

EXCERPTS FROM THE FOUNDING DOCUMENT OF THE ORDER OF ST. LUCY

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A VISION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As a college student reading T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," I was deeply moved by the spiritual dilemma in the poem. Its images of parched earth and stagnant water spoke to my own needs for living water and renewal, but also to the needs of the unbalanced society I saw around me. At the time, I was reading Man and His Symbols, edited by C. G. Jung, and was intrigued by the theory that symbols could be a key to unlock a treasure trove of information in the collective unconscious of mankind. The notion that I could receive knowledge that somehow every person possessed innately, but that was at this time virtually unknown to my conscious mind, caused me to experiment with symbolism in an attempt to subjectively prove this theory to myself. I used techniques that I was learning in another book I was reading at the time, Concentration, by Ernest Wood. The subject of my experiment was The Hanged Man, key 12 in the Major Arcana of the Tarot. I had just acquired, at the age of 19, A. E. Waite's Tarot deck, which was drawn by Pixie Smith, a friend of the W. B. Yeats family. I had found the deck sometime before my study of Eliot. The deck had seemed to almost speak to me from the shelf. When I bought the deck, I had no idea what it was. The same thing had happened to me a few years before, when I bought a book called Meister Eckhart's Way to Cosmic Consciousness. I had thus become intrigued with cosmic consciousness and with the idea that I could become personally aware of mystical realities.

The Hanged Man plays a role in Eliot's poem. A person receiving a reading from a fortune teller is told, "I do not find The Hanged Man. Fear death by water."ⁱ Eliot feigned ignorance of the Tarot key's meaning in the notes to his poem, but his symbolic use of the Tarot key in the poem shows that he knew more (at least subconsciously) about The Hanged Man than he was willing to admit. My professors later told me that Eliot could not have known anything of Tarot because he was a Christian. Having recently acquired my deck, after a few hours of reading and re-reading the poem, I used Wood's techniques of concentration on The Hanged Man symbol before lying down on my bed and closing my eyes. I told my roommate, who looked at me like I was crazy, that I was about to have a vision. My goal was to receive a vision from the collective unconscious, using the Tarot symbol as a key to unlock the spiritual knowledge that would resolve the dilemma presented in Eliot's poem. What I received was a vision, from a superconscious level, of the peace which passeth understanding. Here again, my professors later told me that when Eliot ended his poem "Shantih shantih shantih,"ⁱⁱ which means "peace" in Sanskrit, he was merely being ironic, not pointing to any message of hope for mankind. Whether Eliot was really so cynical, I don't know—but what I do know is that the powerful symbolism of Eliot's poem, and especially The Hanged Man, upon which I meditated, spoke to my subconscious mind in such a way that I did in fact receive a vision, very vivid and real, and came back to self-conscious reality possessing knowledge of things that I had not possessed or even known of a short time before. The vision showed me that Jung's theory was correct. While the vision related to the theme and symbolism of the poem and of the Tarot key, it also transcended these symbols. I was transported to a place that existed outside of time, and came in contact, through symbolism, with a higher reality that instructed me. Because an

understanding of Eliot's poem is not necessary to decipher the vision (except as I will point out), I will recount it here.

In the notes to his poem, Eliot wrote that he associated The Hanged Man with the "Hanged God of Frazer" and "with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus."ⁱⁱⁱ The Hanged God relates to the myth of the Fisher King, in which a sacrifice is needed to bring fertility to a dying land whose vegetation is in need of water. In the story of Emmaus, two disciples are walking with a stranger and, unbeknownst to them, the stranger is Christ. This hooded figure appears in Eliot's poem, although he does not identify the figure anywhere as Christ (those who are already familiar with the Emmaus story may infer the figure's identity upon reading Eliot's note). I had not read the notes to Eliot's poem at the time of my vision. When I saw this hooded figure in my vision, I did not associate him with the Christ. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, I did not realize I had come in contact with the risen Christ until later.

After lying down and closing my eyes, the next thing I knew I was on top of a hill. In contrast to the bleak images of the poem I had just read, I was standing in a place of lush vegetation. There was a figure in a brown robe and hood standing near me. The figure seemed androgynous. I could not see his or her face because the hood concealed it. The figure spoke, saying, "Come and see that which the few have seen, and that which none have understood." I felt compelled to follow, with a great eagerness. To the figure's right, there was a path leading down the hill in a winding manner through green vines, trees, and limbs. I was led down the hill and onto a beach. The shoreline was vast, and all along it I saw many other people who had been gathered to witness this thing, whatever it was. The figure motioned me on and then fell back, as I walked toward the sea, and up the steps to a wooden dock. I walked along the dock, to the end of it, and stood holding the railing. The sea stretched out for miles ahead. I looked up at the sky. There were storm clouds gathering, and a great feeling of anticipation in the air. Then there was the sound of loud thunder that shook the earth. As I held tightly to the railing to steady myself, I looked around at the others gathered on the shore. Some were stumbling and falling down. Then, a second time, loud thunder shook the earth as people stumbled. And finally, a third time, the loud thunder sounded as the people lost their footing on the shore. After the third thunderclap, I looked into the sky, and light began to shine. The heavens parted, and there, in the center of the sky, was an enormous, radiant, white dove, hovering over the waters of the sea, as if preparing to descend. As I saw this dove, I knew that in spite of all the pain, ignorance, sorrow, and evil in the world, there was a nurturing Mother above, ready to embrace us with divine love if we were only willing to take one step toward Her. I returned to normal consciousness with a great sense of peace, and the knowledge that this divine love exists beyond all human understanding.

This vision was a life-changing experience, and I consider it an inner conversion. The experience of it caused me to change, to strive to be a better person, a person who sought wisdom and wanted to learn to love others more. The three thunderclaps in the vision appeared in the final section of Eliot's poem, "What The Thunder Said." In the poem, the

thunder spoke three times, and each time the “DA” of the thunder represented a Sanskrit word: Datta, dayadhvam, and damyata (give, sympathize, and control).^{iv} Eliot’s poem ends with a second repetition of the words: “Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. / Shantih shantih shantih.”^v My vision mirrored this closing—the thunder, and then the dove. It was a vision of the Trinity. The Son was the guide in the hooded robe, the thunder was the voice of the Father, and the dove was the Holy Spirit. But, chiefly, it was a vision of the Holy Spirit as a nurturing Mother.

A couple of years after the vision, I made some interesting connections relating to it. I had a third experience of a book “calling to me” from the shelf: The Book of Tokens, by Paul Foster Case. In it, the Tarot of the Builders of the Adytum is reproduced. Unlike the Waite deck, which is the only deck I had seen to this point, Case’s Empress held a heart-shaped shield with a dove on it. When the number 12 of The Hanged Man is reduced it becomes 3, the number of the Empress. Also, each one of Case’s Tarot keys has one of the 22 Hebrew letters on it (they are absent in the Waite deck). The Hebrew letter-name associated with The Hanged Man is “Mem,” which means “seas” or “waters.” How had my subconscious known that The Hanged Man was associated with Mem, meaning “seas,” especially when there is no water pictured in The Hanged Man? How did it know that this key was related to the Empress, who bears the symbol of the dove, when there is no dove in Waite’s deck? It was because symbols are the key to unlocking the knowledge that resides in the collective unconscious. It is through engaging symbol and ritual that we make spiritual progress, not by assenting intellectually to any belief system. As Karen Armstrong points out in her book, The Case for God, mythos (symbol and ritual) and logos (science and logic) are two distinctly different ways of approaching the world, and mixing logos with Christianity has led to problems such as literalism and fundamentalism.^{vi}

After reading Case’s book and learning more about Builders of the Adytum, a school of Tarot and Qabalah in the Western Mystery Tradition, I was pleased to find that there were others in the world who used Tarot, as I had done, for meditation. I joined BOTA and did the work for many years. Eventually, I decided to become Catholic because of my devotion to the divine feminine (but only the kind of “Catholic” that would accept someone like me). When I found the Liberal Catholic Church International, I had no idea that Paul Foster Case, the founder of BOTA, had also been a Liberal Catholic priest. While finding a Catholic church that accepted my occult views was liberating, as time went on I felt the need to be around more like-minded people, not merely people who tolerated my way of approaching things. And, while Catholics are more open than Protestants to the idea of the sacred feminine, I felt I hadn’t really found the place where I could express my devotion to her...and I also found St. Lucy.

ST. LUCY'S DAY

Many traditions recognize a spiritual hierarchy, and among that hierarchy a group of advanced souls who aid mankind. Some names for this group include the Inner School, the Great White Brotherhood, and in the Catholic tradition, the Communion of Saints. Saint Lucy's Feast Day is December 13. Clarity and light are attributed to her. She is thought to aid in times of temptation, and she grants good judgment and discrimination when we pray for her aid in confusing situations.^{vii}

According to legend, St. Lucy was a woman of great beauty, who was born into an affluent family in Syracuse in 285. She practiced Christianity in secret and was devoted to St. Agatha. Her mother converted to the faith after she was healed miraculously of chronic illness when St. Lucy took her to St. Agatha's tomb. St. Lucy refused an offer of marriage because she had promised her virginity to Christ and wished her dowry to be given to the poor. Her betrothed turned her into the Roman authorities, where she refused to sacrifice to the gods, saying "the sacrifice that is pleasing to God is to visit the poor and help them in their need." When she was ordered to serve in a house of prostitution, she could not be moved by a thousand oxen, a thousand soldiers, or the spells of wizards and magicians. She survived being set aflame and boiling oil poured over her head, saying "I have prayed for this prolongation of my martyrdom in order to free believers from the fear of suffering and to give unbelievers time to insult me." She was finally killed by a dagger, which was stabbed into her throat. She died in 304.^{viii}

St. Lucy is always depicted carrying her eyes on a dish. There are two opposing legends concerning this. One is that her eyes were gouged out during torture and miraculously restored. The other is that she herself gouged them out and gave them to a suitor who was enraptured by them. Here, too, they were miraculously restored. In addition to the qualities of clarity and light, people pray for the intervention of St. Lucy in problems of eyesight.^{ix} St. Lucy can be seen as a representation of true vision, as opposed to the false vision of those who are enslaved to appearances and materialism.

St. Lucy's significance can be more deeply understood by exploring her story through the lens of the esoteric tradition. St. Lucy refused marriage, offering herself instead as a virgin bride of the Lamb. We find this mystical marriage symbolized in the Major Arcana of the Tarot through the Empress and Emperor keys. The Emperor is identified with the zodiacal sign, Aries, which is symbolized by a ram. A young ram is a lamb. The Emperor, like St. Lucy who holds her eyes on the dish, is associated with the function of sight. In The Book of Tokens, by Fr. P. F. Case, we find the following in the meditation on the Hebrew letter-name Heh (meaning "window"), which is attributed to the Emperor:

Again, a window is set in the wall of a house,
 Even as the eye is set in the head,
 That they who dwell within may look abroad
 To see what passeth without.
 Hence it is written in the Book of Formation
 That the letter HEH correspondeth unto the faculty
 of Sight.
 This referreth to my power of vision,
 Which is not as thine, since nothing escapeth it,
 And all things appear unto it in their true aspect.

It is written:
 “The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
 Beholding the evil and the good”;
 And because I,
 The Dweller in the House of the Supernal Will,
 See all things as they really are,
 My vision hath no taint of false judgment.
 Seeing, I understand,
 And because nothing is hid from me,
 Therefore am I merciful.^x

Elsewhere in the meditation, we find this passage:

For my Way is the Way of the Word,
 And the Word is hidden in thy heart.
 For this is the Word creative,
 Which calleth all things into being.
 Here is a mystery,
 For the letter HEH concealeth the Word,
 And the Word is as truly a vision as it is a voice.
 With me there is no difference between speech
 and sight.
 In very truth, I utter myself by seeing.^{xi}

Thus we can see that the Emperor is symbolically synonymous with the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” in the Liberal Catholic Liturgy, that creative Word or Logos of the Father by which the worlds were formed. St. Lucy has a connection with her mystical husband, the Lamb, through the gift of true sight, since the creative Word is uttered by seeing.

The identification of Christ with Aries is strengthened by the assertions of some astrologers, who claim that Christ was born not in the sign of Capricorn, but in Aries (the

sign ruled by the planet Mars), and that Aries is the ruling sign of Judea.^{xii}

Just as St. Lucy waited for her mystical husband, the Lamb, so we too as Christians should wait with a mental posture of receptivity to the Word, as Christ's church is also symbolized as a bride.

Another passage in Case's meditation on Heh states:

Even as in Genesis thou mayest read
That Light was the first creation,
So hath it been known since the beginning
 By the wise.
They worship me with wisdom
Who turn their faces toward the East,
For the shining of the dawn
Is a type of all my works.^{xiii}

Just as, in the first passages from the meditation, we saw how St. Lucy was connected with the Lamb through sight, here she is connected with him through Light, which is the meaning of her name. As we read in the Qabalistic passage from the opening of St. John's gospel, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."^{xiv} Before the reform of the Gregorian calendar in the 16th century, St. Lucy's Day fell on the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Scandinavian hymns about St. Lucy have lyrics describing the Light by which St. Lucy overcomes the darkness. Thus we have seen that the Lamb, God's Word, is associated with both vision and Light, both of which are attributes of St. Lucy. St. Lucy is sometimes referred to as the Queen of Lights.

"They worship me with wisdom who turn their faces toward the East, for the shining of the dawn is a type of all my works." The Hebrew "Helel ben Shahar" in Isaiah 14:12, meaning "Son of Dawn," is translated into the Septuagint Greek as "heosphoros," which means "dawn-bearer," and from the Greek into King James English as "Lucifer," which means "light bearer." The connection between the names Lucy and Lucifer is obvious. A connection between St. Lucy and Lucifer as "light bearer" can be seen in St. Lucy's Day celebrations, where a girl who is chosen to represent the "Lucy Bride" wears a white dress and a crown or wreath with seven white candles on her head, and walks ahead of a procession of women also wearing white, each bearing a lighted candle. Lucifer, who is incidentally synonymous with Prometheus (who brought fire to humanity), was the Roman astrological term for the morning star, Venus, which rises in the East. It is said that Christ will return from the East when he comes again. In the book of Revelation, which concludes with the marriage of the Lamb to his bride, Christ says, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."^{xv}

The name Lucifer, through its usage in poetry and contemporary mythology, later came to

be associated with the Adversary. One reason this may have occurred is that when the morning star is seen, it appears very close to the earth, thus looking like it has fallen from heaven.^{xvi} St. Lucy was thus associated with Lucifer, the mythical angel who had fallen from heaven, and she came to have a “fallen double.” This darker Lucy was said to be the first wife of Adam, who gave birth to a race of “invisible infernals.”^{xvii} No doubt this “shadow Lucy” is seen to be married to Adam (the fallen) because her true mystical husband, the Lamb, is known symbolically as the Second Adam (the redeemer). The pastries served in St. Lucy celebrations known as “Lucy Cats” were rumored to symbolize the devil’s cats, which Lucy had subdued. The devil’s cats were often pictured at Lucy’s feet. “Lucy Cats” have an “X” shape on them surrounded by bright pieces of fruit or small candles in the form of a solar wheel.^{xviii} The dual nature of St. Lucy is reminiscent of the Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Sophia, who was said to have two natures, one earthly and one heavenly.

The wreaths worn by Lucy Brides are sometimes made of evergreen leaves, which are traditionally sacred to Venus. In the image shown on the Empress key of the Tarot, the Empress (representing Venus) is shown seated before evergreen trees. The seven candles on the wreath are also significant in that seven is the number of Netzach, the sphere on the Qabalistic Tree of Life representing Venus. Another clue that St. Lucy is associated with Venus is that her enemies were only able to kill her by stabbing her in the throat. The throat chakra in man is known as the Venus center. In the Tarot, the bride of the Emperor (ruled by Mars) is the Empress, who symbolizes Venus, and is shown bearing a heart-shaped shield depicting a dove in its center. The dove, a symbol of Venus, was also a symbol of the Goddess Sophia. This feminine archetype was important to the ministry of Jesus. Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy discuss the symbol of the dove in their book, Jesus and the Lost Goddess:

“According to Ptolemy, Jesus became merged with the Christ archetype at his baptism. In the gospel story, when Jesus is baptized the voice of God announces: ‘This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased,’ and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. From the Christian myth cycle, we know that the Holy Spirit is a pseudonym of the Goddess. Heracleon and Ptolemy tell us that the dove symbolizes ‘Sophia, the Mother above.’ The dove was a widespread symbol of the Goddess in the ancient world and was adopted by Christians as a symbol of Mary.”^{xix}

Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, Liberal Catholic founder also noted a connection between the Goddess and the Holy Spirit, writing that “all the feminine cults—the worship of Isis, Astarte, Vesta, Venus, Pallas Athene—essentially emphasize the Third Person, whom we now call God the Holy Ghost.”^{xx} In the scriptures, the Holy Ghost is depicted both as a dove and as cloven tongues of fire. Since Lucifer/Venus is synonymous with Prometheus, who brought fire to humanity, it is beneficial to have a look at the esoteric meaning of fire.

At the heart of all magical work is kundalini, known also as the serpent fire. The kundalini is an energy residing in the sexual organs, that, when sublimated, can be used to awaken the third eye chakra in meditation. The serpent fire is in itself neutral, but can be used for

good or evil purposes. In the Qabalistic practice of Gematria, the Hebrew words Nachash (meaning “serpent of temptation”) and Messiah (meaning “the anointed one”) both sum up to 358, meaning that the serpent and the messiah are at one level essentially the same. That force which at first tempts us will eventually redeem us. This is actually a Biblical concept. In the 21st chapter of Numbers, when the Israelites gave into temptation in the wilderness, God sent fiery serpents of destruction upon them. When Moses prayed for their redemption, God told him to put a fiery serpent upon a pole. When they gazed upon this brass serpent raised on the pole, they were saved. The gospel of St. John identifies Christ with this serpent, telling us that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”^{xxi} Gnostics are familiar with the identification of Christ with the serpent in the story of Adam and Eve. Of interest is the fact that Christ told his disciples to be “wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.”^{xxii} According to Manly P. Hall, in his book The Secret Teachings of All Ages, “initiates of the Mysteries were often referred to as serpents, and their wisdom was considered analogous to the divinely inspired power of the snake.”^{xxiii}

The coupling of Mars and Venus in the Tarot through the marriage of the Emperor and Empress hints at the necessity of the feminine in the creative work of the Logos. In the work of the Mystery Schools, Venus has a prominent place. The vault of the Rosicrucians contains prominent Venus imagery. The red rose, which has five petals, is a symbol of Venus, and the planet Venus orbits around the earth in a pentagonal pattern. The upright pentagram, a symbol of Christ’s dominion over matter, is linked with Venus and the sublimation of desire.

The feminine energy was important to Christ. Jesus traveled with women, and women acted as patrons to finance his ministry. He had a special relationship with Mary Magdalene, his beloved disciple. Whether this relationship was sexual is of little importance, as the male/female energies interact on both the spiritual and physical levels. St. Lucy acted as a vessel of Christ in sublimating her own sexuality as a virgin bride.

It noteworthy that the Venusian Tarot key, The Empress, who in the Tarot image is pregnant, wearing a crown of twelve stars and with a moon under her feet, also appears in the book of Revelation:

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”^{xxiv} The woman’s child is in danger of being devoured by a dragon with ten horns, whose number is 666. The number 666 is demonstrated by John Michell to be the number throughout the ancient world to symbolize the male/solar principle. The number is derived from the magic square of the sun.^{xxv}

Another passage in Revelation states that the dragon “persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness.”^{xxvi} The eagle is a well-known esoteric symbol of

sublimated desire, while the dragon can be seen to symbolize the unrestrained passions that destroy.

The relationship between the woman and the dragon is the opposite of the divine marriage symbolized by the virginity of St. Lucy. It is a relationship in which, as Margaret Starbird writes, “the ‘beast’ is dissociated from his feminine counterpart and the feminine side of his own psyche.”^{xxvii}

We can see throughout the history of the church how the male/solar cult of patriarchy has stamped out the image of the Goddess, who is an essential half of our collective psyche. Christianity, in some circles, has become the worship of the Beast. We also see this imbalance in governments who wage war and destroy Mother Earth through negligent environmental policies.

In closing, I would like to conclude that the Church has suppressed the true identity of Venus in a campaign to demonize the Goddess by associating her with the Adversary. In much the same way that the dragon persecuted the pregnant woman of Revelation (which we have seen actually represents Venus in the symbolism of the Tarot), the imperialist nature of fundamentalism and patriarchy have, throughout the last 2000 years, suppressed the divine feminine and in the process even done significant damage to Mother Earth. In worshipping only the masculine, solar force, without its balancing counterpart, Christianity has become, as perhaps the author of Revelation warned, the worship of 666 (the number of a man) alone. Rather than being a counterpart to Christ, the Goddess has been “cast out of heaven” as a fallen luminary.

It is clear that some early Christians saw Venus, the morning star as a positive force. In 2 Peter 1:19 are written the words, “And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”^{xxviii} Revelation 2:26-28 says, “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.” And then there is the proclamation of Christ, already noted, that he somehow IS the morning star, which I read as referring to the union of the Spirit and his Bride. This conclusion is also reached by esotericist, Paula Gott, who writes in her essay, “Lucifer: Satan or Goddess?” that “the *Spirit is Jesus; The Bride is The Bright Morning Star – Astarte, Asheroth, Venus – take your pick. The Bride was the Goddess.*”^{xxix} C. G. Jung made an oblique reference to Christ’s “I am” statement in Revelation when he wrote that “Lucifer, the Morning Star, means Christ as well as the devil.”^{xxx} But the association of Lucifer with the devil has no Biblical basis. According to Gott, “As with many words in scripture, the translators chose the word that supported their version of the texts. ‘Morning Star’ or ‘Venus’ was translated as ‘Lucifer’ if the goal was to demonize, especially if the ‘demon’ was the goddess.”^{xxxi} Interestingly, the occultist Kenneth Grant goes so far as to suggest that Christ himself

is an inversion of Venus, with the redeeming blood being a correlate of the menstruum. He states that, “as the central or solar power-zone—Tiphereth—is always attributed to a god who is slain and whose redeeming blood saves, so the Venusian-Lunar attribution of Netzach affords the feminine inversion of the primal myth, showing how the Goddess gradually became degraded as the God was exalted.”^{xxxii}

Like Venus and Sophia, Astarte is associated with a sacred dove. Astarte, whose name comes from the same root as the Greek word for star, “aster,” is synonymous with Venus.^{xxxiii} One of Astarte’s other symbols is the pentagram in a circle, which represents the planet Venus. Gott writes that veiled references to Venus appear in the Torah: “The Old Testament contains references to *Astarte*, but each time she was mentioned, the word was changed to *Ashtoreth*, a combination of *Astarte* and *bo-sheth*, a Hebrew word that means ‘shame.’ As a result, nowhere in the Torah do the Hebrew letters for the goddess’s name, *Astarte*, or *Ashtar*, appear. But the similarity to El’s ‘consort,’ *Asheroth*, is intriguing.”^{xxxiv} The Queen of Heaven (the consort of El), whose worship was common in Judah and strongly opposed by Jeremiah, was thus very likely to be identical with Astarte (Venus). The demonization of the Goddess has ancient roots. Any attempt to honor St. Lucy, who is, as I have shown, a representative of the Goddess, must take into account her dark history, being careful to disassociate from any of the lies or illusions that have been projected onto her image.

THE ORDER OF ST. LUCY

The Order of St. Lucy is open to all those who are called out of the world to a life of inner contemplation, who identify with the worship of the Liberal Catholic rite and its teachings, and who are open to exploring the Christian mysteries through the teachings passed down to us through Liberal Catholics of both the Theosophical and Western Mystery School traditions. The work of the Order of St. Lucy is aligned with the Second Ray of Love-Wisdom, and is focused on the feminine archetypes of St. Lucy as a compassionate bride of Christ and the Virgin Mary as a wise mother. The OSL sees St. Lucy as a representative of Venus, and Mary as a representative of Sophia.

The Order of St. Lucy is founded on seven pillars.

The Outer Pillars:

1. Study
2. Contemplation
3. Charity
4. Liturgy

The outer pillars form a square, the foundation of our temple in the objective world, which is based on ordered service through corporate worship and spiritual practices.

The Inner Pillars:

1. Love of God
2. Love of Self
3. Love of Neighbor

The inner pillars represent our own subjective reality and experience, and form a sacred triangle representing the two great commandments of the Christ to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, which form the essence of righteousness.

Taken together they form the seven lights or candles in Saint Lucy's evergreen crown. The seven candles of the crown thus represent the sum of our spiritual aspirations. Generally, the lights can also be seen to symbolize the seven spirits of God before the throne, the seven churches, the seven archangels, the seven sacraments, the seven rays, the seven planets, the seven alchemical metals, and the seven chakras.

The outer pillars, being four, represent the notion of order. It is through these four pillars that the outer work of St. Lucy's order is accomplished. In Tarot, the four outer pillars correspond to the Emperor, key number 4, which we have seen to represent the ram of

Aries (ruled by Mars), or the Lamb of God.

The inner pillars, being three, correspond to the Empress, Tarot key number 3, which we have seen to represent both Venus (who is essentially the third Person of the Trinity), and St. Lucy, whom Christian tradition tells us is the Bride of the Lamb. (This is of course, not to say that St. Lucy is herself the third Person, but that the symbolism of her cult is essentially Venusian). The three inner pillars also symbolize the inner constitution of man, which, like the Trinity in whose image man is created, is of a tri-fold nature: the superconscious aspect or breath of life which comes from the Father, the subconscious aspect which creates and informs the body and the material world around us, and the self-conscious aspect which we use to relate to others in the world. Chiefly, though, the three inner pillars emphasize the third aspect of the Trinity, which is the Holy Spirit, the fire of love within us, on which all our spiritual work must be based, or else, as St. Paul tells us, it is worthless.^{xxxv}

As Bishop C. W. Leadbeater has pointed out, the Holy Spirit represents the divine feminine as expressed through the ancient cults of the Goddess, including Venus, and in the Order of St. Lucy it is our aim to restore the divine feminine to her throne. As an aside, it is worth pointing out that Leadbeater's thoughts on the matter of the third Person's gender are not always consistent: in The World Mother as Symbol and Fact, he wrote that the divine feminine can be seen as the spouse of God "because through the action of the Holy Ghost upon the virgin matter the birth of the Christ into the world takes place."^{xxxvi} Here, the Holy Ghost is obviously seen as a male, impregnating force. Fr. Thomas Schipflinger offers an alternative view in his book, Sophia-Maria: A Holistic Vision of Creation, pointing out that the words of Luke 1:35, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you," may "be interpreted as depicting two principles—the Holy Spirit and the power of God; and one could say that the female Spirit principle maternally prepares Mary to receive the power of the Most High."^{xxxvii}

While some of the liturgy of the OSL focuses on St. Mary, the main focus is on St. Lucy. The OSL holds that St. Mary is a personification of the Holy Spirit as Mother (Wisdom), while St. Lucy is a personification of the Holy Spirit as Bride (Love). And it would seem, based on the teachings of St. Paul, that Christ is a masculinization of Wisdom or the Greek Sophia: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."^{xxxviii} Notice that St. Paul separates the two concepts "power" and "wisdom," much in the same way that Schipflinger separates "power" and "the Holy Spirit" in his reading of Luke.

St. Lucy, whose name signifies "Light," represents the fire of love upon which true acts of charity and compassion must be based. She also represents the inner Light of each one of us. Just as Venus, the morning star, appears in the sky before the sun rises, St. Lucy's feast day occurs each year just before the birth of Christ. According to the Julian calendar, Lucy's

feast day, December 13, fell on the winter solstice. While her feast day should perhaps be moved to December 21 or 22 to retain this connection and its symbolism, in the Order of St. Lucy we use the date for the original feast, nonetheless viewing our sacred feast day as the gateway to the winter solstice and the Christmas season. The solstice is the shortest day of the year, and thus the time of greatest darkness. The sun enters Capricorn on December 22, and in Tarot Capricorn is represented by key 15, The Devil. The Archangel associated with key 15 is Auriel, whose name means “Light of God,” and in some esoteric systems Auriel is the Archangel of the planet Venus. Another of the Devil key’s connections with Venus and St. Lucy is that the Hebrew letter name Ayin is assigned to it. Ayin means “eye,” and so it obviously relates to the function of sight, of which St. Lucy is the patron saint. The Devil key, on one level, represents the darkness of the material world that we must learn to see beyond, and thus the temptations facing those who have devoted their lives to Christian service.

Christian tradition tells us that St. Lucy brings help in times of temptation. Since her feast day is associated with the winter solstice, we associate St. Lucy with the act of turning inward, of reflection, of seeking the clarity of the inner light during the time of year when the sun is most absent. It is by turning away from the material world and from the mass mind consciousness that rules the natural man that we learn to see things as they really are. Tradition tells us that St. Lucy, who is depicted carrying her eyes on a dish, is associated with vision. Her spouse, the Lamb, (the ram of Aries), as Father P. F. Case wrote, “utters [himself] by seeing.”^{xxxix}

It is this act of turning within and honoring our own inner Light that we chiefly associate with St. Lucy. Through this act, we begin to renew our lives in accordance with the way things really are, instead of living our lives in bondage to the appearances of the material world, which delude us into believing that we are separate from one another. We learn to see with the eyes of God and become bearers of his Light in a world of spiritual darkness.

Personal revelation and the inner Light of the individual are of the utmost importance for our order. The revelation of the inner voice is represented in Tarot by The Hierophant, or Pope, key 5. Its zodiacal sign is Taurus, which is ruled by Venus. The rose is sacred to Venus. The number of the petals of a rose is in multiples of five. In the study of Gematria, letters are given numerical values, and if the numerical sums of sacred words are equivalent, these concepts are said to share something essential. In Greek gematria, the word “rhodon,” or “rose,” is the number 294. 294 is also the number of the word, “skene,” the tabernacle in the wilderness, of “ekklesia,” the church, or “those who are called out,” and of “he akademia,” the academy of Pythagoras. Here is a clue that the inner core of the ancient wisdom exists in more than one tradition. Gematria may be found in the Greek, Hebrew and Latin languages. The word gematria comes from the word, “geometry,” which is the study of the sacred proportions of nature. We may enlighten ourselves by recourse to other ancient traditions that have informed our own. Simone Weil alighted on this truth before her untimely death, exclaiming, “How our life would be changed if we could see that Greek geometry and the Christian faith have sprung from the same source!”^{xl} It is a

function of the Order of St. Lucy to explore the connection between the secrets of Christianity and the ancient mysteries.

The word “rhodon” is often used to designate the “interior church.” Christ’s reference to Peter as Simon bar Jonah, which means “hearing, son of the dove” is a reference to the establishment of the church not on any outer hierarchy, but on the individual’s own inner connection with the “masters of compassion,” since The Hierophant key of Tarot represents the function of “interior hearing,” and is ruled by Venus, whose symbol, like Sophia, is that of the dove. Christopher Bamford writes that the Church of the “Rose Cross” is the “Inner Church, which is the redeemed Sophia.”^{xli} Just as sacraments are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, so too is the outer church a symbol of that true, inner church that exists on the inner planes through the work of the Great White Brotherhood, or the Communion of Saints. We must turn inward and emulate these masters of compassion if we are to possess the love of Christ in our hearts and discover the true meaning of charity. This true church consists of “those who are called out” of the world for inner instruction, not of any organization, jurisdiction or outward structure. Clergy should strive to be worthy symbols of the inner church for those who are lost in the illusions of the outer world. In our religious order, the point of contact with this inner life is symbolized in the true vision of St. Lucy.

294, the number of the rose, reduces to 15. Thus it is in essence the power of The Hierophant (5) working on the subject of the self-conscious mind (1), which is represented by Tarot key 1, The Magician. The experience of bondage and temptation represented by The Devil, key 15, can then be said to be truly our own inner voice urging us toward a spirit of renewal. It is for this reason that, in the Western Mystery Tradition, The Devil represents “the renewing intelligence.”

$4 + 3 = 7$. The union of St. Lucy with her spouse, the Lamb, produces the fullness of the seven lights in her crown. On the Tree of Life, seven is the number of the sephira called Victory or Netzach, which represents the planet Venus. It is of no small interest, then, that Tarot key 7, the Chariot, represents the sign Cancer, which begins on June 21, the time of the summer solstice, when light is the greatest and the days are the longest. In Greek mythology, Helios drove the chariot of the sun across the sky each day. Christ is often associated with the sun. He himself said, “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”^{xlii} If Christ is symbolized as the sun, we can see a perfect symmetry between St. Lucy and her spouse, occupying, as they do, the positions of the two solstices in the year. And there is, of course, no doubt that Christians have associated Christ with the sun, or Helios, as December 25, the birthday of the sun god Sol Invictus, was made into the birthday of Christ. The Sabbath itself changed from Saturday to Sunday, the “day of the sun.” H. P. Blavatsky, in her essay, “Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry,” wrote, “the East being the cardinal point whence arises the luminary of the Day, the great giver and sustainer of life, the creator of all that lives and breathes on this globe, what wonder if all the nations of the Earth worshipped in him the visible agent of the invisible Principle and Cause; and that *mass* should be said in the honour of him who is the giver of *massis* or

'harvest.'"^{xliii} Indeed, the celebrant faces east in the Holy Eucharist, offering thanks for the harvest. It should be noted that the energy of the sun is essential for the growth of all life, but solar energy in excess does nothing but destroy. The solar god must not be devoid of the nurturing love of his female counterpart, or his cult invariably descends into imperialism and destruction. 666 is the number of the magic square of the sun. There is nothing evil in this number unless we worship the sun alone. It is for this reason that celibacy can lead to any number of evils. Holy Orders should also be extended to women in this enlightened age.

It is noteworthy that in Greek mythology, Rhodos (whose name comes from the same root as "rhodon"), who, according to the Odes of Pindar, was the daughter of Venus and Neptune, married Helios, the sun god, and the two gave birth to seven sons.^{xliv} Here it is interesting to note that, just as the 294 of "rhodon" reduces to 15, the two Tarot Keys representing Venus (The Empress, key 3) and Neptune (The Hanged Man, key 12) add to 15. Since The Hanged Man, like Christ, hangs from a tree, his sacrifice and his connection to Venus can be seen as relating to the "rosy cross." It is also interesting to lay Tarot keys 2, 9, and 4 out in a row (The High Priestess, The Hermit, and The Emperor). Since the function of coition is assigned to The Hermit, these three keys show the union (9) between the Lamb (4) and a virgin (2). While Cancer is associated with the summer solstice, the sign is actually ruled by the Moon. The High Priestess key represents the Moon, and may be seen as St. Lucy in her virginal aspect. The Empress (Venus) is the same female archetype functioning as bride. (The prima materia or "first matter" of the alchemists is a virgin substance that gives birth to all things, and yet remains virgin). The feminine archetypes of Christianity may thus be seen as virgin, bride and mother. In the Order of St. Lucy we emphasize the symbolism of the blessed virgin Mary as a wise mother and St. Lucy as a compassionate bride. The male archetypes of Mars (the Emperor) and the Sun (the Logos) may each be taken as symbols of the Lamb or Bridegroom.

The island of Rhodes, or Rhodos, was once home to one of the seven wonders of the world, the "Colossus of Rhodes," a giant statue of the sun god, Helios. According to Bhakti Ananda Goswami, the mythical union of Rhodos and Helios bears a symbolic connection with more than one world religion. He writes that Catholic cathedral labyrinths, at whose centers were usually rhodons or rose medallions, were used "to celebrate the 'bridal' mysteries of Godhead's divine love, and to draw the finite soul (feminine psyche) back into the union of 'conjugal' love with the infinite Lord or divine bridegroom, at the center of one's heart or creation." He points out that "Jewish bridal mysticism, as in the Kabbalah, is also admittedly related to Platonism," and that the Platonists worshipped Helios. Goswami draws the conclusion that "Christian caroling, Jewish Hora dancing, and Sufi dance meditation" are all connected to "the very ancient worship of Dionysos and Helios Kouros and Rhoda on the island of Rhodes." He also writes that "the rhodon was the ancient symbol of Helios and his beloved Rhoda on their sacred transcendental island of Rhodes. The Jewish reformer King Josiah actually used the rhodon of Rhodes as the symbol of his reign." Finally, Goswami claims that Dionysos, as the "second person," is the Hierophant of the mysteries of Helios and Rhoda (Rhodos).^{xlv} Incidentally, this echoes Paula Gott's alternate reading of

Revelation 22:16, in which she writes that “when this verse is modified and the key words compared to Moses’ conversation with *The Gods* on the Mountain, the answers agree: “I AM” is YHVH and Asheroth – God and Goddess.’ Jesus said: “I AM” is THE ROOT and THE STAR – God and Goddess.”^{xlvi}

According to some, Athena also has a place in the myth of Rhodos and Helios. Michael Grant and John Hazel wrote that Helios told his seven sons “that the first people to sacrifice to Athena would enjoy her presence for ever. The seven sacrificed to her at once, but had no fire. The Athenian Cecrops likewise performed a sacrifice; he was later than Helios’ seven sons in doing so, but he used fire. In consequence both the Rhodians and the Athenians were believed to enjoy Athena’s presence, and continued to sacrifice to her, the Rhodians still without fire.”^{xlvii} Whether the island of Rhodes was more sacred to Venus or Athena, one cannot doubt the etymological connection with “rhodon” noted above, and there are in fact ruins of a Venusian temple in Rhodes. And, as I have noted elsewhere, the dove of the Holy Spirit is sacred to both Venus (the Goddess of Love and Bride of the Lamb) and Sophia (the “Mother above” and Goddess of Wisdom, who is synonymous with Athena). This bears on the fact that the work of the church is that of the Second Ray, which is the Ray of “Love-Wisdom.” And here it is worth noting again that Leadbeater wrote that not just Venus, but all the “feminine cults—the worship of Isis, Astarte, Vesta, Venus, Pallas Athene—essentially emphasize the third Person, whom now we call God the Holy Spirit.”^{xlviii} Perhaps more telling is that Venus is essentially identical with the Phoenician Goddess Astarte, from whose name comes that of our holy feast of Easter, a celebration that abounds with colorful eggs and rabbits, symbols of reproduction and fertility.

It is thus evident that, in the feast of St. Lucy and her symbolism, there is a remnant of teachings older than Christianity. It is well known that when pagans were converted to Catholicism they were allowed to keep their customs. Christian places of worship were built over pagan temples. The Catholic vestments and the mass contain pagan elements. All of the four pagan “quarter days” have been replaced by Christian festivals near the solstices and equinoxes. Until recent times, Christians were more willing to embrace these older traditions and the place they share in Christian teachings. The ante-Nicene father, Clement of Rome, wrote that, “as the Lord had twelve apostles, bearing the number of the twelve months of the sun, so also [John the Baptist] had thirty chief men, fulfilling the monthly reckoning of the moon.”^{xlix} The four gospel writers, as well as the banners of the tribes of Israel, bear the symbols of the four cardinal signs of the Zodiac (man, lion, bull and eagle), which are also seen in the books of Ezekiel and Revelation. And in the book of Genesis we find the words, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years.”¹ The 1611 Bible contained a table including the dates the sun enters each sign of the zodiac, as well as information concerning the cycles of the moon, the solstices and the equinoxes. An examination of the 1599 edition of the Geneva New Testament shows artwork depicting the twelve disciples and twelve tribes of Israel surrounding the border of the page, with the four gospel writers in the center pictured with their four astrological symbols; and there, in the midst is the Lamb: an obvious reference to the sun, the twelve signs of the zodiac, and

the four cardinal signs.

While most contemporary Christians will readily condemn astrology and other esoteric disciplines as the work of the devil, one could easily argue that fundamentalism and dogmatism are the true evils. The Catholic church was once perhaps “universal,” in that it attempted to combined the elements of paganism and Christianity into one system, but where it failed was in the notion that there is any worth in attempting to convert others, and also in its campaign to stamp out all remnants of the Goddess. A truly universal church must realize that the truth exists in all religions, and that, as Simone Weil pointed out, “the mysteries of faith are degraded if they are made into an object of affirmation and negation, when in reality they should be an object of contemplation.”^{li}

THE SEVEN PILLARS:

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” Proverbs 9:1.

The Order of St. Lucy is not an esoteric order, but a religious order open to esoteric ideas. The Order of St. Lucy is not a school, but a spiritual family of vowed religious who are seeking the answers to life’s questions each in their own way. Membership in Theosophical or Western Mystery School organizations is encouraged. The Order of St. Lucy is founded on the four Outer Pillars of Study, Contemplation, Charity and Liturgy, and the three Inner Pillars of Love of God, Love of Self, and Love of Neighbor. Taken together, these seven pillars are symbolized in the seven candles of St. Lucy’s evergreen crown. The brothers and sisters of St. Lucy do not live in a cloistered setting, but rather in the world. We are drawn together by the common bond of turning inward to seek the Greater Light, which we feel is signified by the true vision of St. Lucy. We live our lives in dedication to spiritual principles in order to be beacons of Light and compassion for those who have not yet broken away from the mass mind consciousness. The Order of St. Lucy exists to be a vehicle of the true, interior church.

A Summation of the Seven Pillars

The Outer Pillars:

Study

The brethren of St. Lucy are not motivated by ego or status. We live a life of obedience to the Higher Self, and view the intellect as tool to be used in the service of God. We view the word “belief” in light of its original meaning of “commitment, trust or engagement”ⁱⁱⁱ rather than to mean assenting intellectually to a set of propositions. We are opposed to fundamentalism and literalism of any form, whether it be theist or atheist. We extend an open hand to anyone who wishes to embark on a path of spiritual unfoldment, and we use study, whether personally or as a group, as a tool to further our own understanding of spiritual principles, so that we may, through applying them to our own lives, become ever more aligned with the true will of God. While we recognize that study is an essential component of spiritual evolution, we also know that true acts of compassion and the utilization and direction of spiritual energies are of far more importance than intellectual pursuits. We are a group of seekers walking parallel paths, eager to help one another, but ever mindful that personal revelation and the inner Light are of utmost importance to spiritual advancement.

Contemplation

The brethren of St. Lucy engage in daily contemplation and communion with the inner Light through centering prayer. Knowing that reason does not hold all the answers, we value the insights that can be gained through active silence and attentive listening for the inner voice. We also recognize that it is only through contemplation of the Christian mysteries and their symbolism that we may hope to gain any true understanding of them.

Charity

St. Lucy said, “the sacrifice that is pleasing to God is to visit the poor and help them in their need.”^{liii} The Order of St. Lucy holds that true acts of charity come not from obligation to mankind, but only from the spirit of compassion and love for others. By blessing others and honoring the Light in them, we bring blessings on ourselves and strengthen our own Light, thus purifying ourselves and building the true spiritual body. Acts of kindness and charity, whether in our daily lives or in an organized fashion, are an essential component of our ministry.

Liturgy

The Order of St. Lucy is an ecumenical religious order in the Liberal Catholic Movement, and uses the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Rite. Meaningful and uplifting Liturgy can be useful in uniting people of differing backgrounds and opinions. The Liturgy is a ministry of the Order and participation is open to non-members. Open communion is practiced. While Holy Orders are not required of those who say vows, or of those who may wish to start a chapter, those who are called to pursue Holy Orders may provide sacraments upon ordination. The Order of St. Lucy is a religious order with valid Apostolic Succession in the independent sacramental movement. The Order is focused less on hierarchy and form, and more on spiritual experience.

The Inner Pillars:

Love of God

Love of Self

Love of Neighbor

A scribe asked Jesus, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus replied, “The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment, and the second is like unto it, namely, this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” When the scribe told Jesus that to do this is worth more than all than all burnt offerings and sacrifices, Jesus said, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”^{liv}

These two commandments, to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves, present a social vision which is fundamental to the Christian life, and a blueprint for actions which

will lay the foundation of God's kingdom on Earth.

To keep these two commandments is to be in right relationship between God and self, and between self and others. When we are not in this right relationship, we fail to see the holiness of life. We cannot experience the kingdom of God if we do not love God, self, and neighbor. In a human relationship of any kind, we will not succeed if we love ourselves more than others, or others more than ourselves. Likewise, if our love for God is not part of our relationships with others, we will fail.

However lost we may be, when we come back to this right relationship, we succeed in becoming sanctified, and setting ourselves apart as channels of God's grace. When we are in this proper relationship, our natural inclination is to give thanks to God and to celebrate life. We are then fulfilling our duty and realizing our purpose. As the Liberal Catholic Liturgy says, it is very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto God. It is right for us to thank God, for when we do so we exalt God's creation, including ourselves, and we learn to express the Light which He has so graciously bestowed upon us.

When we express this Light to others, by setting the example of righteousness and showing forth good will, then we are able to bring into the world the perfect love that God has given to us.

END NOTES

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