

“Remember, it is the internal qualifications, not the external, which recommend a man to be a Mason”.

Companions,

Each month during my year in office, I will be highlighting one of the qualities which Masons should possess, and it is important for each of us to examine ourselves to ensure that we continue to possess and display these qualities.

For December the virtue is **Relief**: Removal or lightening of something oppressive, painful, or distressing.

Having the virtue of **relief** this month is very appropriate, being as December marks the Christmas season. Parties abound, celebrating this time special time of year. However, there are many people in Masonry and general society who have no one to celebrate with, with many hardships to deal with and try to overcome. Some people struggle to feed their families and themselves or worry about something as basic as having a warm place to stay.

Masonry is “founded on the purest principles of piety and virtue”. In “The Moral Teachings of Masonry”, W. Bro. J.S.M. Ward states: “To **relieve** the distressed, is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy; to sympathize with their misfortunes; to be compassionate of their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the great aim we have in view. On this basis, we form our friendships and establish our connections. **Relief** flows from brotherly love, as free, pure, and refreshing as the mountain air. It dries up the gushing fountains of grief, banishes want from the abode of a distressed brother, and pours the oil of joy into the wounded hearts of the widow and the orphan.”

Certainly, donating to the various Masonic charities and foundations is one form of **relief** that we as Masons are encouraged to do. Most Lodges, Chapters, Preceptories and Valleys and Councils of all the Masonic bodies have their own charities, foundations and bursaries to which funds are contributed. The Shrine is known world-wide for its abilities to assist those individuals who require special treatment and **relief**.

This time of the year, **relief** is especially important for local charities such as food banks, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and other organizations who work to help individuals who struggle with daily survival. It may be working with Church organizations to provide a small gift for those in need so young children can feel the joy of having a gift to open.

But is **relief** strictly about financial donations? While providing funding is essential, **relief** can come in many other ways. It can be inviting someone without friends or family to your house for a festive meal. In some of past postings with the RCMPolice, there were single

members who could not make it home for Christmas to be with their family, and were invited to share with myself and my family so they would not be quite so lonely. It may be a Brother or Companion who is not well or who recently lost a family member and could use a phone call or a visit to take away some of the loneliness they are feeling. Or a family member far from home who, through the modern technology of social media, Zoom calls or Facetime, can be included in the festivities they may not be able to attend.

Giving of your money is wonderful but giving of your time and your company can be much more valuable in providing **relief** to those in need.

The saying is “Give until it hurts”, but maybe more appropriate should be “Give until it helps”

I hope you and your family and friends and are able to have a happy and joyous holiday season.

M. Ex. Comp. Ken

REF: https://www.masonicworld.com/education/articles/masonic_relief.htm
BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH – Significance to our life as Freemasons (freemasons-freemasonry.com)