



Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons

The Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan

To be the Fraternal Organization of choice for men in the Province of Saskatchewan

Grand Master's Monthly Reflections



"It Starts with Me"

MW Bro. Michael Keogan, Grand Master, 2026-27

October brings with it a noticeable change in our surroundings. The leaves have turned, the harvest is largely gathered, and the days grow shorter as we move steadily toward winter. It is a season that encourages us to reflect on what has been accomplished and to consider what we want to carry forward into the months ahead.

October also gives us an opportunity to pause and be thankful. Thanksgiving reminds us to recognize the people, relationships, and blessings that enrich our lives. Within Freemasonry, I believe one of those blessings is the opportunity to welcome good men into our fraternity and to help them discover the friendships, lessons, and fellowship that make our Craft meaningful.

That thought leads me to something that should be at the very heart of everything we do as Masons: **respect and dignity.**

When a man expresses an interest in becoming a Mason, he is not yet our Brother in the formal sense. But he is a man who has chosen to approach us, often with an expectation that he will find something worthwhile in our fraternity. He has placed a degree of trust in us. How we treat him during his journey toward membership is therefore incredibly important.

Our Masonic teachings provide us with a remarkably clear standard for how we should conduct ourselves. Brotherly Love calls upon us to treat others with kindness and consideration. Relief reminds us to be attentive to the needs and circumstances of those around us. Truth calls upon us to be honest not only in our words, but also in our conduct.

Those principles do not suddenly become relevant when a candidate receives his Entered Apprentice degree. **They should guide our conduct from the very beginning of a man's journey toward Freemasonry.**

If we sincerely apply Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth to that journey, they should also serve as a kind of moral test. Any practice that humiliates, intimidates, degrades, or deliberately embarrasses a candidate should immediately cause us to stop and ask whether it truly belongs within our fraternity.

This is particularly important when we consider the difference between **Masonic tradition and behaviour that may simply have been tolerated in the past.**

There may be occasions when something is described as harmless joking, good-natured teasing, a test of character, or simply "the way things have always been done." We should be careful about accepting that explanation without reflection. A man who is seeking to join our fraternity should never have to endure humiliation or intimidation as a price of admission.

What may be intended as humour by one person can be experienced very differently by another. What one Brother remembers fondly from his own experience may be something that another man finds uncomfortable or discouraging. And the fact that something was done in the past does not, by itself, make it worthy of carrying forward.

Freemasonry asks us to improve ourselves. That includes being willing to examine our own customs and practices and to have the courage to change those that do not reflect the principles we profess.

This is where my theme, ***It Starts With Me***, becomes particularly important.

It starts with me when I welcome a prospective Brother with genuine respect. It starts with me when I recognize that a candidate's willingness to join our fraternity is something to be valued, not something to be taken for granted. It starts with me when I refuse to participate in behaviour that diminishes another man, even when it is presented as a joke or tradition.

And it starts with me when I have the courage to say, **"That is not how we should treat someone who has come to us seeking to become a Mason."**

Our Lodges should be places where a man can ask questions without fear of ridicule, where he can admit that he does not understand something, and where he can take his first steps into Freemasonry knowing that the men around him genuinely want him to succeed.

This does not mean that our fraternity should lose its humour, fellowship, or good-natured spirit. Those are important parts of the Masonic experience. But genuine fellowship does not require someone else to be the target of the joke. We can enjoy one another's company without making another man feel small.

Every Mason in this jurisdiction has a role in shaping the experience of those who are considering joining us. Officers have a particular responsibility, but this is not solely an officers' issue. Every Brother who encounters a prospective member has an opportunity to demonstrate what Freemasonry looks like when its principles are actually lived.

If we want men to see Freemasonry as a fraternity worthy of their time, trust, and commitment, then we must show them that fraternity from the moment they first approach our door.

If we want respect, let us demonstrate it.

If we want dignity, let us protect it.

If we want men to become proud Brothers, let us give them every reason to be proud of the way they were welcomed.

It starts with me.

Thank you, Brethren, for your continued commitment to making Freemasonry in Saskatchewan a fraternity in which good men can find friendship, fellowship, personal growth, and a genuine sense of belonging. The character of our Craft is reflected not only in what we teach, but in how we treat those who place their trust in us.

Fraternally,

Mike Keogan

Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan



Until next month, may we each remember that the work of Freemasonry always begins with one Brother. It starts with me.