

**Only Through  
Masonic Unity  
Do the Best  
Get Better**



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**THE SUPREME COUNCIL, 33°  
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## Only Through Masonic Unity Do the Best Get Better

**S**AMUEL CLEMENS was fond of telling stories about the American West where he, as a young reporter in Nevada, began writing under the name of Mark Twain. One of his most famous anecdotes is about the richest man in a rough-and-tumble Western boomtown. Because this sturdy pioneer wanted to add some "class" to himself and the growing town, he decided to decorate the rooms of his newly built home with copies of some classic statues from Italy.

There with commutual zeal we both had  
    strove  
In acts of dear benevolence and love;  
Brothers in peace, not rivals in command.  
*Homer*

In time the pieces arrived after each endured a rough stagecoach ride across the American plains. Upon uncrating the largest piece, one labeled Venus de Milo by the Italian shipper, the rich man discovered a statue without arms. Mistakenly convinced it had been damaged in shipment, he took the local postmaster to task—and collected damages! Content with his compensation, the man began to look at the statue more kindly, and soon he liked it just fine, believing that the arms, if it had any, would just be useless additions.

Today, are some of our Brethren like this purblind gentleman? Have these Brethren become so involved in one aspect of Masonry that they have forgotten how important each part is to the whole of

Freemasonry? Just as the Venus de Milo, however excellent it is in part, would be perfect and complete if it were whole, so each Body within Freemasonry is only complete when it is united with the entire Fraternity. If we accent one segment of the Craft to the exclusion of the rest, we splinter and weaken the totality of Freemasonry. Our work is too great, too important, too needed. We cannot become divided. Our harmony, our Masonic unity, is imperative. If one group breaks off from the rest, every group is affected and so, ultimately, is the Symbolic Lodge, the foundation of all Freemasonry.

We must never forget that the Symbolic Lodge is the core of our Craft. It is the foundation upon which all else in Freemasonry depends. The basic, universal and eternal lessons of the three degrees form the sound foundation upon which we build our lives. In our Lodge we become Masons in our hearts. No other degree is more important, for the principles of the Lodge bring us integrity and strong character, dignity and respect. In return, we strive to be of service to others through our charitable endeavors and our steadfast concern for individual liberty and freedom.

For those Brethren who wish to extend themselves further in Masonry, there are the Scottish Rite and York Rite. Here the lessons of the Lodge are expanded through ritual. Here the scope of Masonic fellowship is widened to include more Brethren who wish to become even better through living and sharing their dedication to Freemasonry. Yet always a Brother is reminded that he is first a Mason of his Symbolic Lodge and only then a member of the York Rite or Scottish Rite. These additional degrees only expand one's horizons and opportunities. They do not change the compass direction set in the

Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft and Master Mason Degrees, without which there can be no true progress in the Craft.

Many Thirty-second Degree Scottish Rite Masons as well as many Knight Templars choose to become Shriners. By making the condition of Scottish Rite or York Rite membership a prerequisite for becoming a Shriner, the Shrine becomes a unique and even stronger organization. Its members already have acquired a deeper understanding of their Symbolic Lodge teachings through the participation in the Scottish Rite and/or York Rite. They are the seasoned timbers with which yet greater Masonic accomplishments can be achieved. The inner temple of commitment can now manifest itself in endeavors of even wider significance, such as support for the Shrine's outstanding Hospitals for Crippled Children and Burns Institutes.

Nor does the impact of Freemasonry stop here. There is the opportunity for participation in many other Appendant Masonic Bodies, each truly outstanding in its own province. Consider the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, the Grotto, the National Sojourners, the High Twelve and the many other noteworthy Masonic related groups. They all contribute magnificently to the betterment of others and our Nation. Masonry works in hundreds of ways to meet special needs and helps those who would otherwise remain unassisted.

Consider also the great founding document of our Country, the Constitution. The American statesman Salmon P. Chase described it saying: "The Constitution in all its provisions looks to an indestructible union composed of indestructible States." Similarly, Freemasonry is an indestructible union of indestructible Lodges and Appendant Bodies. United, we work together in a diver-

sity of ways to achieve one goal. Divided, we weaken the whole of Freemasonry and lessen the effectiveness of each separate part.

Those, who desire to exercise their own authority in a limited scope adhere to the maxim of "divide and command." A better motto, and one at the heart of Freemasonry and every true Brother, is "unite and guide." Let us, then, follow the ideals established in the Symbolic Lodge. Let us build on them, in all the diverse ways that contribute to the benefit of Freemasonry. Our work is great. But we must work together to achieve the success we envision. United for the common good of all, we can share common goals and together accomplish uncommon heights for our Craft and our Nation. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote:

All your strength is in your union,  
All your danger is in discord.

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