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29° – Scottish Knight of Saint Andrew

Topic 1

“Living for Today, Preparing for Tomorrow”

We ought to love life; we ought to desire to live as long as God ordains it; but let us not so encase ourselves in time that we cannot break the crust and begin to throw out shoots for the other life. - Henry Ward Beecher

My first “boss” was one of the most influential people in my life. When I was 12-years-old, I began working my first job. Dorothy, a woman my family knew from church, needed some help around her house and with her rentals. She had been through several workers before me. Dorothy tended to expect quite a bit from her helpers. Jobs included “mopping” the floor (on your hands and knees with a rag and bowl full of cleaner), cleaning the bathtub, weeding the garden, painting walls and sheds, cleaning up rentals after tenants vacated the premises, and washing her car. Each day entailed different jobs and tasks. Dorothy loved to work outside, and when she was able, we would both pull weeds, water plants, trim bushes, and prune flowers.

When Dorothy wasn’t working or finding jobs for me to do, she loved to watch game shows and read her Bible. To this day, I don’t believe I’ve ever met anyone else who could quote so much of the Bible from memory, and her skill at Jeopardy was almost as equally

impressive. Dorothy studied and prayed relentlessly. Truly, she is one of the most spiritually devout Christians I've ever had the pleasure of knowing.

Dorothy had a passion for life and she appreciated its beauties - as well as its tasty treats. Dorothy certainly had a bit of a sweet tooth. Lucky for me she also had a gracious spirit, so I was the benefactor of many treats and goodies. Dorothy took time to laugh and work, to relax and study, to serve and pray. In short, Dorothy led a balanced life.

I believe Dorothy truly emulated Beecher's advice to "love life" yet she also "(threw) out shoots for the other life" during her time on this earth. She loved God and sought to live in a manner pleasing in His sight. At the same time, she allowed herself to enjoy games, puzzles, and friends. During her time in this world, Dorothy enjoyed the gift of life and sought to secure a place in the next world via her devout reliance on and adherence to God's Will. Dorothy lived for today while always preparing for tomorrow. She lived in a manner that if today was to be her last, tomorrow was secure and her happiness would continue in the afterlife.

In the 29^o, we learn the qualities of a Knight of Saint Andrew. Embracing these nine qualities inevitably lead to living a life characterized by both a fulfilling present and a promising future. We are expected to be happy and fulfilled today while at the same time planning and preparing for the future that lies beyond this realm. The qualities of a Knight of Saint Andrew charge us to live for today while preparing for tomorrow.

The three essential qualities of a Knight of Saint Andrew are humility, patience, and self-denial. By humility we are called to be meek and modest. As humble subjects of our Creator, we are reminded that we owe all of our successes to those who have come before us and ultimately to Him. Today's road has been paved by yesterday's efforts. Further, no matter our

talents and successes, there is always someone better somewhere else. We must push ourselves to excel, always knowing that there are others pushing themselves as hard or harder. Humility is accepting that we are not perfect while striving to obtain perfection.

By patience we are called to bear life's difficulties, provocations, and annoyances with calmness, tolerance, and understanding. The word "patience" entails the bearing of "pain." Like those noble Knights of the Temple who refused to compromise the integrity of their Order and bear false witness, patience entails suffering life's storms in hopes of a brighter future. We don't have to burn at the stake or suffer in prison to prove we are patient, but we do have to accept the world we live in and work to improve it without giving up and walking away from our fellow man. Patience is easier to obtain when we have accepted our own shortcomings and embraced humility.

By self-denial we are called to sacrifice our will for His Will. We are called to lay aside our own selfish interests in the pursuit of more noble goals to serve others and positively impact their lives, thereby ensuring a promising future. Self-denial requires humility and patience as we sacrifice our wants for the greater good.

The three *more* essential qualities are charity, generosity, and clemency. Charity consists of relieving the poor and needy. As we learn in the 18°, "charity is action, and the chief law and first virtue of a Mason." As an Entered Apprentice, we are taught that "charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity." Truly, when it comes to "throw(ing) out shoots for the next life," charity is essential.

Often times, the concept of generosity is considered a synonym for charity; however, generosity is marked by the *willingness* to give. Generosity is the spirit; charity is the action.

One's actions could qualify as charitable - the result of those actions could in fact relieve the poor; however, if charity is not enacted with generosity, the action is clouded by insincerity.

Clemency is mercy. A Knight of Saint Andrew is to show mercy to both friend and foe. Though it is easy to be merciful to our friends and family, demonstrating mercy to our enemies is not an easy task. It seems counterintuitive to go to war with a nation, decimate their country, and then invest money in rebuilding efforts; yet, this is clemency – this is mercy. In the 30°, we learn that as humans, we are to forgive all men. God is the Final Judge, and he will forgive whom he chooses. As Knights of Saint Andrew, our actions must be forged in generosity and mercy.

Finally, the three *most* essential qualities are virtue, truth, and honor. Virtue is moral excellence, righteousness, and goodness. Virtue ensures that we are centered in goodness and constantly rebuking evil. Pike states, “Virtue and Wisdom, only, perfect and defend man” (803). Truly, a Mason's quest is Light – Truth – Perfection. Virtue leads to Light. By it, we are perfected; by it, we are well armed against the enemies of ignorance, tyranny, and fanaticism.

Truth is sincerity and integrity. Again, as an Entered Apprentice we learn that truth is a “divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue.” In the prologue to the 29°, Brother Jim Tresner states, “No true Mason ever despairs of final victory of truth over error.” We practice virtue because virtue is truth and truth conquers all.

Honor is respect and distinction; honor is the product of practicing virtue and seeking truth. We honor those we admire; we admire those who demonstrate a virtuous character. Truly, a Knight who embodies and practices the nine qualities of a Knight of Saint Andrew will be honored both today and tomorrow.

The 29° is one degree away from the capstone degree of the Council of Kadosh. As such, the degree of Knight of Saint Andrew begins to close the circle of lessons contained in the degrees of the Council. In the Council's opening degree of Grand Pontiff, we are instructed to become bridge builders who work today to construct strong links between the past and the future via today's action. In Pike's words, "Whatever withdraws us from the power over our senses, whatever marks the Past, the Distant, or the Future, predominate over the Present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings" (806). Claussen summarizes Pike's statement when he notes that "(Masons) are concerned mainly with the upward and forward" (Clausen 182). Hence, we must focus today's efforts on tomorrow's benefits. Present bridges and those under construction must lead to future destinations of Light and Truth.

As a Knight of Saint Andrew, we must hone a humble, patient, selfless character; our actions must be charitable, generous, and merciful. If we succeed, our name will be associated with virtue, truth, and honor. The reward of having lived an honorable life is life eternal. In this manner, we "break the crust" of this temporal existence and "throw out shoots for the other life." A life thus led will result in a final judgment where we hear those welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

Dorothy wasn't a Mason - she wasn't a Knight - yet she embodied the characteristics of both. Dorothy planted seeds of virtue in my character and conduct. She modeled patience, humility, and selflessness. She was charitable, generous, and merciful. She was virtuous and truthful. As such, she was honorable. Dorothy lived for today yet was always prepared for tomorrow. In youth, I was blessed to have a role model like Dorothy. In manhood, I am blessed to be associated with Freemasonry and Freemasons. I hope I have a character that would make Dorothy proud; I hope my actions honor the fraternity and my fellow Freemasons. For sure, both

Dorothy and Freemasonry have called me to live for today while preparing for tomorrow. Time will tell if I have successfully embraced those charges. Until then, I will continue to labor and pray for a patient, humble, selfless, charitable, generous, and merciful character – a life of virtue, truth, and honor. May today be fulfilling; may tomorrow be perfection.

Works Cited

Clausen, Henry. *Clausen's Commentary on Morals and Dogma*. San Diego: Neyenesch, 1985.

Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma*. Richmond: J.H. Jenkins, 1945.