



The Grand Lodge of Virginia

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons



Do Good Unto All

By: Worshipful Alexander Szramoski, Grand Chaplain

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

-Proverbs 17:17 KJV

Back in late January, most of the eastern US was subjected to an unprecedented winter storm. Overnight the ground was covered in nearly half a foot in snow which was then followed up with freezing rain. This inevitably turned the entire surface of the eastern states into the world's largest ice rink.

Two days after the snow had stopped falling, plowing trucks had cleared enough roads to let transit flow again. The real trouble wasn't clearing the roads; it was freeing our cars from the icy prisons that these plows had created from moving all that ice and snow onto the curbs of every street they touched.

Overnight these walls of snow would then freeze into actual solid walls of ice. At my house, we had to ditch our shovel and augur for pick's. We would take chunks of ice off that surrounded our cars and toss them off to the side.

It was a very intense process which only made me think of how hard this would be for our neighbors who were elderly, mitigated physically or lived alone. Thankfully, whole communities came out to help clear up the parking lots, driveways and sidewalks needed to help make things more accessible and less slippery.

There is nothing that should warm the heart more than a community coming together for a common good. Among all people everywhere, there is a universal rule or axiom illuminated to us that instructs us all to be on the lookout for those most in need. Of course I am speaking of the Golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

It's times like these where we have to ask ourselves this: what are we doing for our brothers in need and how far are we willing to go?

Consider the tenants of Masonry our rites and rituals. Our greatest cardinal belief is that all men share the same creator and because of this all men are thus brothers.

As a DeMolay, in every meeting we held there was a specific moment where the membership was asked if there was any "sickness or distress" to report. The meaning of this is obvious; we want it known to the other brothers if someone is looking for help with personal or family matters.

You aren't required to speak up if you choose not to, you can't compel someone to accept help if they can't admit they need it. Much like so much else, you cannot treat a problem until you are willing to acknowledge it.

My reference to the Golden rule is obvious but I want you to take heart of this, that you as a Mason are always acting as a Mason in your public life even when you are not thinking about it. If we are to believe that all men are brothers, what are we doing to show it?

While we Masons do not go on recruiting drives, we are free to answer if someone asks "are you a Mason?" The moment you say yes is the moment that every action you took until now is recontextualized by that revelation. What do you look like as a Mason? What acts do you do that distinguish you as a man who looks out for his brothers?

It does not capture the totality of what I am describing but as you go about your daily business you are a brand ambassador. We don't openly advertise it but when people know that you're a Mason they get a little curious.

When people see Mason's pitching together to help a brother or the spouse, widow, sister or daughter of one that sends a message. You cannot buy authenticity; it simply exists or it does not and all we ask that you do is that you go out of your way to help a brother down on his luck without bringing yourself and the situation further down in the process.

The opposite of this is also true. People will notice disunity, they will notice the cold shoulders, and they will notice it more especially when it is directed outside the west gate.

Our mission should be clear to those who inquire further than a passing glance. When anyone asks you why you pitch in, why you donate money, time and skills to someone, why you visit the Masonic Home in Richmond, why you mow the lawn and fix the fence around the lodge, always have a good answer.

Always remember as well in as much as we are observed by the world at large, our creator watches us with uninhibited providence. Know that nothing remains unseen no matter how secret and use your gifts to do him proud as you remember a brother's welfare as your own this year and beyond.



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