



Recall Notice, or the Feast of Saint Murphy

What is this?

This is a game for 2 or more players. One player acts as Bishop, essentially a traditional RPG Game Master who frames scenes, plays the roles of non-player characters and narrates the outcomes of player character actions. The remaining players create and take the roles of Clergy, sent on a mission to the holy Überworld.

The Europolitan Omnichurch never makes mistakes.

After all, it's been entrusted by the 5-Way God to act as His/Her/Its/Their/Our agent on earth, from icecap to icecap, throughout the world-spanning Europolitan Empire. The 5-Way God manages by delegating, so it's the Omnichurch's duty and responsibility to determine the ultimate fate of each of its members, whether to frolic in the glorious Überworld or swelter in the terrible Unterworld. Using a state-of-the-art database, the Omnichurch maintains and updates every person's salvation score, graded simply Pass or Fail. At time of death, this score is the sole determinant of a soul's postlife disposition. (Actually, there's a three-day layover in Limbo to allow for last minute corrections.) To ensure accuracy, the Omnichurch continually validates these scores, using the

observations of covert field agents, reports by informers, electronic surveillance and random interrogation.

Individual clergy members, however, do make mistakes.

They're still human, even after ordination. Here and there, an unreported mistake gets made during the commission of a sacrament. Perhaps the wrong unguent is applied during a baptism. Other times, a grievous sin, such as an act of masturbation, never gets confessed and fails to be caught by investigating clergy. Worst of all, a clergy member might be tempted by a bribe to overlook an transgression or tamper with a salvation score. Because such errors—human errors—happen, tainted souls manage to move into the Überworld, tracking blots of unpardoned sins onto its pristine floors.

Mistakes do get discovered.

Through audits, interrogation and deathbed confessions, the Omnichurch learns of these assignment errors and becomes responsible for their correction. The initial remedy is to transmit recall notices to the misassigned deceased up there in the Überworld, but they seldom surrender themselves voluntarily. In reality, it's too much trouble to go after all these people. The vast majority are quietly pardoned or simply forgotten by the Omnichurch. Some, however, must be made examples of. The laity must learn that they cannot escape the piercing gaze of the Omnichurch. And the clergy must learn that their actions can lead to the incorrect eternal outcome, the swapping of someone's endless torment for endless bliss, or vice versa. So each year on the first of April, the feast day of St. Murphy, patron saint of mistakes, clergy are sent to the Überworld to extract fugitives and to redirect them to the darkness of the Unterworld.

You are a clergy member. A clergy member in training.

You hold an office in the minor orders of the Europolitan Omnichurch. Ranking from lowest rank to highest, these offices are: Porter, Lector, Exorcist and Acolyte.

You are learning on the job, training to enter the higher orders. Some day, who knows, you may become ordained as a Deacon, Priest, or perhaps even as His or Her Holiness, the Bishop of Europolis.

Choose your sex and name.

Both men and women serve as clergy of the Europolitan Omnichurch at all levels of the organization. So are you man enough to commit yourself to a lifetime of chastity, poverty and obedience? Or are you woman enough? Please decide. Then choose your name from the list of approved saints' names:

- Men can choose from: Abraham, Basil, Conrad, Dotto, Eustace, Felix, Guy, Humbert, Isidore, Jerome, Kanute, Leo, Maurice, Noel, Owen, Pascal, Quartus, Roderic, Sebastian, Timothy, Ulrich, Vitalis, Wigbert, Xavier, Ymar or Zeno.
- Woman can choose from: Alpheia, Breedon, Clare, Daphne, Esther, Felicity, Gwen, Hedda, Isabel, Justina, Kinga, Lydia, Marie-Rose, Natalie, Olive, Pauline, Quiteria, Rosalie, Sophia, Theodora, Ursula, Viola, Wulvella, Xantippa, Yolanda or Zoe.

Choose your office.

Your office determines what you do every day in the Omnichurch, but it has special resonance while visiting the Überworld. Your office grants you use of a supernatural tool and a choice of talents that may aid you in your mission. Choose an office and then select one of the two talents.

As a Porter...

Your tool is the **Key of Access**. This allows you to open and to close, to enter and to leave. Your talent is **Guarding**, providing protection, or your talent is **Bell-Ringing**, signaling an alert.

As a Lector...

Your tool is the **Book of Lessons**. This allows you to impart knowledge or to teach someone a lesson. Your talent is **Interpretation**, deciphering the otherwise opaque, or your talent is **Concealment**, hiding that which is better unseen.

As an Exorcist...

Your tool is the **Laying on of Hands**. This allows you to heal and to bless. Your talent is **Banishment**, driving forth that which is better gone, or your talent is **Nurturing**, providing comfort and sustenance to the suffering. (There wasn't any suffering in the Überworld until your party arrived. For more information, see **Blasphemy** below. Nurturing doesn't reduce your Blasphemy score, it can help mitigate its effects.)

As an Acolyte...

Your tool is the **Candle**. This allows you to reveal and illuminate.

Your talent is **Preparation**, from raw ingredients, producing something of use, or your talent is **Ignition**, setting loose that which yearns to blaze.

In any case...

The Bishop has summoned you to his or her cathedral and you have been briefed on your mission and your target in the Überworld. A team leader will be selected from the highest ranked clergy on your team. After a short service permeated by a particularly intoxicating incense, your group will arrive in the Überworld. Each of you will be wearing a cassock and carrying your tool of office. In addition, you will find hanging from your neck the holy symbol of the Omnichurch, the **Pentabrach**. Commonly known as the Asterisk or Starfish, this emblem is composed of five arrows radiating from a central point, symbolizing both the multiple natures of the 5-Way God as well as the salvific death by dismemberment of His/Her/Its/Their/Our most holy prophet. The Pentabrach will serve as a communication tool, allowing you

to speak to one another and with your Bishop back home. By touching your target with the Pentabrach, you can transmit them to the dreadful Unterworld. Or by touching your own forehead, you can attempt to return to *terra firma*. Any other gear or supplies you might need must be scavenged from within the Überworld.

You will also be armed with your humanity.

As a human being you have three natures:

- Your **Hylic** nature. This is your ability to perform physical acts, much as an ape could do. But more skillfully, because you're human. Choose one special physical skill at which you're accomplished. Examples: Aikido, Tightrope Walking, Chopping Onions.
- Your **Psychic** nature. This is your ability to reason and perform knowledge-based skills. Choose one special mental skill at which you're accomplished. Examples: Playing Bridge, Mathematics, Accounting.
- Your **Pneumatic** nature. This is your ability to sense, to emphasize and to perform fellowship. Choose one special spiritual skill at which you're accomplished. Examples: Sensing Danger, Persuasion.

So what's the Überworld like?

As a living human, you cannot perceive the infinite presence of the 5-Way God which is something like music combined with brilliance combined with an orgasm, eternally pleasing and eternally changing. Therefore, through your perceptions, the Überworld is translated into a more comprehensible realm, sort of a resort crossed with a national park crossed with a theme park crossed with a vibrant city. The inhabitants only cooperate and never disturb one another. Every moment, they are having the time of their lives.

So, how do you do things in the Überworld?

As long as you go with flow, acting just like one of the eternally rewarded, you will

succeed at whatever you do. That limits you to walking about, innocuous conversation, playing golf, skiing, dining, those sorts of things, so it won't get you very far. As they say, if you want to make an omelet in the Überworld... Well, normally you don't—the omelet just manifests itself. But your mission is bound to be much messier than that. You will be foreign bodies in a pristine environment. When you do anything that disturbs the peace, through questions or probes, trespasses or conflict, lies or theft, or anything in any way jarring, you must roll three Fudge dice after describing your action and your desired outcome. Then assign one die to Success, one to Harm and one to Blasphemy. When using your Hyllic, Psychic or Pneumatic skill, roll an additional die. When using your tool or the Pentabrach, roll an additional die. When using one of your office's talents, roll an additional die. The Bishop then will interpret the results, narrating the outcome.

What does your Success die tell you?

Minus: You have failed in your action.

Blank: You have accomplished something other than you intended.

Plus: You have succeeded in your action.

What does your Harm die tell you?

Minus: You have received a serious repercussion related to your action.

Blank: You have been affected in an unexpected way.

Plus: There is no fallout from your action.

What does your Blaphemy die tell you?

Minus: Your action has caused destruction or chaos. Add 2 to your Blasphemy score.

Blank: Your action has tainted someone or something. Add 1 to your Blasphemy score.

Plus: Your action was seemingly nonbesmirching.

Wait, a blasphemy score?

Yes, you have one. It starts at zero. Each time your blasphemy score increases, you will suffer an effect, such as:

- Your cassock becomes torn or stained.
- You break out in boils.
- Your breath turns sour.
- You begin to use profanity.
- Your footsteps leave stains.
- Flowers die in your presence.

Try to make each successive effect a little more gruesome than the last.

When your blasphemy score reaches 30 [to be changed upon reflection or playtesting], the Überworld will no longer tolerate your presence and you will be destroyed, followed by immediate eternal assignment to the dismal Unterworld. So you probably want to return to earth before this happens. And otherwise, avoid dying while you're away. You haven't been pardoned yet.

Last Minute Notes from the So-Called Game Designer:

This is a blatant mashup of the wonderful games Lacuna, Ghost/Echo and Otherkind. It is entirely last minute, so I had no time to talk about the GM's role in this game. Is it comic? Well, I'm easily amused. I hope that the situation of yanking poor souls from heaven while managing to trash the place has at least a smidgen of dark humor.