

May it please the Fratres..... not Fraters!!!

By: James A. Marples, VII^o,
Nebraska College M.S.R.I.C.F.

For many years, I have studied Masonic Rosicrucianism. When I became a member of the various Rites, Orders, and Associations within Freemasonry --- I was fascinated by the use of proper designations for our fellow members in such settings.

For example:

- * When we meet together as Craft Masons, we are "Brothers".
- * When we meet as Royal Arch Masons, we are "Companions".
- * When we meet as Shriners, we are "Nobles".

That same pattern holds true in this Society. When we meet together, as Masonic Rosicrucians, we are "Fratres". On some instances, I have seen the word incorrectly spelled 'Fraters'. Even I have mistakenly used the incorrect spelling, at times. However, in an effort to be more consistent & accurate, I am attempting to rectify that and to do better. My feeling is that other Fratres will benefit by seeing the commentaries provided below:

The time-honored reference book for nearly all words, terms, and subjects of a Masonic nature is "Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry." Its author, Dr. Albert G. Mackey, 33rd degree, K.T., states that the correct plural form of Frater is "Fratres." This is how he defines the singular term 'Frater'----

Frater: *Latin, meaning Brother. An expression borrowed from the monks by the Military Orders of the Middle Ages, and applied by the members to each other. It is constantly employed in England by the Masonic Knights Templar, and is beginning to be adopted, although not as generally, in the United States. When speaking of two or more, it is an error to call them Fraters. The correct plural is Fratres.*

To be certain that this opinion is still held today in the 21st Century, I consulted my friend, Frater Robert G. Davis, IX^o, of Guthrie, Oklahoma (a member of Oklahoma College M.S.R.I.C.F. and editor of the publication "Ad Lucem"). Frater Davis concurs that "Fratres" is the acceptable plural.

To triple-check, I consulted worldwide sources, including my friend, Frater Tom McRae, IX^o, of Brisbane, Australia (a longtime member of Eugenius Philalethes College of the Masonic Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia --SRIA--). And, he agrees "Fratres" is the correct spelling. Frater McRae indicated that he has encountered many members who are unaware of the correct spelling and usage.

It is my hope that through continued education, we may strive for accuracy to make our writings uniform with regard to this. When done accurately, such terminology will indeed be pleasing to the Fratres...not Fraters.

