

### *Why Can't Catholics Join a Masonic Lodge?*

We may know of good things done by Masonic organizations like the Shriners, or we might remember that Ben Franklin and George Washington were Masons. We may know prominent businessmen, politicians and neighbors who are proud of belonging to the lodge. We might even like to buy into the excellent insurance plans available to lodge members. Recent popular movies present a positive image of Freemasonry and glorify its history. All this is misleading.

As a fraternal organization, Masons do some good services to society, and lower degree members are largely unaware of the agendas and philosophies and secret teachings of the higher degrees, but all degrees are incompatible with the heart of our Christian Gospel.

Most Christian denominations discourage membership and Catholics have long been forbidden to join the Masons. In like manner, much of the anti-Catholic stuff in the last century has been promoted by lodge members if not always directly by the secret lodges.

In a recent investigation reviewing the reasons for the Catholic prohibition of membership, the Catholic Bishops of Germany found the following facts:

- Freemasonry declares freedom from dogmatic adherence to Church teaching or any revealed truth.
- They deny any God-given teaching authority or Church leadership.
- They hold to a clockmaker God who perhaps created but does not enter into the affairs of man.
- They deny the possibility of objective truth.
- They deny the possibility of revealed truth.
- They deny the possibility of a personal relationship with God.
- They hold all world religions as equal.
- They deny the need for God's grace.
- They have neo-Gnostic (secret knowledge) rituals for the perfection of members, (without the benefits earned by the cross and resurrection of Jesus.)
- The work of redemption by Jesus is ignored or denied.
- They allow all Christians to join but seek to adopt their Christianity to the Masonic world view.

Masons have a popular myth about their origins among the builders of Solomon's temple and/or in the Knights Templar. Recently their own historians have admitted this is a myth. Freemasonry originated in England less than 300 years ago. Non-working rich men took over the workmen's guilds as legal discussion clubs that soon developed into a secret society.

Pope Leo XIII in an encyclical about 100 years ago stated our position best. In denouncing the Masonic Craft as a, "deceitful and crafty enemy of the Church," he said. "Let no man think that he for any reason whatsoever join the Masonic sect if he values his Catholic name and eternal salvation." The American Catholic Bishops in 1985 reaffirmed this. "One cannot be both a Catholic and a Freemason."