

The Catholic Catechism on Freemasonry

Lecture Series on Freemasonry Through the Light of Catholicism

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Session 3.3 Philosophy of the Third Degree

The third sacrament of Freemasonry is the Master Mason Degree through which the initiate is raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason and participates in the death and raising of Hiram Abiff.

CATHOLIC
CATECHISM ON
FREEMASONRY
LESSON THREE -
RELIGION

Naturalism, Indifferentism, and Oaths

The Third Degree of Freemasonry

Indifferentism

Naturalism

Oaths

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- *Overall Points of Conflict with the 3rd Degree*

The Master Mason degree is the highest degree in what is properly craft Free and Accepted Masonry. All other grades would only add more light to what the Freemason has received to this sacrament called sublime. Here the initiate has advanced to the climax of his journey and is now able to do the work of a Master Mason and earn his own wages. Yet, he is presented with a problem. His Master has been slain without giving him the one secret that he has longed desired – the name of God. The Legend of Hiram Abiff (albeit a different secret in Anglo vs. Continental) is the great mystery of Freemasonry, but follows the death and burial event of all initiation rites.



In Eminenti apostolatus specula (The High Watch) Pope Clement XII - 1738

“Now it has come to Our ears, and common gossip has made clear, that certain Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles called in the popular tongue Liberi Muratori or Francs Massons or by other names according to the various languages, are spreading far and wide and daily growing in strength; and men of any Religion or sect, satisfied with the appearance of natural virtue, are associated with one another in a union, according to their laws and the statutes laid down for them, by a strict and unbreakable bond which obliges them, both by an oath upon the Holy Bible and by a host of grave penalties, to an inviolable silence about all that they do in secret together.”

Humanum Genus (The Human Race) Pope Leo XIII - 1884

“Now, the masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savor. For, from what We have above most clearly shown, that which is their ultimate purpose forces it-self into view - namely, the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced, and the substitution of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which the foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere naturalism.”



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- *The Three Irreconcilable Conflicts*

- Indifferentism
- Naturalism
- Oaths

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- *The Three Irreconcilable Conflicts*

- **Non-Guild**
- **Jurisdictional Variation**
- **Catholic Objection**

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- *The Three Irreconcilable Conflicts*

- **Indifferentism**

- The Catholic Church believes and teaches and that there is no salvation outside of the Church (*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*) and, therefore, that the Catholic Church is the fullness of truth. This belief does not limit God who saves, but proclaims that Christ and His Church are God's given path to that gift of salvation. Therefore, the idea that one religion is as good as another, and that all religions are equally valid paths to salvation is antithetical to what Christ Jesus revealed and to Catholic

INDIFFERENTISM IN THE MM DEGREE

- What elements remain from the previous degrees
 - Still blindfolded, partially clothed (right arm and both breasts exposed), cable-tow now thrice around arm/neck, no bare feet.
 - The Master Mason initiate is received upon both points of the compass extended and pressed to both naked breasts, which is to teach the initiate that as the vital parts of man are contained within the breasts, so the most excellent tenets of the institution are contained between the points of the compasses--which are Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love.
 - The Holy Bible still have a square and compass set on it, but now both points of the compass are now elevated above the square, which is to teach the initiate to never to lose sight of those truly Masonic virtues, which are friendship, morality, and brotherly love.
 - Taught to wear apron now as a Master Mason
- These changes meant to symbolize advancement and matriculation into more light (Gnosticism) and secret mysteries.

LEGEND OF HIRAM ABIFF

- Common Feature of Rites of Passage – Death and Burial to convey the great mystery.
- The legend of Hiram Abiff at King Solomon's Temple appears to be an amalgamation of various legends down through the ages together with a Biblical text to fit into the theme and purpose of the Master Mason degree, which is to signal to the candidate that the work of a Master Mason is never over until his labors on earth are completed, and he finally receives his reward/his wages in Heaven.
- If you have my book 'The Catholic Catechism on Freemasonry' you can read the drama of the Master Mason degree, but for the class, I will read it aloud.



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- *The Three Irreconcilable Conflicts*

- # Naturalism

- The Catholic Church believes and teaches that God is the source of our life and all that is good, and that we are on a pilgrimage to return to Him. The sacraments, the signs that Christ Jesus left on earth, order us to the Eternal Father through His grace, and help us to order all that is good back to Him. Naturalism looks to nature as the one original and fundamental source of all that exists and attempts to use it to explain causes and to order life back to nature.

NATURALISM IN THE MM DEGREE

- Self-determination is a central teaching in Freemasonry; that the initiate is to use the tools of an operative Mason to apply the philosophical meaning of that tool to his life and, thereby, become a better man.
 - The new working tool of a Master Mason is the Trowel, and they are taught that the trowel is an instrument made use of by operative masons to spread the cement which unites a building into one common mass; but Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection; that cement which unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist, but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.

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- # Oaths

- , (name of candidate), of my own free-will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God, and this worshipful Lodge, erected to him and dedicated to the holy Sts. John, do hereby and hereon most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, that I will always hail, ever conceal, and never reveal any of the secrets, arts, parts, point or points, of the Master Masons' Degree, to any person or persons whomsoever, except it be to a true and lawful brother of this Degree, or in a regularly constituted Lodge of Master Masons, nor unto him, or them, until by strict trial, due examination, or lawful information, I shall have found him, or them, as lawfully entitled to the same as I am myself. "I furthermore promise and swear, that I will stand to and abide by all laws, rules, and regulations of the Master Masons' Degree, and of the Lodge of which I may hereafter become a member, as far as the same shall come to my knowledge; and that I will ever maintain and support the constitution, laws, and edicts of the Grand Lodge under which the same shall be holden. "Further, that I will acknowledge and obey all due signs and summonses sent to me from a Master Masons' Lodge, or given me by a brother of that Degree, if within the length of my cable-tow. "Further, that I will always aid and assist all poor, distressed, worthy Master Masons, their widows and orphans, knowing them to be such, as far as their necessities may require, and my ability permit, without material injury to myself and family. "Further, that I will keep a worthy brother Master Mason's secrets inviolable, when communicated to and received by me as such, murder and treason excepted. "Further, that I will not aid, nor be present at, the initiation, passing, or raising of a woman, an old man in his dotage, a young man in his nonage, an atheist, a madman, or fool, knowing them to be such. "Further, that I will not sit in a Lodge of clandestine-made Masons, nor converse on the subject of Masonry with a clandestine-made Mason, nor one who has been expelled or suspended from a Lodge, while under that sentence, knowing him or them to be such. "Further, I will not cheat, wrong, nor defraud a Master Mason's Lodge, nor a brother of this Degree, knowingly, nor supplant him in any of his laudable undertakings, but will give him due and timely notice, that he may ward off all danger. "Further, that I will not knowingly strike a brother Master Mason, or otherwise do him personal violence in anger, except in the necessary defense of my family or property. "Further, that I will not have illegal carnal intercourse with a Master Mason's wife, his mother, sister, or daughter, nor suffer the same to be done by others, if in my power to prevent. "Further, that I will not give the Grand Masonic word, in any other manner or form than that in which I shall receive it, and then in a low breath. "Further, that I will not give the Grand Hailing Sign of Distress, except in case of the most imminent danger, in a just and lawful Lodge, or for the benefit of instruction; and if ever I should see it given, or hear the words accompanying it, by a worthy brother in distress, I will fly to his relief, if there is a greater probability of saving his life than losing my own. "All this I most solemnly, sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steady resolution to perform the same, without any hesitation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind what-ever, binding myself, under no less penalty than that of having my body severed in two, 1 my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes, the ashes scattered before the four winds of heaven, that no more remembrance might be had of so vile and wicked a wretch as I would be, should I ever, knowingly, violate this my Master Mason's obligation. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same."

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Session 4 In Eminenti (1738), Pope Clement XII

Foundational Course on the first Papal Bull issues against Freemasonry and forbidden Catholics from membership into the Masonic Orders under pain of excommunication.