

FREEMASONS IN THE CHURCH

The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said: 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, whence comes this darnel?' 'An enemy has done this,' he answered. The servants said: 'Do you want us to go and weed it out?' He answered: 'No, lest when you weed out the darnel you pull up the wheat as well. Let them both grow till harvest time, then I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel, tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.'

Matthew 13: 24-30

One can find in current literature, and on the internet, any number of allegations of Catholics enrolled in Freemasonic lodges around the world, particularly since the mid 1970s. The involvement not only of members of the Catholic laity, but of the clergy, with the Craft has been the case since at least the mid nineteenth century. The most dramatic public assertions regarding such involvement occurred in September 1978 when Italian Mason, Mino Pecorelli, published a list of some 120 alleged Masons in, or associated with, the Vatican dicasteries, including cardinals, bishops, and priests as well as members of the laity¹. The list included the Secretary of State to Pope Paul VI, Cardinal Villot, and the man who succeeded him in that office, Cardinal Casaroli.

The Masonic Imposition

Consider these characteristics of Freemasonry —

- A Mason is bound to assist his fellow Mason.
- The Masonic oath supervenes over every other duty the Mason may have, whether to Church or state, to wife, or family.
- The Masonic oath supervenes over every vow, whether priestly, religious or marriage, the Mason may have taken, and over every oath he may have taken to tell the truth.
- The Masonic oath supervenes over any oath of office he may have taken, whether as police constable, as lawyer, as magistrate or judge, as member of parliament, or as governor of state, or Commonwealth—or as bishop.

A Mason-priest must assist his fellow Mason-priest if he be a pedophile, or homosexual, fornicator, or thief. The Masonic 'duty' supervenes over his duties as a priest and a Catholic. He must then, protect, rather than correct and report to his bishop, the man and his shortcomings.

A Mason-bishop must protect, rather than discipline and remove, his fellow Mason-priest or religious. He must prefer and advance him over others when a vacancy occurs within his diocese.

¹ Pecorelli was assassinated by two gunmen on a Rome street on the evening of 20th March 1979.

A Mason-priest or bishop is, ipso facto, under interdict² and cut off from the Church's sacraments. Since he is strictly forbidden to celebrate the sacraments³ he is a prime candidate for blackmail within the Masonic fraternity. If he should appear to be failing the Masonic requirements, he can quickly be pulled into line.

Moreover, a priest who has committed some evil in the past known to the Masonic fraternity is similarly amenable through blackmail to Masonic discipline. The result is as effective, and as detrimental to the faith and morals of his flock, as if the man were himself a Mason—for he is then under Masonic control.

It should be clear from the above that once a priest or religious becomes a Mason the consequences for the Catholic faithful are appalling. Not only will he neglect as far as he can to implement Catholic teaching but he will work to put in place the Masonic agenda. He will cooperate with other Masons in the Church. He will, moreover, work to subvert otherwise orthodox priests and bishops to the same end.

The Lure

Paul A Fisher, American Catholic writer on the Craft, provides the following insight into Masonry's attractions—

My own experience at a 1965 Shriner's parade in Washington D.C. left my wife and me so impressed by the Arab sheiks, Keystone Kops, marching bands, clowns and choirs—and the immense joy and pleasure they all brought to our small children—that we were strongly persuaded to believe the Catholic Church's age-old condemnation of the Masonic Fraternity must certainly be misguided. Consequently, it was shocking later to learn that behind the festive façade and the children's charities lurked a more profoundly selfish purpose. Adam Weishaupt suggested the reason for such activities nearly 200 years ago when he instructed his illuminees:

*'We must win the common people in every corner. This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools, and by open, hearty behaviour. Show condescension, popularity, and tolerance of their prejudices, which we, at leisure, shall root out and dispel.'*⁴

This façade of goodwill and bonhomie may serve to attract a Catholic and make him contemplate involving himself with Freemasonry.

Motivation

The average Catholic, whether priest or layman, with whom the question of the presence of Masons in the Catholic Church is discussed, always arrives at the same

² 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 1374.

³ Canons 1332 and 1331 (1) nn.1 and 2

⁴ Paul A Fisher, *Behind the Lodge Door*, Tan Books, Rockford Illinois, 1994, pp. 233-4. The Shriners are an American Masonic order, the *Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America*. Professor Adam Weishaupt of Ingolstadt, Germany, [1748-1811] was educated by the Jesuits. He founded his Order of Illuminati (ie, 'the enlightened ones') of Bavaria, a sort of higher level Freemasonry, in May 1776. It was suppressed by order of the Elector of Bavaria in 1784-5.

question, or series of questions—*Why would a bishop, a priest, a layman, submit himself to such nonsense? What is in it for him?* And, more importantly—*Why would a Catholic prejudice his immortal soul with the certainty of eternal damnation by embracing the Masonic order?* The following is a list of suggested motives.

- In *Inimica Vis*, his encyclical of 8th December 1892 to the bishops of Italy on the subject of Freemasonry, Leo XIII cites *ambition* as a motive—*far too many of our compatriots, driven by hope of their personal advantage or by perverse ambition, have given their names or support to the sect.*⁵
- Monsignor George F Dillon, Missionary Apostolic based in Sydney, quoted in October 1884 a Masonic source as citing *vanity, or pride*, as a motive.⁶—*The vanity of the citizen or burgess to be enfeodated to [ie, initiated into] Freemasonry is something so common and so universal that it always makes me wonder at human stupidity... The prestige of the unknown exercises upon men a certain kind of power [so] that they prepare themselves with trembling for the phantasmagoric trials of the initiation and of the fraternal banquet...*⁷
- As we have noted in earlier papers, at the heart of the Church’s condemnation of the sect are the breaches of the First and Second Commandments which occur in the taking of Masonry’s oaths. The sense of what is fitting (and unfitting) to the faith of the Catholic should warn him instinctively against involving himself in such oaths. Accordingly, a further factor may be identified—*weakness of faith*.
- *Modernism*, the heresy which denies that there is anything transcendent in Catholicism, provides a powerful motive for a Catholic to embrace Freemasonry—for both evils adopt the view that religion must be reduced to the natural. The same can be said of those Catholics who adopt the tenets of *Marxism*.
- An inclination to *intrigue* or *machination* forms part of the temperament of many men. To such as these, the secretive character of Freemasonry may be attractive.
- *Naivety* and *weakness of character* would appear also to be disposing causes.

⁵ *Inimica Vis* (8.12.1892), n.6

⁶ Monsignor Dillon delivered a lecture in Edinburgh, Scotland, on the war between Freemasonry and the Church, subsequently reduced to writing as *The War of Antichrist with the Church and Western Civilisation*, [M H Gill & Son, Dublin, 1885] reproduced, with a preface by Rev. Denis Fahey, in *Grand Orient Freemasonry Unmasked*, Christian Book Club, Palmdale, California, 1950. It is clear that Monsignor Dillon had access to sources provided by the Vatican of information from one or more former Freemasons at the very highest level. In 1822 an Italian Freemason, one of the Illuminati, operating under the pseudonym *Piccolo Tigre* (‘Little Tiger’, or ‘Tiger Cub’), wrote a text for the benefit of members of the Piedmontese lodges of the *Carbonari*. The *Carbonari* was formed by Masons from the Catholic peasantry ostensibly to fight for national independence from the French and for the freedom to practice their Catholic religion—Jesus Christ was taken to be their Grand Master! In reality it was a device to inveigle simple Catholics to embrace Masonry. *[H]aving started on the purest Catholic and loyal lines, [it] soon ended in being the very worst kind of secret society which infidelity had then formed on the lines of Masonry.* [Dillon, op. cit., p. 50]

⁷ Monsignor Dillon, op. cit., p. 59.

Blindness

It is significant that the ceremony of initiation into the first Masonic degree, that of *Apprentice*, involves the blindfolding of the initiate. Once a Catholic has submitted himself to Freemasonry a darkness, characterised by an insouciance as to the state of his soul, seems to settle over his intellect blinding him to the prospect of his eternal damnation.

A Study In Recruitment

In 1999, the anonymous authors of *Via col vento in Vaticano*, a group, allegedly, of high ranking Vatican prelates, set out the mode of procedure by Masons seeking to recruit members within the Vatican bureaucracy showing how these motives and weaknesses of character in individual priests and prelates might be used —

A specific department exists in the Masonic order whose sole responsibility is to recruit... Qualified recruits must possess a strong intellect, lively intuition, ambition, lust for power, good communication skills, the ability to understand and to pretend not to... It is of the utmost importance that, during the first phase, the subject remains oblivious to the trap that is being set. Masonic techniques employ a gradual progression so that the candidate gradually learns the sect's goal as the superiors see fit.

The ways of co-opting recruits are many, and they vary from person to person. The first phase may involve techniques as simple as an invitation to an embassy to celebrate a national day, an unexpected meeting with someone who says he is delighted to have made his acquaintance, or a prelate who asks for something and says that he is indebted. Then comes the praising and cajoling stage: 'What a marvellous and kind person you are; what intelligence; what manners... You deserve better; you are wasted where you are. Shall we go on a first name basis? Let's think of a better placement for you.' We then enter the prospect phase: "I know this prelate, that cardinal, that ambassador, or such and such a minister. If you wanted, or were not opposed, I could put in a word for you. I will tell them that you deserve a higher office; for example, undersecretary of a ministry, bishop in..., nuncio in..., private secretary to... " and so on.

At this point, the agent realises immediately whether the ecclesiastic has swallowed the hook, even if he modestly claims: "I am not worthy. I am not up to it. I am a simple man. Others are better than me," and so on. The agent is well trained and knows that prudence is the virtue of the strong, and that false modesty is the virtue of the ambitious.

Slowly, promises are kept and the candidate begins to feel a debt of gratitude toward his sponsor-friend whom he considers his benefactor. Meanwhile, his career is progressing smoothly, and the possibilities seem endless. Now, as the subject falls prey to ambition and vanity, he enters the phase where he is informed of the motivating factor behind his rise through the ranks. The revelation usually goes something like this: "Monsignor, Excellency, you must know that your rapid rise is due more to the Masonic order, and all of its friends in and outside the Vatican, than

to me. They have orchestrated your prestigious rise to important positions in the Church. As you can see, you don't have to worry because many influential people already hold you in high regard. You are now free to decide whether to remain where you are and collaborate with our organization in the future, or not.

In this delicate phase, the prelate in a state of crisis, must decide which road to travel. His ambition craves greater advancement, but he is bewildered by the introduction to the Masonic order. He fears being exposed if he doesn't join, and imagines the emptiness around him if he does. The fraternal advice of an older dignitary who stayed in the Masonic order and continued his career success convinces the prelate, in spite of himself, to remain on the path he has started...⁸

The Dilemma

We return to Monsignor Dillon for his exposition of the dilemma for the potential recruit from Catholicism—

[Once a man is enticed] into Masonry—into the lowest degree... [a] great gain for evil [is]... at once obtained. But a man, though in Masonry, may not be willing to become an atheist and a socialist, for some time at least. He may have in his heart a profound conviction that a God existed, and some hope left of returning to that God, at or before his death. He many have entered Masonry for purposes of ambition, for motives of vanity, from mere lightness of character. He may continue his prayers, and refuse, if a Catholic, to give up the Mother of God and some practice of piety loved by him from his youth. But Masonry was a capital system to wean a man gradually away from all these things. It did not at once deny the existence of God, nor at once attack the Christian Dispensation. It commenced by giving the Christian idea of God an easy, and, under semblance of respect, an almost imperceptible shake. It swore by the name of God in all its oaths. It called him, however, not a Creator, only an architect—the great Architect of the universe. It carefully avoided all mention of Christ, of the Adorable Trinity, of the Unity of Faith, or of any faith. It protested a respect for the convictions of every man, for the idolatrous Parsee, for the Mahommedan [sic], the heretic, the schismatic, the Catholic. By-and-by, it gave, in higher degrees, a ruder shock to the belief in the Deity and... inducement to favour naturalism. This it did gradually, imperceptibly, but effectually...⁹

The Masonic bishop, priest, or layman will forsake his faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. This may occur slowly but it is inevitable. Sooner or later he will be confronted with the dilemma posed by Monsignor Dillon above. If he remains in the Craft, however, he will lose touch completely with the Divine element in the religion he has secretly betrayed and become preoccupied with the human. He may recite the prayer of the *Modernist* Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin, with conviction—

⁸ Translated into English as *Shroud of Secrecy, The Story of Corruption Within The Vatican*, by 'The Millenari', Ontario, 2000, pp. 183-5.

⁹ Dillon, op. cit., pp. 23-4.

May the Lord preserve in me a burning love for the world, and a great gentleness and may he help me persevere to the end, in the fullness of my humanity.

But the conviction will be a natural not a supernatural one as the end to which he perseveres will be a limited and earthly, rather than an eternal, end. Like Esau, he will have forsaken his birthright for a mess of pottage.

The Issue

Pope Leo's clarion call to Catholics remains valid in the 21st century that we should *tear away the mask from Freemasonry and... let it be seen as it really is.*¹⁰ If that call is important for the proper conduct of citizens in the life of civil society, how much more important is it for Catholics in respect of any incursion of Masonry within the Catholic Church?

How Shall We Identify Them?

How shall we know whether this man or that, this priest or that, this bishop or that, is a member of a Masonic lodge? Pope Leo XIII provides a test—

*[N]o matter how great may be men's cleverness in concealment and their experience in lying, it is impossible to prevent the effects of any cause from showing, in some way, the intrinsic nature of the cause whence they come. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree produce good fruit." [Matt. 7: 18] Now, the Masonic sect produces fruits that are pernicious and of the bitterest savour.*¹¹

Human enquiry proceeds like science, inductively, from effects to cause, and, like science, it may err. If we find effects, which might be characterised as Masonic, within the Church, it may be that they are produced by other causes such as laziness or inadvertence, weakness, or cowardice. If this conduct is systematic, however, it will make it more likely that Masonry is at work.

Again, the conduct may be attributable to the influence on priest or prelate of *Modernism* or *Marxism*, each of which, as has been said, denies that religion transcends the natural. These evils are, each of them, perfect complements to Freemasonry so that the need to distinguish between them hardly matters. For all practical purposes, they can be taken to be Masonic.

Any bishop, any priest, any layman within the Church who manifests in his words or actions the promotion, or acceptance, of any part of the Masonic program ought, then, be regarded as a Mason or, at the least, under Masonic control, unless he is able convincingly to refute the allegation. Leo XIII quotes Pope Felix III [383 AD]¹² to the point—

¹⁰ *Humanum Genus* (20.4.1884), n. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid*, n. 10

¹² *Inimica Vis*, n.7

An error which is not resisted is approved; a truth which is not defended is suppressed; and he who does not oppose an evident crime is open to the suspicion of secret complicity.

Michael Baker

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