

# DISCOURSE

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## “Volunteerism”

My Dear Brothers:

Comedian Joan Rivers for many years opened up with the line “Can we Talk”. That my Brothers is exactly what I would like to do with you, have a dialogue, a conversation just simply “can we talk.”

Although we have over forty five thousand plus very important people (VIP) I would like to have a conversation with the 891 Worshipful Master’s, Senior Warden’s and Junior Warden’s that compose each Lodge’s principal Officers, the 594 Treasurers and Secretaries, and the 2,079 Appointed Lodge Officers of all 297 Lodges in our State. The other Forty two thousand plus of the best members we have are more than welcome to join us on the sidelines and listen to our conversation. There is something here for everyone who loves the Fraternity.

My Brothers, I don’t know how many of you have seen the movie entitled “A Few Good Men” with Jack Nicholson & Tom Cruise, and the scene where they are in a court martial and the Jack Nicholson is being questioned by the prosecutor to tell the truth and he answers “you want the truth, you can’t handle the truth.” Well you may be wondering where am I going with this, well my Brothers contrary to the line in the movie “I firmly believe that you not only deserve the truth, but that you CAN handle the truth.”

Can we talk; I say we can have an open and frank discussion that we may better understand where we are and where we need to go. I hope that at the end of this discussion you will have a better understanding of what “**WE**” need to do.

First, I would like to dispel a myth that has lead us to some misunderstanding and even a misconception that continues to harm our Fraternity today, and that is the use of the term “volunteer.” Do we understand the meaning of that word? Wikipedia describes volunteer, volunteers and voluntary as follows.

“In general terms, **volunteering** is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic (selfless) activity, intended to promote good or improve human quality of life (well being of individuals and societies), but people also volunteer for their own skill development, to meet others, to make contacts for possible employment, to have fun, and a variety of other reasons that could be considered self-serving (the precedence given in thought or deed to self).” (was added by this author)

Volunteering takes many forms and is performed by a wide range of people. Many volunteers are specifically trained in the areas they work in, such as medicine, education, or emergency rescue. Other volunteers serve on an as-needed basis, such as in response to a natural disaster or for a beach-cleanup.

The dictionary further defines volunteer as 1. A person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking. 2. A person who performs a service willingly and without pay.

Frankly speaking, the reason for the definitions is to demonstrate that **volunteerism** has nothing to do with the notion that volunteering is for when an individual has spared time. When there are no ball games on the TV, when we are not hunting, fishing, riding etc.

Volunteering is for the individual that makes a selfless commitment to help others or society without compensation. I ask you to follow me with this analogy.

Think of a Volunteer Fire or Paramedic Department of many small communities across the country, can you imagine just for a minute if there were an emergency and the volunteers were out hunting, fishing or riding. At a card game or golf tournament. On a weekend taking in a game and there was no one to answer the emergency call after all they are volunteers. (Based on our perception of volunteers they do it when they can or want to) Would this sound okay to you if it were your home that had the emergency? Of course not, they made a commitment to serve and protect your home and there was no exceptions, like except when they are at home watching a game hunting or fishing season. No sir they volunteer to arrange their schedule or work around one that all the volunteers could take days off and still serve their fellowman while maintaining their work schedule, their family life, and even their places of worships. What they do is more than volunteer, yes sir they sacrifice of themselves to serve others, a concept that is loosing its meaning today, SACRIFICE.

You see volunteering brings commitment, caring, dedication, selfless, a sense of service. It brings out the best in everyone that participates. It is one of the most demonstrative types of Charity a person can give. Of course prioritizing is paramount in the concept of volunteering since decisions must be made between its duties to its commitment to the volunteer cause and the times spent on self-indulgence.

Volunteering should never be taken lightly because if not handled properly and prioritized correctly their will be a lot people unhappy with you. On the other hand, I can tell you that it is not impossible to do; I along with millions of others do it each and every day of our lives and we are the best for it. For there is no greater service, than to help others unselfishly without compensation a true labor of love.

We are all Masons and I hope you feel as proud of it as I do. Just think for a moment if your Grand Lodge Officers would take the same attitude of volunteerism that many in our Lodges have today. Of not showing up at the meetings, not practicing our lines, not performing the obligations we swore to at our various stages through our Masonic carriers, and even more at our last installation according to our Office. What would you think of that Officer? Would you give him a pass? Would you make excuses for him? After all, he is just a volunteer, he may not have much time, his cable tow must be short, family and business first, etc. These are some of the many excuses we hear at the local level, would this be okay for the Grand Lodge Officers too.

I, will tell you how I would answer the questions above, I would not think much of an Officer that is derelict in his duties. I would not give him a pass, I would not make excuses for him, he is a member of a volunteer organization, **that made a commitment, who dedicated himself, who obligated himself, who was charged with certain responsibilities, which he accepted out of his own free will and accord to perform the duties and responsibilities of that office.** As an intelligent man and leader, he should have known the undertakings and if he does not know or chooses not to know than he should resign, step down and not embarrass himself, his fellow members, his Lodge, Grand Lodge or whatever organization he may be a volunteer of. Volunteering is not for the faint of heart, it takes commitment, dedication and plenty of love.

I would like to share with you a section of the Digest of Masonic Law of the State of Florida that addresses this very same thing we are discussing here today, you will find it in Chapter 1 entitled MASONIC LAW, TRADITION AND POLICY, LANDMARKS AND CERTAIN LAWS OF FREEMASONRY. Section 1.08 is found as Duties of Officers and I quote:

**“1.08 Officers of Lodges, Grand and Particular, are by the nature of their contract with the fraternity, required to be prompt and faithful in the discharge of their official duties. Culpable negligence and dereliction on their part tend to discourage the Brethren, whereby the normal force or influence of the Lodge is weakened or destroyed. Such conduct is therefore censurable, and the Brethren should not be slow in seeking effectual fraternal remedy.”**

As you can see in the above Regulation, our predecessors took their responsibilities seriously, so much so that they made negligence and dereliction of duty censurable, because this they realize would tear at the fabric of our Fraternity, to the point where it could destroy it.

To the Worshipful Masters, Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer, Secretaries and Appointed Lodge Officers at your last installation of Officers you made a contract with the Fraternity to be prompt and faithful to the discharge of your respective duties. Be the man and Mason to whom your word means something, be the man and Mason that takes his responsibilities serious, be the man and Mason you can be proud of, be the man and Mason that your peer emulates and look up to. If you perform the duties and

responsibilities, to which you swore to uphold you will be respected and loved by your Brothers, your Lodge and our Fraternity would be the better for your participation and leadership in your Lodge.

Now I would like to share a word to the forty-two plus thousands who have been listening on the side lines. Remember that you too have taken several obligations as a Master Mason, to assist the officers in the discharge of their duties should be your constant care and at the installation you were charged to be of a generous dispositions and not envy the preferment of your Officers. You were also charged that the association between the Officers and the Brethren be formed and perfected in so much union and harmony that will cause great rejoice among the Craft. That your kindness and Brotherly Affection distinguishes your conduct and lastly that the tenets of our profession be transmitted through your Lodge, pure and unimpaired, from generation to generation.

My friends and Brothers this is the truth of where we are and what we need to do, to get to where we want to be. In my heart of hearts I know we are up to the task, I know you can handle the truth and even more I believe your love of Fraternity is such that you with the assistance of your Brethren will do what ever it takes to get the job done. We as Grand Lodge Officers commit our time and resources to assist the Brothers and Lodges that request assistance in an effort to turn their Lodges around.

You see my Brothers when we start to take our Masonry seriously; when we start to take our Obligations serious, when we start to take our Responsibilities serious, when we start to take Volunteerism serious, that will be the day that Masonry will turn around. That will be the day we will start to see personal growth. That will be the day we will start to become better men. That will be the day we will start to be better human beings. That will be the day we will start having palpable quality. That will be the day we would have started a rebirth of our beloved Fraternity.

My Brothers, keep in mind that someone else stood up before you and those Brothers with more hardship, with less conveniences then today, made it happen for you, will you make it happen for those that will be coming after you, or are you of the mind set that think together we can move mountains.

Will you be the ones that will make it happen? Are you ready to rise to the occasion? My Brother stand up and be counted. ARE YOU WITH ME?

Respectfully and Fraternaly Submitted, I remain your most humble servant

Jorge L. Aladro  
Senior Grand Warden.

***If you would like to receive, these newsletters make request at email below if you would like to forward to your list of friends you have my permission and thank you in advance.***

*“My Brothers, the newsletters are intended to be thought provoking, to get you to think creatively, to get you thinking what if?, to dare you to improve yourself and your Lodge.”*

***Note: If you would, like to have any of these presentations made at your Lodge or District Associations feel free to call.***

***“Masons always rise to the occasion”***