

# Theurgy and the Martinist Tradition

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## Introduction

I was asked by a friend, recently, why The Rose+Croix Martinist Order<sup>®</sup> (commonly known as "The R+CMO," "R+CMO," or just "RCMO") practices Theurgy. She had read somewhere in AMORC's *The Rosicrucian Digest* that our V.M. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin abandoned Theurgy during the latter part of his life because he felt that it was "too dangerous." She was concerned about how "dangerous" Theurgy is. I realized then that there are misunderstandings, even among the esoterically inclined, not only regarding the differences between Magic and Theurgy, but also in understanding what our V.M. Saint-Martin meant by the term.

## Theurgy and the AMORC

To begin with, it is important to understand that the author of the article in *The Rosicrucian Digest* is not a Theurgist, was never a Theurgist, and has no idea about genuine Theurgy. The AMORC, which publishes *The Rosicrucian Digest*, does not teach Theurgy, does not practice Theurgy, and knows nothing about genuine Theurgy. Therefore, the author of that article would not know what Theurgy is and would not be capable of actually writing anything informative or instructive about the Act and Art of Theurgy, other than to fall back into the standard practice of the uninformed which is to breathe hushed and ominous "warnings" about it.

Secondly, understanding authentic and genuine Martinist history, and understanding (and using) the practices of authentic Martinism is not now and seldom has been a strong "forte" of AMORC and its officers. Therefore, one must be very careful about Martinist "information" coming from such a publication as *The Rosicrucian Digest*. These statements are made, not disparagingly, but to provide facts which have bearing on the *Digest* author's confusion.

## Theurgy and Magic

Thirdly, many persons have seriously and sadly misunderstood the term Theurgy, often confusing it with Magic. We find such misunderstanding and confusion even among those persons who consider themselves to be esotericists or mystics.

It is important to understand that the two operations of Magic and Theurgy can be confused because they are similar in certain ways. Both employ varying degrees of Ritual, and both may use mental imagery or words to express the desired goal. *But, again, Magic and Theurgy are not the same!* The major difference is the position of the Will in the operation.

In Magic, the Rituals, mental imagery, and words are used to raise and empower the personal Ego and its Egoic Will. In **Theurgy**, the Rituals, mental imagery, and words are used to merge the personal Will into God's Will. This merging is called in authentic Martinism, **The Way of the Heart**. Therefore, we conclude that the essential difference between Magic and Theurgy is the position of the Will in the process of accomplishing our goals. This essential difference has to do with the constitution of the human being as a creator in God's world.

### **Man as Creator**

It is important to understand that man is a divine being, created in the image and likeness of God. Consequently, man is, among other things, also a creator. Make no mistake--man is a creator! Obviously, man is a creator on a very minuscule scale compared to God, but, nevertheless, man *is* a creator. He can create mentally, as well as by the use of the spoken word. When we sit back and do what is fashionably called "visualization" in many schools, we are mentally creating that which we are "visualizing." It is true that what we have created is on the mental or astral plane, but we can bring what we have created to manifest by an act of Will. In other words, we can "will" something to happen or to manifest. Here we are exercising our innate divinity--a power which God did not strip away from us after the Fall. Man can also create by use of the spoken word.

### **Man as Magician**

By the mere proclamation of the word or statement "Be it done," *It is done*. With *So be it* or *Let it be done*, coupled with the Will, man sets in motion a chain of vibrations for the accomplishment or manifestation of his desires. Of course, its manifestation may be modified, delayed, or mitigated by karmic influences. By the exercise of the Will, we are saying: "My will be done!" This is a simple example of Magic. Usually we associate Magic with only such romantic things as ceremonial, evocation to visible manifestation, spells, conjurations, and so on.

### **Man as Theurgist**

Now, let us examine another operation. We have visualized what we want to manifest. Then, instead of willing it to happen or to manifest, or instead of saying *My will be done*, we say, instead: *Holy Father, Thy Will be done....* In this instance, we have merged our personal Ego into God's Love, and we have aligned our personal will to God's Will. We have expressed our desire, but we have left its manifestation to His Will, not ours. This is a simple example of Theurgy. In Theurgy, however, because we are putting God's Will first and aligning our will with His, we do not need to mentally create every time we desire something. We can invoke His Name and ask for what we want. If it is His Will, it will manifest...

**For who, if his son asketh for bread, will give him, instead, a stone?**

--Matthew 7:9

When we align our will with God's Will during our Work, we open our consciousness

to the Divine flow of Consciousness. What often occurs is that we may approach our place of Work with a certain plan in mind, and then find that we will do Work that we never really thought of before we entered the Holy Place! In Theurgy, we accept the role of being an agent of God's Will. One common example of Theurgy is the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist (the Mass).

## **The Work of Initiation**

In order to practice true and genuine Theurgy, one must have the Knowledge, the Power, and the Authority to use that power! Innately, all human beings have the divine power that is our birthright ("This was the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"). To truly apply that divine right, however, man's consciousness must be aligned properly with the divine current, in order to awaken the "sleeping giant" of inner divinity ("Christ in you, the hope of glory"). The proper alignment with the divine current is what true, authentic, and genuine Initiation does, and such Initiation must be received in person from one who stands in an unbroken Initiatic Chain of Initiators. The first link in that Initiatic Chain is always one who has established an Inner Plane Contact from which the Initiatic Power is received. By receiving Initiation in a Theurgical Order like The Rose+Croix Martinist Order<sup>®</sup>, you are awakened, and the innate Divine Power which was formerly only a slumbering potential is activated--and you are "born to become a child of God."

## **Disadvantages of Magic**

The disadvantage of Magic is that the personal Ego prevails and the personal Will is paramount--"My will be done." That is, Magic inflates the Ego in order to have a source of energy, then channels the powers and energies of the inflated Ego into the Will which directs those powers and energies outwardly. It is no wonder that Saint-Martin rejected such a practice! He knew that because Magic exercises one's personal prerogatives as a divine being, one also assumes full responsibilities for the results of the magical acts. In other words, in Magic, we incur and accept the karma of the results--whether good or bad--usually bad. Because "we see through a glass darkly," working Magic is always a risky business because it is difficult--if not impossible--for the magician to see all the way through to the final outcome.

## **Advantages of Theurgy**

In Theurgy, on the other hand, because the Theurgical Initiate knows those secret, Initiatic methods which perfectly merge the personal Will in God's Will so that there is a unity of the two Wills, the goals that are granted are given because God's Will has been done. In true and authentic Theurgy such as is taught in The Rose+Croix Martinist Order<sup>®</sup>, God's Perfect Vision overcomes the human's imperfect vision (the "dark glass") and the "way of the Lord is made straight." Is there karma associated with this? Yes! Good karma because only Good can come out of the execution of God's Will! This is the true meaning of the Master's command,

**Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

## God and "the Cosmic"

Does this mean, then, that when we end our visualization with "If it pleases the Cosmic, it is done," then we are practicing Theurgy? NO! In the first place, the "Cosmic" does not encompass God! To illustrate the difference between the two, consider this analogy: think of yourself as the "Cosmic" and the entire Universe as God. You can see that God, in this illustration, includes you (the "Cosmic"), but that the "Cosmic" does not encompass God!

But there is an even greater difference between the two terms. The term "Cosmic" suggests a cold, soulless, and distant impersonality, a conglomeration of organized forces without persona, rather like an electric generator--a source of power which can be used (or abused) at the whim of the operator. However, the term "God" suggests persona, a Mind (the true meaning of the Greek "Nous"), and sentience. To Work Magic, you need only call upon the soulless, mindless Cosmic to do your bidding. To Work Theurgy, you must realize that there is a Greater Will and a Greater Mind and a Greater Heart into which you shall plunge. The authentic Martinist works with God, not with the mere "Cosmic."

## Saint-Martin and Theurgy

Let us come, now, to examine St.-Martin's understanding of the term Theurgy. First of all, St-Martin rejected the Ritual acts of Pasqually's "Elus-Cohen" as being unnecessary "to find God." The Ritual acts of the Elus-Cohen have almost all disappeared, but a few (a very few) manuscripts have survived. These show that Pasqually was using ceremonial magic very similar to the ritual found in the medieval grimoires. Even though Pasqually called these magical procedures, "theurgy," in fact, they were *not* in any way actually Theurgical! The Magic of the Elus-Cohen was nothing more than medieval magic, but Pasqually, despite his considerable genius, was unlearned and incorrectly called these acts "theurgy." Thus, all his life, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin confused the two terms and incorrectly referred to Magic as "theurgy" because that was what he was taught in his "first school" (as he called the Elus-Cohen).

But did Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin use and teach genuine Theurgy? The answer is--Yes! But he used a different term: "Magism of God." For proof of this, note this statement he wrote in a letter to his friend, Baron Kirschberger:

**...There were precious things in our first school. I am even inclined to think that [Martinez] Pasqualis...had the active key to all that our dear Boehme exposes in his theories.... From all this, it follows that an excellent match may be made by marrying our first school to friend Boehme. This is what I work at; and I confess to you candidly that I find the two spouses so well suited to each other that I know nothing more perfect in its way....**

## --Letter XCII, 11 July, 1796 in *Theosophic Correspondence*

What does Saint-Martin mean by "marrying our first school to friend Boehme" (pronounced "Ber-mah")? Simply this: active Ritual should be combined with divine philosophy--which is what genuine Theurgy does! Also, let us examine the following statements from Saint-Martin's *Man: His True Nature and Ministry* (Penny translation):

**All these things point to one and the same term, the Divine Magism [Editor's note: i.e., genuine Theurgy], which embraces all things, fills all things, penetrates all things. If men direct their aspiration... in any direction where this Magism is likely to be found,...they are not long in arriving at one of these springs, which all have the same Magism for principle, and they soon get intoxicated with delights, which, though coming through different channels, all have the same foundation in God. (p. 196)**

Saint-Martin also writes in *Man: His True Nature and Ministry*:

**The same law is laid down for you, O Spirit-Man, for the management of your domains as the officer of Truth. You are God's earth; you are a divine functionary in the Universe.... He sends you this task, wishing you not to spare yourself in pains for its accomplishment, and warning you that He will rigorously exact His returns, which consist in nothing less than the restoration of order, peace, and life, in the portion of His domains which He trusted to your care. This work is the Magism of God, [Editor's Note: this is Saint-Martin's term which means genuine Theurgy] and the complement of prayer. When He thus sends His desire or thirst into you, He does more than admit you into His council, for He brings His council into you; and insinuates within you, the sweetest and highest purposes of His Wisdom; and impregnates you with the same relations, which He Himself has to all that is defective, and Himself provides you the needful wherewith to work its rectification; that is, He provides you with funds out of His own glory.... This work is the very complement of prayer, since it is the very action...of the divine order which passes into you. (pp. 176-177)**

Thus, it is clear that Saint-Martin believed in the combination of the practical application of human powers as found in the Elus-Cohen, but he also believed that such application was to be raised to the sublime heights of Boehme's vision--and this is what Theurgy does.

### **Theurgy and the Martinist**

There is no question that Saint-Martin used and taught Theurgy, and this is the secret Tradition passed on to **The Rose+Croix Martinist Order®** (commonly known as "The R+CMO" or as "R+CMO") and all genuine Martinism. A Martinist Order which

has no Tradition of genuine Theurgy to give to its Initiates does not empower them to do the work which Saint-Martin commanded, which is **"the management of your domains as the officer of Truth."**

If the Martinist does not possess the Tradition of Theurgy, how can he or she follow the rule of God as Saint-Martin established it, which is "nothing less than the restoration of order, peace, and life, in the portion of His domains which He trusted to your care"? Can "order, peace, and life" be restored by simple talk? Can "order, peace, and life" be restored by merely Initiating (if, indeed, one possesses that Power) and then inviting the so-called Martinist to attend lectures? NO! Saint-Martin, as the man of action, understands that **"[God] sends you this task, wishing you not to spare yourself in pains for its accomplishment, and warning you that He will rigorously exact His returns."** True Martinists understand that merely lecturing about dinner does not prepare and serve the meal. True Martinists understand that the Work of Reintegration cannot be accomplished by merely talking about it, but by application through genuine and authentic Theurgy.

### **Authentic Martinism and Theurgy**

The genuine Martinist Order produces a Martinist Theurgist whose Martinist Theurgy follows Saint-Martin's command to restore "order, peace, and life" in the world. The Martinist Order that denies Theurgy or that denies that Saint-Martin both practiced and taught Theurgy not only doesn't know what Saint-Martin wrote, but also fails to provide its Initiates with this all-important Theurgical Tradition. Such an incomplete Martinist Order must remember that Saint-Martin wrote that God "...will rigorously exact His returns" because of its failure and refusal to truly work for Reintegration. The Rose+Croix Martinist Order® will not fail in its duty to equip its Initiates with the full and complete Tradition of Martinism, and that Tradition includes Saint-Martin's practice and teaching of Theurgy.

### **Conclusion**

Hence, we answer in the very words of Saint-Martin: because it is authentic Martinism, The Rose+Croix Martinist Order® ("The R+CMO") is a Theurgical Order that accepts "this task" of working for Reintegration, wishing "not to spare [it]self in pains for its accomplishment."

**The Rose+Croix Martinist Order®  
(The R+CMO)**

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