

Advice for

Deacons

of

Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica



by
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foreword by
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Since the authoring of this text, but prior to its publication, Dionysus Soter has been ordained to the Priesthood in Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, taking the new name Dionysos Thriambos. He has not revised or edited the content of Advice for Deacons since receiving sacerdotal orders, and it remains a text for Deacons by a Deacon.

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D.Th.

FOREWORD

If an individual communicant in the Gnostic Mass is likened to a beam of Sunlight, then the officers of the Gnostic Mass may be likened to the bands of colored light which result when Sunlight is passed through a prism, with the prism in this case being Qabalistic symbolism. The Priestess would rule the short wavelength, high frequency end of this Spiritual Spectrum, the Priest would govern the long wavelength, low frequency end, and the Deacon would hold the Center, the place of balance, the interface between the two ends of the spectrum and also between the diffracted spectrum itself and white Sunlight.

As the Ruach, the Deacon stands between Neschamah and Chiah; but also between Neschamah and Nephesh. The Deacon is both the “A” of IAO and the “V” of IHVH. Thus, the Deacon’s central position in the Gnostic Mass is both symbolic and practical. The Deacon is challenged to assist the Priest and Priestess in the fulfillment of their roles, and simultaneously to coordinate the activities of the congregation with those of the other officers. This central role gives the Deacon a unique perspective on the ceremony, a perspective which is not necessarily shared by the Priest or the Priestess. Those who aspire to the priesthood would, therefore, be well advised to experience the diaconate first-hand.

The present work, written by a seasoned, thoughtful, and eloquent member of our diaconate, should be of value not only to the author’s intended audience of deacons-in-training, but also to more experienced deacons, and even to members of our priesthood and episcopate. Let it be as a tonic to refresh their enthusiasm and curiosity about our budding but well-rooted spiritual tradition.

by Sabazius X
(AKA Tau Apiryon)

Grand Terrace, California
February 21, 1997 e.v.

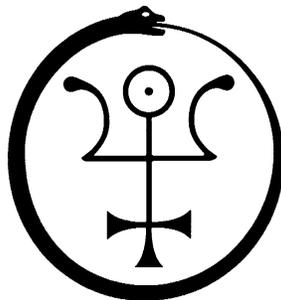


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PREAMBLE

Advice for Deacons

This paper is a series of essays designed to provide information to Deacons who are just beginning work in that office, or who have been in insular circumstances with regard to the performance of E.G.C. ritual. The component writings are **essays**, i.e. “attempts,” and do not reflect any culmination of practice or policy in the Diaconate. The intention has been to create a point of reference and a body of suggestions for theory and technique at a time (A.L. IV iv) when the Church is beginning to articulate herself at levels of sophistication that she has not previously approached. Additionally, this advice offers suggestions for further study among published sources in a (by no means comprehensive) bibliography appended to each essay.

Composition of this Advice

The author of these essays is Dionysus Soter, an ordained Deacon of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica. He wishes to thank Continuity, Sharash, Magdalena Morgaine, Adam Kadmon, and Merlinus Ambrosius for their guidance from the Priesthood in his work as a Deacon; the staff of *The Scarlet Letter* for permitting him to air some of this writing in advance of its inclusion here; Hortus Inclusus, Ananda, Sulis, and Titvs for their questions relating to this material; Circle of Stars Sanctuary for consistently outstanding performance of our central ritual; Athena Ariagne for everything; Tau Silenus for late-breaking scholarship; and Tau Apiryon for his encouragement and tolerance.

Taking this Advice

Most of the essays in this paper assume the reader’s acquaintance with Liber XV, the Canon of the Mass. Since the author is merely writing as a Deacon to fellow Deacons, there is little chance that anyone will lend too much weight to the contents of this paper. Still, the reader is encouraged to take all imperatives, expressions of preference, theoretical convictions, and so forth with a grain of salt. As a further caution, it should be emphasized that Deacons have a great deal of guidance available to them that takes priority over this paper. Deacons should particularly avail themselves of the instruction of the ordained Priests and Priestesses with whom they work, and by extension, their episcopal supervision.

DIMENSIONS OF THE DIACONATE

The title of “Deacon” is derived from the Greek *daikonos*, meaning “servant,” and the principal business of the Deacon is service. The Deacon does a service to the Church in seeing that the ritual continues to be performed rightly, with joy and beauty. More specifically, she serves the Priest and Priestess in attending to their ritual needs in the course of the ceremony. The Deacon also serves the People by orienting them to the ritual, and providing them with cues and guidance throughout it.

While service is the principal business of the Deacon, it is not at all her only business. The Deacon occupies a sort of “middle management” role in the ritual, with supervisory responsibility of various sorts. The Deacon’s service to the People actually takes the form of leadership and supervision. She also supervises the two Children in their ritual roles. And the Deacon ordinarily has management responsibility for the physical setting of the temple.

These varied responsibilities require of the Deacon a particular state of mind that is very different than those of the other Mass officers. Typically, an officer in a powerful magick ceremony like the Mass invokes a force/quality/entity, and works with that force/quality/entity to focus, concentrate, and exalt the officer’s awareness. Both the Priest and Priestess will do this when working effectively. The Deacon, on the other hand, cannot afford to “focus, concentrate, and exalt” the awareness that is required in order to supervise the ongoing details of the ceremony. The Deacon must maintain a continuous monitoring of People, the Children, and the temple properties. This work is one of the most important ways that the Deacon serves the Priest and Priestess in the ritual. Knowledge that the Deacon is available to attend to details outside their immediate control permits the Priest and Priestess to become fully absorbed in their invocations and other operations of magick.

The Deacon’s particular type of attention also enables her to provide appropriate feedback to the People in order to keep them “tuned in” to the ceremony. This sort of attention has actually been described in terms of having “no consciousness at all.” The definition of “consciousness” in this case includes reflection, imagination, or any mental process divorced from direct perception of external, consensual phenomena. For ease of reference, this paper will refer to this “not conscious” type of attention just discussed as “surface presence.” In terms of magical theory, surface presence corresponds to a complete coincidence of the gross and subtle bodies, so that the magician with surface presence has no perception of her own “depth” or that of the world around her. Instead, her attention is entirely invested in her immediate, consensual surroundings and how they change in accord with her actions.

Many skilled magicians have deliberately avoided developing this sort of awareness in their solo practices, where it serves little purpose. But in any ritual work that involves direct communication with other participants, ranging from a 50-person public ritual to intimate work with a partner, surface presence is invaluable. It is the type of attention required in order to maintain direct communication with others. It is a constant tool of the most successful classroom teachers, salespeople, and therapists. With some distinct exceptions, surface presence is the psychic posture maintained by a successful Deacon throughout the Mass.

The qabalistic significance of the office of the Deacon can be assessed from the prescribed costume, as well as the actions she performs. The colors of the Deacon's costume are white and yellow. The white is worn in common with all of the other officers, but yellow corresponds to the element of Air, and the *vau* of Tetragrammaton. This letter of tetragrammaton in turn corresponds to the central sephira of Tiphareth, or Beauty. Tiphareth is balanced at the center of the qabalistic Tree, midway from the Kingdom to the Crown on the middle Pillar of Mildness. The Tiphareth symbolism is consistent with the Deacon's physical placement in the Mass, which favors a station in the very center of the temple, just west of the altar of incense.

Tiphareth is also the center of the *ruach*, usually interpreted as reason or consciousness, which forms the middle part of the Hebrew psychic anatomy. *Ruach* literally means "breath," as does spirit, to which it corresponds in the system of Renaissance hermetism. The hermetists of that period understood the body to be perishable and material. The soul, in contrast, was eternal but entirely immaterial. The spirit was supposed to be the medium by which impulses and sensations were transferred between the body and soul. The Deacon fulfills a similar function with regard to the People (body) and the Priest and Priestess (soul). She also serves as the nexus between the physical temple (body) and the human congregation (soul).

While the maintenance of surface presence will prevent a Deacon from "assuming" a god-form as described in Liber O, it is nevertheless true that the rich symbolism of the Mass suggests quite a few god-forms which are symbolically appropriate to the office. The Deacon may wish to assume these god-forms before or after the ceremony, rather than during it, or to address these gods in some other fashion, if she feels that it would be helpful to her work.

The attribution to Tiphareth leads to association with an assortment of solar gods, especially the Graeco-Roman Apollo and the Egyptian Ra. More particularly, the solar form of Horus called Heru-ra-ha is suggested. In addition, the Deacon's initial delivery of The Book of the Law and the incantation of the Collects connects her with gods of magick, writing, and speech, such as the Egyptian Tahuti (Thoth) and the Greek Hermes. A final mention might be made of "psychopomp" deities, or guides of the soul. These are attributable to the Deacon because of his duties to admit, marshal, and lead the People at various points in the ceremony. Key psychopomps include Anubis of the Egyptians and Hermes of the Greeks.

The supervisory authority of the Deacon is the lowest degree of such authority in our Church. It is conferred by a Bishop, Priest or Priestess through a ceremony of ordination. Such ceremonies vary among ordaining clergy. Some Bishops may prescribe a particular one to Priests and Priestesses working under their guidance. The ordination will usually include the prospective Deacon's vows of service to the Church.

Typically, Deacons are ordained through the magick act of "laying on of hands," just as they are in orthodox forms of Christianity. Laying on of hands is also the basic magical mechanism by which Bishops confer authority to Priests and Priestesses. This act involves the Deacon in a chain of authority, or "apostolic succession" that can be traced directly back to Aleister Crowley. Crowley, as the prophet of Thelema, the scribe of The Book of the Law, and the author of the canon of the Mass, is the immediate wellspring of religious authority in the Gnostic Catholic Church. Crowley himself claimed apostolic succession from Christian sources. While the line of succession in which Crowley most likely participated has some shaky antecedents, episcopal consecrations descending in line from Crowley have been ratified within E.G.C. by the current Patriarch Hymenaeus Beta, who holds succession in both the Crowley line and a separate and much less controversial line of succession. Thus E.G.C. can claim the Christian apostolic succession as well as the Thelemic one. This feature is not so noteworthy as an historically debatable link to Jesus and his disciples. It is rather a long, quiet connection with the pagan and gnostic religious leaders who provided the organizing format—and in some cases, the organizers—for the Christian Church once it became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

Bishops, Priests, and Priestesses will have certain expectations of Church members who seek ordination to the Diaconate. It is certainly likely that they will expect prospective Deacons to be duly baptized and confirmed members of the Church. There may be additional criteria of ritual proficiency, knowledge of the Church, and/or magical aptitude which are applied to ordinands.

In addition to the particular requirements of the ordaining Bishop or Clergy, a prerequisite for the Diaconate has been set by the Holy Father of the Church. Deacons must be initiates of at least the Second Degree of O.T.O. Magicians of that Degree should readily see the extent to which the role of the Deacon accords with the instruction provided to them through their initiation. E.G.C. exists as a component organization of Ordo Templi Orientis. Our Church is a body within our Order, as contrasted with the Christian history of incorporating monastic Orders within a larger Church. The symbolic instruction of specified Degrees of O.T.O. is now required preparation for ordination in E.G.C.

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

The best edition for reference as of this writing is the one in *Magick* (Weiser 1994), pp. 572-586.

Liber DCCLXXVII

The correspondences of 777 are essential to the study of symbolic valence in the Mass.

Liber CCXX—The Book of the Law

Liber LXIV—Liber Israfel

This book gives an invocation of a god-form related to the office of Deacon.

Mystery of Mystery by Apiryon Ep. Gn. and Helena Ep. Gn.

This “Primer of Thelemic Ecclesiastical Gnosticism” is a set of papers relating to the Gnostic Mass and the history of the Church which forms the second number of the *Red Flame* journal published by Pangenetor Lodge O.T.O. The article on “The Formula of Tetragrammaton in the Gnostic Mass” elucidates some of the qabalistic infrastructure of the ceremony.

Gnostic Gnews Vol. 1, No. 3 (Summer Solstice IIIxix e.n.)

The specifics of E.G.C. apostolic lineage are discussed in several articles in this periodical from an earlier phase of the development of the contemporary Church.

The Eucharist by Le Chevalier Clement de Saint Marq

The English-language edition of this fascinating paper was translated by Richard Jessel and Frater Y.V., and published by Pangenetor Lodge. The paper itself was cited by Theodor Reuss, a Patriarch of E.G.C., and contains some unusual speculations on the nature of apostolic succession and the origins of Christian ecclesia.

“The Christian Mystery and the Pagan Mysteries” by Hugo Rahner

Rahner’s Christian perspective on the issue doesn’t keep him from undertaking a thorough and interesting examination of it. This paper is published in *The Mysteries*, the second number of the Eranos anthologies edited by Joseph Campbell and published by Bollingen.

TEMPLE STEWARDSHIP

Care of the physical temple and its properties is one of the most important services that a Deacon can perform for his congregation and clergy. Traditionally, he is responsible to the Priest and Priestess for the preparation of the ritual space.

It will occasionally happen that the Priest and/or Priestess prefer to set the temple without assistance from the Deacon. In most cases, however, the clergy will want to spend the time before Mass physically and psychically preparing themselves for the ceremony, so they will be glad for him to take responsibility for setting the temple.

It is important, if possible, to keep the temple closed to the People before it is completely set. This rule keeps the well-meaning or curious from getting underfoot, and provides the People with a more dramatic sense of entry into the temple. (Note also that the admission of the People to the temple by the Deacon is the first specified action of the ritual proper in Liber XV.)

Since few of us are so fortunate as to work in temple spaces permanently dedicated to E.G.C. use, a good deal of cleanup and temple strike is generally required after each Mass. The Deacon should, as before, assume responsibility in ensuring that the space used for Mass is, if anything, cleaner than it was before the ceremony. Ideally, the same people who set temple should attend to the cleanup procedure—this provision helps to guarantee that items are returned properly to their sources. It is important to remember that both communally and privately owned Mass furniture, weapons, and regalia have been dedicated to a sacred purpose, and should be returned to their owners or designated storage spaces as directly as possible.

The following sections are some brief descriptions of the components of a well-set temple.

The Shrine

In the easternmost portion of the temple is the Shrine. Although Liber XV equates the word “shrine” with the High Altar alone, experience suggests that it is a useful term to encompass the entire arrangement of furniture in the East, including: 1) the High Altar, 2) the Super-altar, 3) the Pillars, 4) the Dais, and 5) the Veil.

Official dimensions of the High Altar are given by Liber XV as 7 feet across, 3 feet deep, and 44 inches high. The most crucial of these dimensions is the width, since a properly proportioned temple will have a distance from the front edge of the High Altar (the line between the Pillars) to the Tomb equal to about 2.1 times the width of the High Altar. For a regulation Altar, a proportional

temple will then be a bit more than 18 feet from East to West, not counting the depth of the Tomb. Larger temple spaces can be brought into accord with Liber XV by setting the pillars farther apart from the Altar. But smaller temples will likely require smaller altars, whether or not the proportions are considered.

There is room for a great deal of creativity in Super-altar design. The Stele is at the top, and should be the highest item in the room. There is a space in the middle for The Book of the Law, and the Graal is at the bottom. A book stand is helpful to get the Book to stand open during Mass. The Graal is full and covered. The 22 candles flank the Stele, four and four; the Book, six and six; and the Graal, one and one. Liber XV does not give colors for the candles, but *CCXX I:60* suggests eight gold, twelve blue, and two black. Conserve candles and keep the temple cool by not lighting them until just before ritual. The Shrine arrangement reflects the Tree of Life, with the Stele at Kether, the Book at Tiphareth, the Graal at Yesod, and then the Paten is added by the Priestess to form Malkuth during the ceremony.

Roses must be on the High Altar, usually in vases. Fresh-cut roses are best, of course, but silk ones can work nicely and save the bother and expense of perpetual resupply.

The Priest's robe and crown are set on the south side of the High Altar. The crown may be set on a pillow for extra reverence. If so, it should be presented to the Priestess on the pillow, so that she is the only one to handle it.

The wine and the glasses for the People must be in or near the north side of the shrine. Also, if desired, there should be a non-alcoholic alternative to wine.

The Pillars should be in line with the front edge of the High Altar, and within the Veil. Contrary to the opening instructions of Liber XV, the steps of the Dais must be on the western side of the Veil. There must be space between the High Altar and the closed Veil for the knees of the Priestess. The Veil should be **open** at the beginning of Mass.

The Altar of Incense

The symbolism of the double cube also relates to the qabalistic Tree, in that its surface can be divided into ten square faces corresponding to the sephiroth. *Book Four*, part II, recommends the adornment of the double cube altar with various symbols of the Universe so that it can serve as an expression of the will of the individual magician. But the altar of incense, as a focus of the common ritual of the Church, should remain entirely black like the altar of the Golden Dawn Neophyte hall. It symbolizes the inscrutability of existence, and the reciprocal relationship of the lower and the higher.

There should be a single candle burning on the altar of incense, to contrib-

ute to general illumination of the temple, to provide a flame if the Deacon needs to light a new charcoal for the censer, and to provide reading light if the Deacon uses a missal for the Collects. Red, white, and gold are all suitable colors for the central candle.

The Book of the Law should be on the altar of incense at the start of the Mass. If the Deacon requires a missal, it should also be on the altar of incense.

Although Liber XV is quite cryptic about the source of the bell that rings during The Consecration of the Elements, it is usual to have the bell on the altar of incense for the Deacon to ring. The presence of the bell provides him with the full complement of the exorcist's tools: bell, book, and candle.

One last item that may be placed on the altar of incense is a phial of holy oil. The oil should be used before Mass to anoint the officers and their weapons. While the burning incense symbolizes the aspiration of the lower to the higher, the oil represents the "spark of the higher which wishes to unite the lower with itself." The twelfth chapter of *The Book of Lies* is illustrative:

The Dragon-Flies

IO is the cry of the lower as OI of the higher.
In figures they are 1001; in letters they are Joy.
For when all is equilibrated, when all is beheld from without
all, there is joy, joy, joy that is but one facet of a diamond,
every other facet whereof is more joyful than joy itself.

If there are no Children in the Mass, the censer and incense should be set on the altar of incense before the ceremony begins.

The Font

Ideally, the font is actually a piece of furniture designed for the purpose, with a large hollow in the top to hold water. A small bowl should then be placed on the edge of the font so that the Priestess can take water from it. Most temples have a simple pedestal for a font, and the Priestess mixes the salt and water directly into the bowl, which may be a bit larger in this case.

No color is specified for the font. Some fonts are white to complement the altar of incense, some are blue for the element of Water, and some are purple for the sephira of Yesod.

If there are no Children in the Mass, the ewer of water and the salt should be set on the font before the ceremony begins.

The Tomb

Virtually no specifics are given for the Tomb in the West. Some versions of Liber XV indicate “an upright coffin,” which would be a snug fit for four officers (Priest, Deacon, and two Children) at the end of the Mass. In an E.G.C. cathedral we might expect a representation of a mausoleum doorway in the western wall, leading to a lower chamber. As it is, closets and homemade boxes of nearly every description have served as Tombs.

The color of the Tomb is unspecified. Black or grey seem natural, or it can be a “whited sepulchre.” Elaborate decoration with hieroglyphs and god-images is possible.

The addition of two candles flanking the Tomb can ensure the illumination of the entire temple by candlelight alone. Free-standing floor candlesticks are desirable for this purpose.

At the beginning of the Mass, the Tomb should hold the Priest and his Lance.

Seating for the People

The Mass is held in a “corridor” space, with the People ranged along the north and south sides of the temple. They should be as close as possible to the central line of the temple without crowding the space needed by the officers. A good rule of thumb for the easternmost seats is to place them about five feet to the north and south of the altar of incense.

Pillows or folded blankets are sufficient to indicate where the People can sit on the floor, and they also serve as kneelers during the Ceremony of the Rending of the Veil. Chairs may be added for People with back problems or other difficulties. Adjusting the number of seats to reflect the actual number of People attending keeps the space intimate, instead of having empty seats during Mass.

The Narthex

The narthex is wherever the People have to wait before admission to the temple proper. It should be as comfortable as possible, in case there is delay in the start of Mass. Copies of a missal for popular response, including the texts of the Creed and the Anthem, should usually be available in the narthex.

The Sacristy

The sacristy, like the narthex, is a necessary space outside of the temple chamber. It is the area where the Priestess and Children wait prior to their entrance. For dramatic reasons, and for the convenience of the officers, it is best to have the sacristy separate from the narthex.

The Priestess, in addition to her sword, requires the Paten for her preparations in the sacristy. When possible, the number of Cakes on the Paten should reflect the actual number of People expected to communicate (plus the Priest, of course).

The Positive Child will have the censer and the box of incense. The charcoal in the censer should be lit just after the People have been admitted to the temple. Large, self-starting charcoals are the most convenient and are now widely available.

The Negative Child should be provided with the ewer of water and the salt.

The sequence of setting temple seems to progress most conveniently from West to East. The narthex and sacristy should be set first, so that they can be used while the temple chamber is being prepared.

Steward Deputies

The Deacon must have a full understanding of the temple setting requirements, which are best learned through the practice of setting temple. But if the Deacon does not enjoy setting temple, he has the option of recruiting a steward to handle the actual tasks involved. The presence of such a sub-officer can reduce the work of the Deacon to a five-minute check to make sure that everything is in order before beginning the Mass. This check should definitely be made by the Deacon, regardless of who does the setting. In a larger congregation, the Deacon(s) may organize an entire pool of trained stewards, what Christians call an "altar guild," so that one or two are available to assist with setting and cleanup of the temple at any given Mass.

Regardless of how many helpers are available, it is important not to assign too many cooks to this stew. A single person can usually set temple for the Mass without hurrying in 30 to 40 minutes' time. Two can accomplish it in about 20 minutes. Three's a crowd, and may create more confusion and frustration than they save.

Just as the Deacon must check the work of steward deputies in setting temple, it is equally vital that the Deacon check on the cleanup of the temple.

Steward recruitment is actually pretty easy in most cases. Members of the congregation who are not officers for the Mass often relish the opportunity to contribute to the ritual. Attending to the physical arrangement of the temple is a magick operation in its own right, and its results are evident to everyone who attends Mass. Working as a temple steward is an introductory involvement in the Mass without the performance demands of acolyting. It is also an appropriate responsibility to offer to Church members who have been recently confirmed.

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

Liber DCCLXXVII

Liber IV, Part II

This portion of Crowley's *Magick* treats the symbolism of various magick weapons and pieces of temple furniture in detail. Of particular interest to Deacons are chapters III (The Altar), V (The Holy Oil), XIII (The Book), XIV (The Bell), and XVI (The Magick Fire: with Considerations of the Thurible, the Charcoal and the Incense). Most of this material was actually written within a couple of years of the first composition of the Gnostic Mass.

“The Kiblah” by Frater Y.V.

This article in *The Magical Link* vol. V, no. 4 treats issues of temple furniture, symbolism, and physical orientation. It is reprinted in *Mystery of Mystery*, as a chapter preceding the one on “Symbolism of the Gnostic Mass Temple.”

In the Continuum Vol. II, No. 4 (An LXXV)

A long commentary on Liber XV includes notes on the symbolism of the officers, temple and equipment. Some ritual instruction is included as well. This account is a quasi-canonical treatment of the original Agape Lodge tradition of Mass presentation.

Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple by Chic and Sandra Tabatha Cicero

This book treats the construction, consecration and use of ritual tools and furniture in the system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. It contains instructions that can be applied to such E.G.C. properties as the altar of incense (“Neophyte Altar”) and the pillars.

DIRECTION OF THE PEOPLE

One of the most demanding responsibilities of the Deacon is direction of the People. It is especially difficult to rehearse these elements of the Deacon's work. In general, it is the Deacon's job to make the Mass comprehensible to the People and to keep the behavior of the People coordinated with the Mass. There are many different tactics and techniques that may be contribute to these goals.

The Deacon's Preamble

Before admitting the People, it is customary for the Deacon to give a brief address in the narthex. This preamble serves to orient members and guests alike to the ceremony. It is often prudent to precede the preamble with a "5-minute warning" to permit the People to finish cigarettes, make a final trip to the restroom, or wrap up their conversations.

The preamble generally begins with introductions. The Deacon can welcome everyone and briefly identify the local O.T.O. body or E.G.C. sanctuary sponsoring the Mass and name the officers.

It is helpful to have the Children along for the first part of the preamble. The Positive Child can take a final head-count for seating and the number of Cakes on the Paten. Right after introductions, the Deacon should ask if anyone attending will not drink alcohol. The Negative Child observes and notes any response. The Deacon can also at this point ask if any of the People have brought their own Cakes of Light for the Paten. These are collected by the Positive Child, and then both acolytes can be dismissed to the sacristy.

At Masses where some of the People are inexperienced or new to the ritual, some explanation of their part in the ritual is needed. It must be stressed to newcomers that the Mass is a participatory ritual, and not just a theatrical display. The People are expected to join in with the appropriate words and gestures, and most importantly, to take communion. Liber XV specifies that unless communion is restricted to the Priest or certain communicants for a special Mass, all of the People present must communicate. In other churches, communication is regarded as a privilege of membership, and visitors are expected to refrain from it. In E.G.C., anyone who says our creed and makes our signs is entitled to our sacrament, and only People who desire that sacrament should be in attendance.

When instructing the People in the steps, signs and words, care should be taken not to overload them with information. It is usually sufficient to tell them that the Deacon will lead the People throughout, to briefly demonstrate the principal signs (*Dieu Garde*, Step and Sign of a Man and a Brother, Hailing Sign, flame, and attitude of Resurrection), and to refer them to their missals for the words of the Creed and the Anthem.

If the officers of the Mass have planned any variation from the instructions in Liber XV, the changes should be announced to the People as part of the Deacon's preamble. The preamble is also often a good opportunity to make general announcements about other local O.T.O. events.

The preamble should not include soliciting questions about the Mass from the People. The Deacon may mention that officers will be available to answer questions after the ceremony. But inviting dialogue during the preamble opens the door to questions that are better answered through the ceremony itself.

The preamble should conclude with the admission of the People. Some Deacons like to admit the People individually and assign each one a seat. It is generally sufficient to ask the People to enter the temple silently and each take a seat.

Cuing the People to Sit and Stand

The instructions in Liber XV on seating and standing the People are sadly deficient. The following list of cues are just one example of how the material can be interpreted. Several general criteria were applied to produce these cues. The simplest ones are that the People should stand to make steps and signs, and that they should stand to speak and chant.

- 1 When admitting the People, ask them to take their seats, because this prevents them from standing in places where they will be unable to sit later. If most of the People sit on one side of the temple, it is fine to move some of them in pursuit of equilibrium. Balance in the temple makes a significant difference in the ritual. Seating may also be adjusted to make sure that the leading seats for communion are occupied by experienced communicants.
- 2 Once everyone is seated in the appropriate places, call them to their feet before taking the Book to the High Altar. Standing is called for out of reverence to *The Book of the Law*, and so that the People will be standing for their response to the Deacon's proclamation of the Law. They remain on their feet for the step and sign, the recital of the Creed, and hailing the Priestess.
- 3 When the Priestess turns to ascend to the High Altar, the People may sit. They remain sitting for the serpentine travels of the Priestess and her preparation of the Priest. During the Priestess' travels the Deacon may remain at the altar of incense if the temple is large enough that the Deacon does not become an obstruction. Otherwise the Deacon will need to get out of the way. A good position to retreat to is the southeastern corner of the temple, in order to have the Priest's robe and crown at hand.

- 4 When the Priestess kneels to stroke the Lance, the People should stand. They are on their feet for the hailing signs, and for “So mote it be.” They remain standing through the enshrinement of the Priestess and the Priest’s circumambulations.
- 5 As the Priest concludes his third circumambulation, the Deacon, Children, and People kneel in the flame posture with hands clasped overhead. Note that it is simpler and more graceful to enter this position from standing than from sitting. The flame is held for two invocations of the Priest and one of the Priestess—typically a total of just under three minutes.
- 6 The People rise to their feet with the hailing sign at the beginning of the Deacon’s recital of the Calendar. They remain standing through the end of the Ceremony of the Rending of the Veil, i.e. until after the eleven kisses.
- 7 When the Priest kneels just before the Collects, the People may sit. Although permitting the People to sit for the first nine Collects appears to contradict the direction of Liber XV at the end of the Ceremony of the Rending of the Veil, it justifies the direction preceding the Death Collect, and generally makes the Mass more palatable to the People.
- 8 The People must stand for Death and The End, with “head erect, eyes open,” as instructed in Liber XV.
- 9 After the final “So mote it be” of the Collects, the People may sit for the entire Consecration of the Elements.
- 10 The People should stand for the entire Anthem—including the Priest’s opening solo, if the Anthem from Liber XV is used. They remain standing for the Mystic Marriage and Consummation of the Elements until after replying to the Priest’s declaration of the Law.
- 11 When the Priest turns back to the East to communicate, the People may sit except as they are marshalled for Communion. They must stand once more to exit the temple, but the Deacon has departed to the Tomb, and cannot provide this direction.

When prompting the People to stand or sit, it is entirely appropriate for the Deacon to issue brief and polite verbal instruction during the ritual. In general, however, simple hand gestures (palm up to stand, palm down to sit) are sufficient to get the point across. They also distract less attention from the ceremony.

Steps and Signs

Observant Deacons will have noticed that several of the steps and signs made by the People and the Priest during the Mass are formal secrets of O.T.O. Degrees. But those versions of the signs are not for use in Masses where all attending are not initiates of III° O.T.O. Instead, the signs used are the ones that were current in O.T.O. when Crowley composed the Gnostic Mass, and before he revised the initiations. These signs are not “blinds.” They are the signs that were originally written into the Mass, and since they are no longer current Degree material, they are eligible for use in public ritual. Descriptions of the signs used by the Deacon and the People follow.

Dieu Garde

Stand perfectly erect, your feet formed into a square (left foot pointing forward, right foot pointing right with the right heel in the hollow of the left foot). Hands, with linked thumbs, are held loosely.

The Step and Sign of a Man and a Brother

This is the old step and sign corresponding to the current I° gesture. Stand in the *Dieu Garde*. Take a short pace with your left foot, bringing the right heel into its hollow; i.e. move your left foot, and then your right foot. The sign is given with hands held open, fingers together. Place your right hand level, with the thumb extended in a square towards the throat, just left of the windpipe. Draw the hand smartly across the throat to the right, and drop it to the side.

The Hailing Sign of a Magician

This is the old sign corresponding to the current II° sign. Hands are held open, fingers together. Press the right hand on the left breast, extending the thumb perpendicularly upward to form a square. Throw the left hand up, with the left arm horizontal from the shoulder to the elbow, and perpendicular from the elbow to the ends of the fingers, with the thumb and forefinger forming a square.

The Flame

During the Ceremony of the Rending of the Veil, the Deacon, Children, and People “kneel in adoration, their hands joined palm to palm, and raised above their heads.” Each adorant thereby assumes the form of the letter *yod*, with the Deacon and Children forming a *shin* in the middle of the temple.

Striking the Breast

The People are to imitate the Priest’s striking of his breast during the Consecration of the Elements. The Deacon may facilitate the cue by holding out her fist visibly in anticipation of the Priest’s action.

The Attitude of Resurrection

The Priest and the People communicate in an attitude of resurrection, i.e. the sign of Osiris Risen, or the Blazing Star, with the arms crossed over the breast. This posture is also the one assigned to the Children when their hands are not occupied. The instruction to the Children may also refer to the Deacon, but the reference of the pronoun “these” (at the Priest’s circumambulations in section IV of Liber XV) is ambiguous. An equally justified reading of the text would have the Deacon stand in the *Dieu Garde* when not otherwise engaged.

Marshalling for Communion

The Deacon is assigned the task of marshalling the People for Communion. To marshal in this case means simply to usher or guide them to the Shrine. The most important aspect of this job is determining the sequence of communicants so that no awkwardness results from simultaneous attempts to approach the East.

Ideally, the People should approach the East and return to their seats in a deosil circulation around the altar of incense and the font. For ease of traffic management, then, the sequence of communicants may run widdershins around the temple, beginning with those seated closest to the East on the northern side of the temple.

It is not necessary to approach the East with the communicant, only to send them on their way to the Shrine at the appropriate time. When the number of People is fairly small, the Deacon may be able to issue all the marshalling instructions from her station at the altar of incense. The other principal alternative is for the Deacon to move around the temple, tapping each communicant at close hand.

Preferences of the Priest and Priestess will be likely to effect the method of marshalling the People. Liber XV does not specify the position of the Priest during Communion, but it is common practice for the Priest to stand at his station in the West.

Especially when the People are numerous, the Deacon has the responsibility of avoiding delays between communicants. Each communicant (after the first) should be set moving towards the shrine as soon as the previous one has completed the declaration.

Leading the Creed

The Creed is of primary importance in the People's participation in the Mass. The chapter "Of Dramatic Rituals" in *Liber ABA* instructs that

One of the great advantages of [dramatic rituals] is that a large number of persons may take part, so that there is consequently more force available; but it is important that they should all be in harmony. It is well therefore that they should all be initiates of the same mysteries, bound by the same oaths, and filled with the same aspirations.

The People's recital of the Creed is the means by which that conscious harmony is affirmed. It is also an instrument by which unconscious rapport can be developed among the People. The Deacon's leadership of the Creed ensures his inclusion in that rapport. This leadership is also vital to the pragmatics of each of the three sequential sections of the Creed's ritual recitation: the step and sign, the eight articles, and the triple pranava.

The step and sign of a Man and a Brother signifies that the People are entitled to the Mysteries associated with the I° of O.T.O., which addresses the phenomenon of Birth. In the ecclesiastical context, it refers to baptism, i.e. birth into the community of the Church. But, since not all of the People at a Mass will necessarily be I° initiates or baptized members of E.G.C., they will not necessarily consciously appreciate those aspects of the gesture. The assumption of the same posture by everyone in the room creates unconscious rapport through the medium of attention to physical sensation. This kinaesthetic impression is elaborated and made more specific through the sign, which encourages the People to feel the impact of an imagined weapon on their throats.

The Deacon should take care to give all of the People sufficient time to complete the step and sign before proceeding to the eight articles of the Creed. Ideally, the sign is given in the fashion of a salute: the Deacon leads by making the sign, but she does not complete it by dropping her hand until all of the People have made the sign, and they in turn do not drop their hands until the Deacon does. This manner of making the sign only works if all of the congregants are accustomed to the ritual, however.

The eight articles of the Creed set forth a series of beliefs and confessions to which the People subscribe. Several of the articles, those pertaining to CHAOS, BABALON, BAPHOMET, and the Saints, may include an intention and/or effect of invocation. The Deacon must lead all eight articles at a reasonable pace, with a loud voice and clear diction, so that regardless of the recitals of individual congregants, all of the People will be able to hear the Creed spoken in time with their own pronouncement of it.

The inherent structure of the phrases and articles of the Creed tends to synchronize the breathing of the People—a process which culminates with the triple pranava at its end. Each AUMGN should consist of a slow, full breath. The

Deacon must leave ample time before each one for inhalation, and the AUMGN itself should be as long as is comfortable. It is important to avoid prolonging the vibration past the limit of the greater part of the People. The power of synchronized breathing to integrate the awareness of the People is remarkable.

Properly pronounced, the pranava travels through all of the vocal resonators from the diaphragm to the sinuses. This upward gesture of pure vibration answers and complements the sign of a Man and a Brother, which targets the midpoint of that series of resonators. It is a physical demonstration of the People's aspiration that is answered by the appearance of the Priestess.

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

Liber CCXX—The Book of the Law

Liber IV, Part III

Chapter VII of this portion of *Magick* contains a discussion of the formula of AUMGN. Deacons will also want to review Chapter V on the formula of IAO.

Liber CCCXXXIII-The Book of Lies

Chapters 20 and 32 relate to the practical business of leading the People. Chapters 49 and 33 relate to the second and third articles of the Creed.

Liber CLVI—Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni

A holy book pertaining to the second article of the Creed.

Liber CDXVIII—The Vision and the Voice

This text contains much information relevant to the Creed.

Mystery of Mystery by Apiryon Ep. Gn. and Helena Ep. Gn.

The chapters "The Creed of the Gnostic Catholic Church: An Examination" and "Gestures Used in the Gnostic Mass" relate to the specified aspects of the Deacon's leadership of the People.

DIRECTION OF THE CHILDREN

The Gnostic Mass requires five officers for full performance. Unfortunately, due to shortages of temple space and/or ritualists, it is often performed with only three. This necessitates changes in the role of the Deacon, which will be addressed at the end of this essay. Certainly, the essential formula of the Mass can be enacted by the three “adult” officers without further assistance. But a Deacon with a thorough understanding of the Mass will see more in the participation of the Children than convenient assistants.

The official missal of the Mass, *Liber XV*, specifies the participation of “Two CHILDREN. Clothed in white and black.” So these offices in the Mass are generally referred to as the “Children,” regardless of the maturity of those filling the offices. In fact, however, these roles were written so that they could be performed by Children. No speaking is required of them, and they are always in a position to be directed by one of the other officers, if necessary. Note that Priest, Priestess, and Deacon are all offices which may carry the status of ordination. This is definitely not true of the “Children.”

In fact, it is most appropriate for anyone who has been baptized in the Church to participate as a Child in the Mass before they seek confirmation. Children do not recite the Creed (which confirmands are expected to have memorized), nor do they make the various signs of the Church and/or Order called for from the People in *Liber XV*. But they have an “inside” perspective on the ritual that should give them further insight in their consideration of confirmation. Since the Church only baptizes those past the age of puberty, all Children following this schedule would be adults.

The technical term for these officers—which Baphomet XI^o somehow avoided in his composition of the missal—is “acolyte.” This term is from Greek roots signifying “following in the path.” The designation is therefore both literally and figuratively true of the “Children” roles of the Mass. It is common practice for would-be Priests and Priestesses to serve as acolytes in the Mass as part of their training, since the Children are in a position to see many of the details of consecration, consummation, k.t.l. that are obscured from the People by distance or interposed bodies.

Other traditional titles that might be applied to these offices stem from the classical mysteries of Eleusis. In the Greater Mysteries, which were rites of individual initiation (unlike the pageant of the Lesser Mysteries), there were three officers: the Hierophant, Stolistes, and Dadouchos. “Hierophant” means “revealer of the sacred” and the original Greek *ierophantes* has the value of 1101. The Deacon as the bearer of *The Book of the Law* fulfills this role. The torchbearer in the Eleusinian ritual was known as the Dadouchos (Greek value of 1209). Clearly, this role is in accord with the acolyte in the Gnostic Mass who bears the censer and is known as the Positive Child. The Stolistes (895), unsurprisingly, bore a bowl of water. The Negative Child with the ewer and salt

corresponds neatly. The communicants (Priest and People) of the Mass fill the role of the candidate in the mysteries. Note that the word “candidate” originally meant “clothed in white,” as the Priest is at his first appearance in the Mass.

In the Eleusinian mysteries, the obvious polarity of the Stolistes and Dadouchos was associated with the moon and the sun. This suggests the traditional alchemical formulae, and through them the tableau (with Children) in the “Lovers” trump of the Thoth tarot. The Deacon in that image is the towering angel Aiwass/Hermes, presiding over the union of the Priest and Priestess.

There are many other ways to interpret that polarity, usually referred to as “positive and negative” in connection with the Mass acolytes. The Positive Child is the *yang* principle, while the Negative is the *yin*. This obvious correspondence opens the floodgates of Oriental metaphysical dualism.

It is common to assign the acolytes in the Mass by gender, with a masculine Positive Child, and a feminine Negative Child. It would be a mistake to become doctrinaire about such gendering. “For he is ever a sun and she a moon, but to him is the winged secret flame and to her the stooping starlight. But ye are not so chosen.” (AL I:16-17) “Countercharged” acolytes, as well as pairs of like gender work quite well.

Symbolically, the acolytes may be seen as siblings. Two male Children might be Set (negative) and Horus (positive). Two female Children might be Isis (positive) and Nephthys (negative). Assuming god-forms is an especially rewarding magical project for these speechless roles.

The Children may be seen as the two versions of the child Horus: Hoor-pa-kraat, the babe in the lotus (Negative), and Ra-hoor-khuit, the Crowned and Conquering Child (Positive). The Deacon would then be Heru-ra-ha, their adult synthesis.

If the Deacon is considered as mercurial (with his Book and bell) rather than solar, the Children may be thought of as Din and Doni. These two spirits of Mercury illustrate the essential doubling and duplicity of thought expressed through language. Thus the Children, while not speaking at all, symbolically represent the meaning and countermeaning inherent in the Deacon’s principal pronouncements—the Collects. The Positive Child is “Truth,” or the meaning manifested by the Word; and the Negative Child is “Lie,” or the meaning hidden by the Word. An analogous reading would be the Ape of Thoth made duplex.

A simple qabalistic reading of the acolytes attributes them to the pillars of Severity (negative) and Mercy (positive). In fact, when not in procession with the other officers, the only paths that must be walked by the acolytes are those pillars, if the temple floor is viewed as a Tree with Kether in the East. The Negative Child moves east and west on the north side of the temple. The Positive Child moves east and west on the south side of the temple. The middle pillar, or pillar of Mildness, could be attributed to the Deacon.

When the acolytes first enter the temple, they do so in the company of the Priestess. The Stolistes or Negative Child leads, and the Dadouchos or Positive Child follows the Priestess. Regardless of the point of their entrance to the temple, they must proceed in a widdershins manner to “the space between the two altars” (i.e. high altar and altar of incense). Not only does this reflect a lunar energy borne by the Priestess, but it places the Dadouchos in the pillar of Mercy and the stolistes in the pillar of Severity. Also, it fulfills the subsequent instruction that when the Priestess turns and ascends to the high altar, “the Positive Child [is] on her right.”

The Children follow the Priestess through her serpentine travels, with the Positive ahead of the Negative Child. This order primarily reflects the prior placement of the Children and the direction of the path of the Priestess.

During the time that the Priestess is enlivening and consecrating the Priest, the Children may flank the Tomb, each in their respective pillar. Though it is tempting for the acolytes to linger to the east of the Priestess, and thus closer to the font and the altar of incense where their implements are needed; putting them in the West clears the central space for movement of officers and perception of the People. Each acolyte in turn gives his implements to the Priestess, and then resumes them when she has dedicated and used them.

The acolytes follow the Priest and Priestess to the East and provide their implements to the Priest for his work in enthroning the Priestess. As soon as he is finished with the tools, the Children simultaneously take them to the altar of incense and the font, and return to the dais. Then they follow the Priest in his triple circumambulation of the temple, this time with the Deacon as well.

Note that the Children are directed, when not carrying implements or making the “flame,” to stand with their arms crossed upon their breasts. This sign is also the “attitude of Resurrection” assumed by the People on concluding their communion at the high altar with the words “There is no part of me that is not of the gods.” There is an artful reference here to the nature of childhood in regard to magick and spirituality.

As the People communicate, they are offered the elements by the acolytes. The Positive Child presents the Paten with the Cakes of Light, and the Negative Child gives a goblet of wine to each communicant. At this point, the fire and water polarity of the Children has been elevated to a solar/lunar polarity. The Paten represents the Sun and the Graal is the Moon.

The Children are the last visible officers of the Mass, entering the Tomb after the Priest and Deacon. Their retreat can be made along their “pillars”—westward on their respective sides of the temple. Their vanishing upon convergence at the Tomb is thus illustrative of the $0 = 2$ formula and the mutual annihilation of opposites in love.

The Children do not communicate in the Mass. There is a special mechanism of *gnosis* operating during the communication of the People, however, to which only the acolytes are entitled. Throughout the Mass, the acolytes may cultivate in themselves an awe of and reverence for the “adult” officers of the Mass. Psychologically, this is augmented by the silence of the Children and their repeated trailing of the other officers. Physiologically, it may be further stimulated by deliberate relaxation of the facial muscles, even to the point of letting the lips separate, as well as staring at the officers. In the final three ceremonies of the Mass, this adoration will be naturally focused on the Priest before the high altar. By the time the People communicate, this state of the acolytes can amount to a free-standing function directed at the approach to the Priestess. The Children are consequently in a unique position to *directly perceive* the inherent divinity of each communicant.

Throughout the Mass, the Children are subject to direction from the other officers. Any occasion for the Deacon to correct or prompt the Children can be addressed with calm gestures or quiet verbal instruction.

Training Children

One of the important features of the acolyte roles is the fact that they are not demanding in terms of ritual technique or theological expertise. It is possible (though not quite ideal) to recruit Children a half hour before the start of Mass. If they have attended Mass but never served as Children before, they should still be able to do so with a ten-minute orientation from the Deacon.

Children just beginning work with the roles do not need to be burdened with a lot of the theoretical material discussed in this essay. They should be made aware that they will have “the best seats in the house,” and told that they have no lines to learn and that the Deacon will be able to give them instruction during the ritual if they require it.

A simple “walk-through” is usually sufficient to give the Children the information they need to perform the ritual. The Deacon can pretend to be the Priestess and walk the acolytes through the Introit. Then, as Deacon, he can walk them through the remainder of the Mass. Without words, and basically skipping the Collects, Consecration of the Elements, and Anthem (when the Children are merely privileged observers), the whole walk-through takes only about five minutes.

Of course, it is preferable to expose Children to a separate and full rehearsal of the Mass before they serve for the first time. In that case, an extra discussion with the Deacon can provide them with a little more symbolic understanding of the ceremony, once they have the ritual experience to contextualize it.

Mass without Children

Sometimes Children will be simply unavailable, or the presiding clergy may decide to forgo them for reasons of circumstance. In that case, the Deacon will have to adjust to “pick up the slack.” The temple will be set differently, to have the Children’s implements already present on the altar and font at the beginning of Mass. The two points in the ritual where the Deacon will have to take different or additional action are during the other officers’ use of the water and censer, and during Communion.

In a Mass without Children, the Deacon will need to deliver the water and the censer to the Priest during the first part of the Ceremony of the Opening of the Veil. The Priestess may also want some assistance with them in the Ceremony of the Introit. Such points should be carefully established among the officers before the Mass.

If there are no Children to serve Communion, it is highly desirable to have a Communion “server” who can assist the Priestess in presenting the elements to the People. In an extreme case, it is possible to have the Deacon take this role. In that case, the Deacon’s preamble will need to offer a whole set of advisories to the People, namely: a) that the Mass varies from Liber XV in eliminating the Children, and, b) that the People will need to marshal themselves for Communion; and c) and how the People should marshal themselves.

It is physically possible, but symbolically inadvisable, for the Priest to assist with or instead of the Deacon in the service of Communion. At any rate, the judgment of the Priest and Priestess will determine how the elements are handled in such a case.

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

Liber CXI—The Book of Wisdom or Folly

Pages 36-42 treat of the Mysteries of Thelemic pedagogy.

THE CALENDAR

Crowley's commentary on the significance of the Calendar (*CCXX II:34-43*) is reproduced here:

We are not to calculate, to argue, to criticize; these things lead to division of will and to stagnation. They are shackles of our going. They hamstring our Pegasus. We are to rise up, to go, to love; we are to be awake, alert:

Joyous and eager, Our tresses adorning,
O let us beleaguer the City of Morning.

The secret of magick is to "enflame oneself in praying." This is the ready test of a star, that it whirls, flaming, through the sky. You cannot mistake it for an old maid objecting to everything. This universe is a wild revel of atoms, men, and stars, each one a soul of light and mirth, horsed on eternity.

Observe that we must "rise up" before we "awake!" Aspiration to the Higher is a dream—a wish-fulfillment which remains a phantasm to wheedle us away from seeking reality—unless we follow it up by action. Only then do we become fully aware of ourselves, and enter into right reaction with the world in which we live.

A ritual is not a melancholy formality; it is a sacrament, a dance, a commemoration of the universe. The universe is endless rapture, wild and unconfined, a mad passion of speed. Astronomers tell us this of the Great Republic of Stars, physicists say the same of the Little Republic of Molecules. Shall not the Middle Republic of Men be like unto them? The polite ethicist demurs; his ideal in funereal solemnity. His horizon is bounded by death; and his spy-glass is smeared with the idea of sin. The New Aeon proclaims Man as Immortal God, eternally active to do His Will. All's joy, all's beauty; this Will we celebrate.

In this verse we see how awakening leads to ordered and purposeful action. Joy and beauty are the evidence that our functions are free and fit; when we take no pleasure, find nothing to admire, in our work, we are doing it wrong.

Each element—Fire, Earth, Air, Water, and Spirit—possesses its own nature, will, and magical formula. Each one may then have its appropriate ritual. Many such in crude form are described in *The Golden Bough* of Dr. J.G. Frazer, the *Glory of Trinity*!

In particular the entry of the sun into the cardinal signs of the elements at the equinoxes and solstices are suitable for festivals.

The difference between "rituals" and "feasts" is this: by the one a particular form of energy is generated, while there is a general discharge of one's superfluous force in the other. Yet a feast implies periodical nourishment.

["the first night"] There should be a special feast on the twelfth of August in every year, since it was the marriage of the Beast which made possible the revelation of the New Law. . .

["the three days"] This is April 8th, 9th and 10th, the feast beginning at high noon.

["Tahuti and the child"] This particular feast is of a character suited only to initiates.

The supreme ritual is the Invocation of Horus, which brought about the opening of the New Aeon. The date is March 20.

The Equinox of the Gods is the term used to describe the beginning of a new aeon, or a new magical formula. It should be celebrated at every equinox, in the manner known to Neophytes of the A.:A.:.

The feasts of fire and water indicate rejoicings to be made at the puberty of boys and girls respectively.

The feast for life is at a birth; and the feast for death at a death. It is of the utmost importance to make funerals merry, so as to train people to take the proper view of death. The fear of death is one of the great weapons of tyrants, as well as their scourge; and it distorts our whole outlook upon the universe.

["every day"] To him who realizes Hadit this text needs little comment. It is wondrous, this joy of awakening every morning to the truth of one's immortal energy and rapture.

["every night"] To sleep is to return, in a sense, to the bosom of Nuit. But there is to be a particular act of worship of Our Lady, as ye well wot.

[Pestilential Deacons who are interested in exchanging personal interpretations of these verses with the present author may write to him at Circle of Stars Sanctuary c/o Scarlet Woman Lodge.]

Reciting the Calendar

"Rise up & awake!" While the instruction for the People to stand falls before the first word of the Calendar in Liber XV, most Deacons and congregations find it more gratifying to stand with this command from the Deacon, rather than in anticipation of it. The hailing sign here, like the sign of a Man and a Brother, is in the nature of a salute. The Deacon should pause before continuing and wait for all of the People to return the sign.

During the Creed, the Deacon pointed the way into the depths of Mystery. With her recital of the Calendar, the Deacon enjoins the People to join her in surface presence, pulling them out of the depths of interstellar space and the secret place where there is no god. This task can be difficult, because of the

different congregants will react to the Priest and Priestess' invocations variously, involving themselves in different types of consciousness. This variety depends on whether they identify in each invocation with the speaker, the addressee, or a third party, and to what degree they immerse themselves in the identification, as well as the structural idiosyncracies of their consciousness. Getting the People to stand and return the hailing sign will throw the ladder down to them, but it will usually not suffice to bring them up to surface presence.

Because of the challenge involved with bringing the People to the surface during this speech, the Calendar must be totally and unconsciously memorized. Any need for the Deacon to become conscious of her words and refer to a copy of the text—on paper or in her mind—will distract her from the work of immediate communication with the People. Instead of on the words, the Deacon's attention must be on the People and the task of giving them whatever stimuli they need to find their way to surface presence in the temple. Those stimuli cannot come in the form of verbal content, which is circumscribed by the Canon of the Mass. But the Deacon has a wide range of tools available, including vocal tone and emphasis, eye contact, and gesture.

A vocal tone that contrasts with the tone used in the preceding speech of the Priest can be helpful. The best tone to use is probably the same one used in the Deacon's preamble. The People were most likely to have had surface presence during the preamble, when they needed to be alert to the Deacon's instructions, and had not yet become involved in the atmosphere of the temple. Bringing that tone back to the People can bring them back to the state that they were in when they heard it last.

Eye contact is most useful to gauge the success of the Calendar in bringing the People to the surface. Failure to return eye contact and pupil dilation are both good signs that People are still pretty deep. But eye contact can also be employed in conjunction with verbal emphasis, to relay the subverbal message, "Hey, I'm talking to you!"

Gestures of all sorts can be useful in alerting the People. One especially convenient one is to make a great overhead sweep of the hand for the "feast every night unto Nu." Besides indicating the arch of heaven, this gesture has a tendency to dislodge imagined creatures that may be occupying the upper part of the People's visual fields. The variety of gesture is only limited by the ingenuity of the Deacon. Percussive gestures can be used: a clap of the hands right after "a greater feast for death!" is likely to snag the attention of anyone who hasn't yet made it to the surface.

The surface presence of the People is needed in order to reunite them from their separate depths. The preceding invocations of the Priest and Priestess have a tendency to orient each congregant to her own stellar orbit. The Deacon's recital of the Collects brings everyone together in the temple for the Priest's

final invocation before the Veil: an invocation voiced on behalf of the whole congregation to “our Lord in the Universe the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery”—an invocation which makes of the entire congregation a greater Lance, the tip of which is the Priest, poised to fling open the Veil.

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

Liber CCXX—The Book of the Law

Liber IV, Part IV—The Equinox of the Gods

Liber CXI—The Book of Wisdom or Folly

Pages 16 and 113, “On Discipline” and “On the Ceremony of the Equinox,” are relevant.

Liber CCCXXXIII—The Book of Lies

Chapter 43 “Mulberry Tops” is a commentary on part of the Calendar.

The Law is for All by Aleister Crowley

The more concise edition of Crowley’s commentaries on the Law has been issued by New Falcon under the editorship of Louis Wilkinson and Hymenaeus Beta. But the Regardie edition is still useful.

THE COLLECTS

The heart of heaven beams forth life and bliss
As worlds are hidden in the serpent's coil.
The horns of mortal change, 'twixt which there is
A gate of love, are turned towards the soil.
Brood of the snake! Droop down your heads and shoot
Forth venom's ice into the steaming earth.
There germinates the secret branching root
That surfaces in green and vital birth
Of stems uplifting leaves and fragrant blooms.
The final fruits lie rotting on the ground;
And far beyond the tombs, the kings are crowned.

“Collect” is actually an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *oratio ad collectam*, meaning “prayer upon assembly.” In Christian ceremony, the collect is usually varied according to the calendar, and precedes the Eucharistic epistle. Liber XV prescribes a set of eleven Collects for use at all Masses, and they are generally recited as a set. The E.G.C. Collects do individually conform to the standard structure of a Christian collect, however.

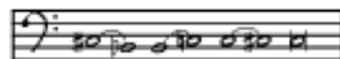
Each Collect contains an invocation, followed by a petition, and finishes with a conclusion. The invocation is a description of the Collect's object (The Sun, The Lord, &c.) with the intention of provoking the manifestation of its influence, e.g. for The Moon:

Lady of night, that turning ever about us art now visible and now
invisible in thy season,

The petition consists of a request that the force invoked produce a certain effect:

be thou favorable to hunters, and lovers, and to all men that toil upon
the earth, and to all mariners upon the sea.

The conclusion of each of the eleven Collects is the People's response of “So mote it be.” An audio recording of Crowley reciting the first four



So mote it be.

Collects gives a tune for incanting the response, which is reproduced at right. It is fairly simple and easy for the People to pick up. There is certainly no need to use a tune, although it does seem to add a richness to the Collects. An ambitious Deacon could play cantor and chant the actual Collects.

Perhaps during the Collects, and certainly just before beginning them, the Deacon will want to heap a good amount of incense onto the censer. The burning incense “thickens” the atmosphere of the temple for the eleven orisons, and it is “symbolical of prayer, the gross vehicle or image of. . . aspiration.” (*Magick*, p. 114)

Unless the People are all Deacons themselves, some sort of gesture will be needed to provoke each Collect's conclusion. A light rap on the altar of incense would certainly suffice. Placing the hands palm-to-palm at the level of the heart seems to work nicely as well. The hailing sign has been used for this purpose, but not without some confusion, as the People tend to make the sign sporadically in reply.

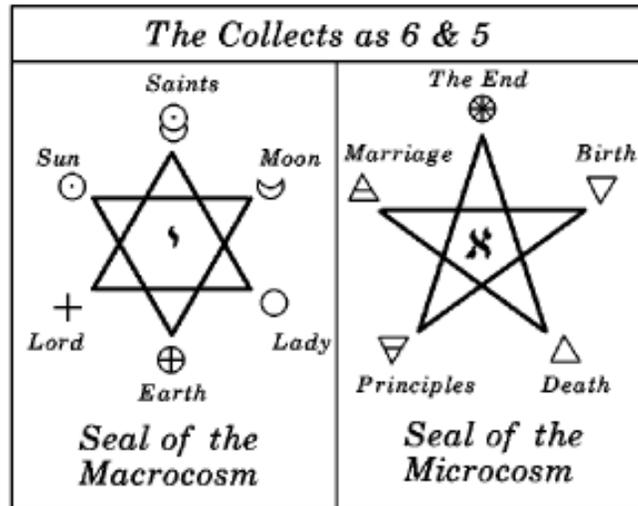
Surface presence is required of the Deacon throughout the Mass with one exception, or rather eleven. The otherwise constant demand for surface presence from the Deacon is balanced at the center of the ritual by his recital of the Collects, during which he can go quite deep indeed. Many Deacons take advantage of this fact by reading the Collects from a missal. Since surface presence is unnecessary for the Collects, reading them off of the page is a viable option if it is acceptable to the presiding clergy.

The arrangement of the eleven collects lends itself to subgroupings. Pairs are clearly suggested: the Lord and Lady, Sun and Moon, Saints and Earth, Sun and Lord, Moon and Lady, Birth and Death, etc. In some cases, they appear to fall into a group of three, such as Sun, Moon and Earth. Deacons should spend some time meditating on the interrelationship of the Collects and the various categories into which they can be divided. This practice will also tend to lead to the discovery or development of correspondences.

Tau Apiryon has indicated that the first seven can be considered as Universal, and the last four as Occasional Collects, with various attributions as shown in this table:

Universal Collects	Tetragrammaton	Occasional Collects	Pranava	O.T.O
The Sun	<i>Yod</i>	Birth	A	I°
The Lord				
The Moon	<i>Heh</i>	Marriage	U	II°
The Lady				
The Saints	<i>Vau</i>	Death	M	III°
The Earth	<i>heh</i> (final)	The End	GN	IV°
The Principles				

Here is another method of grouping the Collects:



Trochilics

Liber XV does not specify which direction to face or where to stand while intoning the Collects. Common practice seems to be for the Deacon to face East from just behind the altar of incense for all eleven. But variations from this practice are certainly possible. An elaborate system of “trochilics” has been used effectively, so that the Deacon turns to face some abstract or concrete reference to the topic of each Collect.

THE SUN: Turn deasil from the East to face the actual direction of the Sun at the time of the Mass: South at noon, West at dusk, North at midnight, etc.

THE LORD: Complete the deasil turn back to the East to face the Priest and the Lance.

THE MOON: Turn widdershins from the East to face the actual direction of the Moon. The direction of the new Moon coincides with that of the Sun. One week later (first quarter Moon) she is 90° east of the Sun, i.e. East at noon, South at sunset, West at midnight, and North at dawn. The full Moon is opposite the Sun. And the third quarter Moon is 90° west of the Sun.

THE LADY: Complete the widdershins turn back to the East to face the Priestess and the Graal.

THE SAINTS: Remain facing East, to project the crosses signed towards the Priest.

THE EARTH: Remain facing East and the High Altar, i.e. “the summit of the Earth.”

THE PRINCIPLES: Turn deosil to face North, for the position of the Sun at midnight—the latent principles underlying existence.

BIRTH: Turn deosil to face East for the position of the Sun at dawn—the appearance of the source of life.

MARRIAGE: Turn deosil to face South for the position of the Sun at noon—station of Hathoor, goddess of love.

DEATH: Turn deosil to face West and the Tomb.

THE END: Complete the cycle with a deosil turn towards the North for the final Collect, through “the accomplishment of their wills,” concluding with a deosil turn to the East for the pranava.

One reason that Deacons tend to stay put during the Collects is their need to refer to the missal resting on the altar of incense. While it is usually acceptable for the Deacon to use a missal for the Collects, there are more reasons to be free of it than trochilics. Since the Collects are the Deacon’s great opportunity to abandon surface presence and exercise some consciousness, it seems a shame to waste that consciousness on the act of reading. If the Collects are memorized, the Deacon can form full visualizations of their objects as he addresses them; he can engage the words on more levels and with more enthusiasm; he can have his hands free to draw appropriate figures and letters in the air; there are hardly any bounds to the elaborations in consciousness that the Collects may inspire.

At the very least, every Deacon should have the sequence of the Collects memorized. After that, the next priority, dreadful as it seems, is memorization of The Saints. During The Saints, the Deacon is supposed to be drawing crosses and projecting them at the base of the Priest’s spine. If the Deacon’s attention is divided between the missal and the base of the Priest’s spine, this operation tends to be inefficient or ineffective. And once The Saints Collect is memorized, the others are comparatively effortless to learn.

The historical Saints given in Liber XV are a fascinating array of individuals whose biographies all amply repay study. The short list of Saints has 22 names and the full list has 78. Assigning these to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the full deck of 78 tarot cards is an exercise best left to the individual Deacon. At any rate, 22 is twice eleven, and 78 is the value of MZLA, the influence from Kether. The following page gives a phonetic key to the names of the Saints. The CAPITALIZED syllable receives the stress in each name.

Lao-tzu: LAU (like *cow*)-dzuh

Siddhartha: Sid-AHR-tah

Krsna: KREESH-nah

Tahuti: Tah-HOO-tee

Mosheh: MOH-shay

Dionysus: DI-uh-NI-sus

Mohammed: Moh-HAH-mehd
 To Mega Therion: Toh MEH-gah THEH-ree-ohn
 Hermes: HER-meez
 Pan: PAN
 Priapus: Prye-APE-us
 Osiris: Oh-SYE-rus
 Melchizedek: Mell-KEE-zuh-dek
 Khem: Khem
 Amoun: Ah-MOON
 Mentu: MAHN-too
 Heracles: HAIR-uh-kleez
 Orpheus: OR-fee-us
 Odysseus: Oh-DIS-see-us
 Vergilius: Vur-GIL-lee-us
 Catullus: Kah-TOOL (like *wool*)-us
 Martialis: MAR-shee-AHL-iss
 Rabelais: Rah-blaiy
 Swinburne: SWIN-burn
 Apollonius Tyanaeus: Ap-poh-LOHN-ee-us TEE-uh-nee-us
 Simon Magus: SIGH-mun MAY-gus
 Manes: MAH-neeZ
 Pythagoras: Pih-THAG-or-us
 Basilides: Buh-SILL-id-eez
 Valentinus: VAL-un-TINE-us
 Bardesanes: BAR-duh-SAHN-eez
 Hippolytus: Hip-PAHL-it-us
 Merlin: MUR-lin
 Arthur: AHR-thur
 Kamuret: GA-moo-ray
 Parzival: PAR-tsif-ahl
 Carolus Magnus: KAHR-oh-lus MAHG-nus
 William of Schyren: WILL-yuhm uhv SHEER-en
 Frederick of Hohenstaufen: FRED-uh-rik uhv HOH-en-STAU (like *cow*)-fen
 Roger Bacon: RAH-jeer BAY-kun
 Jacobus Burgundus Molensis: YAH-koh-bus Bur-GUHN-dus Moh-LEN-sis
 Christian Rosenkreutz: KRIS-tee-ahn ROH-zen-kroits
 Ulrich von Hutten: OOL-rikh fohn HOO-ten
 Paracelsus: PAIR-uh-sell-suss
 Michael Maier: MIKE-uhl MYE-ur
 Roderic Borgia: RAHD-er-ik BOR-zhah
 Jacob Boehme: YAH-kohb BAY-muh
 Francis Bacon Lord Verulam: FRAN-sis BAY-kun Lord VER-oo-lahm
 Andrea: Ahn-DRAY-uh Robertus de Fluctibus: Ro-BARE-tus day FLUK-ti-bus
 Johannes Dee: Yoh-HAHN-es DEE
 Edward Kelly: ED-wurd KELL-ee

Thomas Vaughan: TAHM-us VAWN
Elias Ashmole: Ill-EYE-us ASH-mohl
Molinos: MOHL-ee-nohs
Adam Weishaupt: AH-duhm VICE-haupt
Wolfgang von Goethe: VOHLF-gahng fohn GAY-tuh
Ludovicus Rex Bavariae: Loo-doh-VEE-kus RECKS Ba-VAHR-ee-ay
Richard Wagner: REE-khard VAHG-ner
Alphonse Louis Constant: Ahl-Fohnss Loo-ee Kohn-stahnt
Friedrich Nietzsche: FREED-rikh NEE-tschuh
Hargrave Jennings: HAR-grave JEN-ings
Carl Kellner: KARL KELL-ner
Forlong dux: FOR-long dooks (like *books*)
Richard Francis Burton: RICH-uhrd FRAN-sis BUR-tun
Richard Payne Knight: RICH-uhrd PAIN NITE
Paul Gaugin: Pohl Goh-gan
Docteur Gerard Encausse: Dok-tuhr Zha-rahrd On-kohss
Theodor Reuss: TAY-oh-dor ROYSS
Aleister Crowley: AL-iss-tuhr CROW-lee

Suggestions for Study

Liber XV—The Canon of the Mass

Liber CVI—Concerning Death

This epistle is reprinted from *The International* in *The Equinox* III (10).

Liber XCI—The Book of Wisdom or Folly

Pages 67-75 treat divine Poets as a class, and several of the Saints as individuals.

Liber CCCXXXIII—The Book of Lies

Chapter 7 “The Dinosaurs” relates to the Saints.

The Heart of the Master by Khaled Khan (Aleister Crowley)

Part III, “The Temple of Truth” relates to the Saints.

Mystery of Mystery by Apiryon Ep. Gn. and Helena Ep. Gn.

The third and final section of this text contains short biographies for each and every one of the Saints listed in Liber XV, and even adds four more who were canonized by Reuss.

Ophiuchus, various numbers

This journal issued by Sekhet-Bast-Ra Lodge frequently features articles of scholarship relating to the Saints, a favorite topic of research for that Lodge.

MISCELLANEOUS INNOVATIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

Banishing

There is a strong tradition of banishing during the Mass. Typically, the Deacon will banish with a pentagram ritual after admitting the People and before bringing *The Book of the Law* to the high altar. Many members of E.G.C. who take on ritual responsibilities are ceremonial magicians, and it is only natural that they should bring their ceremonial habits to Church ritual.

But a pentagram banishing is unnecessary, and perhaps inappropriate during the Mass.

The Mass is a dramatic ritual. Dramatic ritual is of another order than ceremonial work, although it often applies ceremonial means to its ends. The Mass in Liber XV is composed of six distinct ceremonies that work in combination to produce the desired effect. The structure of the first portion of the Ceremony of the Introit corresponds rather neatly to a lesser pentagram banishing:

Banishing	Ceremony of the Introit
Qabalistic Cross	Display of the Law and Salutary Exchange
God Names at the Quarters	The Creed, articles one through four: CHAOS, BABALON, BAPHOMET, & THELEMA
Recognition of "Guardians"	The Creed, articles five through eight: Saints, Mass, Baptism, and Life
Qabalistic Cross	Triple AUMGN

A banishing is not specified in Liber XV. Certainly a banishing of any sort prior to the admission of the People to the temple is a suitable and helpful action, contributing to the spiritual preparation of the Deacon and the space. It is especially desirable when a new temple space is being used for the first time. But placing it amidst the explicitly delineated motions of the Ceremony of the Introit could be seen as an interruption of the process.

Oral tradition indicates that certain Thelemic rituals are of a nature that precluded banishing after the ceremony. Two rituals specifically indicated are the Mark of the Beast (from Liber V) and the Gnostic Mass. The reason given is that these rituals particularly are intended to foster the spread of the magick force of the Aeon of Horus through the world at large. The Mass does so through a eucharistic process, i.e. it converts the mundane into the divine. The Creed defines "the Miracle of the Mass" as the process by which "meat and drink are transmuted. . . into spiritual substance." The Mass can transmute the psychic debris of the Old Aeon into the vital spirit of the New, so energies that might

need to be excluded from other rituals through banishing can be included and transformed by the Mass. Therefore, there is no need to banish before the Mass; and while doing so will not keep the Mass from being effective, banishing may deprive some potential objects of the effects of the Mass.

Sounding the Bell

At the end of the Consecration of the Elements, the Priest elevates the Host and the Cup, and “The Bell sounds.” No indication is given as to who should sound the Bell, but it is nearly always done by the Deacon. As noted in earlier essays, the Bell is an appropriate weapon in the Deacon’s armory.

Generally the Bell is struck only once at the indicated juncture. Some ritualists prefer three strikes of the bell, however. The present author holds a preference for six. This baroque-seeming elaboration of “The Bell sounds” into a sixfold battery has a precedent.

The next phase of the Mass following the sound of the Bell is that of the Anthem. The original Anthem was taken from Liber DCCC, “The Ship.” In “The Ship” the character of The Young John takes the Priest’s part in the Anthem. Just before he begins the Anthem, there is a set of stage directions:

He consecrates, and partakes of, the sacrament. The two warders, kneeling, clasp his knees, and the two women support his arms. A sixfold chime of bells. He invokes the God in the shrine. [Emphasis added.]

Of course, as Crowley notes in *Magick*, “There are numerous ways of striking 6.” (p. 201) Deciding to use a sixfold battery does not solve the question of how to sound it. 666666, 1-4444-1, 1-22-22-1, 1-1-22-1-1, 22-1-1-22, 22-22-22, and 333-333 are all balanced batteries of six expressing different aspects of the nature of Tiphareth. But there is no reason to suppose that any one of those batteries will be appropriate for all Masses.

There is no other mention of the Bell in Liber XV. But it has been given other uses by some presenters of the Mass. Occasionally, the congregation will wish to commemorate a recent birth, marriage, or death through the Mass. An elegant way to handle such a situation is for the Deacon to include the fact in her preamble, and then sound the Bell as a reminder before reciting the relevant Collect during the Mass. A similar mechanic has been used for Masses performed in conjunction with Confirmations or other Church ritual.

Mass Record

Of all of the officers of the Mass, the Deacon is the one who has the most elaborate relationship to books. The Deacon has the first custody of *The Book of the Law* in the ritual. He may also keep a missal on the altar of incense. It is therefore most appropriate that this messenger/scribe role should be involved with the maintenance of a Mass Record.

Any group regularly performing the Gnostic Mass will find it very worthwhile to take the time to note down some details about each Mass immediately afterwards. Hardbound sketch books are recommended for this purpose, owing to their versatility and durability. An entry may contain comments and notes from anyone in the congregation, or it may be limited to the officers of the Mass. Separate volumes may be established for each office, if many different people are serving in each. But it is best to start with a simple and fairly comprehensive Record.

The Deacon will probably need to take care of the Record, along with other temple properties. He should certainly be zealous to enter his impressions in it after each Mass, and he may have the responsibility for setting down the nuts-and-bolts information of time and place, officers' names, number of communicants, and so forth.

Other Rituals

A Deacon's service may be desired or required for rites of the Church other than the Mass. Deacons may be involved in Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Funerary Rites, Exorcisms, Animal Benedictions, or any number of other ceremonies undertaken by the Church on its members' behalf. Since there is no single standard for such rituals, the Deacon should make inquiry to his Bishop, Priest, or Priestess regarding any that have been adopted for the use of his congregation. The inquiry should be made before the need arises, so that the Deacon can familiarize himself with the rituals in advance, and be able to serve with confidence when needed.

Appendix: Liber XV

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The original PDF edition of *Advice for Deacons*, circulated online for over twenty years, included an unauthorized and significantly flawed edition of Liber XV. I apologize for any confusion that it may have caused. It has been removed from this present second edition of the PDF.

Deacons are strongly encouraged to base their work and study on an **approved** edition of the canon of the Gnostic Mass, consulting one or more of the following sources:

- The text published in *The International*, March 1918 e.v.
- The text published in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 1
- The text published in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 10
- The text published in *Magick: Liber ABA, Book IV, Parts 1 - 4*, Samuel Weiser, rev. ed. 1997 e.v.
- The text published in “Mystery of Mystery,” *Red Flame* No 2, June 1995 e.v.

Per the USGL E.G.C. Manual (2006 e.v.): “Texts other than the above shall not be used for public celebration of the Gnostic Mass without the prior permission of the Patriarch.”

Besides eliminating the defective copy of Liber XV, this second edition has been enhanced by appending a set of Addenda clarifying other problem points in the quarter-century-old legacy text of *Advice for Deacons*.

Love is the law, love under will.

T Polyphilus, *Ep. Gn.* (A.L. V iv)
Centennial, Colorado



Addenda to Advice for Deacons

T Polyphilus, Ep. Gn. (A.L. IV xvii)

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

In the decade and more that has passed since I first wrote *Advice for Deacons*, I have often been encouraged to revise and update it. My resistance on this score is rooted in the basic nature of the original document: it is non-authoritative *advice* offered by a deacon to his peers. Since I have subsequently been ordained a priest and consecrated a bishop, I can no longer write from that perspective.

However, I cannot help but recognize that not only have I changed, but so has the larger Church. While many people still tell me that they find my old *Advice* helpful, it was in fact written before many significant developments in the Gnostic Catholic Church of O.T.O. It was prior to the first issuance of the *E.G.C. Manual* in the U.S. (since twice revised). It was before the existence of the office of the national E.G.C. Secretary. It was before significant meetings of the bishops of E.G.C. in 2004 and 2005 regarding Gnostic Mass standards.

The purpose of these addenda is to correct and clarify various matters raised in the original *Advice for Deacons* document. It is broken out into sections corresponding to those of the *Advice*. I hope it will help to preserve the usefulness of my earlier writing in the face of subsequent developments and changes, and I anticipate no trepidation about revising these addenda as needed.

Love is the law, love under will.

DIMENSIONS OF THE DIACONATE

As a demonstration of the fallibility of the original *Advice*, consider the word *daikonos*, given inaccurately for the Greek *diakonos*. A *daikon* is a sort of large Japanese radish, unknown to the ancient Greeks.

Another semantic issue is that of “supervision.” I would substitute the word “guidance” (and “guide” for “supervise”), since *supervision* is in fact the etymologically denoted nature of *episcopal* authority.

A necessary addition to the “Suggestions for Study” in this section is the *E.G.C. Manual* issued through U.S. Grand Lodge O.T.O., by the authority of the Patriarch Hymenaeus Beta and his Primate Sabazius.

TEMPLE STEWARDSHIP

The Shrine

The most crucial of the High Altar dimensions *from the perspective of a priest or priestess* is height; however width is the one which is most integrated into the other measurements of the temple. For a regulation-height altar (most strongly recommended), it will be helpful to have a footstool to assist the priestess in her ascent. Having a pillow on hand for the priest's long kneeling during the eleven collects is a kindness as well.

It is somewhat misleading to say that the two great candles “flank...the Graal,” since the candles should be set at the outermost ends of the High Altar, beyond the roses. The advice about positioning robe, crown, and peoples' goblets on the High Altar is just that, simple advice, albeit with a tone more commanding than I would choose today.

The Altar of Incense

The single candle on the altar of incense is “not recommended” according to the 2004 episcopal meeting. One or more candles may be there if needed for lighting purposes, but they are extrinsic to Liber XV, and should not be considered to have any symbolic significance.

The Book of the Law should be in the hand of the deacon prior to Mass, during the preamble and admission of the people.

Holy Oil may be used to anoint officers and weapons before Mass, but this task will not fall to a deacon as such. The Oil may be placed on the altar of incense for use in confirmations or ordinations; but at most Masses, it will not need to be there.

Seating for the People

For my more recent thoughts on this topic, see the first section of my Annotated Liber XV.

DIRECTION OF THE PEOPLE

The Deacon's Preamble

As a point of clarification, deacons should not ordinarily *name* the various gestures demonstrated during the preamble, since that will typically overburden newcomers (for whom such instructions are intended) with information which they do not need. While the various details mentioned in *Advice* are all helpful ingredients of a preamble, the overriding consideration should be to keep the process of introducing newcomers simple, and to permit them to appreciate the ceremony without unnecessary difficulty or distraction.

Any variations from the instructions in Liber XV, outside of those specifically indicated in the *E.G.C. Manual*, must not only be announced to the people, but *approved in advance by the Patriarch*.

I have recently witnessed (at Subtlety or Force Encampment) a custom of placing several minutes for silent contemplation between the deacon's preamble and the admission of the people. I found that change pleasant and blameless.

Marshalling for Communion

If the people are expected to approach and return from communion in a deasil circulation of the temple, it should be announced beforehand. A great deal of pointless anxiety and fumbling can be caused by tacit demands for a custom which is not, after all, specified in Liber XV.

Very large numbers of communicants may be efficiently accommodated by setting up the two children each with a supply of both elements (cakes and wine) on their respective sides of the temple below the steps of the dais. The deacon then has the congregation stand in files on both sides, and the lead communicants on each file alternate in taking the elements, moving to the center east, consuming them, declaring communion, and returning to sit. (This procedure is the one that has been used successfully at Gnostic Masses held for National O.T.O. Conferences.)

Leading the Creed

As a further "Suggestion for Study" on this topic, I now refer the reader to my own Discourses on the Creed.

DIRECTION OF THE CHILDREN

The remark that "the Church only baptizes those past the age of puberty" is inaccurate. The current minimum age for E.G.C. baptism in the United States is eleven.

Mass without Children

The *E.G.C. Manual* dictates that at Gnostic Masses where the office of the children is vacant, the deacon offers the eucharistic elements for popular communion.

THE CALENDAR

I have no corrections or clarifications to make regarding this section, except to note that I am no longer conveniently contactable via Scarlet Woman Lodge.

THE COLLECTS

I concur with the sentiments which Br. Paul Hume expressed as follows:

We are fortunate enough to have a recording of Crowley reciting the first few Collects. While he uses a musical phrase for "So mote it be," he does not chant the text of the Collects. He does recite them, in a sonorous, well-supported speaking voice, and this, I

would note again, is also a meaning of the verb “to intone.” ... If the Deacon prefers to chant or sing the Collects, let’s avoid the all-the-words-on-a-monotone-until-the-last-sylla-buuuulllll, with that drop at the end. This style not only obscures the text of the Collects, it disconnects the meaning and beauty of that text in what should be an intimate moment shared by the Deacon and the People. It does not exalt the participants, it numbs them.

For those deacons interested in more sophisticated approaches to musical chant in the Collects, Br. Oliver Althoen of Golden Lotus Oasis has developed some notes on applying Anglican chant techniques to this ceremony in the Gnostic Mass.

“Unless the People are all Deacons themselves, some sort of gesture will be needed to provoke each Collect’s conclusion.” I no longer consider this statement true. Any congregation with a majority of experienced attendees will know when each Collect ends, based on a combination of prior familiarity, the deacon’s vocal inflection, the consistent syntactical structure of the Collects, and the reactions of their neighbors. If some sort of further signal is desired, a visual one should suffice, and I recommend either making the “attitude of resurrection” (arms crossed over breast), or if the deacon has been standing in that sign already, releasing it to stand in a spread-armed tau posture.

“During The Saints, the Deacon is supposed to be drawing crosses and projecting them at the base of the Priest’s spine.” There is no sentence in *Advice for Deacons* that I rue more than this one. A noted proponent of this practice justifies it with the remark that the priest’s “Kundalini [may be] stimulated by the invocation of our spiritual ancestors.” The business about the Priest’s subtle anatomy is entirely external to both the text of the Mass and to the Agape Lodge tradition informed by Jane Wolfe’s exposure to Crowley’s ritual technique in Cefalu, and I find it out of accord with my own practice as a priest.

The recommendation of the 2004 episcopal meeting was “Crosses on Cup or on Priest.” And yet, there is in fact nothing in the text to indicate that the crosses need to be made *on*, *at*, or *toward* anything in particular. The most parsimonious reading, and the one I now prefer, is for the crosses to be made over the small altar, in the smoke of the incense. As Crowley wrote in *Magick*:

Into this Fire he casts the Incense, symbolical of prayer, the gross vehicle or image of his aspiration. Owing to the imperfection of this image, we obtain mere smoke instead of perfect combustion. But we cannot use explosives instead of incense, because it would not be true. Our prayer is the expression of the lower aspiring to the higher; it is without the clear vision of the higher, it does not understand what the higher wants. And, however sweet may be its smell, it is always cloudy.

In this smoke illusions arise. We sought the light, and behold the Temple is darkened! In the darkness this smoke seems to take strange shapes, and we may hear the crying of beasts. The thicker the smoke, the darker grows the Universe. We gasp and tremble, beholding what foul and unsubstantial things we have evoked!

Yet we cannot do without the Incense! Unless our aspiration took form it could not influence form. This also is the mystery of incarnation.

I used to do crosses-at-the-cup after realizing the shortcomings of crosses-at-the-priest. My rationale was that the cup held the blood of the saints. Yet there is a certain commonality with

the incense idea just quoted, in that the cup of dark wine is a traditional scrying tool, and illusions may be evoked into it just as into the smoke of the incense.

A reconsideration of the approved texts of Liber XV invalidates my earlier ideas about the relevance of the number 78 to the full list of saints. It is more accurate to say that the long list contains *seventy-plus* names, and the symbolism of the number 70 should guide consideration of the matter. (See, for example, my Discourse on the Fifth Article.)

Since the publication of the 2nd revised edition of *Magick* (which contains the most recent official text of Liber XV), two saints have been formally canonized by our Patriarch Hymenaeus Beta. William Blake was added in the Fall of 1997 e.v., based on Crowley's essay "William Blake," subsequently published in *Oriflamme 2 (The Revival of Magick)*. In the full version of the Saints Collect, Blake may be inserted among the poets, between Rabelais and Swinburne. (Notice of the addition was originally published in *The Magical Link*, new series no. 1, Fall 1997 e.v.) On February 17, 2000 e.v., without formal announcement, the Patriarch added Giordano Bruno, in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Bruno's martyrdom. In the full version of the Saints Collect, Bruno is placed among the Renaissance magi, between Robertus de Fluctibus and Johannes Dee. (Notice of the addition was published in the current number 9.1 of *Agape*, May 2007 e.v.) In addition, the *EGC Manual* specifies that the names Karl Johannes Germer and Grady Louis McMurtry may optionally be added to the list of Saints in any celebration of the Gnostic Mass, and they would naturally fall at the very conclusion of the list.

Deacons making a thorough study of EGC saints may also wish to consider the four "retired" saints that were inserted into the list by Reuss, but subsequently omitted by Crowley. Details are available at The Invisible Basilica of Sabazius. Although I personally would love to have Dante in the Saints Collect, none of these Reuss saints are currently included in official EGC ritual.

MISCELLANEOUS INNOVATIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

Whether things have changed a lot, or I've just been exposed to a wider variety of practice over the last thirteen years, I no longer think it's accurate to say, "There is a strong tradition of banishing during the Mass." But there are still some persistent local customs that support the practice. I continue to be of the opinion that banishing after the admission of the people for Mass is inappropriate.

Deacons and novices looking for less academic texts to develop a grounding in the culture of New Aeon Gnosticism may enjoy the "Suggestions for Study" in my "Section 2" Reading List for that purpose.

The copy of Liber XV appended to *Advice for Deacons* in its original electronic distribution was not an approved edition of the ritual.