



Niepokalanow with a large ornate Basilica of the Immaculate Conception predominating the scene. It was built shortly after the end of World War II. It is one of the most popular pilgrim shrines in all of Poland. The friars still carry on with the printing apostolate and publish the *Knight* magazine which St. Maximilian founded in 1922 (see page 53).

Why Was Saint Maximilian Opposed to Freemasonry?

By Bro. Charles Madden OFM Conv.

When Saint Maximilian founded his Militia of the Immaculata (MI) he specifically included the conversion of Freemasons in the daily prayer to be recited by MI members. In his writings he also referred to the Freemasons as the "head of the serpent" which Mary's heel would crush. Why? What is Freemasonry all about? Often people consider it to be merely a fraternity, many of whose members are Protestants, that performs humanitarian works, and indeed this is true to a great extent.

However, in reality Freemasonry is a form of religion, which in both belief and practice promotes religious indifference in the guise of religious tolerance while at its very core is against both Christianity and Judaism. Although there isn't space to go into the history and origins of Freemasonry, let it be said that elements of it trace back to the medieval stonemason guilds, the suppressed Knights Templar of the early 1300's, and occultic elements having yearnings of returning back to the so-called "ancient wisdom" of the pagan polytheistic religions of Persia, Egypt, Greece, etc. These same pagan nations persecuted the Jews for their belief in monotheism, i.e., the belief in the One True God.

In 1717 the form of Freemasonry which exists today was formed by four lodges in England. They established themselves in a more public and less secret manner. This new more public form of Freemasonry rapidly spread from Protestant England to the European continent, including Catholic nations such as Spain, France, and Italy. The Continental lodges quickly showed themselves to be anti-Christian with an especially anti-Catholic

twist. That emphasis was not so apparent in England as there were so few Catholics there. This has led to the mistaken belief common today that somehow English Freemasonry---and by extension American Freemasonry since it came from England---was fundamentally different from European Freemasonry.

About twenty years later, in 1738, Pope Clement XII issued the first of the Catholic Church's many condemnations of Freemasonry. His successors right up to the present time have done likewise. In the same decade the Protestant governments in Holland and Sweden, and the city of Geneva, Switzerland banned Freemasonry.

One of the best expositions on the dangers of Freemasonry is to be found in the encyclical *Humanum Genus* issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1884. Here are some of the salient points of that encyclical:

- 1) The lodges of Freemasonry are secret societies whose members hold mysteries which were hidden even from many of their own members.
- 2) All members take severe blood oaths swearing that whatever they know now or learn in the future will never be revealed to non-members and swear always to obey their leaders. These blood oaths bind under penalty of mutilation and death.
- 3) Their ultimate purpose is "...the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced, and the substitution of a new state of things in accordance with their ideas, of which the foundations and laws shall be drawn from mere 'Naturalism.'" (Pope Leo goes on to define Naturalism as a system of belief that makes human nature and human reason supreme in all things and denies that anything has been revealed or taught by God, or that there is any teaching authority established by God.)
- 4) Freemasonry intends that "...the office and authority of the Church may become of no account in the civil state; and for this same reason they declare to the people and contend that Church and State ought to be altogether disunited. By this means they reject from the laws and the

commonwealth the wholesome influence of the Catholic religion."

- 5) Freemasonry not only wants to hinder the work of the Church and destroy the papacy but also intends to undermine all religion "...that a regard for religion should be held as an indifferent matter, and that all religions are alike. This manner of reasoning is calculated to bring about the ruin of all forms of religion." This in turn would undermine belief in the existence of God, negate Christian morality based on the Ten Commandments, lead to the denial of the consequences of Original Sin, and finally would lead to considering what was once portrayed as sin as no longer evil but even good.
- 6) Freemasonry promotes laws undermining the sanctity of marriage and encouraging the total secularization of education which, in turn, leads to the undermining of all lawful government authority.
- 7) Freemasonry also promotes, in various guises, a revival of the ancient Mid-East polytheistic pagan religions and their so-called "ancient wisdom."
- 8) In the political sphere they would cooperate with Socialists and Communists in their attempts to overthrow established governments everywhere.

That was Pope Leo XIII's analysis. Now let us see what Freemasons say about themselves. They still say that they are members of a secret society and still conceal their mysteries -- even from many of their own members -- and also still bind themselves by blood oaths. The quotes below are taken from the book *Morals and Dogma* by Albert Pike, the most renowned Mason of nineteenth century America. It was he who lifted Freemasonry in America from the doldrums in the aftermath of the anti-Masonic crusade of Protestant ministers in the 1830's. His book is still one of the most respected of Masonic authorities and can be found in most Masonic lodge libraries. Pike wrote the following:

- 1) "Masonry, like all Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism, and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false

explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it. So God himself incapacitates many men, by color blindness, to distinguish colors, and leads the masses away from the highest Truth, giving them power to attain only so much of it as it is profitable for them to know. Every age has a religion suited to its capacity." (p. 104).

- 2) "Secrecy is indispensable in a Mason of whatever Degree. It is the first and almost the only lesson taught to the Entered Apprentice." (p. 109).
- 3) "The Blue Degrees [the first three Degrees, which most members never go beyond -- Ed.] are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry...It is well enough for the mass of those called Masons, to imagine that all is contained in the Blue Degrees." (p. 819).

A man entering the very first degree of Freemasonry is assured that nothing he swears to in his first degree oath will conflict with his religious or personal beliefs, yet he is immediately led, phrase by phrase, through a terrible blood oath never to reveal the secrets of the lodge, "...binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my throat cut from ear to ear, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the sands of the sea...." This is a real oath sworn while one's hand is on the Bible or Torah, etc. (Some claim that this oath is not meant seriously, but one should never swear on the Bible, which is calling on God to witness to the truth of what we say, if we do not mean it! The oath, meant or not, is a blasphemous use of the Bible). It should be noted that in the old pagan religions blood oaths were also used to conceal secrets and rituals.

Pope Leo XIII, as mentioned above, warned that not only did Masonry seek to undermine all forms of religion and morality but also that it would abet communist and socialist revolutionaries. This came true within thirty years of his death in 1903. Most of the nations of Europe at that time were under the influence of Masonic governments. Then after World War I Communism, Fascism, and Nazism ran rampant through Europe. Nazism, for example, was an occult religion seeking to restore pre-Christian paganism to Germany. Another example of the political aspect was the exposure in 1981 of the Masonic P2 Lodge plot against the Italian government. In Italy, unlike America, magistrates undertake investigations of crimes. It is clear from the report issued by the investigating magistrate that this plot was a sustained effort by the P2 Lodge to control the Italian government.

What is the Catholic Church's position on Freemasonry today? In the 1960's and 1970's confusion arose concerning Freemasonry due to the lifting of some Church penalties and a

Freemasonry - a Paragon of Tolerance? ? ?

In our country, over a long period of time, Freemasonry has had a devastating influence in reinterpreting the U.S. Constitution such as to remove systematically or to restrict religion (particularly Christianity) and religious influence in many institutions of our society. For three decades, 1940-1970, the U.S. Supreme Court was dominated by Freemasons, and it was during this period that so many court decisions inimical to religion were written.

One of the great ironies of this period is that many laws and practices directed against black Americans were struck down by a Supreme Court, most of whose members belonged to Freemasonry, which explicitly excludes blacks! Separate and unequal is the watchword for Freemasonry. While there is the Prince Hall system of Masonry for blacks, it is not considered authentic. Freemasonry's support for the Ku Klux Klan is almost forgotten today, yet these two racist and anti-Catholic secret societies worked hand-in-glove for years.

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misguided form of ecumenism in some quarters. This resulted in some Catholics joining the Masons with the approval of their pastors. However, when the new Code of Canon Law was issued in 1983, the Holy See clarified the canon on secret societies, in which the Masons are no longer mentioned by name, by stating clearly that membership in the Masons is forbidden to all Catholics everywhere, and that to do so is a serious sin which automatically denies Holy Communion to anyone who joins the lodge. This clarification was ordered at the direction of Pope John Paul II. Local ordinaries may not make exception to this rule. In 1985 the U.S. Bishops also declared that Freemasonry is irreconcilable with Catholicism.

It is important to note also that many Protestant denominations, despite the presence of many Protestants within Masonry, have condemned membership in the lodge. Lutherans, American and Scottish Presbyterians, Quakers, Mennonites, some Baptists, the Church of England, the Assemblies of God, and others as well have taken this stance.

Another aspect of Freemasonry is its close affinity with the New Age movement. The book *New Age Youth and Masonry*, written in 1972 by Lynn Perkins, clearly makes the links between the two movements. Structurally they are poles apart. Masonry is highly, rigidly structured while the New Age movement seems to have no organization to it. One can safely say that the New Age movement is in some ways an outgrowth of Freemasonry. What are some of the elements common to both movements? Both seek "Light". When all is said and done that "Light" turns out to be Lucifer. Both deny the existence of divinely revealed religion. Both denigrate Sacred Scripture by denying its inerrancy and its divine inspiration, and consider the Scriptures as merely a collection of ancient sacred books written by men. Both deny the divinity of Jesus Christ and His role as Savior and Redeemer, and that He ever established a Church. Both promote hidden "ancient wisdom" which can be gleaned from the ancient pagan religions of the East. Both promote astrology and reincarnation. Both have elements of Gnosticism with its elitist mentality and the lure of secret knowledge and wisdom (which not everyone should be privy to) at the core of their beliefs. Ultimately both movements can lead into

the worship of Lucifer, although the vast majority of members of both movements do not realize this.

Let us look at two of these elements common to both movements. Belief in reincarnation is quite popular today. It is an integral part of the New Age movement and it is clearly important to Freemasonry. J.D. Buck, who was a 32-degree Mason, and a still well respected Masonic author from the 1920's, wrote the following in his book *Symbolism of Freemasonry or Mystic Masonry and the Greater Mysteries of Antiquity* in 1925. Referring to those who help the poor: "Reincarnation being true, these servants of humanity are laying by a store of good karma, which is literally, 'treasure in heaven', and which must inevitably secure for them still broader opportunities and greater power for good in another life; and best of all, they are unfolding the higher spiritual perceptions."

Another quote from the same author on Salvation and on Christ states: "Every soul must 'work out its own salvation' and 'take the Kingdom of Heaven by force'. Salvation by faith and the vicarious atonement were not taught, as now interpreted, by Jesus, nor are these doctrines taught in the exoteric Scriptures. They are later and ignorant perversions of the original doctrines. In the early Church, as in the Secret Doctrine, there was not one Christ for the whole world, but a potential Christ in every man. Theologians first made a fetish of the Impersonal, Omnipresent Divinity; and then tore the Christos from the hearts of all humanity in order to deify Jesus; that they might have a God-man peculiarly their own!" You will find similar thinking in the New Age movement.

Manly Hall, a 33rd degree Mason, in the 1976 edition of his book, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, makes it plain that in Masonry's belief system Jesus Christ is not divine. He says, "The true disciple of ancient Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities...". He explains: "As a Mason his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, the names mean little, for he recognizes only the light and not the bearer. He worships at every shrine, bows before every altar, whether in temple, mosque or cathedral, realizing with his truer understanding the oneness of all spiritual truth..." Hall says further, "No true Mason can be narrow, for his Lodge is the divine expression of all broadness. There is no place for little minds in a great work." This is his way of saying that

all religions are alike. This attitude is one of religious indifference, not religious tolerance, as Pope Leo XIII pointed out over 100 years ago.

What about Freemasonry and Judaism? There are those who use the participation of some Jews in Freemasonry as an excuse to indulge in anti-Semitism. Judaism, like Christianity, believes in only one God, therefore on that basis alone, Judaism is incompatible with Freemasonry. Like Christians, Jews have seen elements and symbols of their faith used by Masonry for its own purposes. Masonry seeks to recover and revive the "wisdom" allegedly found in the ancient polytheistic religions of the East, whose adherents ruthlessly persecuted the Jews of old for worshipping the one True God. It is no mere coincidence, therefore, that the modern day pagan occultists of Nazism also persecuted the Jews.

Another aspect of Freemasonry is the connection between it and the worship of Lucifer. In a letter written to French Masons in 1889 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution, Albert Pike wrote the following: "That which we must say to the crowd is -- We worship a God, but it is the God that one adores without superstition.

"To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the Brethren of the 32nd, 31st, and 30th degrees--The Masonic Religion should be, by all of us initiates of the higher degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian Doctrine.

"If Lucifer were not God, would Adonay (The God of the Christians) whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, barbarism, and repulsion for science, would Adonay and his priests calumniate him?

"Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonay is also God." Pike concludes with this statement, "...the true and pure philosophical religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonay; but Lucifer, God of Light and God of Good is struggling for humanity against Adonay, the God of Darkness and Evil."

An interesting correlation with this is the experience of Cardinal Edouard Gagnon when he was the canonist for the late Cardinal Leger of Canada. In a 1991 interview he said, "I often had to lodge requests with the Apostolic Penitentiary in Rome for excommunication orders to be lifted in the cases of people who had

stolen the Sacred Host on Masonry's orders. They had been well paid for the task and some regretted their action, asking the Church to pardon them." Then in response to the interviewer's remark that this was more typical of a satanic sect, Cardinal Gagnon said, "No, some forms of Masonry also celebrate black masses. The episode I have just related took place in Canada where Masonry is not believed to be anti-religious."

One final point; in the ritual for raising Masons to the Knights Kadosh 30th degree there is a platform on which rests three skulls, one of which is surmounted by a Pope's triple crown. Immediately after taking the first of four oaths the candidate, following the example and instruction of the Thrice Puissant Grand Master, stabs the skull crowned with the Pope's crown and cries out, "Down with imposture, down with crime."

It is important to realize that in the ritual of this degree the word "imposture" always refers to the Pope's role as Vicar of Christ! Later on in the ceremony the candidate is told, "This represents the Tiara of the cruel and cowardly Pontiff, who sacrificed to his ambition the illustrious order of those Knights Templar of whom we are the true successors. A crown of gold and precious stones ill befits the humble head of one who pretends to be successor, the Vicar, of Jesus of Nazareth. It is therefore the crown of an imposter, and it is in the name of him who said 'neither be ye called masters', that we trample it under our feet." Following this instruction the papal tiara is thrown to the floor and all present trample it under foot while shouting "Down with imposture!" The candidate having thus "discarded all stupid and vulgar prejudices" is knighted Kadosh by the Grand Master.

Is there any doubt, therefore, why Saint Maximilian wanted the conversion of the Freemasons so earnestly, and why he referred to Freemasonry as "the head of the serpent?" □