

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I would like to take this time to speak briefly about Freemasonry and the Shriners.

Although at Baptism, our souls are washed away of any guilt from Original Sin, personal sins, and the punishment due to those sins, because of the effects of Original Sin, our souls are constantly burdened with an inclination to sin, known as concupiscence. It is this influence that so often handicaps our desires, making it more difficult for us to choose—through our free will— to do what is right and just in the eyes of God. But we must choose to reject our prideful ways, deny ourselves, and follow Christ and His Church (cf. Matt 16:24).

How then does this apply to those within the Church, who have chosen to become and remain members of the Freemasons or the Shriners? It may be the case that such persons would be able to articulate many good things they are doing in these organizations, so where does the problem originate? We have all heard the old saying, “the end does not justify the means”. This is far from anecdotal, but runs true according to the moral philosophical teachings of the Catholic Church. Although the accomplishment of a particular good end may in fact be a good thing per se, it would at the same time, be morally impermissible to have accomplished that good end by first having engaged in an immoral act (as the means), even though the intention was to have a good end.

Where is all this leading? The fact remains that because Freemasonry (and the Shriners) teach a form of religion that although runs somewhat parallel to Christianity, it at the same time, rejects any absolute truth in Christianity, and has historically been a great oppressor against the Catholic Church. Being an organization whose mission is to undermine the truth of Christ, membership in such an organization therefore becomes an immoral act. Because of this, and many other practices which run contrary to the moral teachings of the Church, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), with the approval of Pope John Paul II, declared that membership in such associations remains forbidden, because of their doctrines and practices which run irreconcilably with orthodox Christianity. The CDF further stipulated that “[t]he faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.” (See Declaration on Masonic Associations, CDF, Nov. 26, 1983)

In Christ through Mary,
Mr. Andrew M. Steele