

# SEASONAL CEREMONIES AND TEMPLE RITUALS

## TEMPLE LITURGY FOR THE E.S.S.G



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## ***Introduction***

This document is an exposition of the basic practices of all official temples of the Order of the Gnostic Star, E.S.S.G., and was based posthumously upon the practices of the very first temple of the Order, which was called Isis-Sophia I (1987 - 1991). This document represents a suggested outline of the basic temple rituals used by all functioning temples of the Order. It is expected that each temple's liturgy (body of rituals) will start, but then ultimately begin to vary, from the basic practices described herein. This rewriting phenomenon occurs because mature members are emboldened to rewrite and embellish these rites. The process of maturation would be loosely defined as where the core members of the group have become elders, a period not exceeding three to five years of consistent practice. These first elders will guide their group towards its own specific destiny, and be thereby fully self-determined. Thus every temple will have to take this basic ritual lore and rewrite it after they have fully mastered it.

The very first temple was started in 1986, but did not become fully active until the Autumn of 1987, and then, on February 1, 1988, the first Anniversarium was performed, establishing its official inauguration, and its place in history. The pattern of group activities was determined partially by the newly established Bylaws, and also driven by the desire of its membership to master the arts of magick, and to share in this mystery with others. Therefore, the temple met informally at least once a month, and usually more frequently. These frequent meetings represented the times when the group would practice ritual magick together, and so the normal Temple Consecration ceremony and the Mass of the Grail were performed to consecrate the space and to empower it. However, nine times a year, the temple met formally to celebrate the seasonal mysteries; and there were additional formal gatherings to perform Initiations, the five Grail Mystery gatherings, and a bi-annual gathering to perform the Vision Quest while camping in a remote location. The five Grail Mysteries were performed as a series of rites dictated by a Lunar event, beginning at Easter, and continuing for 61 days. As you can see, the group gathered together often, and for several specific reasons, and these can be grouped accordingly.

- ***Performance of Ritual Magick*** - times indicated by auspices and convenience.
- ***Seasonal Mystery Ceremonies and Temple Functions***. (Also Business Meetings)
- ***Grail Mystery Gatherings*** - Five Mysteries in all.
- ***Initiations*** - occurring whenever one of the members seeks and is qualified to undergo a transformational ordeal.
- ***Vision Quest*** (Natural Magick and outdoor camping).

For the Seasonal Mystery Ceremonies and the Initiations, the formal temple opening ceremony, called the Installation of the Gate, is performed in addition to the circle consecration rite. The performance of this ceremony requires that a quorum of temple officers be present to perform all of the allotted parts or roles. This ceremony is performed for the first and second degree initiations, but

not for any initiations beyond that level, since the higher initiations are more properly considered magickal ordeals, and use a corresponding magickal Circle Consecration rite and the Mass as their opening rituals.

The Bylaws are quite specific about the order and practice of the Seasonal Ceremonies, and we shall quote it in this document as a prelude to discussing these rituals, their structure and pattern, and the themes chosen by the first temple of the E.S.S.G.

The Calendric Celebrations represent the perfect venue for the practice of writing group rituals and ceremonies. The necessary elements are the basic dates and the range of research data as is presently available and found in the Western Mystery Tradition. The following is a list of those dates deemed of spiritual importance to the Order of the E.S.S.G. It will be noted that these are well defined by folk tradition and by historical precedent.

- Candlemass February 1st
- The Anniversarium of the Egregore February 13th
- Vernal Equinox March 21st
- Beltane May 1st
- Summer Solstice June 21st
- Autumnal Equinox September 21st
- Michaelmas September 29th
- Samhain October 31st
- Winter Solstice December 21st

These seasonal celebrations (except the Anniversarium) represent the four Quarter points and the four Cross-Quarter points of the four Seasons. Michaelmas is somewhat out of synch with the other seven. However, because temples of the Order always close after Midsummer (June 21st), the traditional cross quarter celebration of Lughnasadh is not represented. It has been found that the productive efforts of groups tend to fall considerably after Midsummer and they do not pick up again until the Autumn. The seasonal activity of the Temple within the Order is therefore properly terminated with the Summer Solstice and does not reconvene until the first week of September. In addition, the celebration of the Anniversarium is for the installation of the new officers of the Temple and to commemorate the installation of the first Golden Dawn Temple in 1888. The Golden Dawn was and still is the primary definition of the traditional Magickal Order and therefore is remembered with veneration. The Anniversarium ritual should therefore be retained intact and inviolate.

There shall also be established a Vision Quest which will be enacted in the Spring and in the Autumn. It shall consist of an outdoor gathering and working within a secure natural environment, thus expanding the operating base of the Temple.

The Grail Mysteries have their own Calendric cycle that is based upon the lunar cycle instead of the solar. These are five events that occur during a sixty-one day period that begins with the first Sunday after the first Full Moon following the Vernal Equinox. The following is a list of each of these

events and their relative occurrence to the first event.

- a. **Eosmass** - As stated previously, this Celebration occurs on the first Sunday following the first Full Moon after the Vernal Equinox. It takes the place of the traditional Celebration of Easter.
- b. **Ascension** - This rite occurs forty days after Eosmass and is always on a Thursday; being the Thursday following the fifth Sunday after Eosmass.
- c. **Pentecoste** - This rite occurs fifty days from Eosmass and is the Seventh Sunday after Eosmass.
- d. **Trinialti** - This Celebration occurs fifty-seven days from Eosmass and is the Eighth Sunday after Eosmass.
- e. **Anthrophos** - This Celebration occurs sixty-one days from Eosmass and eleven days after Pentecoste; being the Thursday after Trinialti and the end of the Grail cycle.

In addition are the first and second degree of the Order, and their specific mysteries and operations. These rites are performed when a candidate has specifically requested them, and has been judged properly prepared and worthy to undergo their powers and mysteries.

We will attempt to cover all of the above rituals, examine the ritual patterns and the themes that determined their construction. Such information will be necessary for the realization of these rituals and assist the student in writing new rituals and ceremonies to augment and even replace them. Each temple of the E.S.S.G. is given a body of lore to start their journey by a qualified elder, and this lore is what the first temple used as its liturgy. In this manner, each temple starts out where the Isis-Sophia I temple ended.

The following is a list of the rituals that are used by a temple of the Order of the Gnostic Star for its seasonal liturgies.

*Installation of the Gate* - This ceremony is used in place of or in addition to the usual temple consecration ritual and is used for formal gatherings where some kind of mystery is to be enacted. The pattern of this ritual is built into the first and second degree initiations, so it is not needed for these rites. This rite establishes sacred space, but uses the methods of a magickal lodge rather than the practice of a ritual magician, who would use a circle consecration rite.

*Installation of the Outer Quorum* - This ceremony is used to conduct all business meetings and resolve issues for the temple body. This rite should be performed at least once a month, allowing a forum for the discussion of magick, determining dates for planned rituals, initiations and seasonal ceremonies, and also determining the direction of the temple, selecting new officers (to be done before the Anniversarium, Feb. 13), accepting new members, and adjudicating issues.

*The Four Seasonal Ceremonies of the Equinoxes and Solstices* - These four ceremonies celebrate important concepts that stand for the entire season. In the first temple, these ceremonies introduced the four greater systems of Gnostic speculation: Valentinus, Basilides, Simon Magus and Justinus (Baruch the Blessed - a suitable mythos for the Summer Solstice).

*The Four Seasonal Gate Ceremonies of the Cross Quarter celebrations* - These four ceremonies celebrate the process of spiritual empowerment and their associated mysteries - being represented in the first temple as the mystikon of that particular seasonal system of Gnosis established by the Solstice or Equinox. These dates are for Candlemas, Beltain, Michaelmas and Samhain. The latter, Samhain, has no associated Gnostic season per se, and so is used as a celebration of the mysteries of the dead.

*The Anniversarium Eggregorae* - This ritual is used to install the new officers for the coming year, to commemorate the Eggregore of the Order, and to extend the powers and blessing of the temple to all attendees. It is considered the most important of the seasonal ceremonies, since it is used to establish the continuity of all temples in the Order.

*The Five Grail Mystery ceremonies* - These rituals are used to express the powers and also undergo the mysterious transformations of the Grail. As an analogue of the old Catholic Lunar festival of Easter, Pentecost, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, these rituals represent the pre-Christian mysteries of these events, being therefore powerful magickal transformations harnessed by the group. These mysteries occur from the season of Spring through early Summer, presenting the resurrection and magnification of the Power of Light in the world.

*The Vision Quest rituals* - There are two variations of this ritual (although one is generally used over the other), and the temple can choose one of these for their obligated bi-annual grove workings. It is important that the members of the temple learn to translate their magick into a natural setting, so that the magick of the temple is also translated into the world at large. The Vision Quest rite is used to empower the quest of self-realization, and assists the initiate in mastering him/herself as well as the natural world.

The Vision Quest is an ordeal practiced in a sacred grove setting in a remote natural location. The members of the temple travel in a caravan to a secluded site and for three days and two nights, they perform their magickal workings together in a communal gathering. The mundane chores associated with camping, making fires, gathering wood and cooking food become wholly a magickal convocation, and nature itself participates in the revelation of greater spiritual insights and self-realization. The Vision Quest can take on mythic themes, as the passage initiation variation represents, or is the experience of natural or earth magick, also called Geomancy. These exercises build up abilities and knowledge for greater magick, when the earth itself is changed by the hand of humankind to exhibit mythic and symbolic analogues, causing the world to become imbued with the World of Spirit.

*The Initiation Ceremonies of Neophyte and Accolyte, and their associated Mysteries* - also the

Consecration of the Hallows (Tool consecration ritual for the Neophyte). These five ceremonies represent the first two initiations for the Order of the Gnostic Star, E.S.S.G., wherein the candidate undergoes the ordeals of the Elementals and the Talismanic Elementals. These initiations, their Grail Mysteries, and the act of consecrating the tools of the ritual magician, establishes the seeker on the path of the ritual magician. These two initiations represent the culmination of the practices and self-mastery of the proto-magician, and the elevation to the Third degree is the beginning of the training of a true magician. The true magician learns to master the arts of theurgy, and is thus called a Theurgist, or *Theurgicus*.

The first two initiations have two variations, the first is the performance of the initiation rite by a full temple of at least seven officers, the second variation is where the initiation is performed by a single adept. The third and fourth degree initiations are also performed one on one, representing the training of the adept magician as a private affair between student and master. By fifth degree, the initiate has become him/herself an adept, and so all initiations are the affairs of the magician alone, with only a few rites allowing a minimum of participants. The greater magickal tests of these higher degrees are called Ordeals, performed by the adept magician as a form of discovery and realization of the spiritual Self, as the Absolute. The highest expression of this realization is, of course, represented by the ritual invocation of the Bornless One.

The above rituals represent the core tradition of the Order of the Gnostic Star, and as such, are given to the seekers to begin their initiatic journey. There are a total of twenty-two rituals in this core tradition, and with the addition of the Ordeals of the Elementals and the Talismanic Elementals, represent the sum total of the knowledge of the magickal student of the E.S.S.G. When he or she has graduated to the next level of experience, they are transcended, but not neglected. The core tradition continues even when the student has become a master magician and high adept, however, it has assumed a whole new structure and spiritual theme.

To master these twenty-two rituals and ceremonies, we must examine them in greater detail, and understand both the structure of these rituals and the spiritual themes expounded within them. We shall examine each set of rituals, as outlined above, and demonstrate their simplicity as well as their sophistication. Prior to the founding of this magickal Order, there were no magickal practices of this character or quality in the Western Mystery Tradition. The E.S.S.G. has established a new level of ritual construction and expression, becoming the basis for a new paradigm in the practice of ritual magick.

### ***Temple Opening Ceremonies***

There are two temple opening ceremonies, one for the Inner Temple, wherein magick, seasonal mysteries and initiations are performed, and one for the outer Temple, where business matters and issues are addressed, as well knowledge lectures and expositions of new magickal techniques. Both opening rites are considered ceremonies, because they do not use a magick circle nor assume god-forms, which is a prerequisite of ritual magick. Yet both rituals are very formalized, and require the memorization of scripts and the assumption of roles. Temple ceremonies are always very formal

affairs, but also, by necessity, very private and secret affairs. Magicians seek to practice their rites in privacy and anonymity, and the events that take place within the outer and inner temple represent the symbolic and magickal interplay of personalities, forces and entities within the space of the temple egregore. Thus all actions that occur are to be perceived as being within the super-symbolic reality of transcendental consciousness, being therefore imbued with significant meaning and prophetic import, and shining with the neumen of Spirit.

### *Installation of the Gate*

The Installation of the Gate ceremony has two parts, the first is the opening of the secret gate of the mysteries, the inner secrets of the spiritual Self, and the closing of that same gate, with a proper ending, a symbolic grounding and centering. Unlike ritual magick, where the magician would ground and center by obvious acts of sending the excess powers into the earth and out of the body, this grounding and centering is philosophical, and it establishes the theme of the working temple as a place of peace, collaboration and constructive effort. The Installation of the Gate ceremony is performed in a magickal temple within consecrated space. Thus the spiritual and magickal nature of the inner being of the soul is emphasized in this ceremony.

The focus of the ceremony is the central altar, wherein is placed the painted lamén representing the temple, and sitting upon this lamén is the temple's specially consecrated power crystal, used to collect the powers, energies and insights of all magickal workings performed in the temple. The crystal is therefore greatly empowered and represents the core of the soul of the temple egregore. The crystal is covered with a veil, and is the sole responsibility of the Auctor, the seer and master diviner for the temple, as well as scribe and treasurer (his/her mundane roles). The two high officers, the Magister and the Hierius, stand before the altar in the West and Southwest respectively, and the Auctor stands in the Northeast. The four Sentinels stand in their respective cardinal points outside the magick circle, the rest of the members stand around the periphery of the magick circle, and everyone is facing the altar in the center of the circle. Then the Magister and the Hierius bring the temple to proper order, performing the initial convocations of the Order, and also give a clue to the secret and ever present inner temple organization, the forces of Light and Darkness, and the gate that lies within their midst. This is a principle mystery of the Order, and should not be expounded upon in this document, but allusions to deeper structures within the spiritual hierarchy of the temple are revealed in many rituals and ceremonies of the Order. The climax of this magickal mystery is when the Magister unveils the magick crystal.

The Auctor is the key to the ceremony, and assumes his/her place before the magick crystal when it is still veiled, and after it is unveiled, draws out its energy and from it establishes the four-fold emanation of its powers through the four Watchtowers. The crystal's powers are unleashed, and the four Sentinels, as if on cue, expound the mysteries that surround the power and mystery of the crystal. These are represented by the symbolic analogues of the numbers 4, 12, 7, 3, 16, and 11 (these numbers are added together to make 54, or 9 - the hidden mystery). Then the four Sentinels reveal their roles - the Eastern Sentinel is the expounder of the mysteries (light of the East), the Southern Sentinel is the expounder of philosophy (healing, growth and inspiration), the Western

Sentinel holds the sword of the Judgement and Protection, and the Northern Sentinel holds the secret key of Gnosis, which is insight, truth and spiritual love. The Auctor is the augur of wisdom, the dweller of the threshold and the master of fear and passion, the Magister symbolizes the power and majesty of the Great Magus, and is summoned as such by the Hierius; and the Hierius is the symbol of the New Dawn, the way of transformation and spiritual evolution, as summoned by the Magister. The Auctor ends the visualized invocation, by revealing that the spiritual source is unlimited, infinite and inexhaustable, and those who realize this mystery are endowed with liberation and supreme happiness. The three higher officers have expressed their visualized invocation while representing the forces of the Southeastern Angle, the Western Watchtower, and the Northeastern Angle - thus forming a gate trigon. All that remains is the opening of the portal gate gesture, performed by the Auctor. The Gate is opened, and revealed therein is the five-fold Hallows of the Grail, the Sword of Power, Holy Chalice, the Sacred Lance, and the Stone of Sion - each symbolically representing a power and virtue of the Grail itself. The Magister then presents to all of the participants that the gate is now open, and it follows with a prayerful evocation of the four-fold Godhead of the magicians.

Within the Inner Gate, the primary mystery is performed, usually one of the seasonal ceremonies or the Anniversarium. The first and second degrees have a shorter variation of the Inner Temple opening ceremony acts as an introit to the initiation rite proper. Once the rite is concluded, then the officers and members of the temple reassemble in their previous positions to perform the Closing rite.

The Auctor concludes the Inner Mystery by performing the closing portal gate gesture, and makes a sign of the invoking pentagram of spirit masculine over it, to seal the gateway. He/She exclaims that the gate is closed, the matter concluded, the test complete; but whatever has been expressed as the central mystery exists within the inner planes in perpetuity. The Magister calls the body of the temple to return to the world of humanity, beginning the initiatic process of translating the inner knowledge so that it become intelligible to the outer world. Then the seven officers declaim the mysteries in reverse, beginning with the Auctor, the Magister, the Hierius, and the four Sentinels, who declaim the four Elemental Mysteries in reverse. Then the Magister declares that the temple circle is opened, all the mysteries are obscured and all tasks are completed in good order. He/She makes the hope that all such endeavors continue to be practiced in harmony, and with everyone in agreement, the rite is ended.

### *Installation of the Outer Quorum*

The Installation of the Outer Quorum is an outer temple opening ceremony that is used to establish the magickal environment of the lodge as a place of conducting temple business. It has the same pattern as the Installation of the Gate ceremony, but it is performed without a circle consecration ritual, and with the members dressed in formal attire and not robes and vestments. In this ceremony, the officers take on their more mundane roles as administrators of the temple. Instead of wearing chasubles emblazoned with the symbol of their office, the officers instead wear medallions inscribed with the symbol of their office. The Magister, if a man, wears a top hat while conducting business,



and if a woman, wears a veil.

The lodge setting consists of stations in the four quadrants set with chairs, and a table set in west with three chairs. The four chairs at the four quadrants are for the four Sentinels, and the table and three chairs are for the Magister, Hierius and the Auctor. Other chairs are arranged in a circle, and these are for the members of the temple, and a lectern has been placed in the center of the circle. The four Sentinels act as Wardens who guard the sanctity of the meeting. The Magister acts as the presiding officer, assisted by the Hierius. The Auctor acts as the secretary and the treasurer, keeping notes of the proceedings and also guiding the meeting through the phases of its official business.

The meeting is brought to order after the Auctor has sealed the door, and the four Sentinels have empowered the four cardinal directions. The Magister brings everyone to their feet, standing in front of their chairs, and begins the convocation that places the meeting within the domain and auspices of sacred space. The Magister then requests that the Hierius proceed to discretely examine all of the members to make certain that everyone knows the sign and password of the temple. This is a pre-selected symbolic sign and secret word that the temple uses to identify members of that body, and is changed on a regular basis (every season). The sign and password would of course be different for each temple within the Order, and no two would be alike. If a member does not know the password (guests and new members should be in this category), then if he or she is properly vouched for and accepted by the Magister, then that person is discretely given the sign and the password, otherwise the person is disqualified and escorted out of the meeting room. The Sentinels would make a gate opening at the door, and then open it and see that the unwanted individual truly leaves the premises before returning and resealing the gate at the doorway. Hopefully this embarrassment would be avoided by making certain that only members in good standing attend business meetings - but it can be used to make a dramatic point with someone who forces his/her way into a meeting.

After every member has been examined and found correct, the Hierius reports this fact to the Magister, who requests him/her to say the sacred invocation, which is done, and responded to by the Magister. The message is clear from the text; the members are asked to be at peace so that everyone feels secure to speak their mind. The Auctor also reminds everyone that he/she is taking down notes of the proceeding for future consideration, and with this reminder said, he/she requests that the litany of the mysteries be pronounced. The Sentinels oblige the Auctor, as does the Hierius and the Magister. Then the roles of each of the officers are declaimed, as they are in the Installation of the Gate ceremony, except the emphasis in this rite is on the outer temple as opposed to the inner and spiritual temple. The four quadrants are so addressed by the four Sentinels, and the Southeast, West and Northeast Angles are addressed by the Hierius, Magister and Auctor - and all declaim the exoteric mysteries of the Order. When this is completed, the Magister declares that the secret quorum is established and the outer gate is established. The Auctor opens the books and prepares to begin the meeting.

The first order of business is the roll call, and the Auctor conducts the roll call to determine the attendance. Then guests and new members are invited to speak one by one at the lectern, introducing themselves and declaring their business with the temple, or that they are a new member attending their first meeting. Then the Magister requests that members or their associates who are in distress

or ill be identified for the prayers and considerations of the body. After this is accomplished, the meeting is properly begun. The Auctor then assume control of the meeting, directing the members to each order of business in turn. Issues that require adjudication are turned over to the Magister, who with the aid of the Hierius, seeks to get the quorum to a consensus on each issue before it is considered resolved. The orderly progression of issues is controlled by the Auctor, who brings them up, starting with the oldest and proceeding to the newest. Old business has precedence over new business. Once all of the business is completed or the allotted time for the meeting has expired, then the meeting is properly acquitted, following the reverse of the manner in which it was begun. The gate is closed, as are the books held by the Auctor. Then when the ceremony is completed, the four Sentinels unseal and open the door, and they escort the officers out, followed by the members of the temple, and the last is the Auctor, who shuts off the lights and locks the door, taking his/her precious books with him/her.

### ***Seasonal Ceremonies***

There are two types of seasonal ceremonies, the quarterly seasonal ceremony, and the cross quarterly seasonal ceremony. The four quarterly seasonal ceremonies are the Summer and Winter Solstices, and the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes. The four quarterly seasonal ceremonies are Candlemas, Beltain, Michaelmas and Samhain. The traditional cross quarterly season of Lammas or Lughnasad is omitted because the temple is temporarily closed from after the Summer Solstice to the first week of September, since most people take vacations and travel during the high summer months. The quarter season and the cross quarter seasons are paired up, Winter Solstice is paired with Candlemas, and the Spring Equinox is paired with Beltain, and the Autumn Equinox is paired with Michaelmas. The Summer Solstice and Samhain have no pairs, and so they stand alone. The quarter season is used to introduce a new concept, and the cross quarter season pair is used to amplify it through a mystery gate structure or event.

The ritual pattern for the quarterly seasonal ceremonies consists of four steps, and these are the introduction or introit, the circumambulation and spiritual exegesis, the generation of the seasonal vortex (using the Watchtowers for this purpose), and the analysis of the formula and thematic meditation session, performed through the Ultra-point. The ritual pattern for these ceremonies was designed to be very simple, allowing the temple body to easily master and rewrite them. The first exercise in rewriting usually occurs when the theme of the ceremony is changed to suit the tastes of the temple. Later on, the structure of the ritual can undergo modifications as well. However, it would be a good idea to at least keep the structure of the quarterly seasonal ceremonies simple and easy to learn, for the sake of new members joining the body. It can therefore fall to the new members to perform the seasonal ceremonies as part of the new duties in the temple, and not be such a daunting task.

The basic ritual structure for the quarterly seasonal ceremony begins with the introduction or introit, then follows with a circumambulation performed in a deocil arc, while the celebrant expounds upon the gnostic exegesis that defines the seasonal gnostic pattern for the coming seasonal phase. The next step is the generation of the seasonal vortex, using the four Watchtowers and the Ultra-point

as the qualifying nodes. Each quarterly season determines the Watchtower where the ritual structure begins; the East is the beginning point for the Spring Equinox, South for the Summer Solstice, West for the Autumn Equinox, and North for the Winter Solstice. At each Watchtower and the Ultra-point the four Sentinels and the Celebrant set the seasonal device (Iron Cross - Spring Equinox, Rose Cross - Autumn Equinox, Hexagrammic Cross - Winter Solstice, Rose Ankh - Summer Solstice), vibrating the formula letter, intoning the formula word, and the basic thematic expression. The four outer nodes are drawn together into the fifth, which is the Ultra-point, and therein the Celebrant expresses the analysis of the formula for the event.

The themes chosen by the first temple of the E.S.S.G., Isis-Sophia I, were wholly Gnostic in character, and therefore, borrowed from four selected systems of Gnosis, as they occurred from the second to the fifth century on the common era. There were, in fact, probably hundreds of different systems of Gnosticism during this period, and it is probably erroneous to even group them together. But for the sake of simplicity, four conceptual models of Gnosticism were selected to match the four seasons. For the Spring Equinox, the Ennoian system of Simon Magus was chosen. For the Summer Solstice, the system of Baruch the Blessed (power of desire), as derived by Justian, was chosen, since Summer is considered a time of pleasures and plenty. For the Autumn Equinox, the Sophian system of Valentinus was chosen, and for the Winter Solstice, the Emanation system of Basilides was chosen. The basic underlying themes of the four seasons are as follows, and these, of course, determined the choices of the Gnostic systems. For the Spring Equinox, the theme is Awakening Awareness, for the Summer Solstice, the Perfection of Love, for the Autumn Equinox, the Harvest of Wisdom, and for the Winter Solstice, the Rebirth of Light. The temple body can use these underlying themes to build their own seasonal ceremonies for the four quarter seasons. The Gnostic exegesis and formulas are particular of each selected system of Gnosis, and captures the basic tenets of each of these systems. The student need only read and study these rituals, and the basic philosophy of their associated systems of Gnosis should be clearly described. However, we will not cover these systems in detail in this document.

The basic ritual structure for the cross quarter seasonal ceremony begins with the introduction or introit, then follows with a circumambulation performed in a widdershins arc, while the celebrant expounds upon the gnostic event or mystery that fulfills the seasonal gnostic pattern introduced in the quarter seasonal ceremony. The next step is the generation of the event vortex, using the four Angles and the Infra-point as the qualifying nodes. Each cross quarter season determines the node or Angle where the ritual structure begins; the Northeast is the beginning point for Beltain, Southwest for Michaelmas, Northwest for Candlemas, and Southeast for Samhain. At each Angle and the Infra-point the four Sentinels and the Celebrant set the seasonal device (Iron Cross - Beltain, Rose Cross - Michaelmas, Hexagrammic Cross - Candlemas, Pshent Cross - Samhain), vibrating the formula letter, intoning the formula word, and the basic thematic expression (Beltain - Liberation of the Ennoia, Michaelmas - Fulfillment of Sophia, Candlemas - Quest for the Light of Gnosis, Samhain - Death and Resurrection). The four outer nodes are drawn together into the fifth, which is the Infra-point, and therein the Celebrant expresses the analysis of the formula for the event. The final action is the erection and crossing of the Gate Threshold - the climax of the gnostic event expressed by the ceremony.

The ritual pattern of the cross quarter seasonal ceremony is similar to the quarterly season ceremonies, yet with some distinctive differences. First, the circumambulation performed after the introit is done in a widdershins circuit, then, the four Angles are used instead of the four Watchtowers to build the seasonal vortex (in this case, called the event or mystery vortex), and the four Angles are drawn together into the Infra-point instead of the Ultra-point. In addition, there is a Gate structure erected in the magick circle through which all the temple body must make a passage.

The cross quarter seasonal ceremony of Samhain is a special case, and does not relate well to the other ceremonies, since it focuses upon the issues of mortality and immortality. There are two versions of this ceremony, one that celebrates the famous writing of C.G. Jung, entitled The Seven Sermons to the Dead. The ritual is broken into eight parts (the four Angles, Infra-point, and three Gate Nodes), and each part encapsulates each of the Seven Sermons. There is another version that focuses on the magickal system of Honorius, and this is the basic staple ritual that fits in with the other three cross quarter seasonal ceremonies.

The follow tables of correspondences will assist the members of the Order to understand the four quarterly seasons and cross quarterly seasons through their symbolic annotations.

***The Cycle of Light:***

West	Autumn Exquinox	Light Waning	Harvest of Wisdom	Heh (Water)
North	Winter Solstice	Light Reborn	Rebirth from Darkness	Heh (final) (Earth)
East	Vernal Exquinox	Light Waxing	Awakening Awareness	Vav (Air)
South	Summer Solstice	Light Triumphant	Perfection of Love	Yod (Fire)

***The Four Festivals:***

Candlemas	Festival of Light (Illumination)
Beltain	Marriage Festival (Spirit and Soul)
Michaelmas	Festival of the Tetramorph (Four Emissaries)
Samhain	Feast of the Dead - Spiritual Rebirth

### ***Four Currents of Gnosis:***

Spring	Ennoia (Thought) and Nous (Mind)	Gnostic system of Simon Magus	Power of the Divine Will (Thelema)
Summer	Baruch the Blessed - the Eternal Power of the Life force	Gnostic system of Justian	Life and the Natural Destiny (Eros)
Autumn	Eternal Sophia and the Redemption of the Pneuma	Gnostic system of Valentinus	Wisdom and the secret Illumination of Initiation (Agape)
Winter	Abraxas and the Emanations of the True and Hidden Deity	Gnostic system of Basilides	Rebirth of Nous - Docetism (Thanatos)

### ***Five Gate Structures of the Order:***

<b>Gate Type</b>	<b>Guide (Preparation)</b>	<b>Guardian (Test)</b>	<b>Ordeal (Process)</b>
1. Installation of the Gate	Beit - Magus (Atu I)	Shin - Aion (Atu XX)	Tau - Cosmos (XXI)
	Inception of the mysteries of magick that protect and cause humanity to evolve.	Drawing of consciousness, continual expansion of spiritual awareness.	The source of the absolute that is experienced as union.
2. Michaelmas	Gimmel - High Priestess (Atu II)	Quf - The Moon (Atu XVIII)	Chet - Chariot (Atu VII)
	The Spiritual Process that assists the seeker to establish self-determination.	Overcoming the fear of the unknown to perceive the psychic source of being.	The eternal moment of the indestructible life-essence - eternal ecstasy.
3. Candlemas	Yod - Hermit (Atu IX)	Tet - Strength (Atu XI)	Lamed - Justice (Atu VIII)
	Purification, reduction to simplistic forms, asceticism causes clarity.	Controlling the self and one's passions - eliminating the lust for achievement.	The impartial forces of karma - mastering the tides of change and fate (realizing destiny).
4. Beltain	Vav - Hierophant (Atu V)	Peh - The Tower (Atu XVI)	Kaf - Wheel of Fortune (Atu X)
	The ability to synthesize spirituality and material existence as one.	Withstanding internal change and transformation to forge the eternal aspect of the Self.	The trials of the mastery of death; discovering the power and beauty of life through experience.
5. Samhain	Tzaddi - The Star (Atu XVII)	Ain - The Devil (Atu XV)	Mim - Hanged Man (Atu XII)
	Self-emancipation, releasing the self from the bondage of the illusions of life.	Integrating the negative and positive aspects of the self into a holistic expression of being.	Spiritual transformation via the transcendence as realized through suffering and pain.

### *Anniversarium Egregorae*

The Anniversarium Egregorae - or the Anniversary of the Egregore, is a ceremony that is performed every February 13, to commemorate the first installation of a temple in the Order, i.e., the Isis-Sophia I, established in 1988. This was also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inauguration of the Golden Dawn, and so it is kept as an auspicious date in the calendar of the Order. This ceremony is also performed to install the new officers of the year, who are elected after the new year. The new Magister Templi is rotated into that position after having been the Hierius for a year. The new Hierius and Auctor are elected by the temple body during the first body meeting of the new year. Veneration is given in this rite to the Golden Dawn, and also to Frederick Hockley, whose workings, occult writings and connections set the stage for the explosion of occult interest in all forms of ceremonial magick. It is said that Frederick Hockley brought together all of the strains of medieval and renaissance magick, so that others, like S. L. MacGreggor Mathers and Aleister Crowley could bring this art into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. Both individuals owed a great debt to Frederick Hockley, as did an entire generation of occultists in Victorian England.

The first thing required for this ceremony is a week long vigil, starting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February. The one designated the senior elder must take a special and blessed glass enclosed vigil candle, and light it without the use of matches or a lighter. The Elder should make the fire with flint, shavings of magnesium, tinder, and a blunt athame. The Elder lights the natural flame, striking the flint with the blunt athame into the tinder and magnesium shavings, and quickly and easily starting a small fire. This fire is used to light the candle, and it is kept burning in the temple for seven days.

During this period of the vigil, when the candle is tended and kept burning by the Elder, the members of the temple reflect on all that has happened for the past year, and after meditating upon these occurrences, he or she will determine their path and course of occult action for the coming year. This is used to compose a list of resolutions and aspirations for the next 12 months of temple activity. In addition to their aspirations, the temple members must also write up a paragraph or two describing who they are and what role they seek to have in the spiritual workings of the temple. The whole composition is a kind of presentation that each member of the temple produces, and this is calligraphically written with ink on pure parchment, signed with their magickal name and devices, making it a Talismanic document. This presentation is read by the temple members every year, and so everyone must compose it afresh, even if they are long standing members. The presentation should include a members' personal goals, spiritual alignments (of their own personal spiritual perspectives) and also personal spiritual teachers, or persons of inspiration, whether alive, dead or mythic. The presentation should also be succinct and (hopefully) not too long.

Also, during this period, those of the temple who are at least third degree perform the invocation of the Archangelic Egregore of the Order, Chiramael. For some, this may be the first invocation working that they have experienced. The invocation is performed, and those who are present commune with the Spirit and Authorities of the Egregore of the Order. Thus the Spirit of the Egregore has become manifest and present during the period of the vigil.

When it is the time to gather together to perform the Anniversarium, the members come with their written presentations, armed with their weapons of magick, vestments, and their bodies purified, perfumed and prepared for the work. They arrive at the temple, which is already prepared for their arrival, thus it is fumigated with costly incense, and adorned with decorations and flowers. The vigil candle is still burning (or has been replaced, transferring the flame, and thus keeping it alive), and the temple is dim and mysterious. The sigil of Chiramael is present on or above the altar used to say Mass.

Prior to working this ceremony of the Anniversarium, the temple members must say a Mass (either Low or High) and set the four Angles with the Host fragments; and a large temple host and some consecrated wine must also be set aside for the congregants. The temple members also perform a circle consecration ritual, usually, the Consecration of the Quest. All that takes place in the magick circle is now of great import. The Mass is attended by all the temple members, and the circle consecration is performed as it would for any major magickal working. During the Mass, the Celebrant blesses beeswax candles to be given to each member of the temple. This Mass also empowers the Spirit of the Egregore, if it has been previously invoked. Sacraments from the Mass are kept for use during the Communion of the Anniversarium, so there is enough wine and hosts for the whole temple body.

The members must have already selected a Magister Templis, a Hierius, and an Auctor by consensus (using the Installation of the Quorum ceremony) and chosen a member to act as the Elder. A Charter expressing Authority for the Erection of a Temple of the E.S.S.G. must also be prepared with the proper authorized signatures and sigils, if this is the first Anniversarium for the temple. The parchment presentations that each member has composed will be taken and kept with the charter of the temple. The temple charter is on display for this event, and so it is removed from its place of safe-keeping. The previous parchments of the body are removed (if a previous Anniversarium has been performed), and the new ones are enclosed with the temple charter, perhaps even sealed with a ribbon, binding them all together. For the moment, the parchments are in the hands of the temple members, to be read during the first section of the ceremony.

The Anniversarium ceremony consists of six sections, and these are the Presentation of the Adepts, the Invocation of the Spiritual Hierarchy, the Charismation of the Officers, the Ceremony of Light, the Invocation of the Egregore, and the Communion ceremony. The ritual starts with the open sharing of the aspirations of each member standing as equals in a ring; and starting with the elder and proceeding widdershins, they each in turn read from their presentations. This begins the ceremony by setting or charging the Egregore of the Order with the desires and designs of the temple members; from this point, the members invoke the spiritual hierarchy of the temple and the Order, then consecrate the three candidate officers, perform the ceremony of light, where each member lights their beeswax candle from the vigil candle of consecrated flame, and then formally engage and invoke the Archangelic Egregore, and within this sacred conclave, perform the communion ceremony, which ends the Anniversarium. The flow of the energies begins with the oral presentations and proceeds to the establishment of the official holarchical structures of the temple within the Order, and sharing the communion of consecrated sacraments together as a final act of spiritual solidarity. This ceremony is quite profound in its ritual structure as well as in its flow of

ritual actions, and the more that the members can put into the perfecting and artistically performing this ritual, the more profound will be its impact. The members of a temple work together for a year, and this year of magickal activity, study, personal growth and conscious evolution can be quite profound. The Anniversarium ceremony seeks to express this mystery of the group mind and soul, that always manifests when a group of ritual magicians come together for their spiritual work.

After the presentation of the adepti, or where the members read their presentations together while standing in a ring, robed and arrayed with their vestments and jewels, the Invocation of the Spiritual Hierarchy is performed. The four Sentinels take their places in the four Watchtowers, and the Elder, acting as Chief Celebrant, stands in the center of the circle - with the members taking their seats in the periphery. The five then invoke the Potency of the Grail, with the Celebrant invoking the three aspects of Deity within the Order, and these are Marah Sophia (bitter wisdom), Lucis Christos (illuminated initiation) and Bridget (the sacramental blessing of life). Descending from this trinity is the Archangelic Egregore of Chirmael, who is called to witness this rite. Then the five Graal Hallows are invoked, which are Therapeuo (healing forces), Prostaia (freedom from tyranny), Agape (companionship), Agathos (bounty), and Gnosis (enlightenment). The Seven Rays are invoked, as the planetary archetypes of the Seven Planetary Spirits, and the Seven Gnostic teachers. After this, the Celebrant sets to the four Watchtowers the Analysis of the Nomen Ordinis, or Name of the Order, which is the E.S.S.G.

When these actions are completed, the matrix of active Powers and Authorities of the correspondences of the Order have been duly invoked, establishing the temple as part of the lineage of the Order, and preparing it for the proper installation of the ruling officers. Within the auspices of these Spiritual Archetypes, the three officer candidates, Magister Templi, Hierius and Auctor are consecrated and administered their oath of magickal office. Following is the Ceremony of Dedication of the Temple, where first the Auctor is consecrated (a second and third time) by the Magister, and then the Hierius. The charter or manifesto of the temple is shown and read, and then each member of the temple swears an oath of fealty to the newly elevated officers and to the temple, and the Order at large. What follows is the Ceremony of Light, where the Magister presents to each member a beeswax candle, and assists them to light it from the vigil candle. The Magister first reads the hymn to the Symbolic Power of the Flame (from the Zend Avesta of the ancient Persian Magi), as a blessing to the natural flame of the vigil candle. Then after all of the members have lit their own candles, they raise them slowly up until they touch to form a single flame, holding them in this position briefly, then lowering them back down. They then say in unison the Oath of the Code of Ethics, said by all members of the E.S.S.G., whatever the differences in their liturgy.

The final two acts of the ceremony are the Invocation of the Egregore and the Communion rite. The Sentinels take their positions at the four quarters and the Celebrant sets up the Invocation Triangle and sets therein a small container of sacramental wine, a host, and burning incense. A Chalice of consecrated wine and a plate of consecrated bread are also set in the triangle. The triangle is sealed with a sword, which the Auctor wields to ward the Gate. The triangle may be set up in the Northeast or Northwest Angle. The Magister and the Hierius stand in the center of the circle, with the rest of the Temple members sitting around them, chanting at various moments the name Chirmael. The Celebrant stands with the Auctor, raising his arms, he recites the charm of manifestation; beginning



with the last syllable of the name, he/she intones this as a word, and then adding the next to the last syllable to the last and intoning this as a new word, and then at each point adding yet another syllable to the word, until the full name of *Chiramael* is fully intoned - thus causing this Archangelic Egregore to become invoked and manifest. The Celebrant charges the four Angles and the Ultra-point with the formula letters of the name of Chiramael, and then performs the Analysis of the Formula in the center of the circle. A psalm from the psalter of the Sworn Book of Honorius is intoned along with an invocation of the Egregore. The rite is completed with an invoking spiral placed around the invoking triangle, and the congregants chanting the Egregore's name. In this auspicious moment, the secret password and sign of the temple is shared with the members, having been spontaneously chosen or determined by the Auctor.

The extra bread and wine that was placed in the invoking triangle and imbued with the power and blessings of the Archangelic Egregore, Chirmael, is removed from the triangle, and the Magister and Hierius take these sacraments into their possession. The members of the Temple sit within the circle. The Magister blesses the large loaf of bread and the Hierius blesses the Chalice of Wine. The bread and wine are then passed to each member deocil wherein he or she shall break off a piece of bread and dip it into the Wine. Thus each member partakes of the essence of Chiramael imbued into the bread and wine. The Magister says a prayer of thanksgiving and then makes the sign of the equal arm cross over each member sitting in the circle, and then the temple members sit in quiet meditation.

After all of these proceedings are completed, the members of the temple stand and reassemble, and perform the Installation of the Gate ceremony, the closing of the Temple section. Thus the temple is now closed in the proper manner, ready to be opened for the first temple gathering of the season of the temple year, which is the Spring Equinox. Then the brothers and sisters of the temple proceed to a great feast, prepared in the honor of the newly elected/rotated Hierius, Auctor and Magister.

### ***The Gail Mystery Ceremonies***

The five Grail Mystery ceremonies represent a higher level of seasonal ceremony, representing the cycle that the Grail manifested in five various forms to humanity, and then disappeared. These five events also represent a sacramental cycle of the waxing of the light, and so as a Gnostic concept, it is the period that symbolizes the spiritual and psychological phases that cause enlightenment. These five phases are explained in the following paragraphs.

***Eosmas*** - the Dawning of the Light - the beginning period of the sacral emanation of the Spirit of the Grail. The first appearance of the Grail in the Arthurian romances occurs during Easter Sunday. This manifestation begins the mysterious passage of the Grail Quest and its various manifestations. The first phase of enlightenment always begins with a profound awakening and inner awareness, a great stirring of the soul, and a great restlessness that overtakes the mundane and settled cycles of existence. It is at this point that the seeker becomes aware that he or she is at the threshold of true enlightenment, and this awareness is presaged with all sorts of brilliant psychic manifestations,

feelings of bliss and ecstasy, and also one undergoes feelings of extreme inadequacy, isolation and despair. Then the manifestation abruptly ceases, and one is left in the darkness of the normal world, now hopelessly inadequate and unfulfilled. This experience begins the true quest for enlightenment, for without the revelation of Spirit in all its glory, one would never desire anything other than what life has to offer. The aftermath is a great restless seeking, and an agony of searching in vain for further signs and directives that would cause the great light of bliss to return.

***Ascensio*** - The Ascending Awareness of the Evolving Spiritual forces of the Grail, therefore, the Adept seeks to achieve immersion into the totality of the Holy Spirit. The second phase in the search for enlightenment represents the promise of the previously experienced manifestation of Spirit, and its profound awakening, to return and aid in the enlightenment of the seeker. After awakening, the seeker prepares to receive the Spirit, and is filled with the joy of anticipation and celebration. Once the adept is truly awakened, then he or she can participate in his/her own spiritual evolution - and the process of spiritual evolution becomes one that is no longer autonomous, but directed by the seeker and his/her higher self or Atman. Ascensio is performed forty days from Eosmas, (or four days from the fifth Sunday from Eosmas), it represents the complete cyclic process of the Grail Spirit, where it re-appears, or at this point, is heralded as immanently appearing. Thus forty days is the first octave of the Grail forces and intelligences, and the seeker prepares him/herself for the reappearance of the Grail in its most profound and physical manifestation, the climax of the Grail cycle that occurs 10 days hence.

***Pentecoste*** - Manifestation of the Holy Spirit - the third phase in the search for enlightenment brings one to experience the empowerment and directives of the Absolute Spirit. Unlike the first phase, which is experienced as light, bliss and beauty as seen from afar, the second revelation of the Spirit is experienced in a profoundly intimate and physical manner. Here the expression of the Absolute Spirit becomes tangible as tongues of flame descending from heaven, and the influx of the Holy Spirit causes everything to be transformed and changed. The manifestation of Spirit is very selective, and not all experience it in the same way, and some do not experience it at all. The requirement from the first revelation is to internally purify the self of all distracting motivations, so the self is light and free from the urges, pressures and false agendas of the petty ego. The desire to be liberated and to truly know the Spirit in its most essential revelation must be the highest driving force of the seeker, and nothing less will succeed. The word Pentecost means fifty, and so it is fifty days after Eosmas, and these fifty days are used to prepare the self in the rites of reduction, simplicity and purification. The number fifty is also sacred to Geburah, and so the rites associated with this event are sacred to Mars, and its powers of eliminating personal karma through exalted self-awareness and discipline.

***Trinialti*** - Celebration of the Revelation of the Grail as a Tripartite Power (Trimorphic Protenoia) - the fourth phase in the search for enlightenment represents the revelation of the Inner Mystery of the Grail - that the Key is Tripartite in nature. This ceremony is performed seven days from the Pentecoste and 57 days from Eosmas. The Trimorphic aspects of the Grail Enlightenment present themselves to the seeker as the essential definition of the Mystery of the Grail Spirit. These three aspects of Grail enlightenment are Inspiration, Illumination and Beatification. Yet these three aspects are the phases of what is called spiritual ecstasy. The technique of gaining spiritual ecstasy is as important as enlightenment itself, and it has many variations, and this mystery is locked in the

heart of the individual seeker. However, the archetypal symbolism of this process of ecstasy is represented in a single manner, as a key to unlocking its mystery - for it is the trigger to all future spiritual evolution. Therefore, the magician will emulate the primary joining of the archetypal masculine and feminine spiritual representations of the Deity, thus becoming an analogue of the Unity of Being, which is experienced as the manifestation of the God-Within, the Atman or Bornless One. Therefore, Trinialti represents the revelation of the Mystery of the Grail Enlightenment, and the seeker must realize, internalize, and fully integrate this teaching into the core of his/her being. Ecstasy is also the great killer, for it promotes the little death of orgasmic paroxysm, and thus the gateway of the Spirit is secretly made known through the death (eclipse) of the petty ego.

***Anthrophos*** - Assumption of the Body of the Illuminati and the Departure of the Grail (as the Body of Light) - the fifth and final manifestation of the Grail occurs four days after Trinialti, and these four days are the required period of the death and resurrection of the ego into the Higher Self. For those who have truly acquired the great Tripartite Mystery of the Grail, and have succeeded in realizing its integration within the Self, will arise when the four days are passed, and experience the mystery of the Great Illumination that does not ever die nor diminish. Thus eleven days after the Pentecoste, the last emanation of the Grail Spirit appears in a very tangible and sacramental form as the deified Man or Woman (Avatar). The final emanation represents the material coalescence of the Spirit as illustrated by the joining of the hearts and spirits of the celebrants of the Grail. This statement of unity draws together individuals of different levels of spiritual attainment and therefore causes a common level to ascend from a solid base of knowing and sharing. The Sangraal Sodality of love and friendship amongst the Grail Seekers is the final achievement of the Grail Quest.

The five different stages of the Cycle of Grail Enlightenment are thus represented, and these themes are aptly expressed in the five Grail Mystery ceremonies. Each ritual reveals a different aspect of the Grail Mystery, yet the ritual structure for these ceremonies is the same for all. The following is a representation of the ceremony pattern used to structure these five rituals.

Each ceremony begins with a Mass, either a High Solemn or Low Ordinary Mass, performed with a Grail Seasonal Reading, followed by the Benediction rite, and the circle consecration ritual, called the Consecration of the Quest. The sacramental environment is further set with bouquets of the appropriate flowers of the Grail, which are the Lily and the Rose.

Each ceremony in the Grail Mystery has three major parts, and these are called the Octagon of Spirit, Penetrating the Gate Threshold, and the Beatification. The ceremony requires four attendant Priestesses of the Grail who stand in the four Watchtowers, a Celebrant, who integrates facets of the ceremony and also performs the Mass and Circle Consecration rite. There are also four Sentinels who stand in the four Angles, and a Grail High Priestess and Grail Priest, who perform the inner mystery (the Beatification).

The Octagon of Spirit section of the Grail Mystery ceremony is divided into two sections, the Vortex of the Grail Maidens and the five-fold formula of the Grail Seasonal Mystery, representing the specific mystery of the season (and this formula will vary for each of the five seasons of the Grail). The four attendant Priestesses of the Grail, starting in the East, and proceeding deocil, intone the

letter and formula word, draw the invoking pentagram of Feminine Spirit that is projected into the Watchtower, and invoke the aspect of the Grail and the Grail heroine's imago. The Celebrant sets the unifying expression in the Infra-point, and therein draws all of the Watchtowers together. The four Sentinels, standing in the four Angles, starting in the Southeast Angle, and proceeding widdershins, intone the reverse letter and formula, then draw an invoking pentagram of Masculine Spirit that is projected into the Angle, and invoke the expression of the Gnostic Discipline and the Grail hero's imago. The Celebrant sets again the unifying expression in the Ultra-point, and therein draws all of the Angles together - creating a great polarity between the Ultra and Infra-points. But this potential is not fulfilled, as the Celebrant moves on to fashion the Gate structure.

The section where the Gate is erected and penetrated is called Penetrating the Gate Threshold, and this performed by the Celebrant and the Grail High Priestess. The Celebrant erects the Western Gate structure (the same Gate structure that is used for the Mystery of Samhain), by setting invoking spirals to each of the three Gate Keys (used for Invocation) and setting the Gate node with the Gate passage themes of Guide, Guardian and Ordeal. The Gate opening portal gesture is performed by the Grail High Priestess, who performs it in the center of the circle, and draws the polarities of the Ultra and Infra-points into her body - thus charging and empowering it with the unified Grail Spirit. At this point in the mystery ceremony, the Grail High Priestess may assume a veil of white or pale blue translucence. She has now become the embodiment of the Mystery.

The final section is the Beatification, and it begun with the four Sentinels circumambulating around the periphery of the magick circle, each turn presenting the mysteries of the four qualities of the Grail that the Grail Seekers search for, and these are ecstasy, compassion, self empowerment and redemption. Once they have completed, the Grail High Priestess responds to their searching, revealing herself to be the embodiment of the Grail that they so ardently seek. The four sentinels then kneel at the four Angles, while the attending Grail Priestesses form an inner circle around the Grail High Priestess, and the rest of the congregants circle around these forming an outer circle. The Grail Priest appears, and kneels before the Grail High Priestess, bestowing upon her a five-fold kiss, and proceeds to perform the ritual drawing down of the Grail Spirit upon the body of the High Priestess. First he draws an equal arm cross upon her body, and then a yoni triangle (water), intoning three invocations of the Grail Spirit, including a powerful invocation from the Book of the Savior (companion to the Pistis Sophia). Once the Grail Spirit has fully manifested in the High Priestess, she recites her reply as the Fully Manifested Power of the Grail. She then blesses the Priest, and he opens her veil, and also makes a gate opening gesture and moves kneeling to her right side. They then express the tripartite mystery of the Grail - the three famous questions and their answers. The High Priestess then proceeds to bless each of the congregants, who come before her and kneel, starting with the four attendant Priestesses, then the rest of the temple, followed at last by the four Sentinels.

At this point in the ceremony, the temple may perform the special Alchemical Mystery that goes with the Grail Mystery (this is a part of the fifth degree mystery ordeal, and is only performed for those who are either eligible or already have experienced this rite). When completed with this inner mystery, the participants return to their former positions, and the High Priestess completes the mystery and then closes the Gate and seals the three gate nodes. The Celebrant then seals the eight

nodes of the magick circle, and the Ultra and Infra-points, and closes the circle - the ceremony is ended.

### ***The Initiations and Mysteries of the Neophyte and Acolyte***

The candidate for either first or second degree begins their ordeal in the same manner, they are told to meditate upon a peculiar subject - a skull is given to the candidate and they are placed in a room isolated from the rest of the temple members. The candidate is charged with these words:

**Meditate upon your death**

**Keep your death always before your eyes**

**Knowledge of death should cause for honesty in life.**

Every initiation represents a death, a transformative change from a previous but invalidated state, to a new state that is not yet defined or understood. Therefore, each candidate is charged with meditating on death, thus the end of their old way of living and perceiving reality.

The first two initiations of the E.S.S.G. are communal events hosted by the temple for the benefit of a new member, making them feel welcome and an active part of the temple. Each of these two initiation ceremonies begin with a circle consecration rite and an abbreviated version of the Installation of the Gate ceremony. Once the temple has come to order, the candidate is brought into the temple space from his/her place of solitude. The three officers wear colored chasubles with the emblems of their office emblazoned upon them - a red Maltese cross for the Magister, a black Celtic cross for the Hierius, and a golden eye of Horus for the Auctor. The Magister and Hierius stand before the central altar placed in the magick circle, the Auctor stands off to their right, and the four Sentinels take up their positions at the four Watchtowers. Once the abbreviated version of the temple opening ceremony is completed, with the officers and members assuming the sign of silence, with finger to lips, then the candidate is brought into the magickal circle, with the Auctor making a symbolic door for his/her entry.

For the first degree, the candidate is bound and hoodwinked as he or she is brought into the temple, but is able to walk. The summoner (Auctor) then anoints the candidate on feet, hands and forehead and brings him or her before the Magister and the Hierius to begin the interrogation. The summoner acts as the defender of the candidate, and the Hierius is the prosecutor and antagonist. The Magister asks who the candidate is, which the summoner supplies, requesting that the candidate be admitted to their company. The Hierius objects, saying that the candidate has not been purified and cannot thus enter. Two sentinels purify the candidate with water (water and salt) and fire (incense). The candidate is then admitted and is asked why he or she wishes to be a member of their company. The candidate replies with a memorized part, saying that he/she is like a soul wandering in the darkness, seeking knowledge, and that such knowledge may be obtained in the company of initiates. The Hierius responds that knowledge without understanding is of no value whatsoever, and does the candidate accept this occult truth, and he/she replies in the affirmative. The candidate is then asked if he or she seeks wisdom, peace, truth and light in the freedom of all his/her intentional actions -

and the candidate replies in the affirmative. He/She is also asked if the candidate searches for the secrets of the hidden mysteries, yet even as the candidate declares the affirmative, the Magister says that the true secrets and incommunicable - that the greatest secret is that knowledge tempered by love is wisdom - promising that the brothers and sisters in the temple will aid in the candidate's quest for wisdom. The Hierius then tells the candidate that humankind is doomed to death, but despite that doom, the urge to Gnosis is ever present in the human heart - the candidate is asked once more if he or she still wished to join in the quest of wisdom, even as humanity is doomed with death - and the candidate answer again in the affirmative, but this times says "I will", representing that he or she is consigned to the fate of transformation.

The Neophyte candidate is assisted to kneel before the central altar, and given the oath of secrecy of the Order, and repeats what the Magister requires him/her to say. The candidate is briefly threatened at this point by the summoner (a reverse of his/her role as protector), as the Magister says: "They Who Journey upon the Winds. They Strike Where No Man Strikes, They Slay Where No Man Slays!" - thus threatening supernatural harm if the candidate breaks the oath to the Order. Then the Magister invokes the Lords of the Universe to protect and guide the aspirant upon the right path that leads to true enlightenment. The Magister then says - "Long have thou dwelt in darkness - quit the night and seek the day!" And the members all say: "We receive you into the Graal Temple of the E.S.S.G!" Then the blindfold is removed, and any other bindings are also removed. The candidate is now a Neophyte, and he/she is blessed by the Hierius and the Magister.

The next item in the Neophyte initiation ceremony is the Christos Mysterium (Consecration Mystery), which is like a morality play, except with occult concepts and values. Essentially, the seeker is imagined seeking within the darkness, doomed from birth with ignorance and mortality. The Magister reads an exhortation, and the summoner takes the candidate by the arm and escorts him/her to the Southern Watchtower, Western Watchtower, Northern Watchtower, and then finally to the East. In the Southern, Western and Northern Watchtowers, the presiding Sentinel in each of these points recites part of a occult poem, where the initiate is given a mystery to ponder through his/her various senses - limbs, heart and head, being the three Qabbalistic parts of the human soul. At the East, the Neophyte meets the Magister and the Hierius, who show a glimpse of the veiled grail (Mass chalice). At this point in the ceremony the first Grail Mystery is performed (we shall deal with this ceremony after the initiations are discussed). Then the Magister asks the Neophyte if he/she has any words for the members of the Order. The Neophyte then recites the second part of his/her initiatory catechism (and is prompted by the summoner), which laments the loss of the Vision of Wholeness (involution), but promises that the wisdom of this vista will be regained (spiritual evolution). After reciting thus, the candidate is welcomed by all of the members of the temple. What follows is the traditional closing of the temple ceremony, in which the officers conclude the business of the temple in the reverse manner of its entrance, and gates are sealed and closed. A feast is held after the ceremony is concluded in honor of the newly initiated Neophyte.

The Neophyte may also conclude the work with the consecration of his/her magickal tools, using the ritual, the Consecration of the Hallows, however it is usually reserved for another time, being the first magickal work tasked to the Neophyte. The Consecration of the Hallows ritual uses a vortex of the four Elements, and the symbols of the Four Grail Hallows, as well as lustral water, incense

and oil of consecration to charge and empower the four ritual tools - Wand/Staff, Chalice, Sword, Dagger and Particle, and crystal or shew stone (the fifth Hallow). This ritual is simple and self explanatory and does not need to be explained further.

The Accolyte candidate experiences a slightly different ordeal, for he/she is presented to the members of the temple for advancement to the second degree by the Magister, who apparently approves of the progress that the candidate as Neophyte has made. The summoner (Auctor) once again anoints the candidate on the feet, hands and forehead with consecrated oil, and then places a hoodwink over the head of the candidate. The summoner then requests to advance with the candidate into the Portal of Wisdom, and is admitted to before the central altar - the Magister then says that the house of one's self must be based upon spirit and not mortal flesh - then the candidate is requested to recite the identities and qualities and signs of the Four Hallows, which the candidate does - being oriented to the East, he/she performs this feat while hoodwinked. The candidate is led to the Northwestern Angle, and turned to face East, where he/she asked to pledge anew to keep the secrets of the Order. The candidate then kneels, laying the right hand upon the ground, and swears by the earth, and then the hoodwink is removed. The candidate then takes salt and casts it to the North, saying: "Let the Powers of Earth witness my pledge." (This is a form of magickal renunciation, a deep mystery.) The candidate, still kneeling, is purified with fire and air (incense), and water and earth (lustral water). The candidate is then told that the mystery of higher degrees is represented by the Mystery of the Nature Light. He/She then received the first knowledge lecture from the Hierius.

The candidate is then taken through the Ordeal of the Crossroads, where the candidate learns the lessons of the path of darkness (and the underworld), and the path of light (ascension). As the candidate is taken into the underworld, he/she is blindfolded, standing in the Northwest facing West, the Sentinels and others make the terrible chaotic sounds of hell, and then it becomes suddenly and deadly quiet. The summoner then recites the lesson of the Great Angel Samael, which is that the foolish and cowardly see only their doom in mortal life, and so they are doomed to wander the abyss of doubt and fear - and yet there is no solution ("Return, for thou cannot pass by."). The candidate is then assisted to walk the cross roads again, heading from the Northwest to the Southeast Angle, where a bell or gong is rung three times, then silence again. The summoner removes the blindfold, but as he/she does so, the Sentinel shines a blinding light into the candidates eyes, and he/she is interrogated, this time by the summoner, who asks - "Why do you come here?" The candidate replies: "To seek the Light of Hidden Knowledge in the Name of Adonai." But once again the candidate is repudiated, having this time gone too far on the path of light ("No mortal eye can long bear the ineffable vision. Return, for thou cannot pass by.") The summoner then assists the candidate to the center of the circle and places a veil over his/her face, and then the second Grail Mystery is performed.

After the mystery, the candidate is unveiled, and the Hierius makes the symbolic sign of beheading (also used to symbolize knighting), while uttering the mystery of the Accolyte degree (Latin: We are born out from God, and die in Christ, and the Holy Spirit revives us.) The Magister then gives the candidate the second knowledge lecture, which is the secret mystery of sacred art of transcendental magick. At the conclusion of this lecture, the candidate assumes the sign of Horus

arisen, and recites the formula of the Great Soul, perfected by wisdom and suffering. The candidate then performs a deocil circumambulation, and with each step, he/she recites one of ten affirmations of the acolyte, until all ten are properly recited. The candidate returns to the center of the circle, standing before the Magister at the central altar. The Magister makes the welcome speech and final lesson for the now newly made Acolyte. The Hierius also welcomes the new Acolyte. Then the Magister reminds everyone that they must now adore the Elements, and the members make the sign of the four Elements to the four Watchtowers, as the Hierius gives a final invocation, and the summoner recites a beautiful occult poem about the majesty of the Absolute Spirit. The Magister then says the parting words, and the ceremony is concluded with the chiming of seven bells or gongs, and then all is silent.

The initiation of the Acolyte is then ended using the closing temple ceremony from the Installation of the Gate, and all officers and members assume their positions to complete this final work. The temple is now closed, and the members proceed to give a feast in the honor of the newly initiated Acolyte.

The Grail Mystery rites for the two initiations are similar in structure and design, yet each imparting a different mystery. The mystery is ideally performed by one member of the Inner Order, a High Priestess of the Grail (5=6). Then a couple assist the High Priestess who are of the fourth degree, the Priestess and the Priest of the Grail (as Deacons). A third degree initiate is represented by the Grail Warrior, thus completing the body of four officers. A grail filled with consecrated wine is placed upon the altar, where kneels the candidate. The officers and assistants then proceed to circumambulate the magick circle deocil, reciting their parts, and building up the theme of the mystery through their narration. When the narration is done and the circumambulation complete, the High Priestess or Lady proceeds to the altar of the Grail, and takes up the chalice of wine, the Priest kneels before her in adoration, while the other members kneel in the circle - the Priest performs a five-fold kiss upon the Lady, and invokes the Spirit of Marah Sophia to descend upon the body of the Lady. In the Acolyte mystery, the Lady recites an affirmation that she is the Feminine Spirit of the Grail. The Priest draws an equal arm cross upon the body of the Lady, and intones the name Marah Sophia. In the both the Neophyte mystery and the Acolyte mystery, the grail is presented to the candidate by the Lady and then assisted to drink, and the candidate is also anointed with the consecrated wine. The litany of the three Questions of the Grail are then performed between the Lady and the Priest in both mysteries. However, the Acolyte must read/recite a specially written dedication, where he/she dedicates him/herself to the study, practice, guardianship of the Arts of Ritual Magick. Also, the two mysteries have different mystery themes recited by the Grail officers. The primary action in both ceremonies is where the officers place their hands upon the candidates head and blow their spiritual breath upon it as an empowerment and blessing.

The Initiation ceremonies for Neophyte and Acolyte have a second variation where a single adept (usually fifth degree or higher), can initiate a candidate without the use of several members to play the various roles. Like the third and fourth degrees, these versions of first and second degree are performed between the adept and the candidate, and the adept assumes all of the formulations and roles to assist the candidate through the initiatory mysteries in a proper manner.



## **The Vision Quest - two versions**

There are two versions of the Vision Quest practiced by the Order for the Elemental degrees, and these are the Elemental Visions Quest, and the Underworld Vision Quest. Both represent two very different forms of the vision quest for practitioners of the Western Mystery tradition. Yet both ceremonies are practiced out of doors, on a camp-out consisting of three days and two nights.

The Elemental Vision Quest, the first of that series, is performed at a remote location and has two ritual events (for two consecutive evenings), and covers three days. Although the directions recommend a fast, one should be very cautious of fasting as well as camping out of doors, because it may be necessary, considering the work of setting up camp and managing the ritual space, that the participants keep their strength at an optimum, and fasting always weakens the body. It is recommended that the participants eat lightly, and avoid all heavy foods and alcohol.

The first evening, after the camp and ritual site have been set up, is dedicated to summoning the Elemental Powers and communing with them. The ritual area is consecrated, and so are the participants. A single individual has been elected to perform the ritual work and manage the magickal needs of the participants, and this individual does not actually participate in the vision quest - this person is called the monitor. A feature of the first night of activity is the erection of a Gate, and the summoning of all sixteen Elementals, using the first several words of each Enochian key, 3 - 18. Once this is accomplished, then the participants form a kind of snake dance, with the monitor at the head, and they circle around the magick circle in a deocil circuit, feeling the powers of the Elementals all around them.

The second evening is the vision quest proper. The mechanism for the vision question is the performance of a simplified version of the Elemental Octagram, where the chosen Elemental of the participant is evoked and drawn down upon him/her, and then the participant, armed with tools and vigil candle, proceeds out of the gateway in the West, and onward into the land beyond, finding a pre-established place of holding a vigil (the items can be placed at the vigil site prior to the ritual, and so they are already there for use). The participant then proceeds to commune with his/her specific Elemental, which has followed him/her out to the vigil site, and seeks a resolution to earth or emotional based issues. When the vigil is completed, the participant returns to the ritual site to conclude the working. The monitor acts as the celebrant, helping each participant to erect the Elemental Octagram and assume the Elemental's powers until all of them have been processed and gone to their vigil sites. The monitor then tends the magick circle until they are return.

The final day is dedicated to remembering the experience, sharing in it with the other participants and also enjoying the final day with a great feast for everyone's honor.

The Underworld Vision Quest is essentially a passage initiation rite held out of doors, in a remote location. The passage initiation is broken into sections or stages (a total of seven in this rite)

representing the cycle of initiation and transformation itself. Selecting a site is very important, because natural features should aid the isolation of the various stages from each other. What is required is a pathway that leads from the beginning of the quest, into the underground domain of unconscious forces, and then rising up into the world of the living once again. The passage initiation rite requires that some individuals (as many as 8) should manage each of the stages, and the rest are then able to experience it. It may a whole day or two to prepare the site for the passage, and those who are going to undergo should not assist or participate in the preparation, but see to their own preparation. A single night is selected to perform the passage initiation rite, so all preparation acts as an effective tool for building momentum. An outdoor passage initiation can be very powerful, and can help to deal with the typical body mind split that the normal adult usually experiences. Those that are managing the passage rite can wear elaborate costumes and also decorate each of the stages, but the natural beauty of the site, selected because it lends itself to a passage rite, should not be either damaged or marred. The day after the passage rite is reserved for taking down and cleaning up the stages, and assembling to enjoy a communal feast with both the actors and the participants. The logistics and suggestions for the Underworld Visions Quest are written up in the document that outlines the rite, and do not need to be repeated here. The passage initiation rite is outside the normal degree based initiations, and is not considered as an official degree in the Order. This rite is also not typically performed in the Order, and was performed as a special event at a Pagan Festival, where the participants greatly outnumbered the actors operating the seven stages.