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Grand Orient de France

An initiatory approach ...
and a Republican commitment

The Grand Orient de France in 7 Points

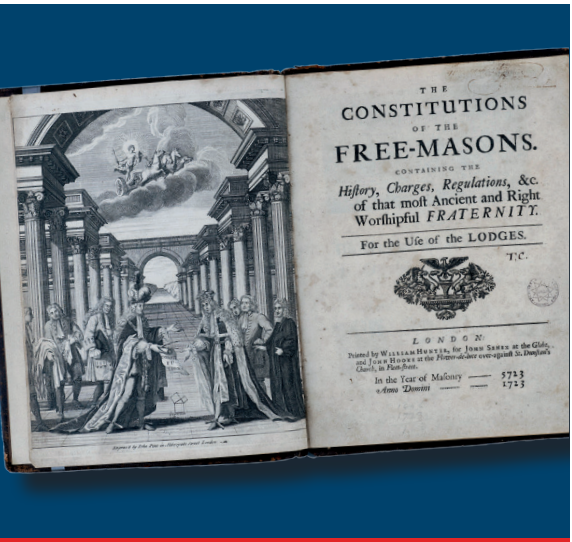
2026-2027 edition

LIBERTÉ ÉGALITÉ FRATERNITÉ

What is the Masonic approach ?

«If you are different from me, brother, far from impoverishing me you enrich me. » It is with these words inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry («Letter to a Hostage,» 1943), who was not a Freemason, that visitors are welcomed to the Grand Orient de France in Paris.

These words embody the Masonic spirit. To be enriched by others, and by their differences, without ceding to naivety or complacency, is the road that leads to knowledge.



Original edition of the Constitutions of Anderson (1723)

Becoming a Freemason in the Grand Orient de France is a personal decision, one which requires careful consideration. The rituals, myths and symbols of Freemasonry remain relevant today : they enable us to exercise our total liberty of conscience as we strive to bring meaning to the world and to life.

The Freemasons of the Grand Orient de France are also intransigent defenders of republican ideals. They have taken as their own the French Republic's motto of «Liberty - Equality - Fraternity,» vital for solidarity and secularism.

The lodge is a place for thought, questioning and debate, where generational, social, spiritual and political diversity meet fraternally to create a unique and intense chemistry.

«Learning about oneself, learning from others and their differences, inspired by a shared republican ideal.»

Why become a Freemason?

In Article 1 of its Constitution, the Grand Orient de France affirms that,

«The purpose of Freemasonry, an essentially philanthropic, philosophical and progressive institution, is to seek the truth, study morality and practice solidarity […] The principles of Freemasonry are mutual tolerance, respect for others and for self, and total liberty of conscience. It holds that metaphysical concepts are exclusively personal, and therefore rejects all dogmatic affirmations. It is committed to the fundamental importance of the secularism. […]»

That says it all !

Initiation

Freemasonry offers something unique to contemporary society: initiation.

To be initiated means both to join a fraternity and to commit to a path of personal progress through a ritual and symbols. The new initiate uses these tools to start his or her masonic work, which is essentially sharing and self-development, all carried out with total liberty of conscience.

You may have heard references to the Masonic method. It consists of the shared work done in the Lodges, which is never-ending, and which is complemented by the individual research which is the hallmark of the Freemason. The light sought by each Freemason (in the 18th century sense of the term) enlightens his or her path and eliminates social distinctions: initiation and the practice of the ritual thus aid individual emancipation.

«Freemasonry strives for material and moral improvement, the intellectual and social perfection of Humanity.»

So what exactly is Freemasonry ?

An open organisation

Becoming a Freemason requires approval by the members of a lodge. This long and demanding process includes three investigations, an interrogation, and a qualified vote. Leaving the Order simply entails writing a letter. Freemasonry is, in fact, the opposite of cults, which are easy to join, require members to sacrifice their freedom of thought and their possessions, are hard to escape, and rarely leave ex-members undamaged.

Grand Orient lodge members are required to pay annual dues and attend two monthly meetings, known as «Tenues.»

Stay on your guard : cults do sometimes borrow elements of Freemasonry in order to expand, but they have nothing to do with Freemasonry!

A place for thought

Freemasonry provides the tools for personal, philosophical and spiritual work. It is not an ersatz religion.

The Order's rituals, and many of its founding legends, are rooted in the Bible. Freemasonry neither imitates nor rejects religion. It is non-dogmatic and does not require any belief in a higher power, putting it on a different plane: it questions Man, encouraging him to find his truth within himself. Many members of the Grand Orient de France are believers and actively practice their faith - something which does not keep them from defending the corollary of liberty of conscience: separation of church and state.

«Freedom of membership, freedom of opinion, freedom to believe or not believe.»

Protecting freedom

While the Grand Orient de France does address social issues, it never takes a partisan approach to debate.

Liberty of conscience is as essential in terms of politics as in terms of religion. Freemasonry brings together men and women of diverse convictions: all beliefs are represented within the Order, except those which are contrary to the values of the Republic and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

The GODF and the Masonic landscape

The sole heir to the first Grand Lodge created in France in 1728, the Grand Orient de France is now the oldest and largest Masonic order in Europe. The Grand Orient de France has nearly 1,430 member lodges, bringing together nearly 55,866 Freemasons, both men and women, working in France and abroad.

The Grand Orient de France operates on a democratic model. Its lodges are sovereign. All leadership positions (Grand Master, Councillors of the Order, Lodge Presidents, etc.) are elected offices and are subject to rules on cumulation, re-election and duration. The lodges are represented at the General Assembly (the Convent) under the rule of «one lodge, one vote.»

Guillaume TRICHARD

Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France

«A historic and democratic obedience.»

Various study committees enable in-depth reflection on topics such as secularism, the Republic's education system, humanity and the environment, artificial intelligence, civil liberties and democracy.

The Grand Orient is also...

- Public Events:
  - *Les Chantiers de la République,*
  - *Utopia Masonica.*
- **Journals** : *Humanisme, La Chaîne d'Union, Chroniques d'Histoire Maçonnique.*
- A certified charitable **Foundation** (www.fondation-godf.org).
- **The Freemasonry Museum** (registered as a «Museum of France»), home to a collection of objects dating as far back as three centuries (www.museefm.org).
- A **public library** and unique document collections and masonic archives.

A little history...

The history of «modern» Freemasonry is said to have begun in England on 24 June 1717, with the meeting of four London lodges, heirs to the proto-masonic tradition which already had a robust presence in the emerging United Kingdom, after developing starting in the late 16th century, particularly in Scotland.

Freemasonry reached France in 1725, with the creation of Saint Thomas au Louis d'Argent, a Parisian lodge formed by English Jacobite (pro-Stuart) exiles. French Freemasonry shook off its English roots in 1738, with the first French Grand Master, the Duke of Antin. In 1743, he was succeeded by his great-uncle, Louis de Bourbon-Condé, who remained Grand Master until his death 1771.

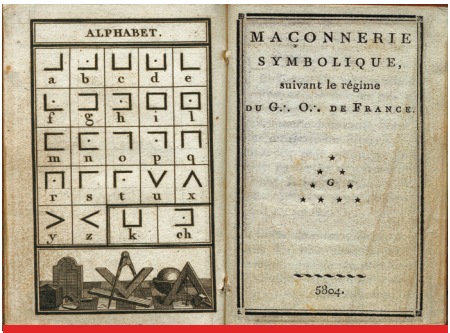
Then the Duke of Montmorency-Luxembourg thoroughly reorganised the Order, which in 1773, under the Grand Master of Louis-Philippe-Joseph d'Orléans (the future Philippe Égalité), changed its name to the Grand Orient de France through a very broad merger of the first national Grand Lodge and the Scottish Mother Lodge.

The first remarkable measure: contrary to the customs of the era, the office of Venerable Master of the Lodge (president) was made an elected office

«A modern organisation anchored in tradition.»

rather than a life-long, hereditary office like positions under the ancien régime.

It had a democratic legislative body (the word, surprising for its time, was de Montmorency-Luxembourg). Each lodge was represented by a delegate at the Annual General Meeting, the 'Convent'. 'This was a truly revolutionary arrangement, marking the separation of powers (executive and legislative) that has endured ever since, having inspired the Republic's model of political organisation.



The Masonic cipher, which is easy to decipher, is based on a very simple principle and today is used solely for historic, symbolic, or decorative purposes. The cipher at the bottom of the pages of this document reads: «FREEMASONRY»

The GODF today

Following in the footsteps of the men and women who, each in their own ways, worked for the progress and improvement of Humanity, the Grand Orient de France actively promotes the principles enshrined in its motto, which is also that of the French Republic : «Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.»

The Grand Orient de France is profoundly committed to the constitutional principle of secularism, which offers citizens the freedom to believe or not believe. Total freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the neutrality of public institutions. It is no less committed to its opposition to racism, religious fundamentalism and the enemies of democracy.

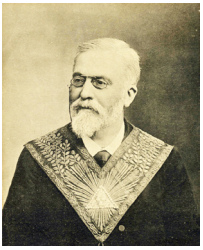
The members of the Grand Orient de France work to propagate and deepen the Humanism of the Enlightenment by tackling many societal issues. Among the thematic issues proposed each year to all Lodges are family planning, youth, bioethics, national education, republican issues, peace, solidarity, freedoms, the end of life with dignity, secular schools, hunger in the world, democracy, difference, incivism, globalisation, the sharing of wealth, all issues that contribute to building humanism and fraternity on a global scale, Europe...

«A quest for progress that benefits everyone.»

Their work is available in the annual report on the «Questions studied by the Lodges,» published in the form of a collection.

A commitment to Humanism...

Emir ABD EL-KADER



Fréderic DESMONS

Jean ZAY

Henri CAILLAVET

Join the GODF...

You may have discovered Freemasonry online, on social media, through a conversation with a friend, during an open house, in the course of your reading or personal research, a visit to your regional Temple or the Freemasonry museum.

If you know a Freemason, he or she can guide you and provide support during your application process. If not, you can fill in an online application at http://candidater.godf.org

Scan this QR code...

You can also write to the headquarters of the Grand Orient de France (16 rue Cadet, 75009 Paris, FRANCE). Your letter will be passed on to an officer in your region, who will contact and assist you.

To follow our news on social media, subscribe to our official Facebook account: www.facebook.com/G.O.de.France and our X accounts: www.xcom/godfofficiel and Instagram: www.instagram.com/godfofficiel

We welcome the «seekers» and builders of the city of tomorrow !

LIBERTY
EQUALITY
FRATERNITY

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