



Sekhet-Maat Lodge, O.T.O.
ecclesia gnostica catholica

*Common Questions and Answers
Regarding the Gnostic Mass
of
Ordo Templi Orientis*

Cakes of Light

Liber AL III:25

23. For perfume mix meal & honey & thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften & smooth down with rich fresh blood.

24. The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what.

25. This burn: of this make cakes & eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me.

E.G.C. Manual III.b: Cakes of Light

For any official celebration of the *Gnostic Mass* where the members of the congregation partake of communion, individual members of the congregation may bring their own Cakes of Light, which they have prepared themselves for their exclusive personal consumption. Such Cakes of Light must be clearly labeled and distinguishable from all the other Cakes of Light. They may be individually wrapped, if necessary, in wax paper or the equivalent.

For all official celebrations of the *Gnostic Mass*, except for those private celebrations of the *Gnostic Mass* at which all participants have specifically requested otherwise, the Cakes of Light provided by the celebrants to the congregation shall be made with the following ingredients and with no other ingredients:

- (i) Meal (any ground edible grain);
- (ii) Honey;
- (iii) Leavings of red wine;
- (iv) Oil of Abramelin (a blend of cinnamon, myrrh, galangal and olive oils);
- (v) Olive oil; and
- (vi) Optionally, one of the following ingredients may be added:
 - Livestock blood obtained legally from a butcher shop or a farm; or
 - Ash from Cakes of Light made according to any reasonable interpretation of CCXX III:23 and which have been burned in accordance with CCXX III:25.

At Sekhet-Maat Lodge, each Mass team makes their own cakes and the types of ingredients used may vary (e.g., using spelt or corn instead of wheat flour). If you have allergies or questions, please do not hesitate to inquire with the Priest, Priestess or Deacon about specific ingredients.

Should you determine that you would rather not use a cake prepared in this manner, please feel free to give a cake of your own making to the Deacon for use in the Mass.

Attendance

Sekhet-Maat Lodge celebrates the *Gnostic Mass* regularly every Sunday afternoon at 3pm. Occasionally, celebrations happen at other times as well. You can find our schedule for Mass, as well as other public events, on our calendar at calendar.sekhetmaat.com.

While in attendance for the Mass, it should be kept in mind that the *Gnostic Mass* is the central ceremony of our Church, and a sacred occasion. There is no particular mode of dress required of congregants, but members often wear their personal "Sunday best," whether that is a white robe (traditional for those confirmed) or starched shirt or tie-dye, it is up to you. Comment and conversation should be reserved until after the ceremony.

The *Manifesto* of E.G.C. states that our Church makes the sacraments of the New Aeon available to those who are prepared to receive them. As we advance in adherence to the Law of Do What Thou Wilt, the *Gnostic Mass* will fulfill that which is written in the holy book *Stellae Rubae*: "I will give thee another ceremony whereby many shall rejoice."

Communion

Taking communion during the Mass is optional for those attending the first time. Taking communion consists of drinking a small goblet of wine (non-alcoholic is available by request) and eating a Cake of Light. Most celebrants of the *Gnostic Mass* make these cakes in accordance with the *Book of the Law* III:23-25 and with the *E.G.C. Manual* (see next page).

The Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (E.G.C.) or the Gnostic Catholic Church was incorporated into the O.T.O. in 1908 e.v. The E.G.C. formally accepted the Law of Thelema in 1920 e.v. As currently understood, the E.G.C. represents the aspect of O.T.O. that administers the *Gnostic Mass* and associated ecclesiastical rituals.

Aleister Crowley wrote *Liber XV* ("Book 15"): *The Gnostic Mass*, in 1913 e.v. in Moscow. In many ways it is similar in structure to the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. However, the comparison ends there, as the *Gnostic Mass* is a celebration of the principles of Thelema. It is a Eucharistic ritual, and congregants are expected to take communion by partaking of the sacrament, which involves consuming a Cake of Light and drinking a glass of wine (juice is available as an alternative), and then proclaiming, "There is no part of me that is not of the gods."

The officiants are not intermediaries between congregants and their god(s), but rather illustrate, through the allegory and symbol of the dramatic rite, a process by which anyone may come to their own direct knowledge (gnosis) of the divine.

Crowley writes in his *Confessions*, "Human nature demands (in the case of most people) the satisfaction of the religious instinct, and, to very many, this may best be done by ceremonial means. I wished therefore to construct a ritual through which people might enter into ecstasy as they have always done under the influence of appropriate ritual."

Membership in E.G.C.

The Clergy

- The Patriarch/Matriarch – The Father/Mother of the Church who at this time is Frater Superior Hymenaeus Beta
- The Primate – The National Grand Master General who at this time is Sabazius X° in the U.S.
- The Episcopate – This is comprised of Bishops who are of the VII° in O.T.O and consecrated to the Episcopate.
- The Priesthood – This is comprised of Priests and Priestesses who are of the KEW° in O.T.O and have been ordained.
- The Diaconate – This is comprised of the Deacons who are of the II° in O.T.O and have been ordained.

The Laity

- Lay members – This is comprised of those who have been confirmed in E.G.C.

Baptism

The Rite of Baptism is a short public ritual that is usually given just before the celebration of the *Gnostic Mass*. Thelema rejects the concept of original sin—for us, baptism is a symbolic entrance into the Thelemic community of worshippers, as well as a commemoration of the individual's birth into life and the Church. The oaths taken are strictly between the participant and their god, and no duties or obligations are promised in service of the church or any individual.

The baptized child joins the community at what is essentially a probationary level. It is a time for exploration, study, asking questions, and a chance to participate in the *Gnostic Mass*. The recitation of the creed by the congregation during the baptismal ceremony represents the instruction of the child in the essential tenets of the church. The individual is not a full member of the community until he or she has learned these tenets and has made a conscious, informed decision to accept them.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the rite that confers formal Lay membership in E.G.C. Within this rite, the individual confirms that it is their True Will to join the church as a Soldier of Thelema and is anointed as a Servant of Ra Hoor Khuit. The recitation of the Creed from memory shows that they have learned the essential tenets of the church and that they are willing to be an active participant in our spiritual community. The Church accepts the new member as a Thelemite, a rightful claimant to the heirship, communion and benediction of the Saints.

With confirmation, the individual is specifically charged with serving the Law of Thelema and Ra Hoor Khuit. The manifestation of this duty is strictly determined by the individual's understanding of their True Will, and is not subject to any other authority. Although there is no other charge, it is hoped that the new Lay member will continue to study the Creed and the *Gnostic Mass*, as well as other Thelemic holy books—most especially *The Book of the Law*.

Baptism & Confirmation at Sekhet-Maat Lodge:

- A candidate for baptism must be at least 11 years old.
- Baptism requires two sponsors who are confirmed members of E.G.C.
- A candidate for confirmation must have reached the age of puberty.
- Confirmation requires one sponsor who is confirmed in E.G.C., a plain white robe, and the ability to recite the Creed from memory.
- Baptism and/or confirmation for any person less than 18 years of age require the prior written consent of a parent or legal guardian.

Becoming a candidate for baptism/confirmation involves letting the chairperson of the E.G.C Committee know your intentions. The ritual will then be scheduled with you.