with calm. It is not just a temporary and fleeting companion on the initiatory quest. It can be a catalyst for Individuation and a fertiliser for Metanoia.

I suggest that we reflect on this theme in the context of our Scottish spiritual approach, characterised by our mottos. I will do so in three stages:

- The Joy of meeting a Brother.
- The Joy of the Secret Master’s crown.
- The Joy of the Ecclesia, the spiritual community.

First of all, there is that exhilarating, joyful moment of first encounter with the one we call Brother, whether on the day of his initiation or on the day of discovery. How cannot we mention the heroes of Luke’s Gospel on this solstice celebration?

In those days, Mary set out and travelled without haste to the High Country, to a town in Judea. She entered Zachariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. She was pregnant with Christ and her cousin was pregnant with John the Baptist.

And then the Baptist, sensing the presence of his cousin, began to tremble. This trembling was a trembling of joy, nothing else. This joy of tangible closeness was the first moment of a spiritual adventure that we are still talking about more than 2,000 years later.

Who among us has not felt this joy? Our destination of joy is written within us – as evidenced by this experience of recognising a Brother – but social conventions, our masks, and questioning can bury it deep within.

So let us give in to the joy of these moments. It marks our responsibility towards others. It precedes responsibility towards oneself, Levinas emphasises. This absolute responsibility stems from irreducible difference, not similarity. A vision of brotherhood based on similarity (as too often emphasised, including in our practices) and ignoring difference is incomplete. The epiphany of the face of the Other and his joy are sources of identification of differences and then of absolute consideration. The Other is not only a reflection of myself.

Allow me to go further and take it to the right level... that of our spirituality, which is decidedly turned towards the Light: when a Brother joins us, it is a favour granted to us, a grace. Each of us is the Baptist Precursor and the Other is the human figure of Christ who appears as the bearer of Light.

After the emergence of Joy in the encounter with the Brother, I take a second approach: that of myself as the author of my own joy.

The crowning of the Secret Master is one of the most theatrical moments of the Scottish adventure. While the

Laurel and the Olive Tree are widely evoked in our Works, the question of the meaning of ‘success’ is often marginalised because it is misunderstood. From early childhood, we associate success with performance, victory, passing an exam, a sport contest, professional advancement... a triumph of a secular nature that always brings joy. But here, success and its consequence, Joy, are of a completely different nature. Saint Ignatius alerts us to this when he speaks of Joy without cause. Success is that of communion, the joy of finally being One with the One we are called to be. This Joy is the joy of liberation, it is that of the butterfly emerging from its chrysalis. It is the joy of taking flight, the joy of truly being. Gabriel Marcel expresses this very well: Joy means being in totality. May each Brother Master Secret disconnect from the profane meaning of the word “success” in his coronation and attribute to it the initiatory meaning that is the only guide for our Work. The success to come, announced by the coronation, is victory over oneself; my reunification with the One, achieved not through death, but through liberation, detachment, the abandonment of metals, work. Joy is what awaits me at the turning points of a transformative, purifying Metanoia.

This is the lesson of Saint Paul in his *Letter to the Galatians: the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace or the translation of John (15:11) quoting Christ: I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete*. It is well understood here that this approach to Joy is personal, individual and initiatory in nature.

My joy is the fulfilment of my spiritual journey, it is a sign of the Unity achieved in my lifetime, it is the realisation within me of our mottos. It is my radiant intimacy.

I spoke of chrysalis and butterfly, and that is precisely what it is about. I sometimes sense turmoil in our ranks, a consequence of what I call the ‘shadow cast’ by the profane world. We are talking about spiritual experience or ‘second birth’. This second birth, the beginning of the “liberation” of the being, is nothing other than the conscious and freely assumed decision to devote one’s life to facilitating the advent of that essential being that God calls us to be, which in us is greater than ourselves and which alone is our true being. Let us consider the extraordinary spiritual freedom of the inner man. Freedom to Be and no longer to Have. This is the essence of the inner life, which leads its own life when the concrete outer life seems unchanged.

This second birth is essentially a fundamentally and totally free act. It is about placing Scottish Spirituality at the very centre of one’s own life. This commitment must be constantly renewed, as dark forces hinder it – this is the mark of our times. The success announced by the crown is that of my second birth, and like any birth, it is Joy.

Having evoked the Joy of encountering the Other, then the Joy arising from my personal spiritual path, I come to the third form of Joy that I wish to address today: that which comes from our collective practice, that which is the daughter of the Egregore and therefore of what I call the consequence of the Ecclesia.

There is a third dimension of Joy in our Scottish spiritual lives, generated by our collective practice, the originality of which I will attempt to define shortly. But first, a serious misunderstanding about a word we often use: Egregore. Those of us with a classical education know – along with René Guenon – that the Latin etymology deriving it from the Greek flock is implausible; the word is purely Greek and actually means watcher. In fact, our collective entity is psychic in nature (which is already quite something), but it should not be confused with the spiritual. When we are together, it is simply an extension of the Individual; there is nothing Transcendent about it. Just an enlargement of individuality. We must not confuse the horizontal meaning with the vertical meaning.

This approach is part of a major concern of our Supreme Council and is part of the ‘shadow’ of exotericism that distances us from our fundamentals. Take, for example, the *WhatsApp* chains that all our Workshops are equipped with: they are used to wish people happy birthdays or send holiday photos, when it is not worse. They strengthen fraternal bonds and in this sense they have a social, exoteric utility. But what should be called ‘chains’ is the uninterrupted transmission of spiritual influence through successive generations, and this is where *WhatsApp* can do little.

And to return to what I was saying earlier, the word ‘generation’ alludes to the ‘second birth’ that is inherent in initiation. So yes, our Communities must contribute to the building of ‘second births’; this is the meaning of the term Perfection, the name of our Workshops.

It has become complicated because there are now three age groups coexisting within our ranks, with differences of all kinds.

When I listen to contemporary sociologists such as Edgar Morin, Michel Maffesoli and Gaël Giraud talk about the colours of the modern or post-modern era and the dimensions of tribes, commons and so on, I can see the relevance of this in the secular world, but what about our Lodges? Our Workshops? I advocate for the word *Ecclesia*, which, after illustrating the early days of Athenian democracy, came to designate the religious community founded by Christianity and the institution established around this common faith. The first stirrings were called *Domus Ecclesia*, and it was in the homes of one or the other that people gathered at a time when dedicated buildings did not yet exist.

These *Ecclesia* – and I am thinking particularly of times of transmission outside of *Tenués* – must be moments of joyful fraternity that transcend differences, even ideological ones, and enrich individual second births. Here we find the magnificent experience of shared joy that engenders individual joys, which in turn nourish it. Individuation, which is the unique adventure of each human life, forever unique, is realised here in doing things together. Spirituality Oriented: shared initiatory progression is the source of Joy.

Let us remain determined and united so that our exchanges and our collective lives do not marginalise, in these dark times, the purpose of our being together: initiatory progression. Let us focus on the Core, not the Bark, advise the Sufi Masters.

So there you have it, Secret Master Brothers, three sources of Joy that I invite you to meditate on and, if you wish, to come back to me about. Reflect in the order that suits you best. In my personal journey, I began with the *Ecclesia* as a fraternal assembly in its societal dimension, then its spiritual dimension, then I worked on Individuation and completed it with the approach of the Other, my Brother. The order does not matter, but the three sources must be approached.

These joys are signs of God's love to me... so listen to this love... 'let there be joy in our hearts' is not enough because it is in our hearts... it is up to all of us here, Scottish Masters, to release it, to let it shine, to pass it on. Let us do so with enthusiasm, that beautiful word which comes to us from the Greek *en-theou-siasmenos*, which literally means 'divinely', that is to say, 'full of God'. It is a state of spiritual fulfilment. Let us grant it to ourselves and distribute it. And when doubt, anxiety and sometimes barbarity assail us, let us listen to Christian Bobin in *L'Homme Joie* (The Man of Joy) about God:

I look at the blue of the sky. There is no door. Or perhaps it has always been open. In this blue, I sometimes hear laughter, the same as that of flowers... impossible to hear without immediately sharing it.

This blue sky is my joy today, and I enthusiastically share it with you, my Brothers.

No. 63

The Arcane Lodge

by the Most Illustrious Brother N. B. 33rd

For several years now, I have been wondering about the meaning of the term *Scottish*, which refers to the ritual framework that guides our work of striving towards the Most High. At the same time, I have been wondering about the mystical dialogue between Solomon and Adonhiram represented by the text currently attached to the 4th degree.

I have come to the conclusion that this dialogue, currently attached to the 4th degree, is a fundamental part of the stages which – under the name of ineffable and sublime degrees – mark Masonic work beyond the degree of Master Mason. Far from being one of the stages of this work, these attached texts are its preliminary and guiding element, the fruit of Christo-Judaic spiritual exchange in the Caribbean.

It must be said in this regard that we do not yet know with certainty what the effects were of the fundamental structural operations of Masonic development carried out by Etienne (Stephen) Morin in the Caribbean. By convention, these are said to have begun in 1761, when qualified members of European Masonry empowered Brother Morin to 'export' to the New World, on a macrocosmic level, a system divided into several degrees, such

as, for example, the Order of the Royal Secret, which had 25 degrees.

In any case, it seems that it was this latter structure that Brother Morin favoured from the outset to ensure that the appropriate texts would exude the religious light that we try to welcome within ourselves, to reflect on and to reason about, and whose initiatory experience is one of systematic questioning, interrogative and problematic. These texts are intended for those who are motivated to seek the hidden meaning behind the obvious, which encourages them to actively grasp the process. Texts intended solely for a communion of Brothers entirely focused on the goal of housing the Great Architect of the Universe, where ritual practice takes place, where each one communes with all and in all, so that all commune in each one.

Similarly – and this is on a microcosmic level – the primordial matter, represented by each of the Brothers, is a sign only for those who are capable of meditation – for those who seek, each on their own behalf, the paths of individual elevation. This matter is shaped by form, represented by the ritual, which provides us with the framework in which, and thanks to which, we can effect this transformation. The communion of the Brothers who perform the ritual develops the same function as the Divinity in the primordial moment of Creation. However, the texts related to the 4th degree emphasise a fundamental deepening of the Masonic approach (regular and recognised), an approach that has been agreed to call *Scottish*.

In a Scottish Lodge, the Brothers have their gaze, their minds and their hopes fixed on the texts associated with the 4th degree, and this with maximum intensity. The Brothers housed in such a Lodge therefore work in sacred time, as well as in a physically tangible sacred space, where mystical operations take place, representing a united chain of consciousnesses, each immersed in their physical envelope, freely determined and imbued with Duty. They constitute the living and active synthesis of spirits or, if you will, God himself developing in history. In other words, there is an irruption of the Eternal when the Initiates physically experience the *Scottish* tension together. The Scottish communion of the Brothers immersed in their corporeality, who engender each other, who produce each other in such a context, is an unfathomable and elusive reality, a great Mystery that is both real and unformulable. In such communion there is no loss of individuality or personality, but the interdependence thus created ensures that the Initiates are not only recipients of liturgical operations, but at the same time united with one another in a sacred life that is common to them.

The Scottish Lodge thus becomes the spiritual form of the Mystery; it reproduces and even realises the esotericism of transcendence leading to the Divine; it is the creator and manager of the sacred. Anchored in a sacred space and time, a mystical body or synaxis, it is the expression of total openness, a categorical imperative of the will to progress, a justification for individual and fraternal action, a tool for the future, for an ambitious future: inserting a fundamental operation of mystical union with God into a group held together by the practice of ritual repetition while being made up of people with different beliefs.

Each Initiate experiences in the Lodge the maximum tension in the gradual approach to the Divine – the 33 degrees – but also has access to a whole series of concepts and objects emblematically linked to the Divine Presence; it is the search for the Sacred (union with the Divine) to which the Brothers aspire, a spiritual quest, that is to say, an impulse to perceive the reflection of the One, far from the Multiple, through sacred objects and concepts.

Celebrating the expected divine presence in liturgical communion means needing one another, for this hoped-for God is not my God, but our God. Such a liturgical dimension of the physical Lodge reflects the physical realities of participation, realities that cannot be replaced in any way.

The related texts essentially introduce a break in level between the tri-gradial system and the set 4 to 33, that is, an act opening communication between different levels and thus making possible the ontological transition from one way of being to another.

For the man imbued with spirituality, imbued with religious tension, space is not homogeneous, but dotted with thresholds or portals communicating with the sacred dimension in its successive levels, with a view to reaching a higher level of intelligibility of the Real-True. Absolute reality is thus gradually and progressively revealed to them. The break in level serves to disintegrate the existing and bring about a regeneration that is supposed to lead to another level, to a qualitatively higher conquest. For archaic ontology, in fact, the real is identified above all with a 'force,' a 'Life,' a fertility, an opulence, but also with everything that is strange, singular, etc. In other words, everything that exists in a full way manifests an exceptional mode of existence. This is the very definition of Ecosism.

The sacred then necessarily appears ambiguous, because the power manifested by the Real-True is beyond human comprehension and can therefore only appear to humans as a force that transcends them, at the moment when it appears to them. The religious is in fact the ultimate reality, that which exists in a full and real way, whereby it, the ultimate reality, is distinguished from the rest of the world, which is the profane. Those who seek such an experience and thereby become aware of this 'other' promote this rupture, which allows them to distinguish the three essential cosmic levels (Heaven, Earth and the lower level), to understand the concrete and real structure of the world, and, consequently, to construct and articulate the holy work that they attempt to shape on the microcosmic level.

In conclusion, the related texts represent a true symbolic hinge of connection and rotation conceived by our founding Brothers of Charleston (within a Christo-Judaic spiritual framework specific to the Caribbean religious milieu) to serve as a support and guide on the multi-graded path to the Holy Empire, thus defining the perspective of the road to be travelled to the top of the Ladder.

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The Convent of Lausanne

by the Most Illustrious Brother M.-H.C., 33rd

Although the *Grand Constitutions* of 1786 provided for a territorial organisation of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite by state or nation (Article V-III), its universalism naturally led to a search for consultation and agreement between the regular Supreme Councils of the world, and even a form of union in a spirit consistent with the founding model of the Rite, which is the Holy Empire.

A first attempt at an alliance took place in 1834 with a treaty between the Supreme Councils of France, Belgium, Brazil and the United Supreme Council of the Western Hemisphere, a completely irregular body. As Paul Naudon notes, *one remains stunned by the consecration thus given to the latter*. But it is worth remembering here that at the same time and until 1870, the Supreme Council of France was not recognised by the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction, the mother Council of the World! It was therefore an alliance between two Supreme Councils on the fringes of regularity, or even three, as the signatory Supreme Council of Brazil was merely a creation of the Supreme Council of the Western Hemisphere.

A universal convent ?

Based on an idea from the Supreme Council for England and Wales, strongly supported by the Southern Jurisdiction, the Supreme Council for Switzerland invited the twenty-two recognised Supreme Councils to participate in a universal convention, which was held in Lausanne from 6 to 22 September 1875.

In fact, it should be noted that of the twenty-two Supreme Councils invited, only seven were actually present (England and Wales, Belgium, Colon-Cuba, Scotland, France, Italy and Switzerland), while four others had given proxy (Hungary, Peru and Portugal to Switzerland, Greece to Scotland). If we add that Scotland withdrew on 8 September, the final acts of the Convention were effectively signed by only six Supreme Councils. Alain Bernheim therefore uses euphemism when he writes that the Grand Commander of Switzerland *was perhaps being optimistic in describing this Convention as universal*.

In fact, as the founder of the Supreme Council for France, Grand Commander Riandey, noted, although they represented only a minority, the delegates of these nine Supreme Councils undertook the revision of the Constitutions of 1762-1786, which naturally raises the question of the legitimacy of the conclusions they reached, which could only have been considered as such if they had been ratified by at least a majority of the Supreme Councils, or more logically by all of them.

The final acts of the Lausanne Convent

In 1876, the Supreme Council for Switzerland, which acted as the secretariat for the Confederation resulting from the work of the Convent, sent each of the Supreme Councils that had participated in it a collection of the texts adopted in Lausanne, namely:

1. Grand Constitutions of 1786 revised by the Universal Convention of Supreme Councils adopted at its meeting on 22 September 1875
2. Treaty of Union, Alliance and Confederation of the Supreme Councils of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite
3. Tuileur des XXXIII Grades adopted by the Convent of the Confederate Supreme Councils meeting in Lausanne in September 1875

Leaving aside the *Tuileur*, the Convent had therefore resulted in a thorough rewriting of the *Grand Constitutions* of 1786 and the foundation of a Confederation of Supreme Councils; with significant changes to the spirit and letter of the fundamental law of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the establishment of a body with legislative and executive powers over the confederated Supreme Councils, the Convent had set itself up as a veritable Constituent Assembly, without, it should be emphasised, having received the slightest mandate from a majority of Supreme Councils.

The failure of the Lausanne Convent

This genuine attempt to revolutionise the Rite was a failure.

Firstly, none of the Supreme Councils absent from Lausanne joined the Confederation or ratified its conclusions, and it was impossible to organise, as provided for in the Confederation's statutes, a new Convent, as provided for in the statutes of the Confederation, despite repeated attempts by the Supreme Council for Switzerland.

Far from promoting unity and dialogue between the Supreme Councils, the Confederation that emerged from the Convent led the Supreme Councils that were openly hostile to its conclusions to form a defensive and offensive League, whose driving forces were the Supreme Councils of the Southern Jurisdiction, Scotland, Ireland, Central America and Greece¹² and aimed at bringing together all the regular Supreme Councils: this paved the way for a worldwide split in Scottish Rite Freemasonry!

The death certificate sounded when two of the signatories, namely the Supreme Council for England and Wales and that of Belgium, withdrew from the Confederation in 1880, the former on 10 May and the latter on 22 August.¹³

Although, as early as 1903, the Grand Commander of Belgium, Eugène Goblet d'Alviella, had noted the failure of the Lausanne Confederation, some Supreme Councils – most of which were not recognised as regular – continued to refer to the Lausanne Convent. Paul Naudon rightly points out *that the very long time it took for the regular Supreme Councils to react against an invasion of purely secular concerns substituted for initiatory values meant that the evil continued to a endemic state.*

It was not until the 10th World Conference of Supreme Councils, held in January 1970 in Barranquilla (Colombia), that a resolution was unanimously adopted:

*This Conference considers that the articles relating to a confederation resulting from the minutes of the Lausanne Convention in 1875 do not form part of the fundamental law of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry and that the said articles on the Confederation are unconditionally rejected.*¹⁵

As Grand Commander Riandey states: *Thus ended, as a dead letter, the so-called Constitution of Lausanne of 1875, and the misunderstandings that had troubled the existence of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for 95 years.*

Grand Commander Pike's analysis

A skilled lawyer and great connoisseur of the Rite, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction, Mother Council of the World, Albert Pike, in a circular letter addressed on 20 March 1876 to the Grand Commanders who had signed the Treaty of Confederation summarised the main criticisms he had of the Treaty, but also of the amendments to the Grand Constitutions:

The powers granted to the Convent by Article III of the Articles of Alliance of this Confederation are far too broad and, in fact, unlimited. Article XII creates a new law that must apply to the largest empire as well as the smallest state and which, applied in this way, is utterly absurd. The amendments that are being attempted in the Grand Constitutions revolutionise the Rite ; and the

*substitution of a 'Creative Principle' in place of the God in whom Freemasons place their faith alarms Freemasonry throughout the world.*¹⁷

It is necessary to clarify and examine in greater depth the two categories of criticisms raised by Grand Commander Pike, in the field of law – one might say constitutional law – and in that of the Rite.

Constitutional deviations

Let us first quote the articles criticised by Albert Pike.

For Article 3, these are essentially paragraphs 1, 3 and, subsidiarily, 5:

Paragraph 1: *The Confederate Supr. Cons. shall assemble in General Convent, through their delegates SS.GG.II.GG, 33rd degree, every ten years from the year 1878, the date set for the next Convent.*

Paragraph 3: *The delegates to the Convent shall have full powers to deliberate and decide jointly, by majority vote, on all measures deemed necessary in the interests of the Rite.*

Paragraph 5: *Each Supreme Council shall determine the number of its delegates, but the Convent shall proceed to a roll-call vote of the Supreme Councils, each of which shall have only one vote.*¹

These provisions established a kind of legislative power conferred on a Convent whose decisions would have been binding on all Supreme Councils, in Albert Pike's words, in the broadest and most unlimited manner. They amounted to depriving the Supreme Councils of their sovereignty, while Article 5, by granting only one vote per Supreme Council, conferred the same authority on each, regardless of its size or history: a coalition of Supreme Councils with skeleton staff could have imposed its will on more established Supreme Councils.

If we add to this the existence of an "executive power" (see note 11), it is reasonable to consider that the legal organisation presented as a simple Confederation (in which sovereignty legally belongs to the entities that compose it) was in reality a Federation (in which sovereignty is held by the federal power).

These orientations thus constituted real deviations from the traditional organisation of the Rite, as intended by the Grand Constitutions of 1786. They were clearly inspired by ideological orientations outside the initiatory domain, thus testifying to a genuine «profanation» of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and its exclusively spiritual and ethical dimension. This profanation was also reflected in the vision of a Sovereign Grand Commander as a simple *primus inter pares*, as Charles Riandey pointed out.

With regard to Article XII, also noted by Grand Commander Pike, it provided that:

The Sup. Cons. who founds a Lodge or Chapter in a country not occupied by another confederated Sup. Cons. has, by right, jurisdiction over that same country, and this possession is guaranteed to him by all members of the Confederation until a Sup. Cons. is established there.

This article was introduced at the request of the Supreme Council for England and Wales and resolved two disputes over territorial sovereignty between that Supreme Council and the Supreme Council of France. The former considered that the British dependencies fell within its exclusive jurisdiction, while Scotland and Ireland wished to be able to establish Lodges there for their nationals²¹. The latter was in conflict with the Southern Jurisdiction over the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii).²²

Not only did the Convent rule in favour of the participating Supreme Councils on both issues, but more importantly, from a legal standpoint, with Article 12, it had overturned and denied the traditions and customs that had long governed this type of conflict, as Grand Commander Pike was to point out in a well-argued manner to the Supreme Council of France on 8 November 1875 (which led the Southern Jurisdiction to break with the Supreme Council of France that same month).²³

Given that this decision (Article 12) is formulated in general terms, it will apply as much to the Empires of Russia, China and Japan as to the small Kingdom of Hawaii: which is why this decision is contrary to common sense, as well as lacking in Masonic legal authority and unprecedented ...

The changes thus introduced into the very organisation of the Rite, mainly with Article 3 of the *Treaty of Alliance*, under the guise of a Confederation, resulted rather in the constitution of a Federation whose sovereignty would

have been superior to that of the Supreme Councils, since the Convent would have had the possibility of imposing on any Supreme Council orientations and positions that it did not share. Rather than a union respectful of historical, geographical and human specificities, as embodied, for example, by the Holy Roman Empire, there was a strong temptation to adopt a more Napoleonic conception of the Empire.

A subversion of the very essence of the Rite

These deviations in the organisation and functioning of the Rite were compounded by a perverse attempt to subvert the very essence of the Rite (and, more generally, of traditional Freemasonry) with what Paul Naudon calls *the quarrel over the 'Great Architect of the Universe'*.

This was a perverse attempt because, without directly attacking this essential *landmark*, the Convent, by seeking to *define the principles of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, in particular the fundamental symbol of the Great Architect of the Universe*, would diminish its meaning and value.

This manoeuvre is first expressed in the preamble to the Treaty of Alliance and Confederation:

Freemasonry is an institution of universal brotherhood whose origins date back to the cradle of human society; its doctrine is the recognition of a higher Power, whose existence it proclaims under the name of the Great Architect of the Universe.

The *Treaty* returns to this question in its *Declaration of Principles*, stating:

Freemasonry proclaims, as it has proclaimed since its inception, the existence of a creative principle under the name of the Great Architect of the Universe.

Such 'definitions' of the Great Architect, even if they are reductive, are naturally acceptable to any Freemason who sees in this expression the figure of a God whom he does not have to define. This was, moreover, the explanation given by the Supreme Council of England, which maintained *that the words 'Creative Principle' in the Declaration of Principles are merely a antecedent to the name of the Great Architect of the Universe, and it is difficult to imagine that such a name could be attributed to anyone other than a personal Being.*²⁹

But another interpretation was possible, as the same Supreme Council was to realise in an exchange with the Grand Chancellor of the Supreme Council of France, who had told him *that the expression 'Creative Principle' had been chosen because it was sufficiently vague to allow people who did not believe in the existence of God to be part of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.*

This desire to overturn the very foundations of the Rite was certainly shared only by a small minority of Supreme Councils, as the rest of the story would prove, but this active minority succeeded in imposing its strategy in Lausanne by playing on the ambiguity of words, with the Supreme Councils of Tradition present at the Convent agreeing to negotiate on what is precisely non-negotiable.

As Paul Naudon notes, *this tradition, which we know to be entirely spiritual and Christian, was at that time coming up against the strong current of liberalism and scientism that was asserting itself within several Supreme Councils.*

This analysis was shared by Grand Commander Riandey, who wrote:

Inspired by a broad liberalism, both from a religious and philosophical perspective and from a political and social point of view, during the weeks they spent in Lausanne, they made significant changes to the principles included in the Grand Constitutions.

These paid reverence, under the name of the Great Architect of the Universe, to God, the Supreme Being, the Creator. The name of the Great Architect of the Universe was retained, but it was now only applicable to a "Creative Principle" (.../...)

What, then, is a 'creative principle'? The word 'principle' is used here only to mask the ignorance that existed at the time regarding the origins of life and the appearance of Man on Earth.

This attempt to subject the very essence of the Rite to the imperatives of the ideologies of the time, i.e. the profound modification of a spiritualist message of human liberation through the lens of secular worldviews – its 'profanation' – was fortunately met with vigorous opposition from the vast majority of Supreme Councils which, as we have seen, refused to participate in the Confederation and to accept its conclusions.

For their part, the Supreme Councils of Belgium and then England, having reconsidered their position, proposed in 1879 to rewrite the offending texts, the acceptance of which was a condition for their continued membership of the Confederation, and which made explicit reference to the existence of God.

Finally, it was around the rigorous, precise but open definition put forward by the Southern Jurisdiction that unity was achieved:

Freemasonry proclaims as its necessary and fundamental principle the belief in the existence of a true and living God.

Conclusions : the World Conferences

It was around this definition that the coherence and unity of the Supreme Councils were reaffirmed; faced with the virus of its profanation – that of the organisation of its relations and that of its principles – the World Body of Scottish Rite was sufficiently solid in its values not to give in. It is nevertheless true that the proponents of this profanation, defeated in 1880, continued their work of undermining the organisation underground, but had no choice but to detach themselves from this World Body or be excluded from it. They continued to refer to the Lausanne Convent, pretending to see it as one of the Laws of the Rite.

On the other hand, over the years, the regular Supreme Councils drew conclusions from this ill-fated attempt, with the initiative taken by the Grand Commander of Belgium, Eugène Goblet d'Alviella, to convene the first World Conference of Supreme Councils in Brussels in 1907.

The aim was no longer to establish a body superior to the Supreme Councils, whose sovereignty was now reaffirmed, but to formalise a forum for exchange and dialogue, whose decisions are not binding on participants³⁵ and which is responsible for deciding who has the right to sit on it, i.e. who is recognised by the community of Supreme Councils as the representative of the Rite in a given territory. Since the World Conference in Asunción, Paraguay, in 2022, the Supreme National Council of France has represented our country at this forum.

Bringing together all the Supreme Councils of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite that recognise the Grand Constitutions of 1786 as its only fundamental laws and respect the traditional principles and values of this Rite, in a union that respects historical, geographical and initiatory transmission specificities, these World Conferences, like the Holy Empire, express the universality and universalism of Masonry.



Le Maître Secret
par Jean-Luc Leguay