

DANGEROUS CONNECTIONS

Funeral exposes dangerous relations between Church and Freemasons

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That two prominent figures in Italian Freemasonry should die almost simultaneously is certainly a coincidence. However, it cannot be a coincidence that, in dioceses far apart, a Catholic funeral was requested and almost granted for both of them.

As we reported, it was [the Bussola's article](#) that set in motion the process that led to the last-minute cancellation of the Freemason musician Bruno Battisti D'Amario's funeral at the Artists' Church (Santa Maria in Montesanto) in Rome, which had been scheduled for Friday 7 August afternoon. Less than 24 hours later, a similar case arose in Sanremo, where Bishop Antonio Suetta – having just returned from a short holiday – [cancelled the scheduled funeral](#) of another Freemason, Mario Tarducci.

Why is this no coincidence? It is because, whilst the various Masonic lodges have long claimed the right to dual membership of Freemasonry and the Catholic Church, this claim has recently found influential supporters within the Vatican, despite the Church issuing nearly 600 condemnations of Freemasonry over three centuries. This is despite the fact that, as recently as [13 November 2023, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) reiterated the absolute prohibition on Catholics joining Freemasonry.

However, as we know, Pope Francis's pontificate set in motion a process in this area too, prioritising practice over doctrine. As early as February 2016, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, then president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, opened a new chapter [by publishing an open letter in *Il Sole 24 Ore*](#) entitled 'Dear Masonic Brothers'. It is no coincidence that, a few years later in 2022, the then Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy (GOI), Stefano Bisi, described the letter and Pope Francis's statement 'No one is saved on their own', the leitmotif of the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, as a sign of goodwill towards the lodges.

This marked the beginning of a period of ambiguity, if not outright complicity. Following several diocesan meetings on dialogue between the Church and Freemasonry held throughout Italy, this period reached its climax at a meeting in Milan on 16 February 2024. This meeting was held under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Milan and brought together the leaders of the three main Italian Masonic lodges and prominent Catholic Church representatives.

It was a closed-door meeting, off-limits to journalists, but [the *Daily Compass* was able to report on exclusively](#) and which is directly linked to recent events in Rome.

The central figure at that meeting was Monsignor Antonio Staglianò, president of the Pontifical Academy of Theology and rector of the Church of the Artists – the venue

for last Friday's cancelled funeral. Monsignor Staglianò himself, flanked by the Archbishop of Milan, Mario Delpini, and Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, engineered an outcome that met the needs of all three Grand Masters present. They all emphasised a single point in different ways: the alleged compatibility of membership of Freemasonry and the Catholic Church. They pointed out that there are also many Catholics within Freemasonry and considered the barrier erected by the Church to be anachronistic, particularly in light of Pope Francis's "Who am I to judge?" and "Todos, todos, todos".

In other words, if remarried divorcees can receive the sacraments, why can't Freemasons? Why are same-sex couples blessed whilst Freemasons must remain outside the Church? Does the much-vaunted mercy of Pope Francis's pontificate not apply to Freemasons? This is why they explicitly requested that membership of Freemasonry no longer be regarded as an impediment to receiving the sacraments. The request for Catholic funerals is therefore a step in this direction.

The Grand Masters were right at the time, and Monsignor Staglianò himself pointed the way, which is precisely that of *Fiducia Supplicans*. In other words, life takes precedence over doctrine; then there is God's mercy, which 'falls on the just and the unjust'. Ultimately, it is God who will judge how we have received it. As with the blessing of same-sex couples, the ordination of women as deacons and the question of priestly celibacy, what doctrine forbids, practice permits.

Therefore, it is easy to assume that the Catholic funeral, which is not a sacrament and is now granted to anyone in the name of human compassion and the principle of 'let God be the judge', was conceived as a first step towards allowing Freemasons to receive the sacraments and normalising their presence in church. It is no coincidence that, [in an interview on Sunday with *Il Secolo XIX*](#), the current Grand Master of the GOI, Antonio Seminario, argued that, in the face of death, 'all differences fall away'. 'Believer or non-believer, Catholic or Freemason, these are distinctions that belong to life and to institutions,' he said. In the face of death, what remains is a person, their story, and the bonds of affection they have forged, as well as the grief of those left behind.'

There is therefore a striking and suspicious similarity between the positions and claims of Masonic lodges and Monsignor Staglianò's approach, even now that the 'Franceschian era' has ended.

While we are certain that Monsignor Suetta knew nothing of Mr Tarducci's funeral or his Masonic affiliation and acted to prevent a Catholic funeral as soon as he

became aware of this, we cannot say the same for what happened in Rome.

While we have no wish to offend Monsignor Staglianò, but given his Masonic connections, we find it hard to believe that he knew nothing of such a prominent figure in Italian Freemasonry who had already been honoured on the Grand Orient of Italy website as early as 5 August. Nor can we believe that he decided to open the Artists' Church (it is normally closed in August) for someone he did not know, simply because the deceased's daughter asked him to. It is also curious that Grand Master Seminario attacked only Bishop Suetta, who had explicitly gone along with Rome's decision, while 'sparing' his friend Staglianò.

We are led to believe that it was only external intervention that prompted Staglianò to change course, taking refuge behind the intervention of Rome's vicar, Cardinal Baldassare Reina. This way, Staglianò can save face with both the Church and his friends in Freemasonry, who will now be able to believe that it was not his doing.