



DISPATCHES FROM HEADQUARTERS

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Supreme Grand Master's July Message 2020

Sir Knights,

As this pandemic drags along, as the full extent and duration of Sovereign Great Priory cancellations and postponements across the country are still yet unknown, I must ask for your continuing indulgence and patience. I am sure that I need not remind you of how deadly the virus can actually be, nor how vulnerable our membership is to the virus. Hopefully, a vaccine will be developed by the end of the year, so that the world can return to a normalcy close to what we experienced some six months ago.

Six months ago? It seems like an eternity. Six months ago, we were freely going about our daily lives, including attending to our many Masonic duties and responsibilities. Six months ago, we were also freely making fraternal visits to different parts of the USA and Europe. Six months ago, none of us would have been able to predict the deep chasm, which has opened up with respect to race relations and specific geopolitical manipulations.

Who would have thought that wanton violence and peaceful protest would be the news of the day? Who would have thought that people would risk their lives from exposure to the virus in order to rise up and protest against what they consider injustice and inhumanity?

Sir Knights, we are indeed living through unprecedented times. I will not make any judgement with respect to what is happening, other than to challenge you to be strong, be safe, be healthy.

As such, many of the Sir Knights will have seen that the statue of the esteemed Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA,

Albert Pike, was toppled by a number of Washington, D.C. protesters some two weeks ago. Unfortunately, even Freemasonry cannot escape being touched by what is happening all around us. Again, I caution all Sovereign Great Priory members, all Freemasons, to not pass judgement on such an event. It is just not our place to try to understand the effect that a symbol of this nature may have on the people of the USA.

To this end though, I've enclosed a short comment written by Arturo de Hoyas, the Grand Historian/Grand Archivist of the US Southern Jurisdiction. I believe that his words are deeply profound and well worth reading by any Freemason:

***Albert Pike: He has lived! The fruits of his labors live after him. ***

Like many of you, I watched the news last night as a mob pulled down and burned the statue of Albert Pike. Earlier in the day I gave a TV interview in which I said that Freemasons did not want the statue to be a point of conflict, but that it was property of the United States, under the Parks Service. I preferred that it be moved to a museum where he could be understood in context.

*Last night, as the mob did their work, the news media called it a "Confederate Statue," the presence of which was "painful." In truth the statue had nothing to do with the Civil War. It was Pike as a Freemason, in civilian clothing, holding a copy of *Morals and Dogma*.*

Pike was a man of his times who embodied the strengths and weaknesses of his generation. Freemasons acknowledge Pike's personal foibles and frailties, and revere his ethical and moral teachings.

They respect what he accomplished, and see in him an example of a person who was willing to abandon personal prejudices on the path to self-improvement.

Among his strong points was his pursuit of knowledge and self-improvement. Within one lifetime he seems to have lived multiple lives that sometimes overlapped each other. He was, for example, an advocate for Native American rights, an accomplished attorney, an author, an educator, an explorer, an historian, a military leader (Brigadier General), a philosopher, a poet, and a translator.

A Boston native, Pike's wanderlust led him to explore the South and follow the Santa Fe Trail. He had a particular fascination with Native Americans, and became a friend to several tribes, compiling personal dictionaries of their languages and dialects. Later in life, as an attorney, he became a legal advocate for Native Americans, trying to secure the rights which they had been promised by the government.

As with other "larger than life" vocal personalities, he was occasionally controversial. Strongly in favor of the Tenth Amendment (States rights) Pike, like many other Americans, sided with the South during the American Civil War. Although his wife's family owned slaves he personally considered slavery a great evil, and the greatest calamity of the South. In 1856 he walked out of the Southern Convention saying, "he would suffer himself to be torn by wild horses before he would justify the renewal of the African slave trade." He was ridiculed for his hope that a time would come for all men to be free, but he failed to condemn slavery outright. Following the war, under President Johnson's amnesty proclamation, Pike returned to private life and in late 1869/early 1870 he moved with the Scottish Rite to reside in Washington, DC.

Pike has been quoted to say that he preferred to leave Freemasonry than sit in lodges with Black men. If this was his earlier view, he matured and changed. In fact, he became a supporter of Black Freemasonry and enjoyed a friendship with Thornton A. Jackson, Grand Commander of the Prince Hall Affiliation. Pike even shared his rituals with the Prince Hall Freemasons, and exchanged cordial and fraternal letters.

After Pike's death he was maligned when it was falsely alleged that he had been a member of the KKK. Pike's enemies claimed he was one of the founders and/or chief judicial officer of the KKK. However, when the US Congress investigated the KKK in 1871, its report failed to support these allegations. (Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 13 vols. [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872]). The allegations were so prevalent and persistent that even some Masonic writers were fooled and repeated them. However, there are no primary documents, membership records, or letters from Pike's time which suggest his participation in any way. In the vast collection of the Supreme Council's archives, there is not a single document connecting him with the KKK.

Another false claim is that Pike was a "Luciferian." The French hoaxer Leo Taxil (Gabriel Jogand-Pages) asserted that Pike was the "Sovereign Pontiff of Universal Freemasonry," and that he taught the worship of Lucifer in the Scottish Rite's highest degrees. Taxil later publicly admitted this was a hoax, at the expense of the Catholic church. Although Freemasonry admits good men of any faith, Pike was himself a Bible-believing Christian, who encouraged Masons to respect Jesus "Above all the other great teachers of morality and virtue" (Morals and Dogma 28:573). In several long passages, Pike implored Masons to follow Jesus's example, calling him "the Great Master" whose life was an "undeniable Gospel" (M&D 28:575). Pike urged us, "Believe that there is a God; that He is our father; that He has a paternal interest in our welfare and improvement; that He has given us powers, by means of which we may escape from sin and ruin; that He has destined us to a future life of endless progress toward perfection and a knowledge of Himself—believe this, as every Mason should, and you can live calmly, endure patiently, labor resolutely, deny yourselves cheerfully, hope steadfastly, and be conquerors in the great struggle of life" (M&D 12:22). Throughout his writing Pike encouraged us to make the most of ourselves, to see ourselves as part of a human family, and to do good to all: "Learn, that you may be enabled to do good; and do so because it is right, finding in the act itself ample reward and recompense. To attain the truth, and to serve our fellows, our country, and mankind—this is the noblest destiny of man" (M&D 4:8-9).

Perhaps, however, his most famous saying is that famously engraved near his bust at the House of the Temple: "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." These wise words remain as true today, as when he spoke them.

Freemasons honor Albert Pike for the several reasons: for his love of a fraternity which seeks to improve the social order and encourages humankind to find commonalities to form bonds of friendship; for his willingness to discard personal prejudices when confronted by better information; and perhaps, most of all, for his love of the truth and commitment to share whatever truth he discovered.

Like the rest of us, Albert Pike was far from perfect. But he had the moral courage to abandon the past and move forward. He tried to make his personal weaknesses into strengths, and his writings encourage us to do the same. The remainder of his life was dedicated to a Fraternity that seeks to transcend barriers, both real and artificial, to make strangers into Brothers. This is why, when his statue was erected in Judiciary Square in

1901, it was attended by men who had previously faced each other on the battlefield.

Pike never wanted a statute of himself. Rather, he said: "When I am dead, I wish my monument to be builded only in the hearts and memories of my Brethren of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and my name to be remembered by them in every country, no matter what language men may speak there, where the light of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite shall shine, and its oracles of Truth and Wisdom be reverently listened to."

In the same manner, if you are able, please continue to reach out to those Brethren and Widows who may be in distress. Reach out to those Sir Knights who may be less fortunate or the more vulnerable. Social contact is what is needed in many cases, whether it be by telephone or other social media or across the recommended social distance.

Above all else, during these difficult times, we must collectively be guided by common sense (logic and reason) and not give in to panic and hysteria. As the future course of this situation continues to unfold, I remain optimistic that the knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the universe that we share in Brotherhood will hold us in good stead. And, as we have read, great men such as Albert Pike

spent their whole life striving towards redemption.

Above all else, please remain positive. If you are a Registrar or Presiding Preceptor, make it your objective to contact each and every member of your preceptory during these uncertain times. It is also a great time to regale your members through social media with well-researched or remembered stories of individuals who came before us or historical events within the purview of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada.

Finally, Sir Knights, I pray once again that each and every one of you maintain a high level of personal safety and health. There are simple measures to take in order to ensure your personal hygiene and safety and, lastly, take faith that you are not alone, wherever you may call home!

Yours in the Bonds of our Order,



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Supreme Grand Master,
Sovereign Great Priory Knights Templar of Canada

Deputy Grand Master July Message

I had attempted to do some additional research regarding the Order of the Red Cross but was unable to acquire the research material I was seeking. I did obtain a copy of the 6th Annual Proceedings of the National Great Priory of Canada at Hamilton in 1881. It provided interesting reading. It covered numerous topics. One, in particular, was a report by M. Em. Kt. W. J. B. MacLeod Moore, the Great Prior of the Dominion of Canada. It was the year "Home Rule" was finally realized by Canada.

While I found his report extremely interesting, it would take a great deal of space to deal with it effectively. I want to present the information attained from the Proceedings regarding uniform, regalia, and a history behind it. In this installment, I would like to discuss the sword, spurs and ring.

The Sword

Each Knight under the rank of Preceptor may wear a straight cross-hilt sword with a black scabbard, and black leather belt, with bronze chains and slings. The hilt and mountings may be gold, silver, iron, steel, or bronze.

Preceptors may wear a sword with a plated steel scabbard, silver plated with appropriate mountings. The cross-hilted sword was made in the form of a cross, an emblem of the cause in which it was used. The blade straight and cutting on both sides, typical of it always employed in defence of justice.

When Crusaders were on the march to the Holy City, they were in the daily custom of placing their long, two-handed swords upright before them, forming a cross, and before these, they performed their morning devotions. On all military occasions, they kissed the hilt of their sword in token of devotion to the Cross. From this, we derive our "Salute" and "Stand to Order."

The girding on the sword was essentially the ceremony that usually constituted a Knight, hence the common expression a "Belted Knight," as identifying the Knight and girding of the sword.

The Spurs

Spurs of gold were the distinguishing badge of a Knight and an indispensable adjunct of Knighthood, to signify diligence in every honourable design, the rowel symbolized promptitude of action.

The Ring

The ring is worn by Ecclesiastics is a sign of an indissoluble connection and union with the church. In the Templar Order, it is adapted in place of the "Girdle" worn around the waist, with which the Ancient Knights were invested, and is a symbol of the covenant of marriage. The ancient signet rings were worn aways on the right hand, and generally on the index finger, see the passage in Jeremiah, xxii,v.24

R. Em. Kt. Geoffrey C. Perry, KCT Deputy Grand Master

SMILE

A friend of mine, R.Ex.Comp. Eric Lakien, collects and emails a daily smile to many. I thought these might also give you a smile.

How Did Canada Get Its Name?

How do you spell Canada? Answer: C-Eh!-N-Eh!-D-Eh!

The original name for Canada, dreamed up by a parliamentary committee in London, England, was "Cold North Dominion," but that was too long, so they abbreviated it to C.N.D.

The King's Royal Governor presented the new name to the inhabitants, but they didn't say a word.

"Well, what do you think?" asked the Royal Governor?

"C, eh?" said the first fellow, and just looked at the Governor.

"N, eh?" says the second guy.

"D, eh?" says a third one.

Then silence.

"Hey," says the Governor. "I like that. It's a helluva lot easier to pronounce when you spell it that way."

And that's how Canada got its name.

Canadian Humour

Ref: Vanity Fair magazine, January, 2013 (<https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2013/01/history-canadian-humor>)

Is the very concept of "Canadian humor" an oxymoron? As we say in Canada: possibly, or possibly not.

Canada's history lacks the violent frontier mythology that continues to fuel the folk hoax of rugged individualism so central to the American identity. Rather, Canadian society was carefully devised to run on the oiled ball bearings of amity and cooperation, ensuring a near-Scandinavian calm, as in: an aversion to firing semi-automatic Russian assault weapons into schoolrooms; the casual embrace of free health insurance even for deadbeats; debate over same-sex marriage that's about as heated as that over licensing dogs; open arms to immigrants, swarthy and otherwise; volunteering for U.N. peacekeeping duties, no questions asked; and a national disinclination to jaywalk, even at three A.M. on an empty street, because, heck, they told us not to.

Thus, a strong case can be made that life in unrestive, uncomplicated, unfrontational Canada is altogether too relentlessly nice for humor to flourish. Lack of societal friction starves the mischief instinct. See also: Belgian stand-up comedy festival canceled again ... New Zealand museum of comedy files for bankruptcy ... Finland-wide clown search proves futile.

"Canadian humor"- does it even exist? Theories abound and conflict and contradict themselves:

Theory 1: There are actually funny Canadians alive today, but all nine of them moved to the

U.S.A., and once they got here they renounced their Canadian cultural heritage, the way Mick Jagger renounced his English accent. Mike Myers never makes Mountie jokes. Jim Carrey declines to send up the toonie, Canada's hilarious two-dollar coin. You have to scour Wikipedia to confirm the Canadianness of Mort Sahl, David Steinberg, Michael J. Fox, Catherine O'Hara, Seth Rogen, the late John Candy and Phil Hartman, and that guy from that sitcom, you know the one. America absorbed Canadian comedians, or, Canadians would say, Canadian comedians absorbed America.* Lorne Michaels, the Darth Vader of American comedy, harvests all the comedic talent in his native land as ruthlessly as Major League Baseball loots the Dominican Republic of shortstops.

Theory 2: A distinctive Canadian humor style never had a chance. The British and the Americans, with their overwhelming cultural power, exhausted all the possibilities of English-language humor long before the messy agglomeration of territories and provinces was confederated into a sovereign entity called Canada, just after the U.S. Civil War.** This left Canadian wits bereft of original material and forced them back on the only potential for risibility left: the condition of being Canadian. Which, given the national psyche, inevitably curdled into a pathetically self-deprecating brand of humor, typified by the following:

Q: How do you get 26 Canadians out of a swimming pool?

A: Yell, "Everybody out of the pool!"

Theory 3: Canadians are, by history and temperament, the opposite of aggressive, and so, unsurprisingly, their humor is defensive; they beat up on themselves before anybody else - i.e., Americans - can do it.***

Theory 4: Canadians have inhaled such deep drafts of Britishness (the Union Jack disappeared from their flag only in 1965) that what there is of a Canadian humor style hews largely to those twin English enthusiasms, parody and satire.

It has been sneered that the American idea of satire is a pie in the face; Canadian tastes have always been subtler, as befits a nation that tuned in weekly for decades to smart British comedy shows via the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, a kind of junior BBC in the best sense. Meanwhile, Americans were doubling up over Milton Berle and Red Skelton and that ilk. Satire also suits the shy Canadian temperament: you can savage your victim while masked in somebody else's identity. Anything to avoid drawing attention to yourself, which is against Canadian societal law.

I give you Stephen Leacock (1869-1944), the mas-

ter satirist, English-born, Canadian-raised, who every Canadian schoolchild knows is a humor immortal. And you say thanks and give him right back, because you've never heard of him, or his classic works, such as the collections *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* and *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*, and the story "Gertrude the Governess: or, Simple Seventeen," wherein one character mounts his steed and goes galloping "madly off in all directions." The Canadian Dilemma, in a nutshell.

Theory 5: The world may not be watching, but Canadians can make other Canadians laugh. It makes sad sense that while Canadian humor entertains the native population - notably with domestic TV comedy series such as *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Royal Canadian Air Farce* - it will never flourish outside the country, because nobody outside of Canada feels any urgent need to read or hear about, or even be aware of, Canada.

This state of affairs was brought home to me a few

years ago when a memoir I'd written about growing up Canadian, *Thin Ice*, was published here in America. The hardcover subtitle was "Coming of Age in Canada," but when the paperback version later appeared, the U.S. publisher had changed it to "Saved by the American Dream," in hopes (futile, as it turned out) of slowing its instant sales decline.

Theory 6: It's axiomatic that humor cannot thrive where there is no passion, and Canadians are famed for repressing their stronger feelings under a heavy blanket of earnest phlegmatism, tinged with an embedded Scotch-Calvinist suspicion that high spirits, and especially fun, are the Devil's work.

In fact, Canadian passions can be and are constantly stirred to the brink of physical violence if the discussion involves:

- Hockey.
- The condescending stupidity about all things Canadian that is an American birthright.
- The American compulsion for insufferable, nonstop, blow-hard jingoism.

WEBSITES

Sovereign Great Priory now operates two websites. You are no doubt familiar with our original www.knightstemplar.ca We now have a "Digital Library and Archives" containing a wealth of information for the interested <https://knightstemplarlibrary.com> We invite you to check it out.

This space welcomes any submissions of articles, art or other pictures of social meetings or hobbies, or such, which are appropriate to share with your Brother Knights for inclusion into the next dispatches.

You are a volunteer in your Lodge, Chapter, Council and Preceptory until you are elected by the members to be an officer. Now you have become the servant of the members and must strive diligently to bring honour to your office and to yourself.

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