



THE UMURM AND THE MODERN RITE,
AN INCONTROVERTIBLE REALITY.

Speaking today at this venue of the *Roosevelt Center* about the Modern Rite is to speak about the Rite of Foundation of a Freemasonry that was born as a utopia in 1717. The intent then was to mark a new direction and movement towards the "Center of Union."

Details aside, we can say that it is undisputed that the appearance of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 represents a major turn around with regard to the operative Masonic tradition, and that it meant the establishment of a ritual "form," which eventually would come to mean an entire first order ritualistic compendium. Then a questioning occurred when the said fruit passed through the crucible of France and of "les Lumières".

It occurred then that the "Rite of the Moderns" became an authentic tool, capable of analyzing the Masonic fact and presenting it through certain symbolic patterns, actions and ritual designs that would make it different and unitary. The ritual form took departure from religious and esoteric issues to which good portions of the Masonic practices on English soil had been pinned.

Therefore, the rite of the "Moderns" in France would have a developmental trajectory somewhat different over the second half of the eighteenth century, yet despite these different guidelines and practices it did not change its vertebral structure of a space of individual development and collective interaction, protected from fanaticism and intolerance, a place where one simply built from love for all that the human being represents, respecting their particularities, but agreeing on the need for progress among all for the moral, ethical, and intellectual development of humankind, exercising the responsibility of the free use of reason.



The need for a ritual backbone tool for an early obedience such as the Grand Orient of France (GODF) caused the Rite of the 'Moderns' to be a real decanting until after decades it became what the Masonic world knows as the "Régulateur du Maçon".

The subsequent political, ideological, and social avatars and powers opened a breach in the development of this unifying ritual of the "Régulateur," as it lost standing for not knowing quite how to respond to the urgent and contextual needs to which other Rites swung to and fro. In this long journey of monarchists and rationalists swings, among others, our rite lost the nickname of "modern" to become permanently, at least on the continent, the French Rite, and as an authentic reference to a *doing and understanding* Freemasonry and Masonic action.

In other locations, the Rite of the "Modern" remained faithful to the original project that was so clearly seen by GODF Brethren of 1786 in having a homologating and homogeneous ritual practice that they eventually confirmed as the "Modern Rite." The epitome of the Modern Rite is expressed within its presence and development in organizations such as the *Supreme Council of the Modern Rite - Brazi*, where the ritual and way of life has been in full effect for nearly 200 years now.

On the other hand, because of the need to be faithful, living sponsors of this legacy of the "Modern" that departs from a basic 'Center of Union,' we are today, after almost 300 years, on a different level by wanting to place the key point of the Masonic arc at the 'Center of the Unity'.

We are aware that this has not been achieved since 1717 to date, given the Masonic organizational structures that have evolved according to their needs and potentials, creating major approaches but also serious rifts despite working under a ritual similarity called by some the Modern Rite, by others the French Rite, and even also for those more balanced, the *French Modern Rite*.



In this wider context of disunion and changing times caused by several and varied ukases or by several disqualifications via the fact of distance and also ignorance brethren gathered around the Rite of the Moderns. Some brothers were aware of this weakness, and therefore believers in a need to reference point, a *Center of Unity*. And why not take the responsibility for what we stand for as Masons and that is what led precisely in 2011 to the creation of the *Universal Masonic Union of the Modern Rite*.

A body driven by the *Supreme Council of the Modern Rite of Brazil*, an Essential Philosophical power of the Modern Rite, which I had the honor of chairing, put forth the necessary foundation to give birth to the Universal Masonic Union of the Modern Rite not as a Masonic body, but quite the contrary, as an open body with the desire of bringing to the rest of the regular Philosophical Powers of the Modern Rite that so wish, respecting their particular independence and specificities, with the wish of catalyzing a series of dynamic relations between them that would allow growth and build knowledge in ritual, on ethical, philosophical, and social levels.

In a changing and turbulent world, we are confident that our values associated with our most popular triple motto, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity are valid and need to be developed both within our Chapters and Philosophical Powers, and projected outwards individually and collectively, displaying our own Masonic responsibility pertaining to the application of study, wide and deep inquiry and reason.

A robust and consistent effort began toward the possibilities of a more just, equitable society, sensible to the love and loving of our neighbor, and confident that the individual human being and group remains in constant, open-ended growth. The view can be shared with others.

The *Universal Masonic Union of the Modern Rite* is not configured, therefore, as a macro structure that seeks to confront other existing expressions, powers or structures, or impose things on the adherent powers. Rather, simply from its moral authority emanating from its Constituent Bodies, it aims to shelter and build *bridges* among those practitioners of the Orders of Wisdom of goodwill



whosoever wishes it to be so, and whose objectives were expressed at the time of its foundation:

1. To promote, disseminate, and further the uses and customs of the Modern Rite.
2. To foment the interaction and harmony among its members in order to practice a truly Universal Freemasonry.
3. To be a plural venue for dialogue and exchange towards creating a true Center of Union regardless of territorial, obediencial or ritual peculiarities.
4. To facilitate the rapprochement between Philosophical Bodies of the Modern Rite through mutual recognition without any kind of discrimination.
5. To develop a workflow dynamics and joint reflection on substantive themes among its bodies.

Therefore, it proposes the tacit recognition of the above objectives, enhanced communication, as well as the provision of tools that would allow both ritual and procedural excellence, in historical, educational and social dimensions. The sum of the parts is a truly Universal landmark.

We are experiencing strong growth in the interest for our Rite, historically the oldest, despite its name that was given in a moment of ritual dissent, by its detractors.

This growth is evident everywhere, but especially on the entire stretch of and sweep of the American continent, and it should also be emphasized by the interest that is gaining in Africa. It should not be a surprise that the sustainability of our principles generates a positive expectation and intended result.



Never before has the perfect balance of the Modern Rite regarding “Tradition” and “Modernity” in human experience been optimally sustained for long. Yet the implementation of the Rite’s commitment to humanity that each member assumes fully and enthusiastically has not been extinguished.

Finally, I want to stress that the *Universal Masonic Union of the Modern Rite* with its openness, and the tireless endeavor within each of its inclusive projects, aims to disseminate, publicize and implement our Rite anywhere on the planet, to assist in achieving better human beings in better societies. We are committed and aware that we have undertaken an important task with respect to the legacy that has been granted to us, which keeps us equidistant from esoteric syncretism and religious beliefs.

The "Modern Rite" in all its diversity and direction, from the secularism that is inherent in it, and the *Universal Masonic Union of the Modern Rite*, wishes to be a part of this Center of Unity that every Mason should want, plus those whom we are bereaved, by *want* and by *requirement* of the Masonic utopia born in 1717.

I have spoken.

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