



GRANDE ORIENTE D'ITALIA
PALAZZO GIUSTINIANI

THE DUTIES OF MAN THE RIGHTS OF THE WORLD

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION APRIL, 2016
ADDRESS BY GRAND MASTER STEFANO BISI

Beloved Brethren, Ladies, Gentlemen, guests,

Thank you all for being here. For us, Free Masons, taking part to the Annual Communication, here in Rimini, is a fundamental duty and a right. It is part of our daily commitment to Freemasonry and our awareness of striving for our endless improvement through confrontation and dialogue. This is what makes of Communion grow -wind on our back!- the number and the quality of our Brethren is increasing: Today G.O.I. has as many as 22,700 members and we are present in all Italian provinces, the last one being Matera, where a new Lodge was installed just a few weeks ago.

Unfortunately, this year we will not see the smiling face of Renato Boeri, who passed away to the Eternal Orient on Easter Sunday.

For our guests, being here is an occasion of getting to know more about our magnificent history, our project spreading over the past few centuries, our goal to be present and working in our Temples and outside our Temples, also through solidarity and charity, to the benefit and Man and Society. Our guests are our families, our friends, people who love free thinking and laical thinking.

In the next two or three days, you will see thousands of faces. These are the Mason Brethren, hardworking and willing Men, who do not hide under a hood. They proudly wear an apron and white gloves, they show their sense of membership to Freemasonry, G.O.I. - Palazzo Giustiniani. I am certain that, if you wish, you will be able to get to know Universal Freemasonry as it really is, banishing all and any stereotypes and commonplaces, very often offensive and adversary.

Not all Brethren of G.O.I. are here today. Some of them are home, some in hospital. Just let me speak about one, Francesco, who is fighting a very hard battle. I am sure he will be the winner.

Freemasons are Men of yesterday, of today and of tomorrow. They belong to a Tradition and to a noble Art, they are timeless and ageless, students at a very special school. Subjects taught in such school are fraternity, modesty, tolerance, solidarity, love. These subjects are not easy to learn and practice, yet they strengthen virtue and dominate vices and bad habits.

We, the Freemasons are eternal workers in an endless working place. Each one of us puts all his passion, his engagement, his talent. We, the Freemasons are like Alberto, a strong man living in the mountains. In his old age, he was no longer able to attend Lodge meeting. In the evenings when his Brethren met, he would sit at home and read the Lodge Ritual all alone.

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We are like Silvano, 92-year from Massa Marittima. He told me: "at my age I need to stop". He is here, among us, with his heart and his soul.

We are like Michele, from Vasto in the region of Abruzzo. One and a half year ago, during a Lodge meeting, he raised his hand and asked his Worshipful Master the permission to approach his Grand Master and hug him. He could understand how his Grand Master, in that moment, needed a fraternal hug. We are like Masuccio from Alghero, in Sardinia; like Aurelio, from Locri in the heart of Calabria, who sends every morning an email to his many, many Brethren, just wishing a good and happy day. Someone said Calabria supported my election with the help of 'ndrangheta (crime organization). What can I say: shame! shame! shame!

Michele, Aurelio, Silvano, Francesco, Masuccio are virtually present here.

This is what we are. These are the Freemasons of the third millennium.

Our consciences are clean, our actions and our ideas are clean. In these difficult times our thoughts are only devoted to Italy, our magnificent Nation.

We, members of G.O.I., think with strength and uncorrupted confidence to our beloved Republic, which will reach 70 years of existence in the next few months. A beautiful lady in a three-color dress, which deserves our admiration, dignity and respect. Dignity and respect we also owe to our Constitution, whose articles clearly and efficiently state the sacred principles of liberty, equality, solidarity, fraternity. A "Constitution to love", as it was loved by Meuccio Ruini, Freemason member of G.O.I., president of the "Commission of 75" who participated in writing our Constitution together with many of our noble fathers.

We wish to remember such great men and their infinite aspiration to give Italy a future of peace and peaceful work. We members of G.O.I., have very special feelings towards the 70th anniversary of our Republic. We have planned to celebrate it through a number of events organized in many symbolic places of our country. Places where workers fight for their jobs and their rights, places where we experiment integration, like the mosque in Colle Val d'Elsa, and places filled with spirituality, like the Waldesian (valdese) temple in Torre Pellice.

Places where Italy will be re-united and not re-divided: Reggio Calabria, Lipari, the South. The right places to speak about principles and values to be pursued. The right places to speak about culture, education, merits, rights. We have a new dream, that we wish to make possible. In our large and small towns (comuni), the sea and the mountains. Let's take a picture, a giant "selfie" with the hashtag #ioamolarepubblica (I love Republic) #iosonolitalia (I am Italy). Italy needs to become a laboratory of hope, like our Prime Minister reminds us.

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This is our reply: we love Italy and always will. Globalization and virtual Era will not cancel national identity or move it to the background. The constitution values of our Nation will be there forever and we will fight to grant our Nation a bright future and safe rights for everyone. I am also thinking to Marco Pannella, defender of human and civil rights.

Speaking about rights, just let me remind that we, members of G.O.I., vigorously demand, in full respect of the Laws and the agreements made with the Senate and the Ministry of Finance. After years of official and stamped letters, we ask to have back 120 sqm of Palazzo Giustiniani, our ancient and beloved home, where we wish to install the Museum of Italian Freemasonry.

Well, there is nothing we want more than this Museum. We want to build this Museum! That is why we are following any possible ways and we are even willing to take any further steps to get back what is due to us. We have to create a Museum of Freemasonry as a sign of remembrance and eternal gratitude to those men who contributed to the building of our Nation. Strong, brave and wise men, like Grand Master Elect Achille Ballori. As you could listen in the beautiful and dramatic reconstruction coordinated by our passionate librarian Dino Fioravanti, Achille Ballori lost his life in that Palace. A fool was made believe that all his personal problems were due to Freemasonry, he armed his hand and shot to death Brother Ballori.

I can show you the keys of Palazzo Giustiniani, they are the keys I am showing you right now. We have found them relocating our offices in Rome. These are the keys used by our Bro Mario Sacconi to lock Palazzo Giustiniani for the last time. He is 90 years old now and very often he tells me: "Grand Master, I wish to go back to Palazzo Giustiniani before my hour comes". Mario must go back, he is the one who will open that front gate again. We must do it for him, he is on the phone right now and he wishes to say hallo to all of us.

We want to open that front gate again, for Mario but also for all of us. We deserve it. We can say it loud with no fear. We, the Freemasons of the third millennium, fully deserve it for our commitment, our courage, our passion. We will never stop. We proved we are owners of a great heart, our good and healthy actions have been followed under a different light also by those who have excommunicated us.

We are not a Religion, nor a Church, nor we wish to become one. We are a great institution, the Church seems to look at us, today, with no prejudice. We are happy that Cardinal Ravasi wrote about dialogue with the Freemasons, about common and shared values, about confrontation without dull closing, without prejudice and accusations which belong to the past. I wrote back to the Cardinal, stating how important is his reflection. We hope for the establishment of a fruitful dialogue, which is for us Freemasons, the basis for a fair, peaceful, civil and necessary cohabitation.



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I am becoming more and more convinced that the Cardinal showed great courage in reflecting without prejudices about Freemasonry. We will not give up our identity and our refusal of dogmas, yet I think we need to show the same courage trying to find a way of dialogue with forces operation for the Common Good. Freemasonry is not against Church, respects all Religions and the creed of its members.

Times of "a priori" divisions are over, times of crusades and inquisitions against nobody and nothing are over. Today, spiritual and laical institutions must unite and work together to fight terrorism and fanatical traffickers of hate and death who want to spread destruction and fear all over Europe and the rest of the world. All men must respect any other men and grant equal rights to everybody. Beginning from the right to life and decent existence for everyone. Men must also respect the rights of Earth, defending and loving it as a Mother. Its resources have been raided and stolen too long.

We, the Freemasons, are aware that our rights are equal to any other men but our duties are greater. For this year's annual communication we have chosen an extremely demanding subject. The Duties of Man, The Rights of the World" is a modern theme, a sublime theme yet difficult and problematic, very demanding to be discussed and put into practice. The Duties of Man, the Rights of the World are strictly connected. It is something concerning all of us, the entire Mankind, something vibrating inside ourselves.

Duties and Rights is something we must have close to our hearts, something we must pursue with strength and vigour, something we must defend. Duties and Rights are civil and political ones, economic, social, the concern work, education. health, even Life itself.

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Duties and Rights seem to be taken for granted, on the contrary they are very often obscured and lost among the fogs of Reason.

We have so many reports by UN, Unicef, Amnesty International and other international organs that speak a very brutal language. We need to rethink about actions in shadow areas. We must recreate Good for all Men where you no longer see it. Let's start from children's right. Young boys and girls are violated and involved in the phenomena of children soldiers. Too many conflicts carried out by rebel forces or governative forces see them fighting, carrying provisions or being used as human shields. We all have seen the shocking images of children carrying weapons, killing in the name of IS. Making must not and cannot permit that children are used to spread such inhuman, merciless and distressing messages.

We also see other plagues diffused worldwide: children's work, children's employment and children sexual abuse. Such horrible crimes must force us reflect, outrage and above all build a better future for the world's new generation and not in a biblical length of time. Numbers are huge and grow at an exponential rate, is a

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bottomless mine digging into the bowels of Earth. Millions and millions of human beings die of starvation or thirst, denutrition or illnesses.

When speaking about rights to grant to people, we cannot ignore, the head of states' conscience cannot ignore the dramatic issue of refugees. It seems that a definitive solution, shared by everybody, is still very far away. We are just wasting time talking about "shares". I remember doing it, years ago, about milk to be produced and sold. The difference is that we are now talking of human beings and human lives, men, women, children. We, Freemasons want to see a more human consideration of such tragedy.

Nobody is the "last one" on Earth, on the contrary the "last ones" are the first to be considered in our Duties.

Another crucial issue is that we all must have a greater and full awareness of the Earth rights. A great and wise American native chief, in a touching letter written to an American president, replied in the following way to the request of what was his request in order to sell the land of his ancestors: "Earth does not belong to Man, it is Man who belongs to Earth".

Such beautiful and meaningful words should make us reflect about another great theme which involves all of us and the future of our Planet. Our Planet is at risk because of Man, who is capable of extraordinary enterprises but also unspeakable insanity.

We have subverted the ecological system and the climate, we have polluted rivers and seas, The demographic explosion of certain areas of the world, the increasing demand for food in such areas are opposed to the demographic decline of the wealthier areas. We are still thinking in an egoistic way, taking care of the interests of some peoples to the detriment of others.

No, my dear Brethren, Freemasonry is as Universal as the Earth and must bring back together what is dispersed. We need to fight and promote perspectives of growth able to match the needs of Earth and the needs of Man, erasing injustice and iniquity that put at risk any possible future of the World.

Today, more than ever, we can state that the wise Man is the one who will be protagonist of such kind of development for Mankind. We, the Freemasons have the capability and the strength to do it, Freemasonry is able to raise, at any time, an endless chain of love and solidarity. The contrary of the walls of hate and separation we see virtually in every corner of the Earth surface. roundly and responsibly, we speak loud: Freemasonry is Life and Beauty. It's emotion. Where a Freemason is, even a single one, you will have a defender of rights and hope to work for justice.

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Fortunately, Freemasons are many and strong is their will in the Art Royale. They have strong arms and the same noble dignity impressed on the faces of the seamen celebrated by Fabrizio De André. In the 80s, he composed an authentic masterpiece, a song called "Creuza de Ma" (The alley leading to the sea). They leave those alleys, sail, fish and sail back home. They are different, but made brothers by their habits, rhythms, gestures, words they mix and adapt. On the Mediterranean sea, from Northern Africa to the Balkans, Greece and the Middle East, many cities appear on the shores. Ports are different, cultures are different, yet they have something in common. The same ancient and universal beating heart. One heart, unique and brave, the one of Freemasonry and its incomparable tradition.

We, the Freemasons, are like butterflies, we have two wings, one is passion, one is reason. Let's fly, like butterflies, with Strength, Courage and renovated Energy.

Rimini, Palacongressi April 1st, 2016