

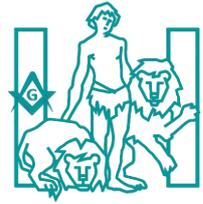


A L.: G.: D.: G.: A.: D.: U.:

Gran Logia de España

**Grande Oriente Español
de Masones Antiguos, Libres y Aceptados
1889**

M.: R.: G.: M.: Txema Oleaga Zalvidea



Gran Logia Provincial de Andalucía

R.: H.: G.: M.: P.: Shaun Parsons-Herrera

ADDRESS BY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

37th PROVINCIAL GRAND ASSEMBLY (21st January 2023)

Dear Brethren of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Andalucía:

This is the first time that I have the honour of addressing the Brethren of Andalucía at an Ordinary Provincial Grand Assembly.

When I began working in my present office, we were still freshly wounded from two crucially important periods: the COVID-19 epidemic and the fallout from elections for Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Spain.

During the epidemic we had lost dear Brothers, family members and friends; we had been confined to our homes and, in many cases, beset by work and financial problems. There was a trace of fear, uncertainty, anger and radicalism. We had to recover, re-establish social relations, normalise our children's play, and restore affection for our elders, amongst a world recovering from a Global Plague.

Masonically, this is the second Provincial Grand Assembly after the election of a new Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Spain. Elections should not have a devastating effect on the coexistence of the Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Spain, but they do. Despite the principles that our Order instils in us and, I am sure, despite our good intentions and the fraternal affection we have for each other, these campaigns often bring out the worst in us. The last elections were no exception.

Yes, Brethren, we have been through some difficult times, both in our personal and Masonic lives and in our Lodges.

We have begun to recover from those wounds and to work together, which is the best recipe for bonding and friendship on the basis of the Fraternity particular to Freemasons. I think we are all glad to be walking together for this purpose.

That, after all, is what Freemasonry is: a process of individual self-improvement carried out together with others, whom we call Brothers, from whom we learn the tools to use and how to handle them with skill. From this solid principle, Freemasonry is a system of morality, that is, it is about relationships between people; it is therefore not a religion, nor is it intended to replace religion.

Working together to know each other better and to love each other more. That is the key, the only key that is really common to all, of which we should be proud, and which I am convinced is the driving force that motivates the brethren of this Province.

I can say with satisfaction that throughout this year, in the visits I have made to my lodges in Andalusia, I have only perceived affection and enthusiasm. We have set out on the right path, on a path that we will walk together in harmony, listening to each other with mutual respect, and with a sincere desire to learn.

The Province of Andalucía is very extensive; it is also the first Provincial Grand Lodge mentioned by historians of Spanish Freemasonry. But, above all, our Province is a melting pot of brethren of different origins speaking different languages. We have learned to tolerate each other, to respect each other, and, more importantly, we have learned to love each other. We must be determined to continue to progress along this path, because we are Masons, and because we are well aware that Freemasonry is lived with diverse sensibilities, all of which are legitimate in their diversity. There is no reason to build walls between us in the name of language, rite or rank. We are, above all, Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Spain.

On our journey, we will encounter difficulties and conflicts. No doubt, we know this well. It is the human condition. We will have to resolve these obstacles Masonically, that is to say, knowing how to look each other in the eye and tell the truth without offending, trying to listen to the reasoning of the others, submitting ourselves, if necessary, to the arbitration of the Worshipful Master of our lodge... If Freemasonry is the centre of union of those who are different, and Brotherly Love one of our three great principles, how can we not be tolerant and seek to resolve our conflicts through dialogue?

What we do not know how to solve, as Masons do, we cannot solve. No matter how much we resort to regulations and courts of justice. Our way of organising the Order is based on our being Freemasons, that is, men of honour, men of freedom and strict morals, working individually and in fraternal collaboration to subdue our passions and practise a certain moral system. Our way of relating to each other cannot be based on suspicion or on preventing impostors among us, not least because there is no human regulation that can prevent evil. As Freemasons, we are not rule-makers, and where others propose detailed codes to determine our behaviour down to the last detail, we propose Fraternity by the use of Traditions, Usages and Customs.

There are few situations that cannot be resolved through mutual respect and sincere dialogue. I encourage you to use this way to resolve any conflicts that may arise amongst you, most of the time because the ego wants to impose itself on reason.

Brethren, almost all of us have agreed that changes need to be made to the Constitution of our Grand Lodge of Spain. This was the explicit objective of the present Grand Master and should be the focus of our greatest efforts.

We cannot offer some principles to society and practice others. We cannot affirm, as the current Grand Lodge of Spain Constitution states, that Masonic sovereignty lies in the Lodges and that the Lodges are the essential part of Freemasonry, and then build an organisation that does not take sufficient account of them. We cannot run the risk that the most important decisions can be taken without due reflection, information or above all participation!

That is why most Grand Lodge of Spain Freemasons agree that the minimum reform of our Constitution should include:

- the separation of powers (legislative, executive and judicial),
- the recognition that major decisions should be taken by the Lodges and their representatives, and
- the formation of bodies to advise or consult the Grand Master, to assist him in his decision-making and to avoid both haste and lack of information.

This is the task ahead of us: to be able, together, to build a structure for our Grand Lodge, which, when renewed, respects the best Masonic tradition and our Usages and Customs. A renewed organisation, without forgetting that we are talking about a centuries old Order.

In the meantime, while we take together this exciting path of renewal towards the new, we, the Freemasons of Andalucía, must continue to do our own thing: Freemasonry.

In doing Freemasonry, I would like to draw your attention to an enormous responsibility that we all have, and most especially all Master Masons. That responsibility is called the Entered Apprentice and it is a sacred trust.

The Entered Apprentices are the most important thing in our Lodges, they are the future of Freemasonry and the mirror of those who have gone before them. Entered Apprentices are the future of the Order, our best asset and the best stimulus to work and perfect our ritual.

The Entered Apprentices, when they have just been received into Masonry, are already experienced and humanly trained; in many cases with as much or more secular experience and training than the senior members of the lodge. But they must be educated as Masons.

Nor can we allow them to have no one to ask, nor can we allow their training to depend on internet sites as if it were a tutorial on how to fix a broken chair. Nor should we provide them with books to read and learn, falling into the monotony of the self-help manual. No. Each one will go at his own pace, but accompanied by the Master Masons of his Lodge.

The Entered Apprentices must begin by becoming well acquainted with the ritual, which will provoke doubts and suggest reflections about Freemasonry and about themselves. The role of the elders, that of the Master Masons, will be to give them truthful answers, which at one time may be a reading, and at another time, simply and sincerely, will be to recognise that they do not know how to answer and that they will seek the answer to do so. And above all, the Mastery will be the discreet and silent personal example. In short: study of the ritual and mastery of the elders.

When a human group, such as a Masonic Lodge, has a project that drives it to work and demands results, most conflicts disappear as if by magic. The formation of brethren is a beautiful project for every lodge.

While we undertake large and small projects, and deepen the Fraternity, the Lodges of Andalucía must continue to work. The Provincial Grand Lodges are there to help you, Brethren. With greater or lesser success, the Provincial Grand Officers, myself among them, have dedicated ourselves with enthusiasm to this very thing.

I would therefore like to thank the Provincial Grand Officers for the hours and efforts they have generously given to their Brethren in Andalusia, since they have taken office, and to remind them once again that they are here to serve you. I wish to remind this Assembly that being a Grand Officer should not stimulate our vanity, but commit us to service to the Brethren, taking care not to forget the rule of the 24 inch gauge, for Freemasonry should not be a substitute or an obstacle to our family or professional life.

This is a time for Joy and Hope. Freemasonry is a serious thing, for it touches the innermost part of ourselves and our own desires for improvement, but it is not sad. It can be hard, exhausting at times, as can looking in a mirror. But Freemasonry gives us the great satisfaction of noticing that we are making progress and that we are not alone.

Dear Brothers of Andalusia:

May the Great Architect of the Universe help us in our undertakings, in our families, in our lodges, and may we meet here in a year's time, with the task accomplished, but, above all, more fraternal.

Thank you, Brethren of Andalusia, for your trust and your affection.

Yours Sincerely and Fraternally.



R.W. B. Shaun Parsons-Herrera
Provincial Grand Master of Andalucía