

# A Practical Guide to LEARNING THE OFFICE OF PRIEST in Liber XV—The Gnostic Mass

*by*  
*Frater Ash*

Learning the Office of the Priest within Liber XV can be a daunting task. It is certainly a complicated role, neverminding the complex magical alchemy that is supposed to be happening. In order to make the initial task of memorization a little easier, I have created this simple guide. It is written from a purely practical point of view, concerned with the technical performance of the ritual.

**Disclaimer:** *I am not a bishop of EGC, although I am an ordained Priest. This guide contains some of my own ideas about performance, which should in no way be construed as definitive or authoritative. All novice priests should discuss any performance issues or questions with their own supervising bishops.*

## Step One: Learn the Speeches

It is possibly best to learn the speeches first, since for many they are the largest initial hurdle. Simply memorize them; there's no way around that. Get it to the point where you can recite them flawlessly without having to actively recall them. In my experience, the best way to do this is one line at a time—learn a sentence, then add another, and another, until it is all memorized. This is pure grunt work, so just get it over with...

O circle of Stars whereof our Father is but the younger brother, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, before whom Time is Ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark, not unto Thee may we attain, unless Thine image be Love. Therefore by seed and root and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke Thee. "Then the Priest answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat; O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!"

O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adareth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.

"I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life; yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am alone; there is no God where I am."

*A handy way to avoid confusing this next speech with the Anthem, which both begin in similar fashion, is to remember the mnemonic "One", as in this speech is first.*

Thou that art One, our Lord in the Universe the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery, uttermost being whose radiance enlightening the worlds is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee—By the Sign of Light + appear Thou glorious upon the throne of the Sun.

Make open the path of creation and of intelligence between us and our minds. Enlighten our understanding.

Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection.

A ka dua

Tuf ur biu

Bi a'a chefu

Dudu nur af an nuteru!

IO IO IO IAO Sabao.

Kurie Abrasax. Kurie Meithras. Kurie Phalle.

IO Pan, IO Pan Pan.

IO Ischuros. IO Athanatos. IO Abratos. IO IAO.

Kaire Phalle. Kaire Pamphage. Kaire Pangenetor.

Hagios, hagios, hagios, IAO.

Thou who art I, beyond all I am,  
Who hast no nature and no name,  
Who art, when all but Thou are gone,  
Thou, centre and secret of the Sun,  
Thou, hidden spring of all things known  
And unknown, Thou aloof, alone,  
Thou, the true fire within the reed  
Brooding and breeding, source and seed  
Of life, love, liberty, and light,  
Thou beyond speech and beyond sight,  
Thee I invoke, my faint fresh fire  
Kindling as mine intents aspire.  
Thee I invoke, abiding one,  
Thee, centre and secret of the Sun,  
And that most holy mystery  
Of which the vehicle am I.  
Appear, most awful and most mild,  
As it is lawful, to thy child!

## Step Two: Learning the Major Sections

There are six main sections of the Mass that involve the Priest. These include:

1. Meeting the Priestess (or “Do you come here often?”)
2. The Three speeches (or “Crossing the Abyss in three easy steps.”)
3. Working the Elements (or “Twenty-one Crosses.”)
4. The Anthem (or “\*Sigh\* Poetry...”)
5. The Climax (or “Hriliu, baby!”)
6. The Blessing (or, “Exit, stage West...”)

When first learning the Priest role, it is recommended to learn a section at a time. Don't try to learn it all at once, or you might feel overwhelmed. Just like learning the longer speeches, learn a full section by heart before moving on to the next one.

### Section 1: Meeting the Priestess

*The Priestess pulls down the Veil of your Tomb, where you are standing and holding the lance with both hands, right over left, against your chest. She says, “...that thou mayst administer the virtues to the Brethren.”*

You then do the following:

- Take the three regular steps.
- Hand her the Lance.
- Give the three penal signs.
- Kneel and “worship the Lance with both hands”.

**I am a man among men.**

- Take back the Lance and “lower it”.
- Stand up.

**How should I be worthy to administer the virtues to the Brethren?**

*The Priestess then consecrates you with the elements and robes and crowns you. She kneels and rubs the Lance eleven times, finally saying, “Be the Lord present among us!” The People reply “So mote it be.”*

**Thee therefore whom we adore we also invoke. By the power of the lifted Lance!**

- Raise the Lance.
- Take her right hand with your left.

**I, Priest and King, take thee, Virgin pure without spot; I upraise thee;**

- She stands...

**I lead thee to the East;**

- ...proceed to the High Altar...

**I set thee upon the summit of the Earth.**

- ...lift or help her onto the Altar (you should work this out with her beforehand).
- (You might need to get the Book for her. Again, figure this out beforehand.)
- Give the Lance to the Deacon.
  
- Take the ewer from the Negative Child, dip your thumb (held between the index and middle fingers) into the water, and make five Crosses, on head, shoulders, and thighs.
- Take the censer and make the same five crosses.
  
- Kiss the Book three times.
- Kneel in adoration, with joined hands (waiting for the Children to return from replacing their weapons).
- Stand and close the Veil.
  
- Take back the Lance and circumambulate the Temple three times (clockwise), holding the Lance as you did in the Tomb (“as Osiris or Ptah”).

## **Section 2: The Three Speeches**

- After the three revolutions, mount the first Step.

**O circle of Stars whereof our Father is but the younger brother, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, before whom Time is Ashamed, the mind bewildered, and the understanding dark, not unto Thee may we attain, unless Thine image be Love. Therefore by seed and root and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke Thee. “Then the Priest answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat; O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!”**

*Priestess: "But to love me is better than all things; ...To me! To me!"*

- Mount the second Step.

**O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adareth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.**

**"I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life; yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am alone; there is no God where I am."**

*The Deacon recites the Calendar: "...A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost delight!"*

- Mount the third Step.

**Thou that art One, our Lord in the Universe the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery, uttermost being whose radiance enlightening the worlds is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee— By the Sign of Light + appear Thou glorious upon the throne of the Sun.**

**Make open the path of creation and of intelligence between us and our minds. Enlighten our understanding.**

**Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection.**

**A ka dua  
Tuf ur biu  
Bi a'a chefu  
Dudu nur af an nuteru!**

*Priestess: "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."*

- Part the Veil with the Lance.

**IO IO IO IAO Sabao.**

**Kurie Abrasax. Kurie Meithras. Kurie Phalle.**

**IO Pan, IO Pan Pan.**

**IO Ischuros. IO Athanatos. IO Abratos. IO IAO.**

**Kaire Phalle. Kaire Pamphage. Kaire Pangenetor.**

**Hagios, hagios, hagios, IAO.**

- Present the Lance to the Priestess, so she can kiss it eleven times.
- Give her the Lance.
- Kneel and stretch your arms along her thighs.
- Kiss her knees.
- Stay here for the Collects.

### Section 3: Working the Elements

This is, in my opinion, the most complicated section of the Mass, performance-wise. There are a ton of small, discrete actions, and it is easy to forget something or mix them up (it happens to the most experienced Priest). So, let's break down this section into four smaller chunks:

1. *Sanctification of the Host and Wine*
2. *The Sacrifice of Life and Joy*
3. *The Pronouncement to the Saints*
4. *The Sanctus*

Again, it is recommended to learn each by heart before moving on to the next sub-section. It can also be useful to remember that there are five sets of crosses: 5, 5, 3, 3, 5.

#### — SANCTIFICATION OF THE HOST AND WINE—

- After the last Collect, stand up and take back your Lance.

*The Priestess should hold up the Cup and Paten together.*

- Make three crosses in the shape of an ascending triangle on the Cup and Paten together.

*The Priestess should then spread the Cup and Paten apart.*

- Make a single cross on the Paten and then one on the Cup.
- Face the Paten.

**Life of man upon earth, fruit of labour, sustenance of endeavour, thus be thou nourishment of the Spirit!**

- Touch the Host with the Lance.

**By the virtue of the Rod! Be this bread the Body of God!**

- Take the Host.

**Touto esti to soma mou.**

- Kneel. “Adore”. Rise.
- Turn and show Host to the People.
- Turn and replace the Host.
- “Adore”
- Face the Cup.

**Vehicle of the joy of Man upon earth, solace of labour, inspiration of endeavour, thus be thou ecstasy of the Spirit!**

- Touch the Cup with the Lance.

**By the virtue of the Rod! Be this wine the Blood of God!**

- Take the Cup.

**Touto esti to poterion tou haimatos mou.**

- Kneel. “Adore”. Rise. Turn and show Cup. Turn and replace the Host. “Adore”

**— THE SACRIFICE OF LIFE AND JOY —**

**For this is the Covenant of Resurrection.**

- Make the five crosses on the Priestess as before.

**Accept, O Lord, this sacrifice of life and joy, true warrants of the Covenant of Resurrection.**

- Let the Priestess kiss the Lance.
- Touch her between the breasts and upon “the body”.
- Fling out your arms upward.

**Let this offering be borne upon the waves of Aethyr to our Lord and Father the Sun that travelleth over the Heavens in his name ON.**

- Close your hands.
- Kiss the Priestess between the breasts.

**— THE PRONOUNCEMENT TO THE SAINTS —**

- Make three “great crosses” over the Paten, the Cup, and yourself.
- Strike your breast.

**Hear ye all, saints of the true church of old time  
now essentially present, that  
of ye we claim heirship,  
with ye we claim communion,  
from ye we claim benediction  
in the name of IAO.**

— *THE SANCTUS* —

- Make three crosses on Paten and Cup together.
- Uncover the Cup.
- Genuflect.
- Hand the Lance to the Priestess (or the Deacon).
- Take the Cup in your left hand and the Host in your right.
- Make the five crosses on the Cup with the Host.
- Elevate the Host and the Cup.
- (Wait for the bell)

**Hagios Hagios Hagios IAO!**

- Replace the Host and the Cup.
- “Adore”
- Retrieve the Lance.

<b>Section 4: The Anthem</b>
------------------------------

- Now recite the Anthem:

**Thou who art I, beyond all I am,  
Who hast no nature and no name,  
Who art, when all but Thou are gone,  
Thou, centre and secret of the Sun,  
Thou, hidden spring of all things known  
And unknown, Thou aloof, alone,  
Thou, the true fire within the reed  
Brooding and breeding, source and seed  
Of life, love, liberty, and light,  
Thou beyond speech and beyond sight,  
Thee I invoke, my faint fresh fire  
Kindling as mine intents aspire.  
Thee I invoke, abiding one,  
Thee, centre and secret of the Sun,  
And that most holy mystery  
Of which the vehicle am I.  
Appear, most awful and most mild,  
As it is lawful, to thy child!**

*...Chorus: Glory and worship unto Thee,  
Sap of the world-ash, wonder-tree!*



## Section 5: The Climax

- After “wonder-tree!”, take the Paten between the index and middle fingers of your right hand.

**Lord most secret, bless this spiritual food unto our bodies, bestowing upon us health and wealth and strength and joy and peace, and that fulfilment of will and of love under will that is perpetual happiness.**

- Make a cross with the Paten and kiss it.
- Return the Paten to the Priestess or the Altar.
- Uncover the Cup, genuflect, rise.
- Hand the Lance to the Priestess or the Deacon.
- Take the Host and break it in half over the Cup.
- Put the *right* half back on the Paten.
- Break the remaining particle in half again.

**Touto esti to sperma mou. Ho pater estin ho huios dia to pneuma hagion.  
AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN.**

- Put the *left* half back on the Paten.
- Hold up the Cup with your left hand and help the Priestess place the point of the Lance on it horizontally.
- Place the remaining particle on the tip of the Lance.
- At this point, you may choose to do some synchronized event with the Priestess—such as taking three breaths—in order to perform the next event in unison.
- With the Priestess, depress the Lance point into the Cup, spilling the Host particle into it, while saying with her—

**HRILIU.**

- Let the Priestess take the Lance.
- Genuflect and rise.
- Bow.
- Join hands.
- Strike your breast.

**O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be mighty among us.  
O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be mighty among us.  
O Lion and O Serpent that destroy the destroyer, be mighty among us.**

- Join hands upon the breast of the Priestess.
- Take back the Lance.
- Turn to the People.
- Lower and raise the Lance.
- Make a cross upon them.

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

*The People: "Love is the law, love under will."*

- Lower the Lance.
- Turn back to the Priestess.
- Kneel.

*The Priestess should offer the Paten.*

**In my mouth be the essence of the Life of the Sun.**

- Take the remaining two parts of the broken Host with the right hand.
- Make a cross with it on the Paten.
- Consume the Host.

*The Priestess should offer the Cup.*

**In my mouth be the essence of the Joy of the Earth!**

- Take the Cup.
- Make a cross with it on the Priestess.
- Drain the Cup, including the particle.
- Rise.
- Take the Lance.
- Turn to the People.
- Cross your arms over your chest.

**There is no part of me that is not of the Gods.**

- Take your place for popular Communication. Liber XV does not specify this; common choices include beside the High Altar or in front of (not in!) the Tomb.

## **Section 6: The Blessing**

- After popular Communication, return to face the Priestess.
- Close the Veil.
- Turn to the People.
- Make a cross on them.

**The Lord bless you.**

- Make a second cross.

**The Lord enlighten your minds and comfort your hearts and sustain your bodies.**

- Make a third cross.

**The Lord bring you to the accomplishment of your True Wills, the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.**

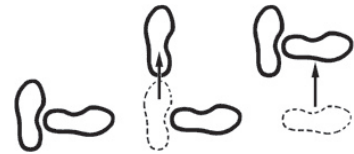
- Proceed to and enter the Tomb, taking the Deacon and Children with you.

## Performance Particulars

These address specific instructions that are not spelled out well in the text of Liber XV. Some items here are authoritative, and those are noted as such. I want to provide a blanket statement that all other items in this section are purely my own opinion, and do not represent authority, ecclesiastical or otherwise. On any item of question, please be sure to discuss it with your supervising bishop.

### ***THE THREE REGULAR STEPS***

According to the OHO (in *Book 4*), a “regular step” is the same as that in the Step and Sign of a Man and a Brother. It is made with the left foot facing forward, the right foot positioned at a 90° angle, with the heel placed in the hollow of the left (i.e. *dieu garde*). Then, step forward three times with the left foot, bringing the right back into the hollow of the left each time.



### ***THE THREE PENAL SIGNS***

According to the U.S. Primate, T. Apiryon, the three penal signs are given thusly:

1. Hands are held open, fingers together.
2. 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.
3. Place your right hand level, with the thumb extended in a square towards the heart. Draw the hand across the breast to the right and drop it to the side.
4. Place your right hand level, with the thumb extended in a square towards the navel. Draw the hand across the center of the body to the right, drop it to the side, and raise it again to place the point of the thumb upon the navel.

### ***ADORATION***

There are several points where the Priest is instructed to “adore.” There is only one part, however, where this is described: “He kneels for a space in adoration, with joined hands, knuckles closed, thumb in position aforesaid.” The U.S. Primate, T. Apiryon, has stated that “This is the typical attitude of Adoration for the Priest, and is the position the Priest should take when the ritual says he ‘adores.’”

Although this is perfectly logical, I maintain that this is not the only way to “adore”, and that outside of specific instruction, “adoration” is open to interpretation. Keep in mind, there are points where the Priest is told to adore when he still has the Lance, which would make kneeling with hands closed tricky. Either the Lance must be handed off each time or adoration must be modified from T. Apiryon’s statement.

### **RAISING AND LOWERING THE LANCE**

Liber XV gives no description of what this means at all. The two common interpretations are:

1. Keeping the Lance more or less vertical, and lifting it up or down, like an arrow. In this method, “lowered” means having the butt of the Lance touching the ground, and “raising” it means lifting the point higher than one’s head.
2. Rotating the Lance, as if holding a jousting lance. In this case, the Lance rotates near its center or the butt, with the tip moving up or down, like the hand of a clock. With this method, “lowered” means the tip is pointed towards the ground, and “raised” means the tip is pointing upwards.

Both methods have their pros and cons. It is recommended to try out both to see how it feels.

### **GENUFLECTING AND KNEELING**

There are several places in the Mass where the Priest is told to either kneel or genuflect. Considering that Crowley used both words in Liber XV, it is reasonable to assume that they aren’t exactly the same thing. One definition of *genuflect* is “to bend the knee or touch one knee to the floor in reverence or worship,” and the OED has it as, “To bend the knee, esp. in worship.”

Therefore, it is possible to interpret *genuflecting* as either bending one knee or touching it to the floor, whereas *kneeling* means to put both knees on the ground.