

Ritual Outline with Standard Opening and Closing

WARDING THE CHAMBER

Begin with the Gnostic Cross:

When the Rhythmic Breath has been developed, a Tongue of Flame is visualized above the head. This Tongue of Flame represents the Higher Genius, the source of magical power, that Sacred Flame by virtue of which the practice of magick is even possible. Holding this visualization in mind, on the expelled breath we vibrate: **Tu Es**

On the indrawn breath, the arms are raised. In raising the arms, the vertical line of the body is balanced by a symmetrical, horizontal extension. The palms are upturned to signify that this balanced being is ready to manifest the power of the Higher Self. The breath is expelled.

As the breath is drawn in, a brilliant shaft of light is visualized which descends swiftly from the Flame, passing through the crown of the head and the center of the body to the ground between the feet. On the expelled breath we vibrate: **Regnum**

On the indrawn breath, the palm of the left hand is brought across to rest on the right shoulder. On the expelled breath we vibrate: **Atque Potentia**

On the indrawn breath, the palm of the right hand is brought across to rest on the left shoulder. On the expelled breath we vibrate: **Atque Maiestas**

Keeping the arms crossed, on the pause at the end of the breath we lower the head. The breath is drawn in: we feel the shaft of light within, radiating the energy of the Flame into and throughout our being. We feel a great concentration of the Flame and of magical power at the heart center, and on the expelled breathe, we vibrate: **Atque Aeon Sum.**

Advance to the East of the Chamber. Beginning at that point, and returning thereto, trace a clockwise circle, encompassing the area of the Chamber.

Return to center and face East.

Bring both hands to your forehead, index fingers and thumbs touching, forming a triangle. Visualize a brilliantly glowing point-up pentagram within this triangle. When the visualization is firmly established, step forward with your left foot, flinging your arms forward, and with it the pentagram, vibrating the God-name of the quarter (see below).

As the pentagram is flung forward, visualize it expanding and growing, until it reaches the inner perimeter of your circle, where it bursts into magnificent shimmering purificatory sparks.

East- YHVH South- ADONAI West- EHEIEH North- AGLA

Facing East, assume the Mountain Pose. Raise arms to the Orans posture, reciting:

"In the name of Light arising do I summon Raphael, the Healer, guardian of Air and Wind and Tempest, to guard this Chamber and witness the acts here taken. Come mighty Raphael, and grace me with thy presence."

Facing South:

"In the name of Light increasing, I summon Michael, the Defender, Lord of Fire and Prince of the Legions of Heaven. May he guard this Chamber and give due witness to the acts here taken. Come, mighty Michael, and grace me with thy presence."

Facing West:

"In the name of Light descending, I likewise summon Gabriel, Lord of Water, Heavenly Herald, who didst bring glad tidings to Our Blessed Lady. May this Chamber be guarded and our acts here witnessed. Come mighty Gabriel, and grace me with thy presence"

Facing North:

"In the name of Light returning, I also summon Uriel, Dark Lord of Earth, who bringest all at last unto the Nether Shore, Companion of all who offer up their lives in the defense of others, guard this Chamber and witness the acts here taken. Come, mighty Uriel, and grace me with thy presence."

Returning to the East:

"I stand outside time, in a place not of earth. As my ancestors before me bade, I join together with those have gone before, and those still traveling along the Path, and we are One of purpose. By Thy Blessed Apostles, by all Thy Holy Angels; by all Powers of Light and Shadow, we call Thee to guard and defend us from all perils, O Most High."

LIGHT THE SACRED FLAME

The central flame source on the altar symbolizes the Sacred Noetic Flame of Gnosis, which brought Self-awareness to higher life. It is the Willful act of rekindling this Flame on the altar, which opens a "Gate" of communication between the Magician and the Higher Powers.

"From the Portal of Air, To the Portal of Water; From the Portal of Fire, To the Portal of Earth; From the Center of Power, To the encompassing adamant, Let this Sanctuary be Established Within the Sacred Flame."

Standard Ritual Closing

Stand in the center of the Chamber, or as nearly center, as the arrangement will allow.

I give thanks to Thee! Every soul and heart is lifted up to Thee, Undisturbed Name, honored with the name 'God' and praised with the name 'Father,' for to everyone and everything comes the Fatherly kindness and affection and love, and any teaching there may be that is sweet and plain, giving us mind, speech and gnosis. Mind, so that we may understand Thee, Speech, so that we may expound Thee, Gnosis so that we may Know Thee. I rejoice, having been illuminated by Thine Holy Gnosis!

Dismissal

Facing and saluting the East:

Hail, mighty Raphael, Archangel of the Air, Healer and Guardian of Wind and Tempest. I thank thee for thine attendance and protection here tonight, and before thou departest for thine airy realms, I bid thee hail and farewell.

Facing and saluting the South:

Hail, mighty Michael, the Defender, Lord of Fire and Prince of the Legions of Heaven. I thank thee for thine attendance and protection here tonight, and before thou departest for thine fiery realms, I bid thee hail and farewell.

Facing and saluting the West:

Hail, mighty Gabriel, Lord of Water, Heavenly Herald, who didst bring glad tidings to Our Blessed Lady. I thank thee for thine attendance and protection here tonight, and before thou departest for thine watery realms, I bid thee hail and farewell.

Facing and saluting the North:

Hail, mighty Uriel, Dark Lord of Earth, who bringest all at last unto the Nether Shore, Companion of all who offer up their lives in the defense of others. I thank thee for thine attendance and protection here tonight, and before thou departest for thine earthy realms, I bid thee hail and farewell.

Extinguish the Sacred Flame, after which, retrace the enclosing circle, counter-clockwise and finish with the Gnostic Cross.

So it is Done.

The Call of the Four Winds -

by Friar Adeptus Major Cornelius

The Call of the Four Winds is a basic rite intended for use in consecrating one's sacred space. It can be used as a prayer, ritual, or meditation as the initiate desires. It is a good exercise for practicing visualization and for initial work with the Sacred Flame. I originally wrote this exercise in a slightly modified form in around 1996, and today I still find it to be an effective practice.

0. Wu Chi - The Infinity Stance

In the practice of Tai Chi, Wu Chi is the basic stance used before starting the set of movements. It translates to "Before Movement" or "Before Energy" and is representative of the stillness that must always precede movement.

To begin with, stand facing east. Be relaxed and casual with the feet placed one shoulder-width apart. Your arms should be relaxed at your sides, with palms gently resting against the thighs. The spine should be kept straight, which is easily accomplished by bending the knees slightly and gently tilting the pelvis forward. There should not be any discomfort. You might have to practice standing sideways to a mirror to make sure the spine is not curved.

At this point, you should close your eyes and begin to still the mind. This is aided by breathing slowly and deeply through the nose. In order to bring yourself to a more serene state, think of your thoughts as the surface of a lake, and endeavor to make the surface as smooth and glasslike as possible.

When you have cleared your mind, even a little, your body will become a vessel for the energies of the Cosmos to put it into motion. When you feel the energy moving through your body, then eventually it will begin to move your body.

1. The Gnostic Cross

When you feel that you are ready to move, then you know you are ready to proceed.

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2. The Call of the East Wind

With your hands clasped, extend them upward and inhale. Visualize yourself aflame with a golden yellow fire. Then, step forward with your left foot, bow and extend your hands forward while exhaling. Allow yourself to feel the energy pour out of your fingertips, forming a golden yellow cross embedded into the East side of the egg.

Bring your hands to your heart centre, while inhaling. Exhale while simultaneously extending your hands straight out to the sides.

Standing in a cross, with feet together say, "Rapha-El, Angel of the East Wind, enter my lungs and give the Air of Life to my whole body."

3. The Call of the South Wind

Turn to the right and face the South. With hands clasped, extend them upward and inhale. Visualize yourself aflame with an ember-red fire. Bow and extend your hands forward while exhaling. Allow yourself to feel the energy pour out of your fingertips, forming an ember red cross embedded into the South side of the egg.

Bring your hands to your heart centre, while inhaling. Exhale while simultaneously extending your hands straight out to the sides.

Standing in a cross, with feet together say, "Micha-El, Angel of the South Wind, enter my Solar Centre and give the Fire of Life to my whole body."

4. The Call of the West Wind

Turn to the right and face the West. With hands clasped, extend them upward and inhale. Visualize yourself aflame with a cobalt blue fire. Bow and extend your hands forward while exhaling. Allow yourself to feel the energy pour out of your fingertips, forming a cobalt blue cross embedded into the West side of the egg.

Bring your hands to your heart centre, while inhaling. Exhale while simultaneously extending your hands straight out to the sides.

Standing in a cross, with feet together say, "Gabri-El, Angel of the West Wind, enter my blood and give the Water of Life to my whole body."

4. The Call of the North Wind

Turn to the right and face the North. With hands clasped, extend them upward and inhale. Visualize yourself aflame with an amethyst-violet fire. Bow and extend your hands forward while exhaling. Allow yourself to feel the energy pour out of your fingertips, forming an amethyst-violet cross embedded into the North side of the egg.

Bring your hands to your heart centre, while inhaling. Exhale while simultaneously extending your hands straight out to the sides.

Standing in a cross, with feet together say, "Uri-El, Angel of the North Wind, ground me and regenerate my whole body."

5. Final Call

Turn to the right, and face the East. Cross arms over the torso, right hand on left shoulder and vice-versa. Say, "I stand in the Shadows facing the Light. In Love I am embraced by both."

Bring your hands together at your heart centre. Inhale while raising your hands over your head. Visualize the four crosses getting brighter. Keep up the visualization, making them as bright as they will get. When the light will not get any brighter, exhale and bring your hands back to your heart centre. Visualize the egg slowly dissolving from the black or indigo color to crystal clarity.

6. The Gnostic Cross

Finish the Call of the Four Winds with the Gnostic Cross as before.

Notes

Note, in the exercise above, the Solar Centre is a reference to the solar plexus. However, as a variation the heart may be used as well. Feel free to try different variations, or even give the flames of the four quarters different colors if you like. The more you work with this exercise the better.

Basic Meditation Practice

During this period, the Initiate should begin to use both the basic ritual open and close, as well as this meditation practice. You should prepare your area with the opening form, sit for meditation, and then finish with the ceremonial closing.

You have read the ritual material, so now we will touch upon the basics of simple meditation. Before we begin, however, I want to point out something that many of you will be thinking to yourself after reading this chapter: “This is too simple, what am I missing?”

The answer... nothing. The actual mechanics of meditation really are very simple. It’s like the game Chess- You can learn all the rules in a very short time, but it takes quite a bit longer to learn to apply those simple rules in an effective way.

With that out of the way, let us tackle one of the subjects that seem to be the main worry for most Westerners- posture. I don’t know how many times I’ve heard people explain that they simply can’t meditate because they can’t sit in the full-lotus position, or have seen people hurt trying. This really is not necessary. Let us look at the bare necessities of posture, and then add some refining touches:

a) Back straight

b) Knees level with, or lower than hips

There you go. Nothing mystical or esoteric about how to sit. Now for the refinements, and some explanations. You want your back straight for several reasons. The Tibetans teach that within the body run vital “winds” that allow us to move, and carry our consciousness. These “winds” run through various channels, the most important of which is called the “Central Channel” which runs roughly parallel to the spine. This is flanked on either side by the next two most important channels, which wrap around and kink the Central line in various places. During meditation, they teach, if you are doing it right, all your “winds” will enter this Central Channel- and that is a good thing. A straight back will, among other things, allow those “winds” to move up and down that line. They also teach that the way you lean can affect your consciousness. If you lean right or left, you may get a specific type of vision, or disturbance, or fall asleep, etc.

Now, do you need to believe, let alone understand all of this to have a reason for a straight back? No. There are, in fact, some very practical reasons for sitting with a straight back. It places equal pressure on your buttocks, and your muscles, which makes for a much more comfortable sitting experience. A brief note for those of you used to carrying a wallet in one of your back-pockets- it is a good idea to remove it when you meditate. While it is there, your hips are lopsided and your back is crooked while trying to compensate. Try leaning to one side, and sitting that way while you are reading this. You end up holding yourself at an angle, tensing certain muscles, or trying to adjust above the hips by bending the middle back. This also tenses muscles. Either will eventually start to tire you out, or cause pain. Neither is an experience that will make you want to come back to meditation anytime soon.

So, a straight back is comfortable. So is slouching, why not do that? Because one of the keys to meditation is alertness. Mental awareness. How aware does a slumping individual seem? If you are lounging, or slouching and are not a little tired... you will be soon. In addition, if you are already a little drowsy, you will find yourself nodding off in no time. There really is a strong Body/Mind connection, which you will soon discover after one or two meditation sessions.

When it comes to hips and knees, we in the West are at a real disadvantage for sitting cross-legged on the ground. We are simply used to sitting in chairs, and newcomers to meditation usually do not have the flexibility needed for getting into, let alone enduring the full-lotus position, wherein one's feet are placed on the opposite thigh forming a pretzel-like configuration.

Why do meditators traditionally sit like that? Stability. It supports the back nicely with a solid base. Of course, the Tibetans also teach that it seals off an exit for the "winds" so they do not escape- but we really do not need to worry about that here. Is there any other way to get this stability? Certainly. We want to maintain, as I said above, a certain level of comfort. It is just too hard to concentrate on anything and keep yourself from fidgeting when your knees are throbbing. If we can get that stability without our knee-joints hating us, there is no reason not to.

The reason I have mentioned having the knees level with, or lower than the hips, is because that is how our hips like it. Try keeping your knees a little higher than your hips while simultaneously maintaining a straight back and you will soon see what I mean. Then try placing enough pillows or cushions under you so that your knees are below your hips, touching the ground. See what I mean? You can also try sitting in a chair, providing you... that's right, Keep your back straight. Your great big fluffy recliner is probably not the best choice for a meditation location, unless what you are really looking for is a nap.

So you are sitting. Now what?

Breathe.

All right, stop chuckling- that is really it for right now. Tuck your chin in just a little (imagining you are being suspended from a string attached to the top-center of your head helps with finding the appropriate angle), focus your eyes on nothing in particular about two feet in front of you and breathe.

Of course, there is a little bit more to it than that. Breathe naturally and comfortably, and with as little conscious control as possible. On the out-breath, mentally count "one" as you focus your mind on that spot two feet in front of you. Hold your mind there on the in-breath, and on the next out-breath mentally count "two."

There you go, wash, rinse repeat.

Your first few times out, you will probably find it a little difficult to make it all the way to seven without losing your count. Do not worry, this is normal. Our minds are used to being entertained, and this is most definitely boring. All you have to do, is every time you find that your mind is wandering, bring it back. If you have lost count, start over. The purpose behind this is to train the mind. It is not going to be any easier than anything else which requires training, but it will get easier with practice.

Your goal with this particular process is to be able to mentally count to twenty-one three times without losing your attention once. To do this, once you have hit twenty-one for the first time, simply start over again, followed by one more round. This process should take anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes and makes for a very nice meditation session. Once you can do this reliably, one or two times a day rest assured that you've "mastered" this chapter of the book, and are ready to move on to the other meditation techniques.

Now a few miscellaneous items to help a little while you are working on that. As far as the eyes are concerned, it is usually best to keep them open, at least a little. You can meditate with your eyes closed, but you are usually guaranteed to see little “visual thoughts” and it is just easier to ignore them if your eyes are open a bit.

The Tibetans teach that you should rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth, for various mystical reasons. I think it is a good idea because it keeps you from building up too much saliva and drooling. I am practical that way.

As for where to meditate, just about anywhere you can be left alone for ten to fifteen minutes will be fine. It is difficult, especially when you are just starting out, to try to remain focused when the world is falling apart around you. The ideal place would be comfortable, about room temperature, without too many visual distractions and very little noise. Unfortunately, most of us cannot escape to some remote monastery or cabin in the woods, and so have to make do with a spare room at best or a chair in the corner at worst. This is fine, as long as you can meet some minimum requirements:

a) You need to be wearing comfortable and loose fitting clothing. Anything tight is liable to become uncomfortable quickly, or even cut off circulation. Your Robe would be fine attire.

b) You need to be able to be left alone for ten or fifteen minutes- no phone, no TV, no one trying to get your attention.

c) It would be nice if you could pick a time when there was as little outside noise as possible.

With the exception of the clothing, these requirements become less and less important the more you practice. As your mind gets used to concentrating in this manner, you will find that you are better able simply to ignore various noises. This may be annoying to friends and family when they need you, however, so timing is still important.

Speaking of timing, another important factor to consider is duration. How long should you meditate? To begin with, I would say no more than ten minutes, twice daily- once in the morning and once at night. The reason for this is that most people will find it difficult as they're just starting out, to maintain their concentration for more than this- plus, if you're not used to sitting completely still, or sitting cross-legged on a cushion, after about ten minutes your body will start telling you it's not too thrilled with your new practice. If you continue beyond this point, you will start building up negative attitudes towards meditating. You will unconsciously start associating it with boredom or physical discomfort, and it will become harder and harder to convince yourself to meditate.

You are much better off getting up from your chair or cushion thinking “Wow, I could do another fifteen minutes or half an hour” than “Thank goodness that's over.” Of course, the more you practice, the easier it will become, and the longer you can and should meditate.

I mentioned that you should do this twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening, and there is a reason for that. What we are doing is training the mind here, and every one knows that this requires repetition. It is usually easiest to find a few free moments in the morning and evening, but of course, if your time schedule is different you can always make adjustments. It does not really matter when you meditate, so much as that you meditate. One important thing to keep in mind though, is that you should avoid meditating while tired. If you are struggling to keep on your feet, imagine how hard it will be to stay awake once you are sitting perfectly still. You will also want to keep your meditation sessions at a regular time.

We are creatures of habit, and if you sit down to meditate at the same times every day you will have a lot more success than if your methods are more sporadic.

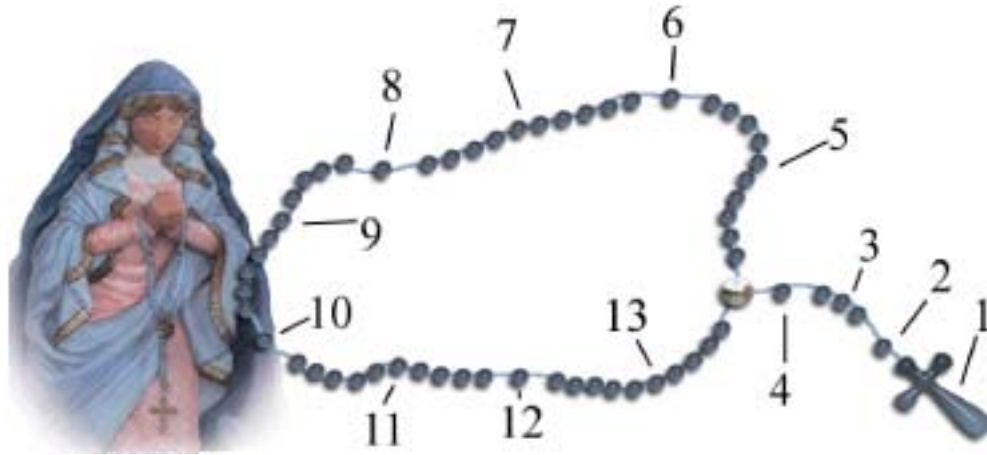
I would suggest staying with the ten-minute time limit for at least a week or two if you are consistently meditating twice daily. If after two weeks you can maintain your full concentration throughout the entire session, feel free to move on to fifteen minutes for one of your daily sessions. If that works out okay for you, go ahead and extend both sessions to fifteen minutes. You can gauge your own progress, and continue to extend your duration like this for as long as you have available time.

In summary-

- a. This is not as hard as you may think.
- b. You do not have to tie yourself in a knot; just sit comfortably with a straight back.
- c. Hold your gaze about two-feet in front of you, with slightly open eyes.
- d. Count your out-breaths, while holding your focus on that spot two feet in front of you. If you find your mind wandering, bring it back to counting, if you lose count- start over.
- e. Once you have reached the count of twenty-one, start over. Do this a total of three times.
- f. Have a regular schedule where you sit twice daily. Do not go beyond ten minutes when you are starting out, even if you feel like you could go on.
- g. Try to enjoy yourself.

How to Pray the Gnostic Rosary

The purpose of the Gnostic Rosary is to help keep in memory certain principal events or mysteries in the history of our salvation, and to thank and praise the Divine for them.



1. The sign of the Cross and the Gnostic's Creed

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Unknown Father, in Truth, Mother of all, in union and redemption and sharing of the powers, peace to all on whom this name reposes.

The Gnostic's Creed

I acknowledge one great invisible God, unrevealable, unmarked, ageless and unproclaimable; the unknown Father, the Aeon of the aeons, who brought forth in the silence with his providence: the Father, the Mother, and the Son.

I acknowledge the Christos, the self-begotten living son, the glory of the Father and the virtue of the Mother, who given birth from the virginal and ineffable mother was made incarnate, the Perfect one. Who in the word of the Great Invisible God, came down from above to annul the emptiness of this age and restore the fullness to the Aeon.

I acknowledge the Holy Spirit, the Bride of the Christos, the Mother of the Aeons, the great virginal and ineffable Mother who proceeded from herself a gift of herself out of the silence of the Unknown God.

I acknowledge the Light of the one church in every place: Interior, Invisible, Secret and Universal, the foundation of the lights of the great living God.

I seek liberation of my perfection from the corruptions of the world and look to the gathering of the sparks of Light from the sea of forgetfulness. Amen.

2. The Our Father

The Our Father

Our Father,
who is in heaven,
Hallowed be your name;
Your Kingdom come;
Your Will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day
Our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and
ever. Amen.

3. Hail Sophia three times.

Hail Sophia

Hail Sophia, full of light, the Christ is with you, blessed are you among
all the aeons, and blessed is the liberator of your light, Jesus.
Holy Sophia, Mother of all gods, pray to the Light for us your children,
now and in the hour of our death.
Amen.

Followed by the Gloria Patri

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit- As it was in
the beginning, is now, and will be forever, Amen.

4. Announce the First Mystery: then say The Gnostic's Prayer.

The First Gnostic Mystery:

The Assumption of Sophia.

Hail to the Great Savior, for He has lifted the Soul and the Heart of the
Heavens out of the prisonhouse of matter and raised her up into the
Pleroma.

5. Hail Sophia ten times, while meditating on the Mystery.

Followed by the Gloria Patri

6. Announce the Second Mystery: then say the Gnostic's Prayer.

The Second Gnostic Mystery:

The Coronation of Sophia.

And the Lord gave unto Sophia a crown with twelve stars which are the
lights of redemption and the Throne of Manifestation for Her seat, and
He also gave unto her the Cross of Mystery as a scepter by which she
shall rule the Aeons.

7. Hail Sophia ten times, while meditating on the Mystery.

Followed by the Gloria Patri

8. Announce the third Mystery: then say the Gnostic's Prayer.

The Third Gnostic Mystery:

The Renunciation.

And the Lord laid the Kingdom at Her feet, and renounced all sovereignty and rule unto Her Throne. The sword that he brought he received at her hands, to redeem and to conquer for the reception of the Light.

9. Hail Sophia ten times, while meditating on the Mystery.
Followed by the Gloria Patri

10. Announce the fourth Mystery: then say the Gnostic's Prayer.

The Fourth Gnostic Mystery:

The BrideChamber

"My Soul doth magnify the Lord, for a lowly handmaid hath been found perfected in Sophia and the King is come. Be it done according to your Word". The King answered and said, "Arise, O Daughter of the Light, and enter into your rest."

11. Hail Sophia ten times, while meditating on the Mystery.
Followed by the Gloria Patri

12. Announce the fifth Mystery: then say the Gnostic's Prayer.

The Fifth Gnostic Mystery:

The Descent of the New Jerusalem.

Behold, a small star from the Heavens descends to the Earth, With Light more brilliant than the Sun. It comes to dwell in the Hearts of the children of men, and these hearts are the foundation upon which is built the Eternal City, New Jerusalem.

13. Hail Sophia ten times, while meditating on the Mystery.

Closing Prayer

O Gentle, O Kind, O Blessed Sophia,
Your children on earth call unto You.
We pray You, Beloved Mother, to cast forth
your net of woven starlight.
Fling it wide across the ocean of the universe
to gather us home to the realms of Light.
Amen.

Vigilia de Domina

A Marian Prayer

Introduction

Historical research has not yet determined the origins of the Vigilia de Domina with certainty. They can be placed, however, within the context of Marian piety which developed among religious Orders between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, first in monastic communities and then in mendicant fraternities.

The composition of "little offices" is a typical expression of the Marian piety of this period. These were originally intended to celebrate the Virgin on Saturday, the day traditionally dedicated to her.

It is probable that the origins of the Vigil go back to the tradition of dedicating Saturday to our Lady; the remembrance would include the celebration of the Mass of Saint Mary and the Little Office. The Vigil then became an office to be recited on the evening before Saturday.

The title of this short office seems to reflect the two ways in which the term "vigil" was used in the liturgical language of the period. The older usage referred to the office proper, to "vigils" or night offices, while later usage referred to the day before a feast and the prayers which preceded the celebration.

Similar to other vigils, which have neither introductory verses nor a hymn, ours begins immediately with the antiphon "Benedicta tu," by which it is commonly known. The Vigil of Our Lady consists essentially of three psalms, three reading-prayers, and the greater antiphon, "Salve Regina."

Use of the Vigil

According to a rubric found in various editions of the Vigil, it is not recited in common on the last three days of Holy Week. During Eastertime, the Alleluia is not added to the antiphons and responsories.

According to uninterrupted tradition, the Vigil is sung or recited while standing, as a moment of joyous prayer. Where there are no particular reasons to the contrary, this tradition should be preserved.

A rubric permits the substitution of the reading prayers with a Marian reading. This allows the community to use a wide range of texts. However, the systematic use of longer readings would deprive the Vigil of one of its most characteristic elements.

The Vigil of Our Lady should always be celebrated as an homage to Our Lady as well as an expression of our common identity at the more important moments of our life together: general and provincial chapters, meetings and conferences and all those occasions when brothers and sisters are gathered together by their common ideal of love and service.

SAINT MARY, LADY OF HER SERVANTS

Psalmody

Ant. 1 Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

Psalm 8 - The majesty of the Lord and human dignity

The Almighty has done great things for me (Lk. 1:49).

How great is your name, O Lord our God,
through all the earth!

Your Majesty is praised above the heavens;
on the lips of children and of babes,
you have found praise to foil your enemy,
to silence the foe and the rebel.

When I see the heavens, the work of your hands,
the moon and the stars which you arranged,
what is man that you should keep him in mind,
mortal man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him little less than a god;
with glory and honor you crowned him,
gave him power over the works of your hand,
put all things under his feet.

All of the sheep and cattle,
yes, even the savage beasts,
birds of the air, and fish
that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God,
through all the earth!

Ant. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

Ant. 2 Your holiness, O Mother of God, is like the fragrance of choice
myrrh.

Psalm 19 - Hymn to the Creator of the Universe and Lord of the Law

When the Word became flesh, like a bridegroom he united himself to human nature; and the nuptial chamber was the womb of the Virgin (St. Augustine).

The heavens proclaim the glory of God
and the firmament shows forth the work of his hands.
Day unto day takes up the story
and night unto night makes known the message.

No speech, no word, no voice is heard
yet their span extends through all the earth,
their words to the utmost bounds of the world.

There he has placed a tent for the sun;
it comes forth like a bridegroom coming from his tent,
rejoices like a champion to run its course.

At the end of the sky is the rising of the sun;
to the furthest end of the sky is its course.
There is nothing concealed from its burning heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladdened the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The awe of the Lord is holy
abiding forever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,
the purest of gold,
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb.

So, in them, your servant finds instruction;
great reward is in their keeping.
But who can detect all his errors?
From hidden faults, acquit me.

From presumption restrain your servant
and let it not rule me.
Then I shall be blameless,
clean from grave sin.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favor in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock!

Ant. Your holiness, O Mother of God, is like the fragrance of choice myrrh.

Ant. 3 Gathered in her presence, let us sing the praise of the holy Virgin.

Psalm 24 - The Lord's entry into His Temple

The gates of heaven were opened to Christ because he assumed out human nature (Irenaeus).

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek him,
that seek the face of the God of Jacob.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory.

Ant. Gathered in her presence let us sing the praise of the holy Virgin.

Introduction to the Readings

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

-Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

(optional prayer: By the prayers and merits of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and of all the saints, may the Lord lead us to the kingdom of heaven.)

Amen.

Reading Prayers

(These three traditional reading-prayers may be substituted with a Marian passage from Scripture, the documents of the Church or Order, the Fathers or other approved authors.)

First Reading

(Your blessing, please.

[the blessing]

May the Virgin Mary and her loving child bless us.

-Amen.)

O holy Mary, Virgin of virgins,
Mother and daughter of the King of kings,

bestow on us your consolation
that through you we may deserve
to have the reward of the heavenly kingdom
and to reign with the elect of God
through all eternity.

Responsory

O virginity, holy and pure, how can I praise your beauty?
- For the Lord whom the heavens cannot encompass was carried in your womb.

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
- For the Lord...

Second Reading

(Your blessing, please.
[the blessing]
May the Virgin of virgins intercede for us with the Lord.
- Amen.)

Holy Mary, most compassionate,
intercede for us.
Through you, O Virgin,
may he who was born for us,
and now reigns over all,
receive our prayers
and in his mercy wash away our sins.

Responsory

How blessed are you, Virgin Mary,
for you carried within you the Lord, the creator of the world.
-Mother of your maker, you remain a virgin forever.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.
-Mother of your maker...

Third Reading

(Your blessing, please.
[the blessing]
Through the Virgin Mother may the Lord
grant us salvation and peace.
- Amen.)

O holy Theotokos,
made worthy to conceive him
whom the whole world could not contain,
by your gracious intercession,
may our sins be forgiven
so that we ascend
to that realm of glory
where you reign with your Son, forever

Greater Antiphon

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you do we cry,
poor banished children of Eve.
To you do we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy towards us,
and after this exile
show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving,
O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
- That we made be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.
All powerful and ever living God,
by the power of your Spirit,
you prepared Mary, the glorious Virgin Mother,
to be a worthy dwelling place of your Son.
As we celebrate her memory with joy,
grant that through her motherly intercession
we may be preserved from evil in this world
and from eternal death.
We ask through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Instead of the above prayer "All powerful and ever living God," one of the following three prayers may be said.)

1. Prayer for the Church and the Order

In your loving kindness, Lord,
break the chains of our sinfulness.
Through the intercession of blessed Mary,
Mother of God,
your Holy Archangel Michael,
and all the saints,
assist and make holy
N., our Patriarch/Matriarch,
N., our brother and prior general,
(N., our Sister and prioress general/president)
our communities
and all our benefactors;
deliver our parents, relatives, and friends
from evil and fill them with every gift of life;
grant us peace and health;
drive far from us all enemies seen and unseen
and repel every sinful desire.
Give us wholesome air and fruitful soil;
free the world from hunger, war, and every disaster,

and protect this city (country, place) and all its inhabitants
from every misfortune.
Pour out your love
upon our friends
and upon our enemies
and grant eternal rest to all those departed in faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

2. Prayer for light and grace for the celebration of Conclave

Look kindly, Lord, upon this family
that trusts in you,
as we prepare to celebrate
a special moment in our fraternal life:
a time when we meet to review our commitment to the Gospel.

Help us hear the voice of your Spirit
and receive your Word in faith;
renew within us ideals of true service,
love for your Church
and zeal for your kingdom.

Assist and make holy our Grandmaster
and all the brothers and sisters who take part in the Conclave.
Give them wisdom in discernment,
prudence in judgment,
firmness in decision,
and vision in planning.

May nothing hinder their true harmony
and may the diversity of views
be reflected in common goals;
respecting our traditions
and attentive to the signs of the times,
may they act always with true concern
for the present and future of the Order.

May they be supported
by our prayers
and by the motherly presence of the Virgin Mary
so that what they do may benefit
the Church and our Order
and so witness our love for you and all your people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

The Pathworking Series

By Adeptus Major Pierce

[Please Note: Adeptus Major Pierce has written and compiled several Pathworkings for Paths and Spheres on the Tree of Life. As these are compiled and formatted for the Monograph Series, they will be added here as well as throughout the degrees, based on their content - L.E.T. V°]

MALKUTH

You stand upon dry, dry earth, where the garbage of yesteryear and a few indistinct bones poke through. Wisps of acrid smoke blow past. Yet there is a path of footsteps, resolute in their steady pace forward, uncovered by the blowing dust, and these you follow.

The smoke becomes thinner and thinner, replaced by a whitish fog that grows thicker and thicker. It's moistness renews you even as it begins to obscure your path: you proceed forward. Just as the mist becomes too thick to let you know direction, you see before you two pillars, clear in even the thickest draughts blowing past: to your right, a white pillar, that gleams in places too bright to gaze upon too long.

To your left is a black pillar; instead of places of blinding bright it has deep dark that reminds you of places within that you have not dared to look. At your feet, are no more footprints but rather three polished stone steps. There are no dirt of prior feet upon them, but you know that they have been polished by the passage of those whose traces you have followed here.

From between the pillars appears a tall figure, whose flowing robes are quartered red at the right shoulder and arm, blue upon the left, with a yellow sash across his chest and finally trailing green from beneath the yellow sash to his sandaled feet. He is winged, his feathers the seven colors of the rainbow. His right hand is raised in blessing and his left hand bears a globe of the planet earth-you see that it is turned so that your homeland is now in the center.

The figure speaks: *I am Sandalphon, who is governor of this sphere. In one pillar is brightness consuming, and in the other pillar is darkness engulfing. Yet I lay down the path that leads between and beyond them, to the source that made and reconciles them. Along my path, you may learn the mysteries of my Sphere.*

His sweeping hand invites you to take the three steps to go between and past the pillars. No sooner do the pillars go behind your view, than you see grasslands, and low hills, and the sound of distant flutes before you, where there had been but mist and pillars.

You think for a second to look behind you, but upon the nearest hillock, is a new figure, brown haired, brown-eyed, strong of shoulder, face strong-blooded, thick-hewed, patient, and gentle; wearing a robe of rich green, with a belt of autumnal browns and reds buckled with a wooden emblem of the earth symbol, bearing a sheaf of reaped wheat in the left hand, and a heavy iron lantern, light bound in the earth's hardness, in the right hand.

Speaks the figure: *I am Auriel, who governs the realm of Elemental Earth.* You had thought that you had already met the governor here-yet before you can ask anything, Auriel flings both arms in the air, gazing upward.

The light has dimmed further, and you can see the first hint of the moon, though the sun has not yet left the sky; more than that, brighter than you have known them, are the Planets themselves, Mercury orange and swift, Venus glowing green, Mars a fiery red, Jupiter a royal blue, and Saturn an enigmatic grey and indigo that has embossed itself upon the simple dark of twilight.

Beyond the planets blaze the stars, such that you might see by their light alone. Behind the path of the planets, you see flickering hints of the ram, the bull, the twins, knowing that if you could stand here and watch, that all twelve pictures of the sign would flicker across the horizon as the night progressed.. Yet another wonder puts this from your mind.

You see a great golden finger flare from the sinking sun, arcing across the sky, the planets and the Moon weaving threads of their own colors to this golden thread: then, it touches the earth just before you, as the end of a rainbow. The rainbow vanishes as soon as you have caught your breath: but where it touched the ground, there are now useful herbs and bright gems all along the ground.

Auriel steps forward to this patch of earth so enriched by the night-skies gift of a rainbow. Behind Auriel, rises Sandalphon, silent and slowly, his feet appearing above Auriels' head only as Auriels' speech ends.

Auriel says Know that this sphere is more than the ground you walk upon, and that the ground you walk upon is more than the green and rocky skin you know. For you have seen that what is above sends it's light deeply below any depth you have known. Within all gems and flowers the lights above have been gathered according to special offices, sealed by signatures.

Now Auriel raises finger to lips, and closes his eyes as Sandalphon speaks.

Sandalphon says: I am the master of this sphere; of many forces are gathered to the Elements four as well as to Earth, the works of the Earth within this Sphere Auriel richly governs. There is another who shall teach you later how we have leavened this labor to be of light and life and not rude drudgery.

Auriel says: I shall now take you through the Quarter of Earth here, that you may begin your ventures upon the mysteries in all the four quarters.

Sandalphon vanishes, and Auriel turns, pointing you North by outstretched hand. You walk a stone path upon a slowly rising mound of grass: just as you reach the broad, low peak of this hillock, you see what you could not see from where you started:

You see a rushing river with a small island in it's middle; there is a pile of wood and a stone circle. Auriel stands above the isle, dropping a few seeds into the ground. Three gnomes rise from the clay, their skin red and brown; each has a beard of green, for saplings sprouts from each of their heads.

You hear no command to them, yet they proceed to pile twigs and leaves for kindling, then logs into the stone circle. Each gnome now rubs a pair of sticks, raising a little flame that they touch to the kindling. Soon a fire blazes. Their work complete, the gnomes plant themselves in the earth, melting to three mounds-but from each, their beards of saplings rise as proud tall trees, deep under as they are high to your sight.

You see the flames wavering, bending to the wind, receiving and shaping the true breath of heat from the fuel beneath-here is the Water.

You see the river rush into the channel it has cut over many thousands of years-here is the Fire. You hear from far away a sound of shepherds' flutes that has bounced along the water to you-here is the Air-and even in the feeling of slipping through your fingers, you know the Earth-wherein is the Water?

It is in your heart and belly to receive the meanings what you have been shown. Wherein is the Air? In your connection of these ideas to these images in the expanse of your mind. Wherein is the Fire? In your aspiration to raise yourself to work these lessons in the earth, or in things you may make seen to others; even as the Gnomish trees thrust upward and more deeply.

Auriel says: know further that you have seen but the beginning: for all these examples of the Elements were known to your flesh and eyes: they have been finally of Elemental Earth

Now Auriel is gone, and you stare into the patch of sky that held him. In our heads, also is a clear place, but it has weight and substance of its own-for the idea we have been given, of how all the Elements show themselves moving in the visible skin we call earth, has particular wisdom and possibilities to which we may return, and which we may digest further.

Yet other notions come to us: how we must learn to know the real nature of what is a motion beneath appearance, how we must see meaning in motion and change; how we must see active force at work in even what has endured unchanged. We see the wind as a subtle skin, moved itself by hidden bones and organs-a hint of wings spread from horizon to horizon, glittering--These and many other ideas are the wings spreading in all directions, from out the body of that first idea we grasped for itself.

This is what the earth of an idea is like, and this is what the air of an idea is as it brings us beyond our first grasp of an inspiration-and as we find our minds racing, we hold back to this one route we have pursued-and we have just known the fire of our minds, in its rushing forth but also in the way we have made will direct that flow of thinking-now, on the edge of this, are images, smells we remember, joy in our adventure and anxiety at the questions nibbling on what we have learned-all these things not quite ideas-and more, we take the hardest fire of air again, and still our thoughts-utterly-taking the idea of stilling, making the idea of silence and still, even diminishing thoughts of what control and simplicity are to a single moment of silence itself-and in a few breaths, we know that we have found the watery part of air; we have seen how each of the elements are in the one element that is our thinking mind-what to know of Water, then, but how each impression has shaped us and we received it-how impression follows upon impression-how there is force to fill us when we find our silence-and, again, a moment of empty open receiving itself, flowing on-

We have felt our will do these things, the earth of fire. We have felt how every idea and its connection is a way to move forward-and we realize that much that we have done in this time of looking in, has in its way been a reaction, a receiver, of what has been around-even our actions have a place of water that is shaped-Just to our left and above, there is the image of a woman's face, but turned away. In the hunch of the shoulder and the turning down of the brow is certain sorrow, but also some mystery or redemption just beyond-but she is gone. We barely knew a flicker of her but the memory is sunk deep into our chests.

Now we look down to our feet and step forward.-simply to act, simple to move, simply to know this for an instant before our feet confirm by their landing the power we have called. We have had a sample of each of the elements, guiding ourselves by the fact that we see them move just behind the earth our senses meet.

Now, onward we go, letting this lesson drop deep into us, seeking something solid and news to us in the realm of Sandalphon and Auriel.

We follow the riverbank, knowing it is not time yet to find a way to the Island and its' waiting trees. We decide to walk against the flow of the river-we are seeking sources now. Along the way, every rock has moss and small animals, trees stand to give us shade, and grass not only softens our step but reminds us that we are rooted to the broad soil that gives all lives a time of moving solidity. Presently, we wonder if there is more to our lesson than the flow and solidity and variety of life-and there is before us a gentle sloping down of the ground. As we approach the edge of this lowering and move down, we see that before us, is a broad round patio in the ground, made of a single large round of bedrock in the earth, just as wide as the full extent of your outstretched arms if you were to stand in the middle, polished by an eternity of feet.

Sandalphon appears in the middle of the patio, just where you had imagined that you might stand. Sandalphon says: *In my domain, the potencies of these Four have been gathered; and in venturing beyond my domain, you shall encounter three of them again, one by one: and there is another you shall meet before you see the New Dawn.*

Now Sandalphon rises in the air, indicating the open patio with his outstretched palm; you know that you must now stand where Sandalphon stood.

Before you, in the East, a sunbeam floods onto the figure there; tall, yellow robed yellow haired, bearing a Caduceus wand hung with healing-herbs in His right hand, a yellow fan bearing the alchemical symbol of Air in his left hand, and wearing a breastplate of gold, bearing the symbol of Sol.

You silence your mind, and are able to speak forth the name of this being in greetings: Raphael, the Healer, Lord of Air and Wind and Tempest.

Now the figure to the South raises the orange glow of a hearth or campfire, and you turn to face him: robed in red, right hand bearing a sword and left hand bearing a torch bearing intense flames of blue and white, wearing a breastplate of shimmering alloy, with the symbol of Mercury enameled in bright orange.

Again, inner silence serves to place the name and greetings upon your breath: Michael the Defender, Lord of Fire, Prince of the Host of Heaven.

In the West, to your Right, a shimmer as of the moon upon a crystal lake bids you turn to that Quarter. There, robed in flowing blue, bearing a silver breastplate with the sign of Luna, the figure holds a silver bowl that pours forth torrents of water, yet with still bottom visible, wherein visions might be sought.

It is perhaps by this sliver of scrying-mirror that you know to speak forth: "Gabriel, Lord of Water, heavenly herald who bore tidings of the Christ unto Mother Mary."

Now on your Right, you turn to the North for a glimmer of gold and we grass attracts you. Here, there are two angels, Auriel, who you know, and above, in the air, a woman, dressed in rich green, bearing a basket of apples. Auriel, in a robe of rich green, with a belt of autumnal browns and reds buckled with a wooden emblem of the earth symbol, stands an austere figure, sadness and mercy and patience etched in face and shoulders, bearing a sheaf of reaped wheat in the left hand, and a heavy iron lantern, light bound in the earth's hardness, in the left hand.

The heavy stillness of this figure is the very flesh of the silence that has counseled you so far: and you speak and know:

Auriel, dark lord of Earth, guide of all to the nether shore, companion of those who die in defense of others.

Auriel and Sandalphon speak as one: *Behold Haniel, who completes the quarter of guardians when you travel according to the powers of the Planets; in Venus you shall know her, companion to Michael, Gabriel and Raphael; who shall prepare you with the true adoration by which you may seek the true spiritual Sun.*

You turn to the East again, and Sandalphon slowly drifts down behind you, arm upon your shoulders. Speak forth, advises Sandalphon: Complete your naming of this place and this shrine shall be your footstone up to the realms of each of these powerful angels, and more besides. With his left hand, Sandalphon directs your gaze to Auriel, who holds out his sheaf of reaped wheat. You take the wheat in your hands, and as you turn again to the east, Michael now holds forward his torch. You ignite the wheat, and before you Raphael waves his fan, bringing smoke and heat away from you and lifting the offering to the air and the ash to the ground.

You turn to Gabriel, who holds forth his bowl, allowing you to wash your hands. You see where a single seed from the wheat sinks in the mud made of ash and water. Haniel has vanished, but you feel a warmth within you: for you have finished this labor by love, which alone uplifts drudgery.

All the five Archangels here raise their voices in song as you chant: **From the portal of Air to the Portal of Water, from the Portal of Fire to the Portal of earth, I establish this sanctuary in the Sacred Flame.**

Now you are alone, but for the lights in the sky: behind you is a sliver of moon rising as if at dusk while before you the first light of dawn cracks the inky night; and five smaller lights travel their Orbits about you: here are the Luminaries that will exalt the Elemental work you have wrought when you are ready to travel to the spheres of the Angels you have met today.

You lift your hands, knowing that the Sacred Flame courses throughout this place, ready to glow when you come here again to announce new aspirations. You close your eyes, open them again, and find yourself, for now, returned to mundane world, but now bearing each of it's elements at your disposal.

The sanctuary and the sacred flame, in truth, remain all around and deep within you still. You see before you a forest of stately trees, a stone path leading to one that is older, bare, perhaps dead. To your left, you see a geyser of flame spurting up from the ground. To your right is the borderland of a swamp, gloaming with it's own inner evening even in the daylight; a profusion of beetles crawling upon the trees bordering its dark wetness. Here are the three gateways beyond the sphere of the material world, whose own complexity and deep unity you have just begun to know.

You have established your shrine here, that you shall therefore have the power to go beyond, even to the source of all that you have undergone. You close your eyes, returned whence you came, but seeing now how green grass that the saplings of trees poke through what had been sterile dirt of bones and old garbage before—perhaps renewed or perhaps finally seen by you for the life that it always has held.