

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

# Agapé

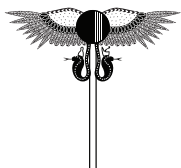


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Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.



E.G.C.

# Agapé

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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

The deadline for the next issue of Agapé is July 9, 2022 EV. We are always accepting articles, reviews, poetry, photography, and art for future issues!

*Love is the law, love under will.*

Andrew  
Editor, *Agapé*

## FROM THE GRAND MASTER

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

### Being a Thelemite, and Being a Thelemite Who is an O.T.O. Initiate

A Thelemite (capital T) is, fundamentally, an adherent of Thelema, a religion (as most of us call it) whose essential principles are poetically set forth in *Liber AL vel Legis, Sub figura CCXX, the Book of the Law*. Many Thelemites accept the principles expressed in other writings into their understanding of Thelema, but this is largely a matter of personal preference. The community of Thelemites consists of every individual who has accepted the Law of Thelema and the *Book of the Law*. It is an extremely diverse, and extremely diffuse, community. The only thing they truly have in common is the *Book of the Law*.

Members of O.T.O. constitute a well-defined subset of the community of Thelemites—and are likely a minority within that community. They are obligated to each other by fraternal bonds that do not apply to non-members, even non-member Thelemites. They are also obligated to abide by certain standards and principles of behavior, which include secrecy with respect to the particulars of O.T.O.'s initiation rituals.

In addition to *Liber AL*, O.T.O. membership entails recognition of a number of documents inherited from predecessor societies and developed specifically for O.T.O. by Theodor Reuss and Aleister Crowley. These can be found in *The Equinox Vol III, No. 1* (The Blue Equinox) and *Vol. III, No. 10*, and include *Liber XV, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae, the Gnostic Mass*.

Another of these documents, the 1917 *Constitution of the Ancient Order of Oriental Templars* (O.T.O.) states the following (Article II):

1. The O.T.O. declares that Brotherhood of All Things Created is a fact in Nature.
2. The principle purpose of the O.T.O. is to teach True Brotherhood, and to make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Another of these documents, *Liber LXXVII: Oz*, sets forth a list of certain fundamental rights of Man, i.e., of humanity.

Several of the documents referred to above also state that O.T.O. is involved in teaching the principles of Hermetic Science and Yoga.

A Thelemite who is not an initiate of O.T.O. may or may not choose to recognize any of these principles, rights, or teachings.

### Those Who Walk Away

We recognize that O.T.O. membership may not be suited for everyone; and we also recognize that we sometimes fail to live up to our own high standards. There will always be those who decide, for a variety of reasons, to step away from participation in our worldly organization. It is important for us to allow them to go in peace. We must avoid retaliating, or engaging in any kind of harassment, against such people, simply over the fact that they walked away. Such behavior is characteristic of abusive cults, and it is unbecoming of O.T.O. membership.



*Love is the law, love under will.*

Sabazius

## UPDATES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

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

The Electoral College took the following actions pertinent to local body leadership at the Spring meeting held online on April 30, 2022 <sup>EV</sup>:

- Passed mastership of ARARITA Oasis (San Diego, CA) from Sr. Amrita to Br. Jonah Hontos.
- Chartered William Blake Lodge (Baltimore, MD) as William Blake Oasis and passed mastership from Fr. FreeShadow to Br. Jeren.

- Extended the tenure of the masters of Circle of Stars Camp (Hanover, IN) and Mithras Oasis (Windham, CT) for one year.
- Suspended the charter of Heru Ra Ha Lodge (Newport Beach, CA) at the request of the master.
- Closed Swirling Star Lodge (Miami, FL) at the request of the master.

The Electoral College wishes to thank the outgoing masters for their years of service and to congratulate the new masters on the trust placed in them.

Procedurally, we extended the suspension of the dedicated lodge space requirement and the minimum number of Gnostic Masses requirement until January 1, 2024 EV.

Our Summer meeting will be held on July 9, 2022 EV in Oakland, CA. The deadline for submission of items to be considered is May 28, 2022 EV.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

Fraternally yours,  
Mike Estell  
President  
U.S.G.L. Electoral College

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR INTRODUCTION

Dear Siblings,

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

I have recently had the honor of accepting the position of Volunteer Coordinator for United States Grand Lodge, and I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself to the membership and let you know how I plan to approach these duties.

### For Officers of United States Grand Lodge

Officers and Staff of U.S.G.L. who are looking for additional support in the work that they are doing

are invited to reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator as a resource to develop their project parameters and solicit qualified volunteers.

Philosophically, I am a firm supporter of the idea of cross training, mentoring, shadowing, and making the necessary arrangements for a qualified replacement to be in place for every integral role. It is not just good practice but a responsibility to provide for a continuity of support and leadership for the healthy development of the Order.

Giving qualified members the opportunity to serve and to learn the processes and practices of our various offices will pay lasting dividends as our organization grows and the demands required to maintain it expand. If you are an officer for Grand Lodge who is able to share some of your workload, please consider doing so, as this provides another member the opportunity to learn about how things are done, provide support, gain insight, and develop the stability of our infrastructure.

I look forward to assisting you in finding the support you require and in training the leaders we desire.

### For Members of O.T.O. in Good Standing

Members of United States Grand Lodge who are interested in taking the initiative to pursue volunteer opportunities are welcome to reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss your skills and interests.

In the absence of posted positions, I am happy to engage in a dialog about skills and interests among members, First Degree and above, who are inspired to put themselves forward for consideration.

I will provide you with a questionnaire that explores your skills, history, work style, and availability, and I will solicit feedback from Order members you've worked with in the past.

With this data I will be able to make recommendations or inquiries among those offices where your skills will be a good fit or keep the information on file against future need if nothing presents itself right away.

Additionally, there may be other short-term Grand Lodge projects available in the future that will give those interested in showing support for the Order the opportunity to be of service on a project-by-project basis on a more limited timeline, and let inexperienced volunteers discover more about their strengths and interests.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office with questions or to start a conversation about what we'll be doing next! I can be reached at [volunteers@oto-usa.org](mailto:volunteers@oto-usa.org).

*Love is the law, love under will.*

Jon

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## WHY THE PRICE FOR LOVE IS PAIN

Soror AVO

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

Years ago, I was sailing with some friends when out of nowhere, we encountered some rough seas. Joe called them "rogue waves." In our tiny 30-foot schooner, the 40-foot (think four stories high) waves looked more like giant mountains hurtling at us. I cinched the straps on my lifejacket a bit tighter and held on for dear life. But Old Joe as we called him was a seasoned captain, and he didn't even flinch. As any good sailor would do, he aimed the bow of the boat right at the center of the wave and kept an even keel, literally. One by one, we sailed over the waves and soon found our way back into calmer waters. The boat and its crew were intact, though I can't say the same for the lunch I ate prior to boarding.

In any case, I learned a few valuable life lessons that day, not the least of which was never forget your Dramamine. The more important lesson though was one that I've applied to every aspect of my life since then, and that is that no matter how rough things get, the only way through a problem is to face it head-on. I have found this to be true with my work as a Thelemite as well. Taking initiations especially can bring up lots of crud that needs to get worked on.

Past traumas, bad habits, outmoded ways of thinking are all traps, like the blade edge of an iceberg just waiting to sink us. Personally speaking, there have been many times when something popped up and it didn't dawn on me until AFTER I struggled with it for a while, that it had anything to do with my growth spiritually. That is where, I think, the biggest risk of failure lies. We get so mired in the seeming mundaneness of the issues that creep up, that we forget that they are all part of the Great Work.

I like to think of the Great Work as a journey toward K&C or Union with one's Holy Guardian Angel, with each of the ten Sephiroth as stopping points or places of reflection along the way. Sometimes we move up, sometimes we move down, sometimes we get completely lost. But every experience we have is part of that journey. How we meet each experience determines where we land next. Let's say for example that while driving to work, you get a flat tire. You call your boss to tell her you're going to be a few minutes late, and she gets mad and hangs up on you. Yikes. You have a few choices; you can (A) let the situation stress you out to the point where you quit your job and do a sloppy job fixing your tire, (B) fix your tire properly, but tell your boss to kiss your behind or (C) remain calm and tackle each problem as it comes, in the most appropriate manner you can think of. Each decision has its consequences. Here's the thing: in Thelema we say that "Love is the law, love under will." There are many layers of meaning to that. One of them is that when we approach things from an attitude of love, everything changes. Think of your own response if you were the boss and someone launched into your office screaming at you because you hung up on them, rather than if they knocked and said calmly, "Hey, are you OK? It's not like you to just hang up on someone." Love changes everything it connects with, and that is why the price for love is pain.

In Liber CL, Crowley writes: "...as love increaseth within you, so doth the torment of His absence." As you meet each challenge head on with love, you not only change yourself, but you draw ever closer to your HGA. If your HGA is the flame, love gives you the wings of the Moth. According to Crowley, the closer you get to your HGA, the further away you get from the material and mundane, until the mere existence in the world becomes a torment of

its own. The point here is that if your will is your ship, then love must be the rudder guiding you in the right direction. Without love, there is no progress. With love, the price of progress is change, and change as we all know can be painful.

So the next time you experience an obstacle or opportunity for change, remember that the pain of change is the price we pay for Love. You'll never find a better bargain.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

## AMOUR VINCIT OMNIA

Soror AVO

The space and time we comprehend,  
Is the beginning and the end.  
There is no division in the great Above,  
Division comes when we fall from Love.  
As above, so below,  
What we mortals rarely know,  
We are that: The Undivided,  
When in Love, we are United.  
The path to Godhead is abundantly clear,  
If one has the mind to Hear.  
314 and 418,  
Salt and Earth, the beauty bring  
419 and 666  
Fire and Air, mortality fix  
There is no UP, it's Out we go  
Godhead is in the ebb and flow  
Of numbers and music and mystical signs  
These are but toys for inquisitive minds  
The only way out of this physical bin  
Is through the Love that lies within.

## THE SOLGRADES' JOURNEY

SOROR AVO

The Moonlight there sequestered,  
Beneath a lusty sky,  
Down along the river's edge,  
The Solgrades mourn their light.  
What fools they are, to mourn that loss,  
For as the light gives way,  
The torment of the plough's sweet blade,  
Separates decay.  
And like the fresh-tilled earth,

Their skin bloodied and raw,  
The Solgrades rise like sunflower sprouts,  
Even brighter than before.  
No more the silent witness,  
The Moonlight takes Her leave,  
As the Light claims his Champions,  
The once weary and bereaved.

## THE DARK ROSE

Soror AVO

I am the Dark Goddess,  
I am Beautiful because I am wise.  
I am Beautiful because I am She who counsels the  
Seeker.  
I am Strength because I survived life's harsh lessons  
And I thrived in spite of them.  
I am the Learned Sage,  
And the Lamp in the Darkness.  
My beauty is Understanding.  
I am hardened, like the stones of the Earth.  
I will destroy all who seek Me,  
For none who seek Wisdom can remain the same.  
I am the Dark Rose.  
I will seduce you with the lust of reason,  
And I will slay you with the blade of intellect.  
All ye who die at my feet, I will suckle with the  
blood of my wisdom,  
And Ye shall rise, like the Mighty Sun in the midst  
of the Gods.  
Seek Me therefore, without fear or reservation,  
For they who find me, also find themselves  
And in so doing, the Bliss of perfect happiness.

## IN MEMORIAM

### James McLaughlin

I have been truly blessed to have known a host of exceptional people during my adult life. One of these people passed the veil into death over Christmas. That was James McLaughlin. I met James in my early 20s at an O.T.O. camping event in Austin called IO Pan Jam. We immediately became good friends. James was initiated by Grady McMurtry in the 1970s and brought with him a deep esoteric perspective. James was first initiated with Brother Duquette, and I later found a book of Lon's inscribed to James with the message "together from day one." James had a clarity of vision without getting lost in the reeds that he was happy to share with those he worked with. He served as Master of Scarlet Woman Lodge for 8 years and focused on the Will of the community rather than a particular vision for what he wanted the community to be. He strove to be a servant leader. He also served as Most Wise Sovereign for Baphomet Chapter R+C, and he served for a time on the Supreme Grand Council of U.S. Grand Lodge.

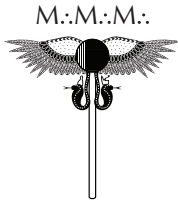
I can honestly say that most of what I know about leadership came from James. He served as a deep-sea diver in the Navy with three tours of Vietnam and later retired as a Sergeant Major from the Army. Only 0.8% of the enlisted Army ever makes it to Sergeant Major. He was also a Pathfinder, which is an elite unit in the Army that drops in behind enemy lines and marks out drop zones and landing zones for troops. For almost the entire time that I knew him, James was in terrific physical condition. He was frequently in the gym and had been bodybuilding since the 70s. He truly was exceptional, and he had a lot to teach to those lucky enough to be mentored by him.

James originally focused on the initiatory side of O.T.O. as E.G.C. wasn't his cup of tea. Later in his initiatory career James reversed course and dove deeply into the mysteries of E.G.C., becoming a supervising bishop for many clergy members in Texas and beyond. He truly shared his love through service.

James (or Jim as he liked to be called post-retirement) had a keen analytic mind and a deeply mystical spirit. His military training gave him a tendency to see things in a black or white frame. I felt blessed to give him counsel on several occasions. He used to say that I was good at seeing shades of grey and would call on me for context. I'm really going to miss those conversations. The last time I saw Jim I was startled at how frail he looked and how easily winded he had become. He looked me in the eyes and said, "it happens to all of us." Jim went into his last days with his eyes open and his head high. I hope that we can all live up to Jim's spirit and example. May his memory continue to inspire those of us lucky enough to have known him.

Aumgn. Aumgn. Aumgn.

David Hill



# Ordo Templi Orientis



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O.T.O. "does not include the A.:A.:, with which august body it is, however, in close alliance."  
— Liber III

O.T.O. has long worked in close alliance with the A.:A.:, which first proclaimed the Law of Thelema to the world. The A.:A.: is a teaching, testing, and initiatory system dedicated to the personal spiritual advancement of its individual members. Within A.:A.: all services are rendered free of charge, and no social activities are held. O.T.O. and A.:A.: have jointly issued the journal *The Equinox* since 1912 EV, now in its fourth volume. Although they are distinctly separate organizations, neither including nor subordinate to the other, O.T.O. has historically assisted A.:A.: with practical matters that lie outside the latter's primary mission, which is purely spiritual in nature. Aspirants to the A.:A.: may write to:

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