

O.T.O.



E.G.C.



# Gnostic news

Hol. I No. 1

Winter Solstice Mxxviii e.n.

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Questions and Answers

We intend to publish answers to questions concerning the O.T.O. - E.G.C. in this paper. If you do not wish your name listed, do not sign the letter. We reserve the right to edit and condense your questions and to state them in a manner which includes more than one letter. If you wish to share your questions with others, please write to the Chief Editor of this newsletter. The only stupid question is the one not asked. It's the answers that are stupid.

What is the Hierarchical Branch of the O.T.O.? (Called the O.T.O. - E.G.C.)

Here is the portion of the O.T.O. Bylaws which defines the EGC/OTO:

## "ARTICLE IX

### ECCLESIASTICAL MEMBERSHIP

#### "Section 9.01. Definition.

"A. All aspects of the O.T.O. are religious in character, and the use of the term "ecclesiastical" to identify the class of membership defined in this article should not be construed to signify that other aspects of the O.T.O. are not ecclesiastical or religious in character.

"B. The term "ecclesiastical" is used to signify membership in the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica within the O.T.O. due to traditional historical usage.

"C. Ecclesiastical membership in O.T.O. does not confer Associate, Initiate, Governing or Administrative membership, or alter their exercise where they may otherwise exist. Members of the Ecclesiastical (also hereinafter referred to as "Church") membership are members of the Ecclesia Gnosticae Catholica, or Gnostic Catholic Church, within the O.T.O.



"Section 9.02.  
Subclasses of Church  
Membership

"There are two recognized subclasses of Church membership, the Father (or Mother) of the Church, and the Bishops.

"Section 9.03.  
The Father (or Mother)  
of the Church.

"The Father (or Mother) of the Church is the O.H.O., regardless of the country in which the Gnostic Catholic Church is established.

Succession to the office of O.H.O. conveys a valid and documented apostolic succession.

"Section 9.04.  
The Bishops.

"A. For the purposes of the limited definition used herein in the context of the Gnostic Catholic Church within the O.T.O., the Bishops of the Gnostic Catholic Church are men or women who are recognized by the Father (or Mother) of the Church as holding a valid and documented apostolic episcopal succession, which authority they apply in the furthering of the Law of Thelema through their ministry.

"B. Bishops from affiliated or distant branches of the Gnostic Catholic Church with or without an historical connection with the O.T.O. may affiliate with the O.T.O. upon mutual recognition.

"C. Bishops within the Ecclesiastical class of membership in the O.T.O. may exercise their traditional prerogative to ordain priests, priestesses and deacons upon their own recognizance. Those Bishops regularly providing public performance of the Gnostic Catholic Mass, and provide religious services to their congregation on a weekly basis, may apply to the National Supreme Council of the O.T.O. for recognition of ministerial status within the O.T.O. They will then be assisted by the O.T.O. in undertaking such legal registrations as are necessary within the State of residence to permit them to serve their congregation by performing marriages, baptisms, last rites and other religious functions. Such registrations require the review of the National Supreme Council of the O.T.O. if any part of the Bishop's authority to undertake such registration is derived from his or her Ecclesiastical membership within the O.T.O.



"Section 9.05.  
The O.T.O. Gnostic  
Catholic Mass.

"A. The Gnostic Catholic Mass (Liber XV) is the central ritual, public and private, of the O.T.O., and is the O.T.O.'s principal rite of religious celebration that is performed on a regular basis within our official bodies.

"B. The Father (or Mother) of the Church has the authority to modify the Gnostic Catholic Mass to suit special functions and occasions, to set recommended guidelines for its proper performance, and to issue recommendations for the preparation of the sacraments."

What does the Ecclesiastical Secretary do?

This is the person that the Holy Father appointed to keep the records of the Ecclesiastical arm of the O.T.O., herein called the O.T.O. - E.G.C. You will find the address for this person in the Magical Link.

The E.S. (Ecclesiastical Secretary) will keep the records of Baptisms, Confirmations, Ordinations (to Deacon, Priest, or Priestess), and such for any bishop who desires this service.

And, in return, the E.S. will supply any bishop with copies of the rituals written and used by other bishops. The purpose of the E.S. is to serve the bishops of the EGC-OTO, making their job much easier. Any comments, requests, suggestions or the like are more than welcomed. Just drop a line to:

Ecclesiastical  
Secretary,  
O.T.O. - E.G.C.  
c/o P.O. Box 1297  
Millbrae, CA 94030-5297

The Purpose of the  
"Gnostic Gnews" Revealed

Rather than have you guess as to why this periodical is being written and mailed to you, let us tell you exactly our aim in this newsletter. It is intended to supply the bishops of the hierarchical branch of the OTO with information about the Ecclesiastical Arm of the Order. It is hoped that you will feel free to contribute to this from your vast knowledge. Articles about the saints, the mass, roles of the officers of the mass, and such are solicited.

We intend to publish this newsletter two to four times a year, depending on the amount of articles we have. It will be

mailed to all recognized bishops and to all Official OTO Bodies listed in the Magical Link.

The Mass - by Father John

Part I - The Furnishings of the Temple

(This will be a continuing series of articles about the Mass - ed)

"In the East, that is, in the direction of Boleskine..."

This is the ideal orientation of the Temple if you know the direction of the Great Circle path from you to "...the South-Eastern shore of Loch Ness in Scotland, two miles east of Foyers..."

But, if you are like me, who uses the rising sun as an indication of where East should be only to notice that this would mean the corner where the door is is where the High altar should be placed, you pick a convenient wall with doors at the other end of the room as "EAST".

The temple should be designed with an eye for the practical. If your "EAST" must be the North wall because of the orientation of the room, let it be so. Just consider that this is the TEMPLE EAST.

Besides, the directions in the missal does not exclude the use of the "Polar Route" to Loch Ness.

"...is a shrine or High Altar. Its dimensions should be 7 feet in length, 3 feet in breadth, 44 inches in height."

This, you know, is the dimensions of the coffin in the King's chamber of the Great Pyramid in Giza. The numbers are the important elements since the numbers 7, 3 and 44 (actually 2 times 22) appear throughout Thelemic literature. The seven foot length exceeds the length of a man and this makes the High Altar bigger than man (even though he is God!).

I know of only one such altar that follows these dimensions.

Some of the pieces of furniture used for the High Altar include a book case, a dining room table, a chest of drawers, and other such items. Some people make an altar out of plywood and paint it. Others make one and simply cover it. There is a case where a stack of milk cartons separated by 2 x 6 planks was covered with a cloth and used as the High Altar. Whatever you choose to use for this, make it stable.



clean, and holy. This is the most holy place in the Temple.

Forty-four inches is about the height of a man's heart or Anahata chakra, the sphere of Tipereth. Just another indication of the Solar quality of the Mass. It should be obvious that it is impossible for the Priestess (even with the help of the Priest) to get from the floor to the top of this altar. Therefore a small stool should be provided for her ascent. The Priest can help her mount the altar as he says, "...I set thee upon the summit of the Earth." Without the stool he would only be able to groan this line, and the people would think that the Priestess didn't fast before Mass.

"It should be covered with a crimson altarcloth, on which may be embroidered fleur-de-lys in gold, or a sunblaze, or other suitable emblem."

This stresses the Solar influence in the Mass. It has been said that fleur-de-lys originated as symbols for bees, sacred to Venus. To stress the holiness of the High Altar, great care should be taken to wash it of wine-stains, candle drippings and other

messes which would detract from the desired effect. Remember, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness", and we "Stars" are also "God". It behooves us, therefore, to keep our temple clean.

"On each side of it (the Super Altar) should be a pillar or Obelisk, with counter-charges in black and white."

Several readily available materials can be used for these pillars, if you really don't want to construct an obelisk out of plywood or cardboard, or, perhaps, granite! The tubes upon which carpeting material is wrapped were used in Berkeley as far back as 1979 A.D. Circular Stove Pipe, from Sears or Montgomery Wards, has also been used. The tops can be found in large hardware stores in the form of tops for stairs in either wood or styrofoam. Bases can be fashioned from plywood, or 5-gallon paint cans, 1/4 filled with sand or cement, can also be used. If a hole is cut into the lid of the paint can, the pillar can be fitted inside the can.

Paint the top and base of one pillar white and one top and base of the other pillar black. Then



paint one pillar white and the other black. Now put the white pillar between the black top and black base. Then simply assemble the remaining parts to make the second pillar with white top and bottom and black middle. The black pillar (with the white top and bottom) goes on your left as you face the High Altar and the other one goes on your right hand. They represent Jachin and Boaz, the pillars of Mercy and Severity. In this arrangement, the two pillars define the limits of the Tree of Life, the two extremes, while the Stele' of Revealing, which is in the center, represents the balance. Of course, the Priest, Priestess, altar, font, and tomb (all yet to be discussed) are all part of the "Balance", too.

If you are skillful enough to make obelisks, the tops are to be perfect equilateral triangles (all sides being equal) and are painted the same color as the pillars themselves. Here only the bases are counter-changed.

"Below it (the High Altar) should be the dais of three steps, in black and white squares."

Perhaps the key word in this sentence

is "should" which translates to "if you got the head room and the length in your temple, go for it!" But with the usual 8 foot ceilings, the average height Priests with normal length lances making normal crosses (again, another later topic), with even 6" steps you will not only have holes in the ceiling above the Priest's head, but will increase the income of local chiro-practitioners. And, it will be easy to spot your Priest's, they are the ones with the perpetual slouch who flinch when they look up.

Still, the symbolism of three is extensive and very complicated. It is repeated throughout the Mass: the three principal officers, Priest, Priestess, and Deacon; the two altars, font, and tomb; three crosses are used quite a bit; the three "secret of secrets", Chaos, Babalon, and Baphomet; the list goes on.

These trios also equate to the three descending triangles, the three pillars, and the three reciprocating (or horizontal) paths on the Tree of Life.

The black and white squares symbolize the two extremes in every part of life and the duality of life

without which we could not exist. Black and white squares are also found in Masonic Temples as well.

"Above it (the High Altar again) is the super-altar, at whose top is the Stele' of Revealing in reproduction, with four candles on each side of it."

The super-altar, therefore, rises above the high-altar. One possible way to make the super-altar is to put the "triple tau" (used in some other O.T.O. rituals) on top of the high-altar. This allows a good space for the Stele' and it's eight candles as well as for what will follow below. The top of the stele' should be visible above the head of the Priestess so that the Priest and people can see it during the Mass.

While reproductions of the Stele' of Revealing are not carried in the Sears, Roebuck and Company Winter Catalog, you can obtain prints of the front and back from the O.T.O. Quartermaster whose address you will find in the Magical Link. If he cannot supply you with them, write to the Aiwass Oasis. These are line drawings which you can color in yourself. One way to present this work of art is to frame it

between two pieces of glass so that the front and back are both visible.

"Get the stele of revealing itself; set it in thy secret temple - and that temple is already aright disposed - & it shall be your Kiblah for ever. It shall not fade, but miraculous colour shall come back to it day after day. Close it in locked glass for proof to the world."  
(Liber AL III:10)

The eight candles represent the seven planets and the earth.

"Below the stele' is a place for the Book of the Law, with six candles on each side of it."

If the "triple tau" is used, a simple book stand (such as the ones found at Cost Plus) can be suspended from a nail (yup, right through the super-altar-cloth) so that, initially when the Mass is opened, the Deacon can put it right in the middle of the super-altar. (This will also be covered later.) The six candles on either side symbolize the twelve signs of the zodiac. Notice that the Book of the Law is parallel with the Zodiac and the Stele' is parallel with the planets and the earth.



"Below this (the Book of the Law and the 12 candles) again is the Holy Graal, with roses on each side of it."

The cup, or chalice, called the "Holy Graal", is placed on the center of the high-altar with red roses, sacred to Nuit, are placed on either side. Some temples lay the roses on the altar, somewhat like one would lay a sacrifice on the altar, but it seems better, in the opinion of the writer, if they are in two vases.

"I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice."

(Liber AL I:58)

"There is room in front of the Cup for the Paten. On each side beyond the roses, are two great candles."

This explains the need for the 3 foot breadth (depth) for the altar. The super-altar, cup, paten, and, in some temples, the pillow for the Priestess, all must fit on top of the high-altar. These represent "Aleph" (the beginning) and "Tau" (the end). The two great candles makes the total number of candles equal to 22 (8 by the stele', plus 12

by the Book of the Law, equals 20. These two great candles bring the total to 22). It just happened, by prior arrangement, that there would be 22 paths or atus (major Arcana) in the Tarot, and that 22 equals 2 times the number of Nuit "and all who are of us".

The Priest's Robe and Crown are placed on the high-altar, on the leftmost side, as you face the shrine. The Paten is in the Priestess's hands at the beginning of the Mass. Therefore the shrine is complete with the Stele', 22 candles, roses, Priest's robe and crown, pillars, and cup. Added to this is the pillow and foot stool for the Priestess. The wine and wine glasses (one per celebrant) and a small table for them on the completes the set up of the shrine. Experience has shown that this table should be placed on the opposite side from which the celebrants approach the altar for communion.

"All this is enclosed within a great Veil."

The veil, representing the veil of the abyss and the Veil of Paroketh, (not to be confused with the veil placed over the bird cage so the parakeets won't talk during mass) conceals not only the