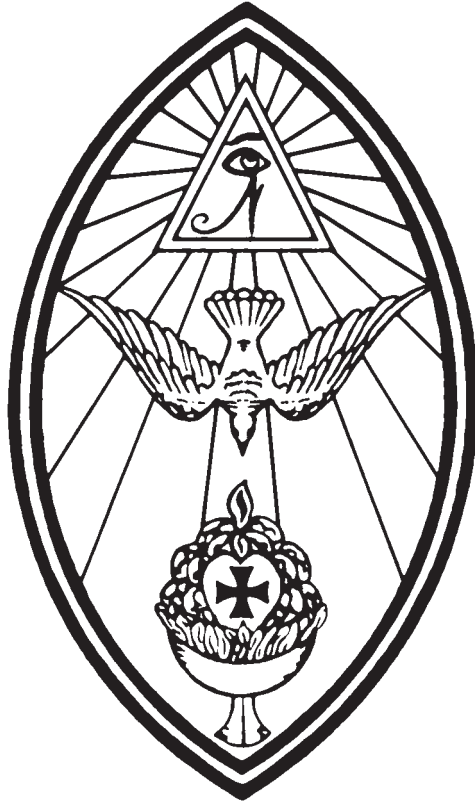


O. T. O.



LIBER XV

ECCLESIAE GNOSTICÆ CATHOLICÆ
CANON MISSÆ

Performance commentary by

BISHOPS TAHUTI AND MARA

Please note: This is not an official O.T.O. or EGC document.

I

OF THE FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

In the East, that is, in the direction of Boleskine, which is situated on the South-Eastern shore of Loch Ness in Scotland, two miles east of Foyers, is a shrine or High Altar. Its dimensions should be 7 feet in length, 3 feet in breadth, 44 inches in height. It should be covered with a crimson altar-cloth, on which may be embroidered fleur-de-lys in gold, or a sunblaze, or other suitable emblem.

On each side of it should be a pillar or Obelisk, with countercharges in black and white.

Below it should be the dais of three steps, in black and white squares.

Above it is the super-altar, at whose top is the Stélé of Revealing in reproduction, with four candles on each side of it. Below the stélé is a place for the Book of the Law, with six candles on each side of it. Below this again is The Holy Graal, with roses on each side of it. There is room in front of the Cup for the Paten. On each side beyond the roses, are two great candles.

All this is enclosed within a great Veil.

Forming the apex of an equilateral triangle whose base is a line drawn between the pillars, is a small black square altar, of superimposed cubes.

Taking this altar as the middle of the base of a similar and equal triangle, at the apex of this second triangle is a small circular font.

Repeating, the apex of a third triangle is an upright coffin, or Tomb.

[Although we have long experience with this ritual, we have never enjoyed the luxury of a permanent Temple space. Thus we have had to improvise within these instructions. We have also been at pains to make our Temple transportable and capable of being disassembled after each Mass. We would suggest the proper height for the Altar places the Priest and Priestess at eye level when she is seated and he is standing on the third step. We look forward to the day when we will own a permanent Mass Temple and can build a permanent 44 inch Altar and a set of steps of the proper height to allow direct eye contact. Please refer to the chapter on Temple equipment for more discussion.]

II OF THE OFFICERS OF THE MASS

The PRIEST. Bears the Sacred Lance, and is clothed at first in a plain white robe.

[My Lance measures 73-1/2 inches from the base to the tip, and is 1-7/16 inches in diameter. It is made from red oak. I stand 6 feet high. A pine dowel of 1-1/2 inch diameter may be purchased very inexpensively from a decent lumber yard and coated with stain and polyurethane. Lance shafts and heads may also be found at <http://www.medievalcollectibles.com>. You will need a Lance of sufficient strength to allow you to hold on for dear life at various points of this ritual. Unlike the weapons in most magical ceremonies, the Lance is not purely symbolic.

We have heard various interpretations advanced for "plain white robe." However, nothing seems more clear to us than "plain white robe."]

The PRIESTESS. Should be actually Virgo Intacta, or specially dedicated to the service of the Great Order. She is clothed in white, blue, and gold. She bears the Sword from a red girdle, and the Paten and Hosts, or Cakes of Light.

[We do our best to conform with these directions, including using the specified colors. The Priestess Robe of course must be removed during her speech so its design must accomodate that function. We use the standard Masonic sword of the Knights Templar degree.]

The DEACON. He is clothed in white and yellow. He bears the Book of the Law.

[A white Robe with a simple yellow chausible that slips over the head and extends to the waist, front and back, is the idea.]

Two CHILDREN. They are clothed in white and black. One bears a pitcher of water and a cellar of salt, the other a censer of fire and a casket of perfume.

[Hereinafter referred to as negative child in black robe with water and salt, and positive child in white robe with censer and perfume.]

III OF THE CEREMONY OF THE INTROIT

The DEACON, opening the door of the Temple, admits the congregation, and takes his stand between the small altar and the font. (There should be a doorkeeper to attend to the admission.)

[A general introduction begins outside the Temple when people are told to turn off cell phones, remove shoes, and enter in silence. Because of what has been the normal “situation and terrain” for us, we bring the people into the Temple next. Here, the Deacon makes a short speech while facing the congregation. He stands between the steps and the square altar (Fire altar). He announces that the ritual was written by Aleister Crowley and is being performed by the EGC under the auspices of the local O.T.O. body. He mentions that Crowley described it as the “central ritual, public and private, of the O.T.O.” He demonstrates the steps and signs the congregation will give during the ritual; mentions that the people will be asked to join in readings and follow directions from him for sitting and standing; explains the “joining hands above their heads” instruction during the speeches of the Priest and Priestess; and describes the Communion at the conclusion of the ritual. He finally ascertains that all present agree to communicate, or they are politely requested to leave.

After finishing his monologue, he takes his place of power between the Circular Font (Water altar) and the Altar of Incense (Square or Fire altar), as described above, facing the High Altar, and the ritual officially begins.]

The DEACON advances and bows before the open shrine where the Graal is exalted. He kisses the Book of the Law three times, opens it, and places it upon the super-altar. He turns West.

THE DEACON. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty in the name of IAO.

[An elegant gesture favored by many Deacons is to make this declaration while standing in the sign of the God Set Fighting, as illustrated in Liber O.]

THE CONGREGATION. Love is the law, love under will.

The DEACON goes to his place between the altar of incense and the font, faces East, and gives the step and sign of a Man and a Brother. All [stand and] imitate him.

[We added the instruction for the audience to stand at this point, as we allow the People to sit upon entering the Temple. The step of a Man and a Brother, in public Masses, is given by advancing the left foot straight and following with the right at a perpendicular angle. The sign is given by drawing the hand, thumb at a right

angle to the extended fingers, across the throat. The Deacon leads the people during the recitation of the Creed below. For the purpose of this commentary, we will henceforth refer to the Altar of Incense as the Fire Altar and the Circular Font as the Water Altar.]

THE DEACON AND ALL THE PEOPLE. I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD; and in one Star in the Company of Stars of whose fire we are created, and to which we shall return; and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, in His name CHAOS, the sole viceregent of the Sun upon the Earth; and in one Air the nourisher of all that breathes.

And I believe in one Earth, the Mother of us all, and in one Womb wherein all men are begotten, and wherein they shall rest, Mystery of Mystery, in Her name BABALON.

And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion, Mystery of Mystery, in His name BAPHOMET.

And I believe in one Gnostic and Catholic Church of Light, Life, Love and Liberty, the Word of whose Law is THELEMA.

And I believe in the communion of Saints.

And, forasmuch as meat and drink are transmuted in us daily into spiritual substance, I believe in the Miracle of the Mass.

And I confess one Baptism of Wisdom, whereby we accomplish the Miracle of Incarnation.

And I confess my life one, individual, and eternal that was, and is, and is to come. AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN.

Music is now played.

[A skilled musician may beautify and enhance the ritual if he or she is present and sensitive to the energies of the Mass. We abhor the idea of recorded music under any circumstances. It is impossible to “time” a performance to coincide with pre-recorded music, and a New Age Muzak style soundtrack may be even worse.]

The child enters with the ewer and the salt. The VIRGIN enters with the Sword and the Paten. The child enters with the censer and the perfume.

[Regardless of what you want to project when you walk into the Temple as Priestess — the attitude you want to convey, what you think you will feel like when you get there, how you will walk, what your voice will sound like when you speak — you must drop all preconceptions when you walk through the door. Be an open conduit. Let the energy channel through you.]

They face the DEACON, deploying into line, from the space between the two altars.

[We interpret this to mean, the High Altar and the Fire Altar, i.e., they stand between the steps and the altar of incense, the negative child in the north, the positive in the south. The Deacon stands in his place of power between the Fire and Water altars.]

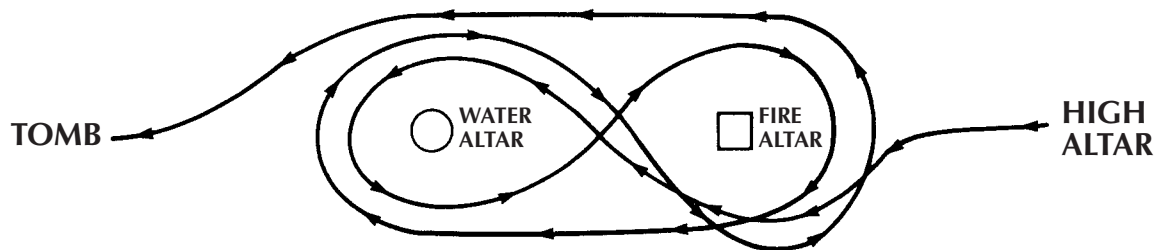
THE VIRGIN. Greeting of Earth and Heaven!

All give the Hailing sign of a Magician, the DEACON leading.

[After leading the congregation in the Hailing sign, the Deacon will gracefully move to his left as the Priestess and children begin the serpentine walk deosil about the Fire altar. The Deacon will take his next station at the north of the steps in front of the High Altar. He remains with his arms crossed upon his breast in the position of Resurrection, facing the Tomb, during the scenes that follow, until it is time for him to bring the Robe to the Priestess.]

The PRIESTESS, the negative child on her left, the positive on her right, ascends the steps of the High Altar. They await her below. She places the Paten before the Graal. Having adored it, she descends, and with the children following her, the positive next her, she moves in a serpentine manner involving $3\frac{1}{2}$ circles of the Temple. (Deosil about altar, widdershins about font, deosil about altar and font, widdershins about altar, and to the Tomb in the West.)

[Two versions of the Priestess walk are illustrated in *Equinox III*, 10. We prefer the one shown here:]



[The positive child makes an additional half circle around Fire altar at the end of his walk to reach his position in the south. Children remain at their respective altars after the walk.]

She draws her Sword and pulls down the Veil, therewith.

THE PRIESTESS. By the power of ✠ Iron, I say unto thee, Arise. In the name of our Lord ✠ the Sun, and of our Lord ✠ . . . that thou mayst administer the virtues to the Brethren.

[An elegant performance tip here is for the Priest to open his eyes only after she says "Arise."

The Priestess makes the crosses with the upright Sword as she speaks the words, pausing long enough to complete the cross at the end of each phrase.

It is important to draw the crosses neatly and accurately as shown, i.e., ✚. They are of equal height and width. We return to the center point after drawing each quarter of the cross and finish in the center. Many people have asked which direction to make the horizontal bar. It is an individual decision, although a right-handed person tends to make the right hand half of the bar first.]

She sheathes the Sword.

The PRIEST, issuing from the Tomb, holding the Lance erect with both hands, right over left, against his breast, takes the first three regular steps.

[The Priestess will back off at a 45° angle to allow the Priest to exit the Tomb. The three steps at a public Mass are given by advancing the right foot straight and following with the left at a perpendicular angle to the middle of the right. This is repeated two more times.]

He then gives the Lance to the PRIESTESS, and gives the three penal signs.

[The penal signs for a public Mass are the following: 1) Hand with extended fingers, thumb at right angle drawn across the throat. 2) Stab heart and draw across chest. 3) Draw across midsection and stab belly button.

While exiting Tomb and making the signs, he directs his attention to the Stélé on the High Altar in the East. This sequence of activity may be interpreted as the Priest's vow to perform the ritual to the best of his ability. The penalty for failure is indicated by the penal signs.]

He then kneels, and worships the Lance with both hands.

[He is aware of the distinction between his own shortcomings as a human being and the majesty of the Lance, eternally extending from Earth to Heaven. This is the symbol of the Holy Mountain, the Shaft of Light, that aspires from the Darkness of Matter to the Glory of the Empyrean Realm.

"Kneel" means to go down on both knees.]

Penitential music.

[See note above regarding live music during ritual.]

THE PRIEST. I am a man among men.

He takes again the Lance, and lowers it. He rises.

[Do not allow the Lance head to touch the ground as the Lance is rotated point downward while kneeling. An awareness of the position of the Congregants is most important when making this gesture so as not to hit anyone.]

THE PRIEST. How should I be worthy to administer the virtues to the Brethren?

[This line is a critical ethical key to the ritual, and one of the most important statements about the roles of men and women in the New Aeon.

The idea of “worthy” implies a Higher Power or Powers judging the individual. Think of the Weighing Scene of the Heart from the Egyptian Book of the Dead if you are offended by the concept of a judgmental Jewish or Christian diety. One way or another, the Priest acknowledges that he is in a state of spiritual impurity that prevents him from “administering the virtues to the Brethren” until he is elevated beyond his moribund state. The idea that the New Aeon allows people the right to feel “just fine” as they are with no need to improve, is absurd.

The second key concept is that the Priestess is regarded quite differently from the Priest. She enters the Temple, is saluted by all, approaches the High Altar, energizes the Sacred Space with her walk, and is now in a position to elevate the Priest from his darkened condition. See Chapter 3 of *The Book of Lies*, The Oyster, where Crowley writes, “The Brothers of A.:A.: are Women: the Aspirants to A.:A.: are Men.” The fact that the Priestess is viewed as of sufficient spiritual purity to conduct these actions prior to her own elevation by the Priest (that will take place shortly at the Altar) is strong evidence that the comon slurs directed against Thelema and O.T.O. as being either male-centric, anti-feminine, or paternal, are a misunderstanding of our doctrine.]

The PRIESTESS takes from the child the water and the salt, and mixes them in the font.

[The negative child has been standing at the north of the Water altar. She moves laterally further north to allow the Prietess to work unencumbered.]

THE PRIESTESS. Let the Salt of Earth admonish the Water to bear the virtue of the Great Sea. (*Genuflects.*) Mother, be thou adored.

[We put three pinches of salt into the font during this monologue as a symbol of Binah. The salt may be added in time with the words thus: “Let the Salt of Earth (pinch 1) admonish the Water (pinch 2) to bear the virtue of the Great Sea (pinch 3).” She now swirls her hand in the font, mixing the salt and water.

“Genuflect” means to go down on the right knee.]

She returns to the West. ✝ on PRIEST with open hand doth she make, over his forehead, breast, and body.

[She draws the three crosses with her wet hand very carefully. We use three progressively larger crosses.]

Be the PRIEST pure of body and soul!

[Again, we draw the crosses and speak the words together. "Be the Priest (cross 1) pure (cross 2) of body and soul (cross 3)."]

The PRIESTESS takes the censer from the child, and places it on the small altar. She puts incense therein.

[The positive child has been standing at the south of Fire altar.]

Let the Fire and the Air make sweet the world! (*Genuflects.*) Father, be thou adored.

[We put two pinches of incense into the censer as a symbol of Chokmah. "Let the Fire and the Air (pinch 1) make sweet the world (pinch 2)!"]

She returns West, and makes ✝ with the censer before the PRIEST, thrice as before.

Be the PRIEST fervent of body and soul!

[See above. "Be the Priest (cross 1) fervent (cross 2) of body and soul (cross 3)."
We like to use the style of censer that hangs from chains.]

(The children resume their weapons as they are done with.)

[The Priestess returns the censer to the Fire altar and walks back to the Priest in the West. At that point the negative child advances to the Water altar and pours the saltwater from the font into the ewer. At the same time, the positive child takes the censer from the Fire altar.]

The DEACON now takes the consecrated Robe from High Altar, and brings it to her. She robes the PRIEST in his Robe of scarlet and gold.

[The Deacon has been standing north of the steps in front of the High Altar. His cue to begin to get the Robe is the children having resumed their weapons.

The Deacon walks forward, turns, walks up the steps in the center, moves the Crown and cap of maintenance off the top of the Robe, takes the folded Robe in his hands, turns, descends the steps, and respectfully walks toward the Priestess. (She has returned to the Tomb area near the Priest.) She turns from the Priest,

and walks toward the Deacon. They join eyes as he passes the Robe. He retreats, walking backward, and resumes his stance with crossed arms in front of the High Altar at north of steps.

The Priestess goes back to the Priest and begins to place the Robe on him. It is important that she take her time during this scene. It will be impossible for the Priest to see or adjust his Robe during the course of the ritual. Thus, if the Priestess fails to straighten the Robe properly because of either sloppiness or performance anxiety, he will maintain a disheveled appearance through the balance of the rite. The Priest will assist her by taking a hand off the Lance as needed while maintaining a firm grip with the other, retaining both hands on the Lance whenever possible.]

Be the flame of the Sun thine ambience, O thou PRIEST of the SUN!

The DEACON brings the crown from the High Altar. (The crown may be of gold or platinum, or of electrum magicum; but with no other metals, save the small proportions necessary to a proper alloy. It may be adorned with divers jewels, at will. But it must have the Uræus serpent twined about it, and the cap of maintenance must match the scarlet of the Robe. Its texture should be velvet.)

[After the Priestess finishes addressing the Priest, the Deacon again climbs the steps to the High Altar and takes the Crown. The Priestess turns and walks to meet him.

The Deacon takes his new position, between the steps and the Fire altar, facing the Tomb.

Again, it is critical that the Priestess place the Crown on the Priest's head properly so that the cap of maintenance is straight in appearance, and not bunched under the Crown. The Crown must be secure enough on his head, that he will be able to gesture with all the force he will feel later in the ritual without it falling off.]

Be the Serpent thy crown, O thou PRIEST of the LORD!

Kneeling, she takes the Lance, between her open hands, and runs them up and down upon the shaft eleven times, very gently.

[If she starts with the first stroke going up the shaft, the eleventh stroke will also be going up and she can very naturally extend her arms upward in a sign of Ecstasy as she utters the next proclamation.]

Be the LORD present among us!

All give the Hailing Sign.

[The Hailing sign for a public Mass is given by covering the heart with the right hand and elevating the left at a right angle to the shoulder. The Deacon leads the congregation in this gesture.]

THE PEOPLE. So mote it be.