



CHURCH OF SATAN

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Information for Prison Chaplains

Church History

Founded on April 30, 1966 in San Francisco by Anton Szandor LaVey, the Church of Satan is the first above-ground religious organization dedicated to the acceptance of Man's nature as an animal living in a cosmos that is indifferent to his existence. To Satanists, Satan is a symbol who represents pride, liberty, and individualism—qualities often defined as "Evil" by people who believe in and worship external deities. Satanism is thus not Devil worship. There is no belief in God, Satan, the soul, the supernatural or in any form of afterlife. LaVey had a background in the circus and carnival, playing both organ and calliope for the performers and even spent time as a lion tamer. He also worked freelance as a photographer for the San Francisco Police department and thus his earthy experiences led him to reject religions in general as being unrealistic in their beliefs. He saw existing religions as a means for controlling the masses, and since most people seem to want and need some sort of unearthly parental figure, he considered that most religions had been invented to meet that need.

But LaVey noticed throughout history that there were iconoclastic men, creative thinkers who were not believers, such as Nietzsche, George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain, Lord Byron, Charles Baudelaire and others, who saw Satan as not representing "Evil," but as a figure who embodied human resistance to authority, who championed the pleasures of life on earth, who saw through falsehoods and accepted the harsh realities of life. LaVey noted that there was no systematic philosophy that those bright rebels could embrace, so he set out to create it. He began with a "magic circle" of fellow free-thinkers in the late fifties and early sixties, and by the time he had concretized a religion which he even referred to as "Ayn Rand with trappings," it was 1966. Being an experienced showman he chose to announce the formation of his Church of Satan on April 30th, known traditionally as Walpurgisnacht, the night when supposedly the "forces of Darkness" held sway. He called 1966 the "Year One, Anno Satanus" using the Roman numeral one to designate that year. 2011 is thus known as XLVI A.S..

LaVey performed rituals - weddings, baptisms, and funerals - and invited the press, who found the voluptuous nude women who served as "altars of the flesh" to be sensational photo opportunities. He was often interviewed for men's magazines, and in 1969 he published *The Satanic Bible*, which codified his philosophy and presented rituals which were intended as cathartic psychodramas to release pent-up emotions, rather than as forms of worship. Membership then

grew rapidly and thus the organization became international in scope. LaVey's philosophy was meant for motivated people who used their talents for artistic and material success, the movers and shakers of the world. Famous early members included actress Jayne Mansfield and entertainer Sammy Davis Jr.. LaVey attracted a number of rock musicians who were proud to publicly claim affiliation, amongst whom were King Diamond, Marc Almond, and Marilyn Manson.

LaVey remained the head of his organization until his death, writing books, recording his organ playing, and being the subject of several video documentaries. These are detailed on the official home page of the Church of Satan (www.churchofsatan.com). At the time of his death on 29 October, 1997, Anton LaVey left the Church of Satan under the command of Magistra Blanche Barton—his consort, mother of his third child, Satan Xerxes Carnacki LaVey, and chief administrative officer of the Church for the preceding 15 years who at that time was the officially appointed High Priestess. Anton LaVey took the survival of his Church seriously, and had appointed individuals to his Priesthood who could articulate the philosophy and who also had personal success outside of Satanism. So this Priesthood—along with the administrative bodies of the Order of the Trapezoid and the Council of Nine—continued working with Magistra Barton to maintain the Church of Satan. Its mission was (and still remains) the work of transmitting the philosophy worldwide so that anyone who might be by nature a Satanist could have the chance to read the literature and discover the proper label for the type of person they are. On April 30, 2001, High Priestess Barton appointed Peter H. Gilmore as High Priest and Magus, and Peggy Nadramia as Grand Mistress of the Temple—Magistra Templi Rex. On April 30, 2002, Blanche Barton and Peggy Nadramia exchanged positions, so that Magistra Nadramia became High Priestess, and Magistra Barton Magistra Templi Rex, the chair-mistress of the Council of Nine. They all continue to hold these positions today. The headquarters for the organization moved from California to New York City in 2001.

Major Teachings

Essentially, Satanism is at base a rational philosophy of pragmatism, materialism and skepticism, generally promoting a libertarian point of social view with an emphasis on law and order to maintain the "social contract" all people accept by participating in civilization. Satan in Hebrew means the adversary or accuser, and LaVey felt that there was a need for a perspective that opposed all forms of spiritual belief - either Western or Eastern, and that included opposing the then current "occultism fad" that was growing in the mid 1960s. Satanism is a counter-position to spiritual beliefs, since Satanists see themselves as being carnal - they do not believe that there is any form of the spiritual, but that does not mean that Satanists wish to eradicate other religious perspectives, or to convert people of faith. The Satanic position is "live and let live," so long as other religions do not

try to force Satanists into their beliefs through involuntary conversion or legislation of them. The American Constitution's principle of separation of church and state is endorsed by Satanists as a wise way to govern, allowing people the freedom of choice to be either religious or secular, without either camp forcing the other into actions which would be counter to their natures or wishes.

Satanists consider that they are born to Satanism. The potential Satanist reads any of the fundamental texts and sees himself reflected in them and thus understands that there are other like-minded people at large in the world. The Satanist view of the human species is that there are people who are from birth either inclined towards the spiritual - wanting guidance from something they wish to perceive as being "above" or "greater" than themselves, or inclined towards the carnal, meaning that they are the center of their own subjective universes and that they take the responsibility for creating their own hierarchy of values, rather than being handed rules supposedly coming from some deity or political authority. The carnal types are generally secular people, often humanists and atheists, and Satanists see themselves as a sub-set of those supporting secular free thought. Satanists are thus not neo-pagans, nor do they consider their philosophy to be a faith, since faith itself is rejected as being a blind belief in forces that do not exist. Reason is championed by Satanists as the tool for understanding existence.

To paraphrase what Anton LaVey explained in his fundamental work *The Satanic Bible*, Man invented all the Gods, doing so because many humans cannot accept or control their personal egos, feeling compelled to conjure up one or a multiplicity of characters who can act without hindrance or guilt upon whims and desires. All Gods are thus externalized forms, magnified projections of the true nature of their inventors, personifying aspects of the universe or personal temperaments that many of their followers find to be troubling. Worshipping any God is thus worshipping by proxy those who invented that God. Since the Satanist understands that all Gods are fiction, instead of bending a knee in worship to—or seeking friendship or unity with—such mythical entities, he places himself at the center of his own subjective universe as his own highest value. Satanists are thus their own “Gods,” and as beneficent “deities” can offer love to those who deserve it and deliver wrath (within reasonable and legal limits) upon those who seek to cause the Satanists—or that which they cherish—harm. This does not mean that Satanists see themselves as having God-like powers. The Satanist is very aware of being human with all the limits that come with being a fragile animal in a society usually ruled by Darwinian modes of competition for survival. Magus Gilmore’s essay "What, The Devil?" from his 2006 book *The Satanic Scriptures* can be read at www.churchofsatan.com and it discusses this in greater detail.

Satanism does not promote unbridled hedonism, since such would show a lack of discipline and respect for the rights of others. Instead, Satanism promotes Epicureanism, a self-disciplined approach to indulging with moderation in the

pleasures that life offers. "Indulgence, NOT compulsion!" is the Satanic dictate for approaching life. Satanism supports individualism, and since the approach to life is pragmatic, each Satanist must decide for himself which political parties would be most personally beneficial. Satanism does not seek chaos or anarchy in society, but utilizes the ancient Roman standard of "Lex Talionis," meaning that when people misbehave in the eyes of the social order, that the punishment must fit in both kind and degree the crime. Being convicted of a serious crime can be grounds for expulsion of a member or rejection of a membership application.

Satanism endorses all forms of human sexuality between consenting adults, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, bi-sexuality or even a-sexuality. Fetishism is encouraged as a means for sexual expression. Sex with children and non-human animals is forbidden.

Since there is no faith or worship in Satanism, there are no regular services nor any church buildings. The Priesthood functions as authorized spokespersons for the philosophy, not ministers to a congregation. Ritual (called Greater Magic) in Satanism is not worship. It is a tool for emotional well-being, the use of which is optional for each Satanist. Ritual is thus a form of self-therapy, a method for expressing and releasing emotions that might be hindering an individual from enjoying life. *The Satanic Bible* by Anton LaVey details the three basic forms of ritual - avenues for releasing feelings of anger (destruction ritual), sexuality (lust ritual) and grief and sympathy (compassion ritual). That book details the ritual implements that are ideal for either a personal or a group ritual, but ultimately all that is required is the power of the imagination of the person who performs the ritual. Lesser Magic is a term used to refer to how one charms people on a personal basis into doing things according to one's desires, and is a regular practice of Satanists.

The Satanism of the Church of Satan was officially recognized by the government of the United States when it was included in their Department of the Army Manual for Chaplains. The Church of Satan does not endorse or recognize any other beliefs or organizations claiming to be representative of Satanism.

Rites and Ceremonies

There is no worship in Satanism. Animal sacrifice is not permitted in Satanic rites and ceremonies. Ritual - used as a cathartic psychodrama - may be performed at the choice of the Satanist, and the basic texts for this are present in *The Satanic Bible* by Anton LaVey. Rituals can be held at any time of the day or night as desired, but should be in a space in which all outside light may be cut off, the light within provided by one or more black candles. The room should offer privacy for the release of emotions verbally and if a lust ritual is performed, masturbation

to climax is expected and that should be done in private. It is up to Satanists who decide to ritualize to determine how often ritual might be personally beneficial. Daily meditation on Satanic literature or imagery is possible. There is no special day of the week for Satanists. If a Satanist decides to ritualize on a monthly basis, it is often done on the night of the dark of the moon.

It has been traditional for group rituals to have a nude or semi-nude woman recline on a platform to serve as an altar, but as is stated in *The Satanic Bible* this is not required. Tools for ritual include the text for the rite, a table or platform to serve as an altar, black candles and an additional white candle if a destruction ritual is performed, a bell, a cup to hold a beverage pleasing to the taste of the performer (it is not required to be alcoholic), a sword (can be substituted with a stick or wand, or just an outstretched arm), gong (or cymbal - only expected for a large group rite), a phallic symbol (for group rites) and water in a bowl (the water can be flicked with the fingers when no phallic symbol is used), paper and pen (for writing a request to be burned in either the flame of a black or the white candle). A fireproof dish is used to hold the ashes of the burned paper. The wall above the altar should have the Sigil of Baphomet (a goat face in a pentagram surrounded by two circles within which are the Hebrew characters spelling Leviathan starting at the bottom point and written counter-clockwise – see the beginning of this document). This could be a simple print out of that graphic mounted on the wall or propped on the altar table in a frame. A medallion with this same symbol should also be worn by all participating. A black robe or cape may be worn, or black clothing. Incense may be employed as well.

Satanists are also free to expand upon, embellish, or contract the standard ritual text as needed so long as such changes respect the philosophy of Satanism.

Private or Solitary Ritual:

Ritual may be done in private or solitary conditions. If the ritual texts from *The Satanic Bible* or *The Satanic Scriptures* are employed the sole performer plays the part of the Celebrant or Priest. The suggested ritual implements may be employed, or if they are forbidden to an inmate, then the person may use his imagination but should be allowed to be in a darkened room. A lust ritual would always be done solo.

Corporate Ritual and Study:

In Satanism, group ritual is performed if a number of Satanists wish to ritualize together. If more than one person is doing a ritual together, then one is chosen to play the role of the Priest or Celebrant. Ordained members of the Priesthood of the Church of Satan are not required for ritual. Compassion and destruction rituals may be done with more than one participant. Group ritual is not required by the Church of Satan.

Primary Books / Holidays / Festivals

The books written by the founder of the Church of Satan, Anton Szandor LaVey, are required reading, with *The Satanic Bible* (includes basics of the philosophy and ritual practices) being the most important. His other books are *The Satanic Rituals* (contains rituals for large groups and baptismal rites), as well as *The Satanic Witch*, *The Devil's Notebook*, and *Satan Speaks* which expand on the philosophy. Also important are the books by Blanche Barton: *The Secret Life of a Satanist* (a LaVey biography) and *The Church of Satan* (a history of the organization). *The Satanic Scriptures* by Peter H. Gilmore is essential reading as it discusses ritual (what is required and what can be excluded) and includes the rites for Satanic consecrations, weddings and funerals.

Since Satanism is a self-centered religion, the highest holiday of the year would be the Satanist's own birthday, which needs no ritual but should be spent in doing things a Satanist would enjoy. There is no requirement that a Satanist celebrate any holidays, and there are no hard and fast traditions or rites associated with them. Since Satanism embraces Nature, the other holidays a Satanist might choose to celebrate would be the seasonal turning points marked by the equinoxes and solstices - the dates of which vary from year to year, as well as the mid points between these which can be recognized as the climaxes of each season. In particular, April 30th, called Walpurgisnacht, is the Spring climax and the anniversary of the founding of the Church of Satan and is generally noted. Halloween, October 31, is the Fall climax and may be celebrated as a time when one's inner-self might be explored through the use of a costume, or one might recall those of importance in one's life who have died - as was done on that night in European tradition.

Work Proscription Days

None.

Fast Days

None. Fasting has no role in Satanism.

Dietary Restrictions

None. However, since Satanism respects animals, some Satanists may choose to be vegetarians.

Religious Clothing

None.

Leadership / Meetings

The Church of Satan is not a social institution, rather it is an association of people supporting the philosophy and a trained hierarchy representing and explaining our teachings, so we do not have regular meetings or required worship services. Satanism is about self-discipline and development of talents through study and practice. Satanists who are incarcerated - if they merit such privileges - should be allowed to study subjects of interest, and access to materials which might allow them to write, create art, or play music.

Hierarchy: The Church of Satan has a system of degrees, the criteria for elevation being based not on mysticism or occultism, but on knowledge of practical subjects beyond Satanism, and even more than that, on the application of such wisdom towards measurable ends. Degrees should not be seen as “initiatory steps” which are expected of members since the Church of Satan is **not** an initiatory organization. No member is required to move beyond Registered Membership. The First Degree denoting Active Membership is only for members who seek more involvement with the organization and other local members. The remaining degrees (from the Second through the Fifth) are **not** open to application or to request. Our specific standards for them will not be publicly released. The administration watches the progress of qualified members, and may choose to grant recognition to outstanding individuals based on demonstrated excellence in the understanding and communication of Satanic Theory, coupled with significant potent practices in the arena of the real world that have produced superior achievements. People naturally and quite organically rise to particular levels, and we may take note at our discretion.

Registered Membership is open to anyone who wishes to support the Church of Satan and it requires payment of a \$200 fee (check www.churchofsatan.com). It is important to note that since Satanism embraces law and order, those convicted of a serious crime may be expelled if they are members or forbidden to apply for membership if they are not members. One might consider oneself to be a Satanist if they read and completely agree with the fundamental literature of the Church of Satan, but they are not members unless they formally join. The Church of Satan has no responsibility for or towards anyone who simply proclaims himself to be a Satanist.

Registered Member (no degree)
Active Member—Satanist (First Degree)
Witch / Warlock (Second Degree)
Priestess / Priest (Third Degree)
Magistra / Magister (Fourth Degree)
Maga / Magus (Fifth Degree)

“Administrator” and “Agent,” are descriptive titles for what people do, not levels of

rank, thus they can be held by members with different degrees. “High Priest” / “High Priestess” are the top administrative titles, and can be held only by Fourth or Fifth Degree members.

Those who hold the Third through Fifth degrees are all members of the Priesthood of Mendes and individuals with these titles may be called “Reverend.”

An important point of emphasis: Our protocol for member interaction is based on the paradigm of a “mutual admiration society,” and this is applied across all levels of our hierarchy. Our members may earn each other’s admiration but the behavior of general respect is our functioning basis. We do not expect all of our highly individualistic members to like each other, but we **do** require that they behave as ladies and gentlemen when dealing with each other in **all** situations and forums, whether they be on line, in any printed or broadcast media and particularly in face-to-face situations. Interaction is never required, and in the case of extreme disagreement wherein civility apparently cannot be maintained, we expect involved members to cease interaction with each other. **Violation of this standard is a ground for expulsion.**

Agents

An individual who demonstrates a thorough grasp of the philosophy of the Church of Satan, skills in being able to communicate it, and would like to be trained as a contact for local media and other interested parties may be chosen to serve as an Agent for the Church of Satan.

When you fill out your application for further involvement, let us know if you would like to be considered for evaluation as a qualified contact point in your area or for media representation. You should then include materials demonstrating your qualifications, such as samples of your writing and video (via DVD) of yourself in a public speaking mode. Those who are appointed as Agents must demonstrate that they have already been making well-reasoned efforts to publicly clear-up misconceptions regarding our philosophy.

Priesthood of Mendes

These are the individuals who act as spokespersons for the philosophy of the Church of Satan, which include the titles of “Priest” / “Priestess,” “Magister” / “Magistra,” “Magus” / “Maga.” Members of the Priesthood make up the **Council of Nine**, which is the ruling body of the organization, appointed by and responsible to the High Priest / Priestess. The **Order of the Trapezoid** consists of the individuals who assist in the administration of the Church of Satan. Members of our Priesthood are people of accomplishment in the real world—they have mastered skills and have won peer recognition, which is how they have attained their position—“as above, so below.” They are “movers and shakers”

who are the core of our movement. While expected to be experts in communicating our philosophy, they are not required to speak on our behalf and they may even choose to keep their affiliation and rank secret, in order to better serve their personal goals, as well as those of our organization. Thus, you may (even as a member), encounter members of our Priesthood and never know it.

Membership in the Priesthood is by invitation only. The old truism “If you have to ask, you can’t afford it” is certainly highly pertinent to our Priesthood. Words to the wise: **Do not ask “How do I become a Priest?”**

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFENDERS IN PRISON

PRIMARY BOOKS:

The Satanic Bible by Anton Szandor LaVey. *The Satanic Scriptures* by Peter H. Gilmore is also worthy of study. (both are available as paperbacks)

HOLIDAYS / FESTIVALS: None required.

WORK PROSCRIPTION DAYS: None required.

PRIVATE RITUAL: None required. Though, since ritual in Satanism serves as a means for releasing pent-up feelings, it might be considered as a worthwhile option for prisoners claiming adherence to the Satanism of the Church of Satan to have the privilege so that they can reach catharsis and then act in a more relaxed and balanced manner as part of the prison population.

CORPORATE RITUAL: None required, but see "private ritual" above.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: None, though vegetarianism is an elective supported by the philosophy.

RELIGIOUS CLOTHING: None required.

LEADERSHIP / MEETINGS

No meetings or worship services are required. The literature may be studied and rituals practiced by the Satanist without need for a Church representative being present.

Resources:

www.churchofsatan.com

The Satanic Bible and *The Satanic Rituals*, by Anton Szandor LaVey
The Satanic Scriptures by Peter H. Gilmore