

Universal Declaration: In the *Brotherhood* we profess—

- compassion is boundless
- communion is ardent
- conscience is examined
- conduct is right
- control is self-control
- cooperation is enthusiastic
- courage is unwavering
- courtesy is gracious
- creativity flourishes
- creeds are respected
- debts are redeemed
- decisions are ethical
- deeds are in moderation
- desires are sublimated
- distinctions are dissolved
- dreams inspire
- duty is done
- education is for ideals
- efforts are cheerful
- egoism is effaced
- endeavors elevate
- equality is equitable
- equanimity is excellent
- ethics is in effect
- excellence is pursued
- expressions are elegant
- faith is enlightened
- feelings are benevolent
- fitness is cleanliness
- flexibility is adaptable
- forgiveness is blameless
- freedom is enhanced
- friendship is loyal
- gender is transcended
- goodwill is constant
- gratitude is appreciative
- grief is consoled
- habits are healthy
- harmony is sounded
- help is available
- hope is to accomplish
- hospitality is a gift
- humility is genuine
- ideals illumine
- illusion is surmounted
- improvements continue
- integrity is reliable
- intentions are honorable
- investigation is inward
- joy is unalloyed
- justice is true
- karma is erased
- kindness is thoughtful
- kinship includes all
- knowledge is virtuous
- labor is an oblation
- learning is open-minded
- liberation is for all
- life is worth living
- livelihoods are harmless
- love is spiritual
- magnanimity is generous
- meditation is on-going
- memories are positive
- mind is enlightened
- mind is serene
- mindfulness is alert
- mistakes are corrected
- music is in our hearts
- obedience is to principles
- order is our law
- passion is purified
- patience is forbearing
- peace is from within
- people are precious
- perception is clear
- perfection is preferred
- perseverance is steadfast
- polarities are transcended
- praise is sincere
- problems are for learning
- promises are honored
- promptness is decisive
- propriety is in practice
- prudence is prevention
- reality is revealed
- realization is our goal
- reason makes sense
- recreation is wholesome
- relationships are honest
- repentance is regenerative
- resources are conserved
- retardants are resolved
- reviews are constructive
- revolution is non-violent
- rights have responsibilities
- safety is our concern
- self is vanquished
- service is enduring
- sharing is caring
- silence is pure
- simplicity is beauty
- sin is undeveloped virtue
- speech does not hurt
- spirituality is supreme
- statements are truthful
- study is integrative
- suffering is assuaged
- sympathy is heartfelt
- tact is commonsense
- teachings are sublime
- tenacity is resilient
- thoughts are upright
- time is well spent
- tolerance is considerate
- transactions are trustworthy
- truth is our aim
- understanding is universal
- unity is our guide
- will-wisdom-wholeness reigns

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by Bing Escudero • November © 2002 v1.2

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## In the Brotherhood We Profess

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As with symbols, language reveals and conceals. For in the use of words, meanings proliferate. Dissertations divide. Further debates dichotomize into factions. Various views and reviews can vilify or venerate. Phrases get interpreted out of context, disconnected from their historical roots. Expressions that originally were ideal later become suspect. And people, that's us, get caught in the middle.

The word *Man* or *Mankind* is generic and, gender inclusive, as with the words, *humankind* and *humanity*. The etymology of *Man* is from the Sanskrit word *Manas*, which means the *Thinker*, and, is neither male nor female. Since this is not widely known, the use of the word *Man* tends to be mistakenly understood as referring to *Men* which becomes exclusively male by a twist of fate.

There was a time when the *Brotherhood of Man* was a shining star that brought hope amidst the violent preoccupations of warring nations. The peaceful ideal of the *Brotherhood of Man* was meant to replace the claims of *Brothers-at-Arms*, the *Brotherhood of Comrades-at-Arms*, who are a fighting force.

The phrase, *Brotherhood of Man*, was and is intended to temper the pugnacity of the male species; to bring the realization that if all men, the soldiers fighting, are brothers, no matter to what war camp they belong, they are, and, indeed, are they true brothers in the one global family of humankind. The indivisible unity of humanity as a family transcends the politics of sovereignty invoked by the nations—more like by the warlord leaders—of the world.

Pugnacity does not blend with the caring character and sensitive softness of women, the original pacifiers of the world. It begins with mothers who pacify their infants, placate sibling rivalries, and appease restless relatives. There may be Amazon stories, but women never escalated their association into an army so that they could declare war.

Women gave birth to boys and girls. Men took over the boys, trained them to be killing machines, fighters who could be commanded to face uncertain death in the battlefield. Women were trained to nurse the wounded. The rest of the women were protected so that their childbearing could replenish the soldiers who got killed.

The glorious victory of Generals is the pathetic wailing of widows who have sacrificed their husbands, sons and nephews, born in pain, raised with love, shielded from suffering, nurtured by motherly sacrifices, that they might have grown into the beauty of maturity.

This is the background why there came to be the *Brotherhood of Man*, and, why the *Sisterhood of Woman* or female kinship did not arise. Currently, there is the forced and awkward usage of gender neutrality words to appear feminist-compliant. Back then, in the attempt to transcend gender and other discriminating polarities, the "no idle phrase" of *Universal Brotherhood* came forward. The



qualifying prefix word, *Universal*, is based on the unity of all life in Nature. The word *Brotherhood* was retained, as the genuine feeling of kinship and of self-sacrifice made a significant beginning in the brotherliness within those *Brothers-at-Arms*. The word, *Arms*, for armaments, was dropped in the hopeful prospects for peace.

From Ancient Freemasonry, the *Cement of Brotherhood* did spread, and, much later, onto Co-Masonry that admitted both men and women (the symbolic *stone structures*, fashioned from the inner quarries of consciousness, in the building of the unified *Temple of Humanity*). Nonetheless, Ancient Freemasonry is exclusively focused on the reformation of male pugnacity, to be circumscribed by temperance, with disciplines concentrated to effect a transformation of character, remade civil and gentle, as in *gentle-men*, imbued with high ideals. Thus parts of the traditional rituals were more appropriate and applicable to men rather than for women.

Ancient Freemasonry began in association with the construction industry. Not at all a cushy office job. Work involved rough exposure to the elements. The rigorous demands for muscular strength were not easily suited to women, who were thus exempted. Such were the days before the invention of power generation, computerized mechanization, safety-featured equipment, personal protective gear, work place climate control, and other comfort amenities.

The dangerous labors in the heavy construction of massive *pillars* and expansive *arches* demanded tough physical power. Able men fulfilled this job requirement. Besides learning a trade, with Ancient Freemasonry, the special situation for segregated initiations brought spiritual education in the awakening of wisdom. Thus the tools and implements of building and masonry work also became the means of communicating ideals, whereby the energies of masculine pugnacity or machismo dominance, could be tempered into the higher endeavors in the upliftment of humanity, and, later, this idealism began to spread elsewhere, onto the written constitutions of democratic governments and social institutions.

In modern Co-masonry, the *Brotherhood* is for universal human rights irrespective of gender. Harmony is learned on equal terms.

At home, women rarely fight back. They try to keep the peace. Pugnacious men fight their wars to prove their manliness. Then they can hardly control their warlike tendencies, erupting as abusive behavior. When the external environment is exposed to stress and violence, the prevailing atmosphere invades the home. If men were to live in peace outside, then peace would permeate into their dwellings.

Should it happen that men throughout the world could truly regard themselves as brothers, any call to arms would leave the Heads of State and their Generals all alone to fight their wars with their own hands. However, this is not to advocate unreasonable pacifism. As long as the menace of evil threatens the rest of the world, there will be the need for guardian or security services, especially in protecting minorities and the disadvantaged from being exploited.



Since we are concerned here with *Brotherhood*, the philosophical question of *good and evil* is another topic for resolution. Suffice it to say, *evil* is anything that causes pain and suffering. And *this* ought to be stopped, whenever and wherever it arises.

As we now use the single word, *Brotherhood*, we carry with it the history of the spirit of those *Brothers-at-Arms* who rose to defend and protect their community. We recognize the expansion of the brotherly spirit into *Universal Brotherhood* which implies no separative distinctions that polarize humanity. We honor the pioneering endeavors spreading the *Cement of Brotherhood* and, the extended progress, where gender and other polarizations are transcended on the pathless path of spiritual regeneration.

Into this new millennium, the qualities that call for *Brotherhood* are ever closer towards universal realization. In a family, when someone is in need, in pain or suffering, help is spontaneous. The adults care for the children and the elderly as a natural responsibility. Couples love and support each other. So with the rest of the family. Children grow up developing useful skills, learning to be helpful and respectful, with people, property, and places. Young adults sublimate their procreative energies, develop the appreciation and aspiration for the ideals as they learn to make decisions in accord with their idealism. There is mutual care and concern for the welfare of the family as a whole—the spotless mirror and the enduring foundation for the rest of humanity.

The global network of our cable and wireless technology is now the worldwide nervous system for a unified humanity. Calamities and conflicts anywhere on earth are immediately felt, making it possible to respond positively with relief. As humans multiply and interact more with each other, the quality of every behavior collectively affects the rest, for better or for worse.

This is where the *Brotherhood* we profess comes to the fore. With the awakening of *Wisdom* we give our best towards the betterment of all. With growing *Strength* we face the vicissitudes of life as we uplift others as well. And, efforts are in accord with the glorious *Beauty* that is the harmony of those selfless endeavors exemplifying the unity of our humanity with the rest of the universe.

A universal declaration, in the *Brotherhood* we profess, is herein presented (*See Box on Front Page*). All the One Hundred Twenty theme declarations initiate an awakening into the vast spiritual possibilities of that indwelling reality as the centrality of our most essential nature. In the process, all are interdependent, transformative, and therapeutic. Not one theme is ever complete without the qualities of all the others. In aspiring for one, the tremendous combined powers of unified grace—the powers (*of the virtues and ideals*) latent in man or the thinker—are invoked and activated into wisdom.

Such is the supreme ideal of *Brotherhood*, the universal work of Freemasonry, in the Co-Masonic and the Segregated Orders of development, and, in other altruistic movements, as in each noble life dedicated to the refinement of character, in the service of humanity.