

EMESSAY NOTES

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**THE
MASONIC
SERVICE
ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH
AMERICA**

**813 1st Avenue SE,
STE 357
Cedar Rapids,
IA 52402-5001**

319-365-1438

Fax: 319-365-1439

www.msana.com

msaoffice@msana.com

Cicero and Freemasonry

Our ancient brethren were well-read. The results of their reading and reflection found their way into both Blue Lodge and Scottish Rite degrees.

Casey A. Fletcher, currently Worshipful Master of Tuscan Lodge in Bartow, FL, an active member of the Scottish Rite Valley of Tampa, and a business executive in Florida, believes that that lessons and wisdom of the ancient sages are offered to Masons in theatrical, but scholarly, fashion. Here are his thoughts, taken from an article in the Valley of Tampa newsletter from March-April, 2020:

Marcus Cicero (106-43 BCE) is a likely source for Masonic ideas, such as the four cardinal virtues, politics, and ethics. He was the Roman equivalent of Plato, a man of philosophical learning, a brilliant writer and statesman. The Founders of our country admired him for his character and principled political life.

Beyond politics and philosophy, Cicero offers sage advice on matters of life. A good example is his work, "On Old Age." Unlike Plato, who wrote using abstractions and theories, Cicero used historical figures. "On Old Age" is a dialogue between Marcus Porcius Cato, Publius Cornelius Scipio and Laelius, in which Cato, and old man, schools the younger two on the merits of properly considering old age.

He encourages their search for wisdom, their continuous education, and their active participation in the life of their city. He also makes a case for the immortality of the soul.

Cicero's advice to the young men may have found its way into our Masonic ritual and is well-summarized in the Master Mason lecture.

We can learn a lot by attending and participating in our degrees and by the frequent study of the ritual. We may never know who is really speaking to us — Cicero, Plato, Confucius, Aristotle, some Zen Master, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke or Solomon. The source of the great ideas, thoughts, and lessons is not so relevant.

What is important, as Cicero taught the young men, is that we continue to grow, learn and act so that, in old age, we many enjoy that "happy reflection consequent to a well-spent life."

Listen Carefully

The blacksmith handed his assistant a nine-pound sledge hammer and, talking above the noise of the shop, said, "When I place that hot iron on the anvil, you watch me, and when I nod my head, you hit it." Now the assistant is the blacksmith.

From the Internet: 'Thanks Freemasons!'

The Stubborn German Brewing Company, in Waterloo, IL, put this post on the Internet, which has been shared numerous times since:

I know we're not supposed to talk about finances on Facebook, BUT I have to post this:

Our landlord, the Waterloo Masonic Lodge, has given us back our last 3 rent checks that we wrote to them. When the Coronavirus stuff first started, in the back of my mind I thought, "Geez, should we ask our landlord if we can delay our rent payment?" But we never did ask. We signed a lease agreement and we agreed to pay the rent so rough times or not, we are paying them and upholding our end of the agreement. I would never not pay someone that I'm supposed to pay even though business is not as expected.

Well, the Masonic Lodge members are very thoughtful and giving people. Each month during all of this, we've paid them, and for the past THREE months, they have given us our rent money back, telling to use it to pay our employees or use for the business expenses that need covering. Seriously, I can't keep this quiet and need to brag on how nice they are to us. Gives me chills just typing this, knowing that there are such kind people out there.

This is totally unexpected and just goes to show how Waterloo comes together during tough times to help each other out. When I say we live in the best town, I mean it. Organizations like the Masonic Lodge make our town great (they also do a lot behind the scenes to help out a lot of other people and children, too.) We really appreciate their generosity and consider ourselves so lucky to have landlords that care.

A Bag of Tools

Isn't it strange, that princes and kings,
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
And common people like you and me
Are builders for eternity?

Each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass, a book of rules;
And each must make — ere life is flown
A stumbling block, or a stepping stone.

— R. L. Sharpe

The Square - Perhaps Masonry's Most Important Symbol

Many learned writers over the years have indicated that the square is the most important, most typical, and common symbol of our Ancient Craft.

It is impossible definitely to say that the square is the oldest symbol in Freemasonry. Who may determine when the circle, triangle, square, first impressed the human mind?

Masonically, the word "square" has the same three meanings given the symbol by the world:

1. The conception of right angledness - our ritual tells us that the square is an angle of 90 degrees, or the fourth of a circle.
2. The builders tool, one of our working tools, the Master's immovable jewel.
3. That quality of character which has made "a square man" synonymous not only with a member of the Craft, but with uprightness, honesty, dependability.

In the "Great Learning," an ancient Chinese book, admitted to date from between 300 to 400 years before Christ, we read that a man should abstain from doing unto others what he would not they should do unto him; "this," adds the writer, "is called the principle of acting on the square."