

**PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF VALENCIA**

**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 23 FEBRUARY 2019**

**ADDRESS FROM THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER**

**Thank you all for attending today's Provincial Assembly. Once again we have in the region of 200 Brethren in attendance and every one of our 24 Lodges in the Province is represented here today.**

**We have some 35 Brethren from our Spanish speaking Lodges; 10 from our Dutch speaking Lodges; 5 from our Norwegian speaking Lodge; 3 from our German speaking Lodge: almost 140 from our English speaking Lodges and the remainder are our valued visitors and guests. I give a warm welcome to you all.**

**I extend a particular welcome to our Most Worshipful Grand Master who as you all know has an extremely busy schedule and we are honoured that you have found time to visit us today. This is your home and there will always be a warm welcome for you.**

**I also thank our distinguished visitors from Murcia and of course a welcome to the representatives of other Masonic Orders.**

**I congratulate all those who have been promoted today or received new Provincial Honours – you have received these Honours because you deserve them. For those who have been sitting watching please remember that we only have about 50 Active Offices in the Province and some 500 members so only one in ten will get an Active Honour.**

**My grateful thanks to all my Active Provincial Officers from last year and in particular to my, now Past, Deputy Provincial Grand Master who has supported me so admirably through my first two years.**

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**The Province of Valencia is one of eight Provinces in the Grand Lodge of Spain and we take great pride in setting very high standards and today those incredible standards have been maintained and my thanks go to all of my team who have helped to make this happen. I thank in particular the**

members of the Provincial Secretary's office; the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies; the Provincial Grand Senior Warden and the members of the Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge.

For those working behind the scenes a special acknowledgement has to be given to W. Bro. Darrell Clayton for providing our sound system; W. Bro. Rob Wood who has provided us with new curtains; W. Bro. Steve Robertson who has given us this magnificent sign behind me and finally to Bro. Peter de Graaf who has refurbished our impressive Columns which are also behind me.

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The Grand Lodge of Spain is continuing to grow in strength and a lot of that success is down to our M.W. Grand Master but we also rely upon the good work of our Lodges and in particular their Masters. Today I had the pleasure of meeting with many of those Masters and I would like to thank you all for the invaluable work that you do. Without your support we are nobody.

I also met with our new Initiates. You are our future and I wish you all a great success in your Masonic Careers. I have extended the remit of my Membership Committee to ensure that you are being looked after and that your development is of the standard you expect.

The English, Norwegian, Dutch and German speaking Lodges have had the honour of being able to hold ceremonies here in Spain in their own languages. Once again we thank the M.W. Grand Master and for the first time our Norwegian Brethren will be allowed to do first; second and third Degree Ceremonies here in Spain.

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Our Spanish speaking Lodges still suffer to some extent from the memories of Franco. I have read that in the late 1930's 30 Brethren from the Helmantia Lodge in Salamanca were shot dead for being Masons; another 30 from the Constanca Lodge in Zaragoza were killed and another 54 in Granada.

So it continued through the Civil War with many others being killed or imprisoned just for being masons. Many of the parents of our target group for membership will have lived as young children under Franco. No doubt they in turn were influenced by their parents and elders who were

**indoctrinated in Franco's ideas of the devils in society being "Masons". I have spoken with Spanish speaking Masons in this Province who are still unable to tell their families that they are Masons. We owe it to all those Spanish Brethren to continue to provide our support and the stability for Free Masonry in Spain and particularly in this Province.**

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**Since last year's Provincial Assembly I and my team have been able to visit 19 of those 24 Lodges that I mentioned earlier and only last Saturday I had a most enjoyable evening at our most northerly point in Vinaros meeting with the Brethren from San Jorge Lodge and then watching as they initiated a new Brother. They have travelled some four hours to get here today and I give you special acknowledgement for that.**

**In April last year Caledonia celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we were able to see our Assistant Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Barrie Roy Mansell, take the Chair for their special Meeting. Our M.W. Grand Master was in attendance to check on how his Assistant performed an Initiation ceremony.**

**In October of last year Oliva La Safor held its 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting performing a Third Degree ceremony and along with the M. W. Grand Master a good evening was had by all.**

**In November of last year I performed a Banner Dedication Ceremony at the Arenal Deportiva Lodge and indeed that Banner has been paraded here today for the first time.**

**In January of this year Javea 40 celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and at that Meeting we were accompanied by the M.W. Grand Master. Many of our elder Right Worshipful Brethren attended and an excellent Installation Ceremony was witnessed and many memories of the past were recalled by W. Bro. Derick Wait.**

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**Euromason, Triangel, Dovre and White River Lodges have moved premises during the year and this highlights the problems of not having certainty of right of access to premises. Lodges should have a contingency plan in the event of owners of premises terminating access rights.**

Regarding premises we have a responsibility to our members to ensure those premises are suitable for the purpose and that Health and Safety Laws are complied with. The Provincial Executive Committee has already started to work on the production of a Health and Safety Policy to help the Lodges.

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Last year I said that I was working on ideas to make more use of our two Installed Masters' Lodges which hold their meetings in Javea and Torrevieja. I am pleased to say that both Lodge's have responded admirably to the challenge that was set for them and have established a need for them to become teaching Lodges.

The Marina Alta Lodge took control of the Summer Lodge of Instruction which was well attended during the months of June, July and August and created a training ground for some Brethren who took part in the Provincial Lodge of Instruction later in the year. A seminar was held for younger Brethren and at one of their Meetings a series of three informative lectures were delivered for the younger Brethren.

In October last year our Torrevieja Installed Masters' Lodge also held a half day seminar for our younger Brethren which was well attended. They covered items such as a deeper look at the symbolic meaning of the Initiation Ceremony, Orientation of the Lodge, Masonic Protocol and Etiquette in the Lodge.

There is also a Summer Lodge of Instruction in Torrevieja

Work is going on amongst the Masters in both Lodges to help produce a Mentoring programme and a guide to helping with Lodges of Instruction and differentiating between them and Lodges of Rehearsal.

Both Installed Masters this year will look to see if they can be of any assistance to our smaller Lodges by providing cover for missing Officers. They may also offer assistance with Ceremonies.

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This year we are to develop a knowledge enhancement programme for our Lodge Director of Ceremonies with a view to them coming together to share

experiences and to work with the Provincial Director of Ceremonies in setting a common approach to ceremonies and to provide special support to Lodges which indicate a need for it. There will also be an opportunity for younger Brethren who wish to aspire to become Assistant Provincial Grand Directors of Ceremonies for them to attend a training programme.

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A continued training programme is essential if our standards are not to lower. Anyone who attended our Provincial Lodge of Instruction in Alicante on 1<sup>st</sup> December last year would have seen a magnificent first Degree Ceremony. The event was hosted admirably by our Javea 40 Lodge and supported by the Provincial Stewards' Lodge. Some 140 Brethren attended on the day.

This year I have invited the Members of Santa Faz to host the Provincial Lodge of Instruction which is to be held in Alicante on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November. Full details will be shown on the Provincial Web Site.

The members of Germanies Lodge have expressed a desire to host the 2020 event having seen the great example set by their neighbours at the Genesis Lodge when they hosted the event in 2017.

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Sticking with the theme of Provincial Events I have to thank all who attended the Provincial Ladies Night in the Gran Bali Hotel last October. Over 190 people attended. This year the Provincial Ladies Night is to be held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October in Benidorm. Full details will be published on the Provincial Website.

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I have spoken a few times about the Provincial Web Site. It still surprises me that when I visit Lodges some Brethren are not aware of its existence. During the past few years we have seen in life a massive change in the system of

communicating. Facebook, Whatsapps, Twitter are all expressions we have heard of. Many of our Brethren will use the internet to book hotels, to buy things, to search for information on Google but there is a reluctance to accept that we too wish to disseminate information using our Web Site and modern methods of communication.

I am going to ask our new Provincial Secretary to concentrate this year on getting more of our members to access our Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia Web Site. There is so much to see and shortly we will be making lectures and talks on Masonic items available for all to read and use.

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Our Provincial Almoner and his team of Lodge Almoners have throughout the year been hammering home the message of having Prostate checks. We have many Brethren in this room today whose lives have been saved by having a simple medical check. Don't just think about it do it. We have a Prostate Cancer support group and a number of members have made themselves available for helping Brethren in a confidential manner. Details are available on the website. It takes a simple telephone call to get in touch with someone who knows from personal experience.

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Today we gave acknowledgement to our Members who have been in Masonry for 40- 45-50-55 and even 60 years. I would have to live to 108 years of age to equal the tremendous achievement of our Brother who has been in Masonry for 60 years. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

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I have talked about the work of the Province and our Installed Masters' Lodges and indeed our W. Masters of our Lodges. Throughout the Province there are many Brethren who devote a tremendous number of hours to Masonry and every one of you is to be acknowledged but there is one W. Brother who for many years has faithfully served the Province and given

many hours to Masonry. I would like personally thank him and present him with my Mason of the Year Award and that Brother is.....

You all know that for the past two years my main Charity has been to support the work done by R. W. Bro. Juan Carlos and his team of helpers at the Guadalest Summer Camp. The Association which he runs provides an outdoor activities holiday for under privileged children. The cost per child is 350 euros for what could be a ten day experience of a life time for these children who have virtually nothing. Last year we raised enough money with the help of District Mark to sponsor 40 children. Many Lodges helped by making donations, individuals raised money and the Province itself organised a Provincial Golf event which raised a considerable sum. I would like to ask you for your support once more and I hope this year to be able to sponsor 50 children which is the maximum that can be accommodated. So please be as generous as you can.

Brethren I wish you a very happy, healthy and successful Masonic Year Ahead.