

October 26, 2011

Dear Brethren:

On behalf of the Grand Lodge of New York, I extend fraternal greetings and best wishes to you and to your loved-ones and pray for God to keep our Masonic family under His protective care.

In the aftermath of hurricane Irene and tropical storm Lee, which rained havoc, and brought devastating floods and massive wind damage to a large swath and region of upstate New York, the Grand Secretary, R.:W.: Gilbert Savitzky and I embarked upon a personal journey to visit, survey and obtain firsthand knowledge from our brothers living in the areas that were hardest hit. We are truly saddened by this encounter in witnessing and hearing the poignant stories and plight of our brothers, their family members, and neighbors who have utterly lost homes, property, and businesses. To call an event of this magnitude a mere tragedy is in all honesty an enormous understatement, some of the storm's victims were left with nothing except the very clothes upon their backs. Regretfully, the media and politicians have not been giving the struggle of these brave survivors the prominent attention and relief that they deserve.

The extent of the damage done to our Lodges, Districts, and Communities are quite evident. As such, it is incumbent upon me and you to get a message out to our fraternity that we need to mobilize our resources in a genuine effort to come to grips with this disaster and provide aid to our fellow distressed brethren. **To augment this effort, I am making a special appeal to our membership through this letter to give whatever you can afford to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund earmarked for "New York Disaster Relief."** Mail your donations to "The Masonic Brotherhood Fund" at 71 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY 10010-4149.

As of this writing, we have already received notification from the Masonic Service Association of North America that the members of our sister Grand Lodges have contributed over \$14,000 so far in aid toward this worthy cause.

We wish to acknowledge and extend our sincere appreciation to all those who have already donated clothing, food, furniture and financial assistance in a genuine effort to alleviate some of the distress affecting these brethren and their families. Our hearts truly go out to all those who had the misfortune of being in the path of these two destructive storms and we hope that your gifts and donations will help add a ray of sunshine during the upcoming holidays.

Freemasonry owes its longevity and its attraction to those very core principles imbedded in the precepts and teachings of the Craft, which have been an indelible and indispensable part of the fraternity since its earliest beginnings. Specifically, I refer to the basic tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. These three basic tenets of Freemasonry remain resolute and unassailable as much today as they were during the early formation of the Fraternity a few centuries ago.

Our namesake of the Tompkins Memorial Chapel at the Masonic Home in Utica, NY, the former Grand Master, Arthur S. Tompkins, in stressing the importance of keeping Masonic Benevolence in the forefront, had said, "We sometimes hear the expression that '*charity begins at home*'. Masonic Charity begins at home in the sense that we are obligated to take proper care of our own needy brethren, their widows, and orphans."

If you should find yourself, your family or know of another member of our Masonic family that is in distress or in need of our fraternal help, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the Grand Secretary and/or the Worshipful Master of your Lodge to seek assistance. Please direct your request for aid and assistance to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund Department of the Grand Secretary's office by calling **(212) 337-6651 or (212) 337-6652**. You may also make your request using e-mail by writing to [NYSGrandSecy@aol.com](mailto:NYSGrandSecy@aol.com) or by writing to the Special New York Disaster Relief Fund in care of the Grand Secretary at 71 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY 10010-4149.

My Brothers, as members of our gentle Craft, always remember that our fraternal ties are very strong and we truly care about all of our Brethren and their families. Again, if you should be in need of our assistance, please know that we are but a telephone call away. And if you are able to donate something to help our needy brethren, no matter how small, know that your donation will be gratefully received and given to those of greatest need.

Be of good cheer and God bless.

With kindest regards, I am fraternally,

Vincent Libone  
Grand Master