

Ars Magica

# The Church



by Love, Romer,  
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## The Church

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## The Church

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Perambulation.....                        | 41 |
| The Benefice.....                             | 41 |
| <i>Benefices Held by Institutions</i> .....   | 43 |
| <i>Tithe</i> .....                            | 43 |
| <i>Papal Appointments to Benefice</i> ..      | 43 |
| Rural Parishes .....                          | 43 |
| <i>Chapels</i> .....                          | 43 |
| <i>Private Chapels</i> .....                  | 43 |
| Urban Parishes .....                          | 44 |
| <i>Chapters of Canons</i> .....               | 44 |
| VISITATIONS .....                             | 44 |
| <i>Visitatio ad Limina</i> .....              | 45 |
| SYNODS.....                                   | 45 |
| <i>Ecumenical Councils</i> .....              | 45 |
| PETITIONING THE CHURCH .....                  | 46 |
| <i>The Petition Total</i> .....               | 46 |
| <i>Acting Without Authority</i> .....         | 48 |
| <i>Appealing a Petition</i> .....             | 48 |
| CREATING GAME STATISTICS<br>FOR A CHURCH..... | 48 |
| <i>Basic Church Features</i> .....            | 48 |
| <i>Resources</i> .....                        | 48 |
| <i>Books</i> .....                            | 48 |
| <i>Enchanted Items</i> .....                  | 49 |
| <i>Relics</i> .....                           | 49 |
| <i>Specialists</i> .....                      | 49 |
| <i>Vis</i> .....                              | 49 |
| <i>Hooks and Boons</i> .....                  | 50 |
| <i>Major Church Boon:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Military Order</i> .....                   | 50 |
| <i>Minor Church Boon:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Anchorite/Anchoress</i> .....              | 50 |
| <i>Minor Church Boon:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Burial Rights</i> .....                    | 50 |
| <i>Minor Church Boon: Chantry</i> .....       | 50 |
| <i>Minor Church Boon:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Chapter of Canons</i> .....                | 50 |
| <i>Minor Church Boon:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Church School</i> .....                    | 50 |
| <i>Major Church Hook: Corrupt</i> .....       | 51 |
| <i>Major Church Hook: Heretics</i> .....      | 51 |
| <i>Major Church Hook:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Jurisdiction</i> .....                     | 51 |
| <i>Minor Church Hook:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Absent Rector</i> .....                    | 51 |
| <i>Minor Church Hook:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Incompetent Curate</i> .....               | 51 |
| <i>Minor Church Hook:</i>                     |    |
| <i>Vast Sanctuary</i> .....                   | 51 |

## IV. The Rule & Religious Life 52

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| BENEDICTINE LIFE..... | 52 |
|-----------------------|----|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Becoming a Monk or Nun.....             | 52 |
| The Rule of Saint Benedict.....         | 54 |
| <i>Daily Routine</i> .....              | 54 |
| <i>Discipline</i> .....                 | 54 |
| <i>Property and Possessions</i> .....   | 55 |
| Food and Drink .....                    | 55 |
| <i>Sleeping Arrangements</i> .....      | 56 |
| <i>Hospitality and Visitors</i> .....   | 56 |
| <i>The Infirmary</i> .....              | 56 |
| <i>Work Outside the Monastery</i> ..... | 56 |
| Monastic Roles and Positions... 56      |    |
| <i>The Abbess or Abbot</i> .....        | 58 |
| <i>The Prior or Prioress</i> .....      | 59 |
| <i>The Terrar</i> .....                 | 59 |
| <i>The Cellarer or Cellaress</i> .....  | 59 |
| <i>The Bursar</i> .....                 | 60 |
| <i>The Infirmary</i> .....              | 60 |
| <i>The Head of the Novitiate</i> .....  | 60 |
| <i>The Sacrist</i> .....                | 60 |
| <i>The Precentor</i> .....              | 60 |
| <i>The Porter</i> .....                 | 60 |
| <i>The Hostillar</i> .....              | 60 |
| <i>The Almoner</i> .....                | 60 |
| <i>The Chancellor</i> .....             | 61 |
| <i>The Priest</i> .....                 | 62 |
| THE RELIGIOUS IN YOUR SAGA .....        | 62 |

## V. The Women 63

|   |    |
|---|----|
| FEMALE RELIGIOUS<br>IN THE COVENANT .....                   | 63 |
| <i>Options for Absent Players</i> .....                     | 64 |
| NUNS .....  | 64 |
| <i>The Rule</i> .....                                       | 66 |
| <i>Characters in a Nunnery</i> .....                        | 67 |
| <i>The Scholar</i> .....                                    | 67 |
| <i>The Refugee</i> .....                                    | 68 |
| <i>The Prisoner</i> .....                                   | 69 |
| <i>The Revolutionary</i> .....                              | 69 |
| <i>Misbehavior</i> .....                                    | 69 |
| <i>Reports of Wayward Nuns</i> .....                        | 71 |
| CANONESSES .....  | 72 |
| BEGUINES.....   | 72 |
| <i>Beguines of the Near Future</i> ..                       | 73 |
| <i>Penitents</i> .....                                      | 73 |
| RECLUSES .....  | 74 |
| <i>Carmelite Nuns</i> .....                                 | 74 |
| ANCHORESSES.....  | 74 |
| <i>The Anchoress' Rule</i><br>( <i>Ancrene Riwe</i> ) ..... | 75 |
| MYSTICS.....  | 76 |
| <i>Hildegard of Bingen</i> .....                            | 77 |
| <i>Marie of Oignes:</i>                                     |    |
| <i>Beguine and Mystic</i> .....                             | 78 |

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| <i>Elizabeth of Schönau</i> .....     | 78 |
| <i>Visions to Come</i> .....          | 79 |
| <i>False Visions</i> .....            | 79 |
| PRIESTS' WIVES AND MISTRESSES.....    | 80 |
| IMPOSTERS .....                       | 80 |
| SAMPLE CHARACTERS .....               | 80 |
| <i>Holy Maga</i>                      |    |
| ( <i>House Ex Miscellanea</i> ) ..... | 80 |
| <i>Grog Templates</i> .....           | 83 |

## VI. The Corrupt 85

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| STORYGUIDING CORRUPTION .....                                  | 85  |
| <i>Heresy and Corruption</i> .....                             | 86  |
| THREE HOLY ORDERS.....   | 87  |
| THE ORDER OF CLUNY.....  | 87  |
| <i>What Makes the</i><br><i>Cluniacs Different?</i> .....      | 87  |
| <i>Government</i> .....  | 88  |
| <i>Independence</i> .....                                      | 88  |
| <i>Frequent Mass</i> .....                                     | 88  |
| <i>The Liturgical Hours</i> .....                              | 88  |
| <i>Chantries and</i><br><i>Masses for the Dead</i> .....       | 89  |
| <i>Ecclesiastical Influence</i> .....                          | 89  |
| <i>Fading Wealth</i> .....                                     | 89  |
| <i>Entering the Cluniac Order</i> .....                        | 90  |
| <i>The Corrupt Cluniacs</i> .....                              | 91  |
| THE CISTERCIANS.....   | 94  |
| <i>What Makes the</i><br><i>Cistercians Different?</i> .....   | 94  |
| <i>Solitude and Retreat</i> .....                              | 94  |
| <i>Manual Labor</i> .....                                      | 94  |
| <i>Governance</i> .....  | 95  |
| <i>Wealth</i> .....  | 95  |
| <i>Ecclesiastical Influence</i> .....                          | 95  |
| <i>Opposing Heresy</i> .....                                   | 95  |
| <i>The Corrupt Cistercians</i> .....                           | 95  |
| <i>Joachim of Flora</i> .....                                  | 96  |
| <i>The Joachimites</i> .....                                   | 96  |
| <i>The Cistercian Connection</i> .....                         | 97  |
| <i>Sample Characters</i> .....                                 | 97  |
| <i>Father Timo of Gradara</i> .....                            | 97  |
| THE VALLUMBROSANS.....   | 99  |
| <i>What Makes the</i><br><i>Vallumbrosans Different?</i> ..... | 99  |
| <i>Papal Influence</i> .....                                   | 99  |
| <i>Extreme Asceticism and Silence</i> .....                    | 99  |
| <i>No Manual Work</i> .....                                    | 99  |
| <i>Total Retreat from the World</i> ..                         | 100 |
| <i>If the Vallumbrosans</i><br><i>are Corrupt</i> .....        | 100 |



VII. The Knights  
Templar

102

THE POOR KNIGHTS ..... 102

The Fifth Crusade ..... 103

Templar Endowments ..... 104

Templars in England ..... 104

Templars in France ..... 105

Templars in Iberia ..... 106

*Templars in Portugal* ..... 106

*Templars in Aragon* ..... 106

Templars in Germany  
and Eastern Europe ..... 107

Templars in Italy ..... 107

Templars in the Holy Land ... 108

*Templars in Acre* ..... 108

*Templars in Antioch* ..... 108

*Templars in Greece* ..... 108

Other Military Orders ..... 109

*Hospitallers* ..... 109

*Teutons* ..... 109

*The Order of Calatrava  
and Other Iberian Orders* ..... 109

*The Order of Saint Lazarus* ..... 110

*The Order of Saint  
Thomas at Acre* ..... 110

TEMPLAR ORGANIZATION ..... 110

    Chapters and Provinces ..... 111

*The Provinces* ..... 111

*The General Chapter* ..... 111

*Provincial and Local Chapters* ... 111

*Running a Chapter Meeting* ..... 111

    Ranks and Titles ..... 111

*The Grand Master* ..... 111

*Grand Master*

*Peter of Montaignu* ..... 112

*The Great Officials* ..... 112

*Commanders* ..... 113

*Brother-Knights* ..... 114

*Brother-Sergeants* ..... 114

*Brother-Priests* ..... 114

*Sisters* ..... 115

*Confreres and Consoeurs* ..... 115

    The Templar Faith ..... 115

*Templar Relics* ..... 116

    Daily Life ..... 117

*Military Tactics* ..... 117

    Joining the Order  
of the Temple ..... 118

*The Membership Ritual* ..... 118

*Joining as a Child* ..... 118

    The Templar Rule ..... 118

*Secret Rites* ..... 119

    Relations with Outsiders ..... 119

*Templars and the Church* ..... 119

*Templars and the  
Military Orders* ..... 119

*Templars and Nobility* ..... 119

*Templars and Muslims* ..... 120

*Templars and the  
Order of Hermes* ..... 120

TEMPLAR CHARACTERS  
AND STORIES ..... 121

    Templars as Crusaders ..... 121

    Templars as Bankers  
and Merchants ..... 121

    Templars as Advisors  
and Diplomats ..... 122

    Templars as Spies ..... 122

    Templars as Priests ..... 122

    Templars as Lords ..... 122

    Templars as Sailors ..... 122

    Templars as Treasure Hunters... 122

CREATING TEMPLAR CHARACTERS ... 123

    Modified Templar Virtues ..... 123

*Brother-Knight* ..... 123

*Brother-Priest* ..... 123

*Brother-Sergeant* ..... 124

    New Templar Virtues ..... 124

*Templar Confrere or Consoeur* ... 124

*Templar Servant* ..... 124

*Templar Specialist* ..... 124

*Templar Administrator* ..... 125

*Commander* ..... 125

*Office Holder* ..... 125

*Templar Prestige* ..... 125

    New Ability ..... 125

*Organization Lore:*

*Knights Templar* ..... 125

    Sample Characters ..... 126





List of Inserts

II. THE CONGREGATION

Purgatory..... 10  
 Story Seed:  
     The Obedient Congregation..... 11  
 Christian Death..... 12  
 Example of Creating  
     a Devout Character ..... 12  
 Patron Saints ..... 13  
 An Example of a Pilgrimage Story ..... 18  
 Experiencing Divine Ascent..... 20  
 Personality Traits, Sins, and Tempers..... 20  
 Divine Warping and  
     the Contemplative Mystic..... 21  
 Divine Warping and  
     the Monistic Mystic ..... 23  
 Improving True Faith..... 23

III. THE DIOCESE

Clergy as Player Characters ..... 26  
 Recommended and Required  
     Virtues, Flaws, and Abilities..... 28  
 Story Seed: The Magus Bishop ..... 28  
 Story Seed: The Proctor of Hermes..... 30  
 Some Papal Officials in 1220 AD..... 30  
 Legates Sent to the Order of Hermes... 30  
 Story Seed: A Troublesome Minster ... 32  
 Major Covenant Boon:  
     Archdeacon Agent..... 32  
 Story Seed: The Vicar-General ..... 32  
 Possession and Exorcism ..... 34  
 Story Seed: A Catechumen Covenant .. 35  
 Story Seed: The Heresy of Hermes ..... 37  
 Bishops and Blood ..... 37  
 Story Seed: Hermetic Sanctuary ..... 38  
 Relics ..... 38  
 Church Auras ..... 39  
 Spells in Church..... 39  
 Story Seed:  
     The Reconstructed Temple..... 39  
 Hermetic Magic and the Sacraments... 40  
 Story Seed: The Lost Priest..... 40  
 Minor Covenant Boon:  
     Holder of Benefices ..... 42  
 Story Seed: The Overgrown Glebe ..... 42  
 Spells to Affect a Parish..... 42  
 Story Seed: A Concerned Priest..... 43  
 Covenant Boon: Covenant Chapel ..... 43  
 Modifiers to the Petition Total..... 46  
 Henri of Toulouse's Petition..... 47  
 The Petition of the Parish  
     of Long Melford ..... 47

Some Common Christian Books..... 49  
 Example Churches..... 50

IV. THE RULE & RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Opus Dei, Divine Office..... 53  
 A Note on Terms ..... 53  
 Story Seed: The Novice's Nuptials ..... 53  
 Monastic Gardens ..... 54  
 Sign Language (Monastery) ..... 55  
 Story Seed: Signs in Silence..... 55  
 Story Seed: Electoral Difficulties ..... 58  
 Story Seed:  
     Good and Faithful Servant? ..... 59  
 The Problem with Priors ..... 59  
 Some Religious Orders..... 61

V. THE WOMEN

Story Seed: The Visitation ..... 64  
 Fontevault and Las Huelgas..... 65  
 Story Seeds..... 66  
 Story Seeds..... 67  
 Héloïse ..... 68  
 Christina of Markyate ..... 69  
 Story Seeds..... 70  
 Story Seeds..... 71  
 A Note on History ..... 72  
 Using an anchoress in the Saga..... 74  
 Becoming an anchoress in England ..... 74  
 Story Seeds..... 75  
 Some Books by Hildegard of Bingen ... 77  
 Books by Elizabeth of Schönau..... 78  
 Saint Severus of Ravenna ..... 78  
 Story Seed: Novices ..... 79  
 Companion Templates ..... 81

VI. THE CORRUPT

Was There a Cluniac Order?..... 88  
 Mortuary Masses ..... 88  
 The Hermit and the Devils ..... 89  
 Story Seed: Fleeing the Mob..... 89  
 The Demon BaalBaruth,  
     Corrupter of Monks..... 90  
 The Demon Patarus..... 92  
 Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)..... 94  
 Story Seed:  
     The Ring of Saint Bernard ..... 94  
 The Three Ages of the World..... 96  
 A Note on the Illuminati ..... 97  
 The Demon Jaeverth ..... 98  
 The Demon Varriar ..... 100

VII. THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

The Templars and the Crusades..... 103  
 Templars and Scandal..... 103  
 The Order Ends ..... 103  
 Papal Privileges ..... 104  
 Grand Masters of  
     the Temple of Solomon ..... 104  
 English Templar Commanders ..... 105  
 Story Seeds..... 105  
 Templars and Demonic  
     Wealth of Nations ..... 106  
 Story Seeds..... 106  
 Story Seed: The Tomb Raiders..... 109  
 Story Seeds..... 110  
 Designing a Templar Priory ..... 111  
 The Grand Master..... 112  
 Story Seed: Independence..... 113  
 Arabic-Speaking Templars..... 114  
 Templar Chaplains and Petitioning... 115  
 Story Seed: The Miser ..... 115  
 TrainedGroup Combat ..... 117  
 Story Seed: The Unfailing Banner ..... 117  
 Calling on God's Aid..... 117  
 Templar Prisons..... 117  
 Templar Saints and Festivals..... 118  
 Woolen Cords ..... 119  
 How Much Do the Templars  
     Know About Magi?..... 120  
 Playing a Templar Character..... 121  
 Templar Banking, Letters  
     of Credit & Insurance..... 121  
 Templars and the Wealthy Virtue ..... 123  
 Templar Equipment ..... 123  
 Templar Ciphers..... 125  
 Story Seed: Stolen Cipher..... 125  
 Templar Sign Language ..... 126

VIII. THE FRANCISCANS

The Challenges of Francis..... 128  
 Mendicants..... 129  
 The Dominicans..... 130  
 Preaching..... 130  
 Francis of Assisi ..... 131  
 Brother Elias Bonibarone, Minister  
     General of the Little Brothers..... 133  
 Letter of Approval: Cum Delicti ..... 133  
 Story Seeds..... 134  
 Miracles of the Little Brothers..... 135  
 Clare of Assisi..... 137  
 Story Seeds..... 140  
 Story Seed: Forbidden Property..... 142





## The Church



|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Brother-Knight</i> .....   | 126 |
| <i>Brother-Sergeant</i> ..... | 126 |
| <i>Brother-Priest</i> .....   | 127 |

### VIII. The Franciscans 128

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| FRANCISCANS IN THE SAGA.....                       | 128 |
| JOINING THE FRANCISCANS.....                       | 129 |
| FRANCIS' LIFE &<br>GROWTH OF THE FRANCISCANS ..... | 131 |
| Spreading the Movement.....                        | 132 |
| THE FRANCISCANS TODAY .....                        | 133 |
| Current Crises .....                               | 133 |
| BROTHERS AND SISTERS.....                          | 134 |
| BIRDS AND ANIMALS .....                            | 136 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| CLARE OF ASSISI .....                  | 136 |
| The Poor Sisters.....                  | 136 |
| HOLY TRADITION: FRANCISCANS....        | 137 |
| Joining the Tradition.....             | 138 |
| <i>Initiation Scripts</i> .....        | 138 |
| <i>Initiation: Meditation</i> .....    | 138 |
| <i>Initiation: Understanding</i> ..... | 138 |
| <i>Initiation: Intervention</i> .....  | 139 |
| <i>Initiation: Purity</i> .....        | 139 |
| <i>Script Variations</i> .....         | 139 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| THE ORDER OF HERMES<br>& THE FRANCISCANS..... | 139 |
| FRANCISCANS IN THE FUTURE .....               | 139 |
| <i>Leaders</i> .....                          | 140 |
| <i>Schism</i> .....                           | 140 |
| <i>Approval</i> .....                         | 140 |

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Martyrdom</i> .....         | 140 |
| <i>Academic Theology</i> ..... | 140 |
| <i>Heresy</i> .....            | 140 |
| <i>Poverty</i> .....           | 140 |
| <i>Ministration</i> .....      | 141 |
| <i>Persecution</i> .....       | 141 |
| SAMPLE CHARACTERS .....        | 141 |
| Grog Templates.....            | 142 |
| <i>Franciscan Nun</i> .....    | 142 |
| <i>Franciscan Friar</i> .....  | 142 |

### Appendix: Bibliography

143

## Chapter One

# Introduction

Welcome to *The Church*. This book for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* describes the Western Christian Church as it exists in Mythic Europe in the year 1220 AD.

Christianity is without doubt the most widespread religion in Mythic Europe. However, the Church also holds

tremendous temporal power. If one man could claim to rule over all the multitudinous kingdoms, cities, and villages of Mythic Europe, that man would be the pope: the head of the Western Church. This claim is not without controversy, but it is the pope who crowns emper-

ors. It is also the Church that shows the people of Mythic Europe the route to eternal salvation.

This book is intended to help and to inspire your troupe to include the Church in your sagas. The covenant could have an ally in the nearby parish priest, or enemies amongst the cathedral canons who plot in the bishop's court. Pious covenant folk (and magi) may worship in the local parish church, or travel on pilgrimages. A nearby nunnery or monastery could be a source of spiritual and intellectual aid to the scholars of your covenant. Alternatively, a fallen monastery could be a sulfurous source of contagion, spewing corruption and despair into the lands about your covenant.



## The Church and the Divine

*The Church* is first and foremost about the human institution that is the Western Christian Church. Of course, part of the Church's function is the organized worship of the Divine, and *Realms of Power: The Divine* contains information about the Divine. *The Church* extends the information in that book to provide more information about the organization of the Church and how it influences the day-to-day lives of the people of Mythic Europe.

*Realms of Power: The Divine* and *The Church* complement each other, but your troupe does not need to have access to *Realms of Power: The Divine* to use or make sense of most of the information in this book.



## The Church and the Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes and the Church are both spread throughout all of Mythic Europe. The Order of Hermes certainly knows of the Church, and it is very likely that the Church has some inkling of the existence of the Order of Hermes. However, in this book we have left it to your troupe to decide exactly what the Church knows of the Order, and what the Church's attitude to the Order might be. Perhaps the Order of Hermes is a well-kept secret, in which case there may be little more than rumors circulating the papal curia. At the other extreme, maybe the existence of the Order is well known to the Church, with local bishops and the monastic and military orders regularly invited to send representatives to Tribunal meetings. Or maybe different segments of the Church have different ideas about what the Order of Hermes actually is.

Whatever is the case in your saga, thinking through the implications can (if you want) provide opportunity for stories. For example:

- How do the magi keep the Order of Hermes a secret from the Church?
- Does the Church consider the Order a menace or an ally?
- What does the Church think about pagan magi?
- Are the magi who keep in close contact with Church officials interfering with the mundanes?

## The Western Church

It is important to note that this book is only about the Western or Latin Church, which is centered in Rome. It is only in the eastern peripheries of Mythic Europe that the Eastern or Greek Church (centered in Constantinople and Jerusalem) has any sway. The Greek Church is similar in some ways to the Latin Church, as they both derive from the religion of the late Roman Empire, but the Greek Church is also quite different in many ways.

The reader should also note that this book is not about heretical interpretations of the Church's teachings. This book describes the mainstream, dominant views of the Western Church.

## The Church in 1220 AD

The Church is a large institution: it covers virtually all of Mythic Europe. In *The Church* we have attempted to describe what is true for the majority of Mythic Europe, and in fact (perhaps because of the central authority of Rome) many aspects of the Church are surprisingly uniform. Where there is room, we have also noted some regional differences in Church practices, but in other cases there has not been space to describe every local idiosyncrasy.

The Church is also not fixed in time, and over the centuries it changes. *The Church* describes the state of the Church in the year 1220, and if your saga follows history, there are dramatic changes in the Church throughout the 13th century. For example, there are ongoing struggles concerning the powers of the pope over the bishops and secular rulers of Mythic Europe, new orders of monks are founded, and in the early years of the 14th century the papacy even leaves Rome. Although we have provided some historical pointers, how (and if) the Church changes throughout the course of your saga is up to your troupe, and may even depend upon the actions of your characters!

## The Mythic Church

The Church of Mythic Europe is based upon the real 13th-century Church, but they are not the same thing. This is not a history book; the Church of Mythic Europe is fictional and includes fictional, mythic elements that were not true of the real Church. No disrespect is intended to modern-day practitioners of any faith.

## Chapter Two

# The Congregation

The Church is not just the clergy, nor the buildings where they officiate. The Church is composed of the whole body of believers united in Christ, and the congregation is an essential element, and sometimes a powerful one. In England, recent decades have seen the development of churchwardens who oversee and help run the Church buildings. Similar roles are developing in Italy, France, and Germany. Congregations can also petition the local bishop to have an unpopular priest removed and for visitation, where a bishop tours the parishes questioning locals about their priest. This provides an important opportunity for the laity to speak ill of, or praise, the incumbent. In the case of serious problems with a priest, it is not uncommon for the congregation to boycott the parish church, and call on the Church authorities to remove and punish the offending clergyman.

In recent decades there has been an explosion of lay devotion and popular

piety. For centuries almost all saints have been drawn from the clergy, but a few of the laity are now canonized, as the Church has accepted that even lay people can aspire to extraordinary personal holiness. The concept of purgatory, while still ill defined in doctrine, means that an increasing number of people may hope to one day reach heaven. Even those whose earthly lives have been less than exemplary may be saved through the saving grace of Christ, and the purpose of purgatory in popular imagination is to refine those souls not good enough for heaven, yet not bad enough for hell.

While some clergy adopt a somewhat jaundiced view of their flock's spiritual potential and ultimate destination, many members of the congregation are deeply concerned with the fate of their own souls. Many of the laity choose to enter a monastery or convent for their last years, and others make generous bequests to the Church in their wills.

Most people in Christendom accept the status of the Church, yet impiety is not uncommon. In some parishes where the priest struggles to hold his flock's attention, it may even be the norm. Impiety may take the form of gossiping, quarreling, gaming with dice, and flirting in church during divine service. One can imagine a parish priest with the Flaw: Difficult Underlings, who can never control his congregation.

Such indiscipline is not usual though — while most districts have a village or two renowned for impiety or rowdy behavior, generally throughout Western Mythic Europe a tone of reverence and quiet attention can be found while the service is in progress, with relatively few nodding off to sleep or whispering to their neighbors. A sense of the sacred, the real presence of God (as reflected in the Dominion aura), and the fact that sermons and the ritual provide entertainment and color hold most worshipers' attention fully. (Those who went on the

## Purgatory

Human life culminates in death, and after death with the eternal fate of the soul. Various possibilities exist for that soul, including heaven and hell. But what of the possibility that a soul is not good enough for heaven, but not corrupt enough to be claimed for eternal punishment by the devil? There therefore are other options, including the limbo to which unbaptized pagans are consigned, and purgatory.

Purgatory is a place of purification, but the experiences the soul endures there are not of the terrible nature of the punishment endured by souls consigned

to hell. Purgatory exists outside of time, yet is somehow linked to the notion of passing earthly time; the period that souls spend in purgatory may be considered in chronological terms, usually visualized as many decades, centuries, or even millions of years, as the soul is cleansed before eventually being good enough to enter heaven.

There are four known ways that the time in Purgatory might be reduced: by intervention by the saints, by the prayers of the living, by Masses said for the benefit of the departed's soul, and possibly by the acquisition of in-

dulgences (see later) though this is not their correct purpose.

The Church has not yet formulated a dogmatic pronouncement on the nature of purgatory. It is entirely possible the concept will change, but in practice the Church in Mythic Europe fully endorses a concept that is very widespread in the laity, and can be found in some of the early Church writings. Many feel the testimony of ghosts who appear from purgatory to warn others of their need for repentance and to appeal for prayer is a strong witness to the truth of the concept.



ill-fated Fourth Crusade sixteen years ago were shocked by the chattering and clamor of the crowds in the Orthodox churches, in contrast). The Church tends to look on these problems as a personal failure by the priest, and (where they exist) the churchwardens. After all, congregations are, like all Christians, sinners.

People generally accept the truth of the Christian system, and partake in the sacraments willingly (even heretics generally aim to reform the Church, not replace it entirely). At least once a year it is necessary to attend Mass and take communion, and this usually takes place on Easter Sunday, but most Sundays the congregation will gather if possible, and communion can be taken more often — even daily if so desired. Some laity go beyond this minimum, observing all the liturgical offices (see Chapter 4: The Rule, Liturgical Offices and the Hours) either in a monastery or church, or even at home, when they hear the bells ring out the hours.

Almost everyone generally accepts the value of worship and the truth of the Church's claims — but the degree of conscientiousness they exhibit in their religious duties varies greatly. The pious are observant, and act upon their beliefs; the majority go through the motions happily enough. The very impious few mock, or fail to participate at all. Outright atheism is extremely rare, and often a sign of subtle demonic intervention.

So long as an individual confesses and takes part in the sacrament of communion once a year, and was baptized with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he remains a Christian and is entitled to a Christian burial, no matter how impious he was in life.

## Indulgences

Often misunderstood, indulgences are important aspects of the faith. An indulgence is not a payment for remission of sins, for that is the role of confession and absolution and is granted by God with a priest following the correct sacraments. An indulgence simply mitigates the length of a penance that has been decreed by the priest.

## Story Seed: The Obedient Congregation

While traveling, the characters enter a village church to attend Mass, and are surprised to find the priest less than welcoming. In fact, he appears to be positively worried upon seeing them. It soon becomes clear that the bishop is in the area conducting a visitation, and the priest is concerned that everything should go well — if the characters make inquiries, they will learn he is in danger of losing his benefice after

repeated complaints about his inability to maintain discipline, and near-rioting in church. However, his congregation appears perfectly behaved, if withdrawn and rather reticent. The churchgoers follow every part of his service attentively, though they do seem to be led by a well-dressed fellow at the front, copying his every move — when he sneezes, they all sneeze. What is going on?

If a character has sinned, confessed, and received absolution, he may well be given a penance of a year or more on bread and water, and exclusion from church for that period. This period may be reduced by the purchase of an indulgence — a monetary purchase accompa-

nied by repentance, contrition, and good works — that asks the saints to intervene for mercy with God, and take on some of the penance themselves.

Many believe that indulgences might be purchased in life to reduce the length of suffering in purgatory after death, but



## Christian Death

The journey of the soul is always perilous, but rarely is the peril greater than as death approaches. A priest should absolve the sins of the dying with the last rites (see Chapter 3: Diocese, Sacraments), but it is also proper that the dying should meet death with the proper mix of resignation, piety, and faith in God's grace. Even when dead the peril is not over, for it is imperative that the body be buried according to the correct rites. If a soul is denied Christian burial, the spirit may rise as a

ghost seeking to have the remains properly interred, and there is a strong folk belief that demons may arrive to try and carry the departed's soul straight to hell. A growing literature of manuals on how to die well are being written, in both Latin and the vernacular tongues. Characters should think carefully about making proper provision for their funerals, and perhaps also for prayers to be said and Masses to be sung to commemorate their lives and intercede for them if they face purgatory after death.

## Example of Creating a Devout Character

A shoemaker called Thomas with Piety +2 might be Devoted to two saints. He chooses Devotion: Blessed Virgin and Devotion: Saint Bartholomew. His player may not assign normal Experience Points to these Devotions, however. Instead, at character generation his player assigns two Devotion Points to the Devotions

(equal to the value of the Pious trait of Thomas). So Thomas' player takes Devotion: Blessed Virgin 0 (1 point) and Saint Bartholomew 0 (1 point). Thomas also possesses a relic of Saint Edmund, and this grants him additional Devotion Points for the saint the relic belonged to in mortal life (see later).

that is not yet defined by Church dogma, and may or may not be the case. It does not stop many from purchasing them with that intent, rather than to reduce a penance, which is their proper role. Indulgences are also granted by the Church in return for certain types of good works that support the Church's aims, like going on crusade or building a church. Indulgences are used by the Church to raise money, to allow great building projects such as the construction of cathedrals, and to fund other good causes such as almshouses and hospitals. An indulgence is always sold for a specific purpose, and an attractive certificate is given to mark the transaction.

Indulgences are often sold by wandering preachers called questors. The purchase price is based on a sliding scale depending on what the buyer might be considered reasonably able to afford, and the length of the indulgence in remission of penance (in game mechanics best expressed in free seasons). The poor donate what they feel they can afford, in most cases six Mythic pennies per season, and

the wealthy at least a pound per season.

As well as purchasing the indulgence, it is then necessary to spend a season in charitable works to demonstrate sincerity, perhaps resulting in experience points in a Reputation: Piety equivalent to the seasons of indulgence purchased, and a single temporary Faith Point. (See *Realms of Power: The Divine* page 58 for details, but effectively a Faith Point can be treated as an additional Confidence Point).

## Vigils & Fasting

It is common practice for the devout to spend the night before an important event in prayer in a church, a practice called a vigil. A Fatigue level is lost, and will not be recovered until the character has made up a full night's sleep, but the character gains one Confidence Point that may be spent the next day on a specified virtuous task.

Fasting usually involves abstinence from all rich foods and alcohol, and sub-

sisting on bread and water, and perhaps vegetables and beer, though local customs and practices vary. Some areas, especially Southern Europe, fast for daylight hours only, while other fasts may involve sexual abstinence as well as refraining from meat, dairy products, and poultry.

Fasting is usually a penance, though it can be undertaken as a sign of piety. A fast lasts for a season and grants a +1 non-cumulative bonus to Petitioning a Saint (see *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 87). But throughout the season in question, the character suffers from a single level of Fatigue at all times, owing to dietary restrictions.

## Devotion

Great piety is always exceptional. It goes beyond the norm of what is required by the Church, and is an active pursuit of holiness as a way of life. It is represented in the rules by the Personality Trait Pious, which can be taken by any character, but may also be represented by the Personality Flaw of that name. Many pious people choose to develop a particular reverence for a saint, or for an aspect of the life of Christ, or for some aspect of the Virgin Mary. They focus their veneration, love, and prayers through that entity, asking him or her (in the case of a saint or the Blessed Virgin) to intercede with God on the worshiper's behalf. This process is known as Devotion.

Devotions advance as an Ability, but do not use normal, generalized Experience Points, instead relying on a dedicated form of experience points called Devotion Points. The two are not transferable — Devotion Points may not be spent on learning Arts and Abilities, and Experience Points may not be used to raise Devotions. Devotions are not Abilities, and do not possess Specializations.

At character generation a Christian character with a positive Piety personality trait may spend Devotion Points equal to the positive score in that trait to establish Devotions. (So 3 points if he possesses the Minor Personality Flaw: Pious, and 6 for the Major Personality Flaw: Pious, otherwise as the assigned score in the Personality



Trait Pious, if any. Negative scores in Pious are irrelevant here, as an impious character does not possess Devotions.)

Assign a Devotion Score of 0 to a number of saints (or the Virgin) equal to a character's positive score in the Personality Trait Pious (if any) — again treating the Minor Personality Flaw as a score of 3, and the Major Flaw as a score of 6 — and then distribute the Devotion Points among them. Further Devotions may be acquired in play, usually requiring a story or significant event related to the saint and character. Subsequent increases or decreases in the Personality Trait Pious after the game begins have no mechanical effect on Devotions, and Devotion Points are neither gained nor lost through these changes.

## The Benefits of Devotion

The character can invoke for intercession any saint he has at least one Devotion Point in a Devotion towards, regardless of whether or not the saint is the character's patron saint or an appropriate saint to the matter at hand. Pious characters are likely to call upon more saints with greater success, because of their established relationships with those saints.

*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 87, introduced the notion of invoking a saint, and the Devotion scores are used as bonuses in that process.

### INVOKING A SAINT:

**Communication + Charm + modifiers\*  
+ a simple die vs. 15 + a simple die**

\* In this case, including the Devotion Total — that is, the score in Devotion to that saint — and the bonus from any relics of that saint (see later).

If the roll is successful, the saint uses one of his or her Divine powers to help the character. If the roll fails, nothing happens, but you may attempt the roll again the next day.

In addition to the sacraments, Christianity in Mythic Europe possesses a plethora of minor folk rituals and prayers, known as sacramentals. These range from prayers

designed to cure toothache, to ritual blessings of crops and animals, to prayers designed to win the affections of a good husband, find lost items, or ensure peace and prosperity in a house. Many of the rites appear almost pagan to some eyes, but are in fact part of the normal Christian practice. These rites are versions of invoking a saint using the normal rules, and may involve anything from a procession of the whole parish on the saint's day, to a simple prayer performed by a couple on moving into their new house. Dominion Lore may often provide a clue as to an appropriate saint to invoke, and even if the saint is not a patron, the specific situation of the rite means that saint counts as appropriate to the task in hand, and the -15 penalty for invoking an unknown saint is not applied (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 87). Storyguides should design appropriate Powers for saints to reflect local customs and hagiography. For example, if the village church is dedicated to Saint Jerome, the congregation may know of his Power that pacifies wild beasts. If a young woman wishes to become pregnant, and leads a white bull on a halter through the streets of Bury Saint Edmunds with the monks in solemn possession, Saint Edmund's power to *Bestow Fertility* is appropriate. Many local saints possess the power to *Bless Crops* or *Bless Livestock*, and are invoked solemnly in annual festivities.

## Relics & Devotion

Possession of a relic associated with a specific saint gives a bonus of +2 to the Devotion Total per Faith Point in the relic for asking for that saint's intercession, but does so no more than once a day. Even if the character lacks a Devotion towards the saint whose relic is carried, he does not incur the -15 penalty for invoking an unfamiliar saint and does gain the bonus for the relic. Only one individual may use the bonus, and he must tend or carry the relic personally. However, a relic visited in a shrine can be employed for the bonus if the custodians agree, by intense veneration lasting a day.

### RELIC BONUS:

(Faith Points in relic)

x 2 bonus to Devotion Total

## The Costs of Devotion

Devotion requires the observance the saint's day each year — so Thomas the shoemaker will be busy on the Feast of the Queen of Heaven (May 1st), and August 24th (Saint Bartholomew's Day), and most likely November 20th (Saint Edmund's Day). A character failing to

## Patron Saints

In *Realms of Power: The Divine*, it is suggested that characters can invoke a patron saint for intercession or their Powers. The patron is often the saint of the local church, the saint of the character's home region, village, or profession, or any other saint the character finds personally inspiring. Everyone, even the impious, can have a patron saint if they wish, and no Piety score is required. Devoted characters may invoke any saint they have a Devotion towards, though one of the saints they are devoted to is technically their patron saint — which is the player's choice.

Also, anyone can ask Mary, Queen of Heaven, to intercede on his behalf

with her Son, regardless of whether he is devoted to her or not. Her mercy and compassion for poor miserable sinners allows this. It is, of course, possible to be personally devoted to an aspect of Mary as well.

Finally, anyone can invoke any saint whose traditional area of interest is immediately relevant to the matter at hand. Any traveler, for example, can call upon Saint Christopher, and it is widely believed that those who have seen a likeness of Saint Christopher and called upon him for mercy will not die that day upon the road. Many travelers carry an image of Saint Christopher for this reason.

celebrate the festival of his saint in some manner will lose at least three Devotion Points, and possibly more, as the troupe decides. The day is lost for the purposes of seasonal activities.

### Gaining Devotion Points

A character can gain Devotion Points by various activities. It is possible to gain Devotion Points and Experience Points in the same season, and even for the same activity; Devotion Points must be spent on the appropriate Devotion, though, and may be used for no other purpose.

#### SEASONS OF PERSONAL DEVOTION

Spending a season engaged in prayer and meditation at a shrine to a saint earns 5 Devotion Points. The only Experience Points gained are exposure in Church Lore or Dominion Lore or similar.

#### ENDOWING A CHURCH, CHAPEL, OR MONASTERY DEDICATED TO THE SAINT

Depending on the size of the institution created, the number of seasons involved in setting it up, and whether a story is required, the number of Devotion Points gained varies from 5 to 50; the former represents a small chapel founded without a story, the latter the building of a cathedral at the center of a saga and many stories.

#### PARTICIPATING IN A GUILD DEDICATED TO THE SAINT

Many professional guilds are dedicated to a saint, and annually observe the festival of that saint. Characters receive 3 Devotion Points on joining the guild, and 2 each on becoming a journeyman and a master. Not all guild members are pious, of course, and even those who are are not necessarily devoted to their guild's saint. (See *City & Guild* page 41, for more on guild membership from a mundane perspective.)

#### VISITING A SITE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SAINT

This may include the tomb, a major relic, or the martyrdom site of the saint, or a site associated with a great miracle of that saint. This is worth 1 to 10 Devotion Points. If the tomb or martyrdom site is in the character's home town, no more than 1 point may be gained. If it requires a journey that takes a season, is part of a pilgrimage (a seasonal activity explained later), or the character has to go out of his way to visit the shrine, then it is worth 5 points or more. If an entire story is based on the visit to the tomb, and it is hazardous and requires a full season's travel, 10 Devotion Points may be gained. This is usually a one-time benefit.

#### SPONSORING CHURCH ARTWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SAINT

This includes things like wall paintings, altars, or windows. It should usually be part of a story, and grants a number of Devotion Points equal to the Aesthetic Quality of the final artwork. (See *Art & Academe*, page 123, for details on Aesthetic Quality.) Such stories usually revolve around finding an artist, and getting the artwork completed. This may also result in a positive reputation as a patron of the arts or of the Church (see *Lords of Men*, pages 25 and 63, for details). Only the best artwork per saint counts; multiple frescoes in churches all over the region to the same saint do not continue to increase Devotion, unless each is of higher quality than the last.

#### STUDYING THE HAGIOGRAPHIES TO MEDITATE ON THE SAINT'S LIFE

A hagiography is a book on a specific saint's life. A season spent studying a hagiography that is entirely about the saint to whom the character is Devoted is worth Devotion Points equal to Quality/2. More general works on the saints that cover many saints' lives usually grant 1 Devotion Point for a season of study; but even if the book is a summa, it can grant only 1 Devotion Point per saint, no matter how many

seasons are spent in study. A work by the saint counts as a hagiography for this purpose — reading Saint Augustine's *City of God* grants 5 Devotion Points per season in Devotion: Saint Augustine (as the work has a Quality of 10) to readers dedicated to the saint. The normal Experience Point gain for studying a text is also received.

#### FURTHERING THE CULTUS OF THE SAINT

Having a candidate approved by Rome as an official saint on the Church calendar is an example of furthering the saint's cultus. The process for this kind of action is discussed later in this book (Chapter 3: The Diocese, Petitioning the Church). Having the saint recognized by the Church as an official saint, having one of his works formerly deemed heretical now accepted as doctrinally sound, or having a church dedicated to that saint consecrated earns Devotion Points equal to the Petitioning Ease Factor.

#### WITNESSING A GENUINE MIRACLE OF THE SAINT

This can be a miracle that the character personally invoked, or one for which the character just happened to be present. The miracle is worth 5 to 10 Devotion Points, though if a miracle of the saint is used to thwart the character no benefit is gained, and he may well lose an equivalent number of Devotion Points. A 10-point gain should be restricted to cases where the character's life was saved by the intervention. If the miracle was invoked trivially and without real need, the saint may well be angered and no Devotion Points may be gained.

#### SPONSORING OR PARTICIPATING IN THE SAINT'S FEAST DAY PROCESSION

If participation in the procession is part of a story or somehow inconveniences the character, such as requiring a long journey, 1 Devotion Point is gained. If the saint is somehow honored through a story, more than is usual, the character gains 1 to 5



additional Devotion Points depending on the cost and effort involved. For example, if the Guild of Saint Bartholomew manages to get a position ahead of the Guild of Saint Peter in the Easter Day procession, or has by far the finest decorations, an additional Devotion Point is gained. Sponsoring a procession and feast (see *Lords of Men: Leisure*, page 46, for more on feasting) grants the character 1 to 5 additional Devotion Points, depending on the cost and effort that goes in to the sponsorship.

### PILGRIMAGE IN HONOR OF THE SAINT, AND ACQUIRING THE PILGRIMAGE BADGE

Pilgrimages are outlined in detail later in this chapter.

### EXPERIENCING A DREAM OR VISION FROM A SAINT

A character with Visions or Premonitions who, during a story, experiences a dream or vision from a saint to whom he is devoted gains 1 Devotion Point.

## False Devotion

Devotion can be directed at any saint popularly acclaimed as such, whether or not he is officially recognized and canonized by the Church. It is quite common for people to be devoted to saints not yet recognized by the Church because the process of canonization has not begun, or because they are only popularly venerated locally. Canonization is not a requirement for someone to be in heaven and able to intercede, after all. Such saints can still work miracles by their Powers.

It is unfortunately possible to be Devoted to, invoke, or just venerate someone who actually was a heretic, or aligned with a different realm — even the Infernal. However, this is not as dreadful a possibility as it first sounds. *Dulia* — proper respect granted to an entity, even a demon — is not worship, and neither is Devotion to a saint. The saint is merely asked to intercede on behalf of the character with God.

So if a faerie, magical entity, or demon was mistakenly venerated, it might still choose to employ its own Powers or not, but no heresy would occur. If *latría* — that is worship reserved for God alone — was to occur, the results would be more serious. Even if offered to a saint or the Blessed Virgin, this kind of worship is a terrible sin. If worship is offered to a demon or faerie, or a magical creature, the repercussions may well be dire.

## Becoming a Saint

One possibility is that a character might after death be accepted as a saint by the Church; and more importantly, be admitted to the assembly of saints by God, hence becoming a focus for Devotion. Such a character must have lived a life of exemplary piety, and died with a Personality Trait Pious of 6 or higher, with a sum of two secondary personality traits (that must both be on the list of traits associated with the Tempers) also not less than 6. The character must not have any personality traits associated with the sins, and must die absolved of sin, having been faithful to the Church and a regular participant at Mass. Those martyred for the faith are the primary candidates, as are holy virgins and those renowned for their charity and good works. Note that it is entirely possible for a person to be a true saint, capable of interceding, yet not be recognized as such yet by the earthly Church.

The formal process of canonization, where the Church recognizes the person's sainthood, requires that in life he must have been associated with at least two genuine and impressive miracles (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 60–61).

If these conditions are met, and the potential saint is widely venerated — with at least one major shrine and a few hundred adherents in his cultus, plus at least handful of people Devoted to him as a saint — he may at the troupe's discretion be accepted as a genuine minor saint, and designed with appropriate powers using the rules in

*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 89.

Official recognition by the Church requires an extensive process of petitioning and the full investigative process of canonization (see Chapter 3: Diocese) and may still prove extremely difficult to obtain. It is worth noting that such a saint will be required to use his Power to intercede on behalf of the faithful, in the meantime to prove his saintly status; but such powers might occur to non-player characters, leaving some doubt as to whether they are genuine miracles of the saint.

The decision as to whether to allow this option and the creating of a new cultus in your saga is a troupe one, and should be handled sensitively.

## Pilgrimages

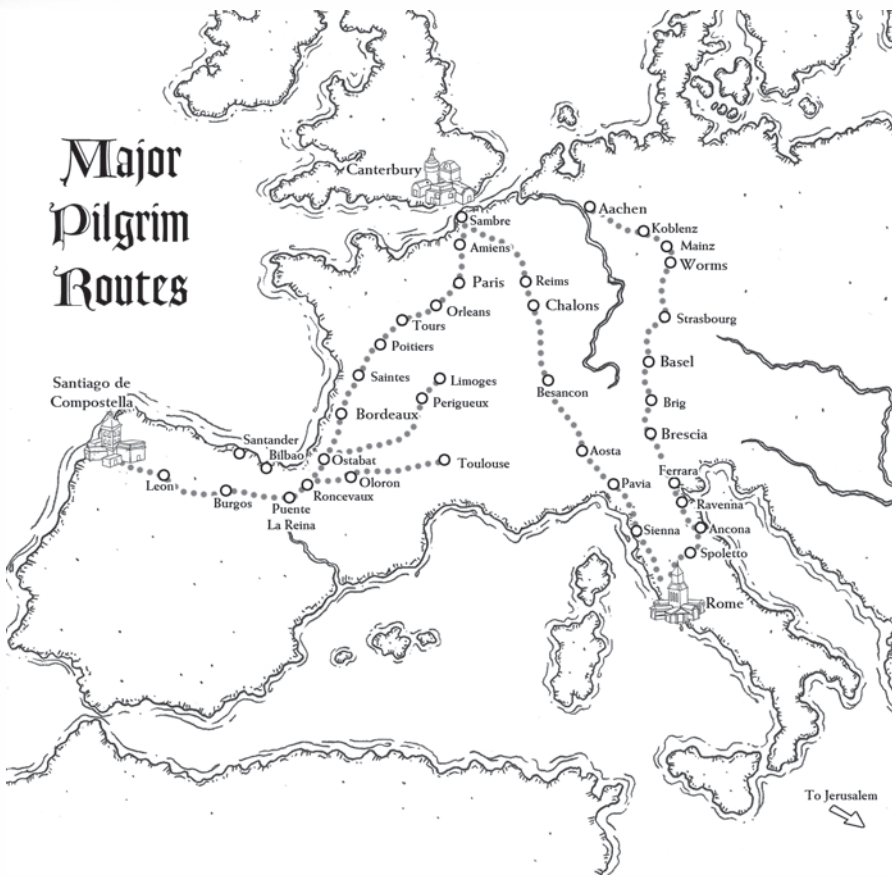
Pilgrimages form a very important part of lay spirituality in Mythic Europe. A pilgrim sets out on a journey to a distant destination to visit a holy site or shrine. On the road he faces many ordeals and problems, and on arriving he offers praise to God and requests certain blessings in return for his onerous display of piety in making the journey. A pilgrimage may not be sullied by other business, for the pilgrimage is its own goal and reward; pilgrimage stories must be about just that — the pilgrimage.

Pilgrims band together on the road, walking armed with little more than a stout pilgrim's staff. Many die of disease or accident, or never arrive at their destination for a host of other reasons; some pilgrims are even robbed, murdered, or sold in to slavery along the way. After all, pilgrims must carry sufficient wealth to reach their goal, or beg for alms on the way. That makes them a tempting target for any unscrupulous types, some of whom even join pilgrims on the road, then waylay and rob them in some lonely spot.

Robbers are not the only dangers faced, for demons also do what they can to prevent them achieving their pious goal. Temptation in the form of all kinds of pleasures, pains, and distractions will beset the pilgrims throughout their journey.

Local authorities sometimes make

## Major Pilgrim Routes



some effort to protect pilgrim routes with patrols, and these routes have hostleries where pilgrims are common guests. Monasteries and churches often provide hospitality, as well, and pious locals may well do all they can to assist, but pilgrimage remains a dangerous venture.

## The Mechanics of a Pilgrimage Story

The character must have a clear aim in undertaking the pilgrimage. There are two types of pilgrimage, major and minor. A minor pilgrimage is a single-session story that centers on events on the road or at the destination. A major pilgrimage (usually to the Holy Land or perhaps Rome or Santiago) takes multiple stories and more than one season to complete and return, and involves some significant risk to the characters. The desired outcome of the pilgrimage often determines whether a major or minor pilgrimage is required. Grogs may elect to fully participate in pilgrimages

(and can gain Major Virtues this way), or may just be along as useful servants.

Having established the aim of the pilgrimage, a Pilgrimage Target Level is determined, based upon the desired outcome.

**Target Level:** 18

**Outcome:** To gain a Minor Virtue, including Minor Supernatural Abilities associated with the Divine\*; To lose a Minor Flaw (or Virtue, if desired); To remove a negative Personality Trait; To meet a requirement of Penance (18 or 30 depending on the decree of the Ecclesiastical authorities)

**Target Level:** 30

**Outcome:** To gain a Major Virtue, including Major Supernatural Abilities or Methods and Powers Virtues associated with the Divine\*; To lose a Major Flaw (or Virtue, if desired); To ask for a miracle\*\*; To self-initiate in Holy Magic (requires True Faith); To meet a requirement of Penance (18 or 30 depending on the decree of the Ecclesiastical authorities)

\* A Supernatural Ability associated with the Divine gained in this manner is gained at a score of 1, and is not penalized by existing Supernatural Abilities or Arts as if it were a Magical Ability being learned by someone with The Gift.

\*\* A miracle should be adjudicated by a troupe decision, in line with the miracles described in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 60.

Once the Pilgrimage Target Level is known, the storyguide selects elements with certain Opposition Values, which feature in the story of the pilgrimage and are known as Oppositional Elements. Each of these Oppositional Elements must be overcome in order for the pilgrimage to be successfully completed, and the destination reached.

A minor pilgrimage is one that requires a Target Level of 18 and that occurs in a single season, requiring a story.

A major pilgrimage is one that requires a Target Level of 30 and that takes multiple seasons, and possibly multiple stories, to play out.

A character may attempt to lose a Story, General, Social Status, Supernatural, or Personality Flaw by a pilgrimage if the troupe agrees it is appropriate. This could include Infernal Flaws or Infernally aligned Supernatural Abilities if the character's story is one of repentance and contrition. General and Supernatural Virtues might be gained by pilgrimage, again if the troupe feels it is appropriate, but would usually be aligned with the Divine realm. Some Virtues and Flaws, such as Privileged Upbringing and Educated, for example, are background Virtues not suitable for learning from a pilgrimage, nor does pilgrimage grant or remove Hermetic Virtues and Flaws. Common sense and troupe discretion should apply to whether the aim of a pilgrimage is suitable.

## Oppositional Elements

The storyguide should design a story that includes elements each pilgrim must personally overcome to complete his pilgrimage. Failure to overcome any



element results in the failure of the pilgrimage's aim, even if the physical destination is reached. In a group consisting of several characters all attempting to complete a pilgrimage, all may reach the destination but only a few demonstrate the necessary spiritual perseverance to gain the benefits sought.

In designing the story, the storyguide should remember that a pilgrimage is an allegorical journey and a test of dedication set by the Divine as much as it is a physical journey, so the specifics of story Oppositional Elements should be tailored to the character's goals. If a character fails to overcome an Oppositional Element important to his personal goal because of another character taking action to resolve it first, then a similar Oppositional Element should arise later in the story. Of course, some Oppositional Elements involve the whole group of pilgrims, for example if a ship they travel in founders in a storm. They will all face the danger together, but only characters who participate in some manner to resolve the issue can claim to have succeeded in overcoming the Oppositional Element.

If, for example, the magus Janus simply flies the ship to shore by a mighty spell, and none of the other characters participate in any way, only Janus benefits. The others should have a later chance to defeat a similar peril, however, if their inaction was only caused by lack of opportunity to participate.

The Oppositional Elements for the pilgrimage should have total value at least equal to the Target Level of the Pilgrimage.

**TOTAL OF OPPOSITIONAL  
ELEMENTS VALUES =  
Pilgrimage Target Level**

Some Oppositional Elements will be shared by all the pilgrims in the group, while others will be personal to one character.

Examples are below:

**Value: +3**

**Oppositional Elements:** Per season spent on pilgrimage; Face natural hazards such as virulent disease (see *Art & Academe*, pages 45–51); Pilgrimage involves travel in a Christian land outside the character's current home-

land and native land\*; Per temptation faced of a sort to which the character is prone to succumb; Face another trial of faith and perseverance, as designed by the storyguide.

**Value: +6**

**Oppositional Elements:** Face dangerous mundane foes such as bandits or other robbers; Face dangerous mundane foes who are religious or political enemies; Face dangerous natural hazards such as storms, avalanches, or blizzards; Pilgrimage involves travel in non-Christian or heretic-controlled lands\*; Face another trial of faith and perseverance, as designed by the storyguide.

**Value: +9**

**Oppositional Elements:** Face a dangerous encounter with a supernatural entity on the road; Be involved in a shipwreck; Face distractions that make abandoning the pilgrimage a desirable option; Face another trial of faith and perseverance, as designed by the storyguide.

**Value: +12**

**Oppositional Elements:** Face demonic opposition from an Infernal entity that has decided to prevent the character from completing the pilgrimage, probably by deceit and manipulating others.





\* If both of these bonuses are applicable, only the higher applies, and they only apply once for the whole pilgrimage, not per season of travel.

In addition, it is important that the characters completely avoid mortal sin

on pilgrimage, and confess and receive absolution for venial sins on arrival at their destination.

The storyguide can prepare the story in advance, but must be willing to change it to reflect choices made by the players. If a character fails an Oppositional Element it

is worth mentioning this to the player, and allowing a later opportunity to remedy this by a different Oppositional Element later in the pilgrimage story. Pilgrimage stories should always be dramatic, and run a very real risk of character death or loss, but the rewards are commensurately great.

### An Example of a Pilgrimage Story

Boniface wants to gain the Minor Virtue Unaging. The troupe decides this Virtue does not really represent anything that is likely to be bestowed by God for a pilgrimage, so after some thought Luke, Boniface's player, decides he would like the Major Flaw Lycanthrope removed. This seems acceptable, and requires a Target Level of 30 — a major pilgrimage. Kevin's character, the faithful shield grog Siderius, travels with him, and decides to make the pilgrimage in the hope of gaining the Major Virtue Guardian Angel (while Siderius is currently a grog, Kevin intends to make him a companion through this story). His Pilgrimage Target Level is also 30.

Finally, they ask Lloyd's character, the much-traveled monk Chrétien the Roamer, to join them, as he has relevant Area Lore knowledge. Chrétien hopes to lose his Major Story Flaw of Difficult Underlings, as he rarely manages to persuade any of his hirelings to help him carry out his schemes.

The troupe having agreed that these seem acceptable aims, the pilgrimage is clearly a major one. As the characters are based in England, they decide to travel to the Holy Land by taking a ship to France, traveling south across the Alps to Italy, then taking another ship to Antioch and south to Jerusalem. The journey there and back will take a minimum of three seasons.

Andrew (the storyguide for this story) now calculates the Oppositional Elements. He knows the journey will take three seasons, so that is a value of +9. The fact the characters must travel through Muslim-controlled lands to Jerusalem gives them +6 more, for a Total Oppositional Elements Value of 15. 15 more points of Oppositional Elements

need to be allocated for each character to overcome before he can succeed in his pilgrimage.

That Boniface must somehow overcome his inner Lycanthrope seems thematically appropriate. Boniface has confided in Chrétien, and asked him to secure him on nights of the full moon, but there will be nine of them in the course of the journey. One night, perhaps while the characters are in Rome, Chrétien will face the chance to succumb to his vice of Laziness when a servant offers to bolt the door to Boniface's room for him. This is an Oppositional Element of +3 for Chrétien — it is the kind of thing he usually succumbs to, and if he does his failure serves to remind him that Difficult Underlings is something he is supposed to be overcoming, for the servant of course forgets. If Boniface escapes, and he probably will anyway if only because someone else opens the door, Chrétien and Siderius face a dangerous Supernatural Predator (the werewolf Boniface) for +9. Siderius is a True Friend to Boniface — who should have trusted him more rather than relying on Chrétien — and so by discovering the nature of the werewolf also faces a personal crisis (worth +3) that in a sense reflects the Guardian Angel motif of his story as he tries to save his friend.

In the morning, Boniface faces dangerous mundane foes — the town guard (+6) — when he comes round bloodied in an alleyway at dawn. After this matter is successfully resolved, and Boniface has sought atonement for his inadvertent sin, Chrétien and Siderius have faced 12 points of Oppositional Elements, and Boniface 6 points worth. Chrétien has only overcome 9 points, however. Several minor elements of the story now

happen, including some threatening hazards, before the characters face another Oppositional Element.

While crossing the Alps on a dangerous track alongside a precipitous drop, the weather turns foul and the characters are all in danger of falling off to their deaths. This is worth +6 points of Oppositional Elements for a dangerous natural hazard. While Chrétien hides in the cart, Boniface and Siderius manage to pull it to safety, using much cleverness to get across the track to safety in a pilgrims' hostel high in the mountains. Siderius and Boniface have now have faced 33 points of Oppositional Elements, including those for the journey itself, and on arriving in Jerusalem have successfully completed the pilgrimage. But Chrétien is still only at 9 points, far short of his needed Total Oppositional Elements Value, as he did not participate in the successful resolution of the danger.

Even worse befalls Chrétien, though, after arriving in an Italian port. On the morning of the ship's departure, Chrétien employs some porters to load his luggage. When it does not arrive, he sets off to find it suspecting he has been robbed (robbers are an Oppositional Element worth +6). He fails to discover his errant employees, and the ship departs without him. At this point, he meets a sea captain who explains he is sailing directly to England. Because he has taken a liking to Chrétien, the captain offers him free passage home (a +9 Oppositional Element, being a serious temptation to give up the pilgrimage). Chrétien chooses to give in to temptation rather than continue alone now all his money has been stolen, and he sets off on the ship deciding God has sent the captain his way as a sign ...



## Pilgrimage & Devotion

While on pilgrimage, characters take every opportunity to visit shrines and see the relics and sights of the places they pass through. This is an excellent opportunity to gain Devotion Points for characters who possess Devotions; even a minor pilgrimage specifically to the saint's shrine, tomb, place of martyrdom, or similar grants 10 Devotion Points, plus 5 per additional site visited that is relevant to that saint's life, and up to 5 more for witnessing relics. So visiting the tomb of Saint James of Compostela will gain the character 10 Devotion Points in Devotion: Saint James if they possess it, and an additional 5 for viewing the relics of the saint there.

## Pilgrimage Destinations

There are several well-established pilgrimage routes that cross Mythic Europe, and books, guides, and pilgrim hostels make these desirable routes for travelers on a pilgrimage. There are many variations on each route, however, and some pilgrims prefer to follow a path of their own choosing. Among the well-known pilgrimage routes is the *Via Francigena*, which runs from Canterbury in England through France, across the Alps near Aosta, and down through Parma to Tuscany before reaching Rome. Also well traveled is the *Via Carolingia*, which goes from Aachen in northwest Germany, through Strasbourg, Basle, Como, Mantua, Ravenna, and Assisi to Rome.

Most major pilgrimages are to the shrine of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela, to Rome, or to Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

## Taking the Cross

Crusades are still preached by the Church across Mythic Europe, and popular preachers still persuade many to "take

the cross" and receive a free indulgence of all outstanding penance, in exchange for promising to serve the armies of the faith. While historically crusades aimed at the recovery of Jerusalem from the infidel, other crusades are currently being preached, and characters may choose to commit to any of them.

In 1220, crusades preached include the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars of Southern France (until 1229), the Fifth Crusade that set off in 1217 and is currently at Damietta in Egypt (ends in 1221), the Northern Crusade against the Estonians (ends in 1228), and the ongoing campaigns against the Muslims of Iberia. Someone committing to a crusade needs to find financial support for his travel and upkeep. He receives a single temporary Faith Point for the commitment, and may at the troupe's discretion remove any Social Status Flaw as he becomes a crusader. Bandits, outlaws, and similar often find this a useful escape from their troubles.

## Christian Mysticism

There are those in Mythic Europe who dedicate their lives to the pursuit of the love of God — the mystics. Mystics do not have to be spooky introverts contemplating the dim recesses of the soul, reclusive hermits, or cloistered religious such as monks and nuns. Some mystics are ordinary laity who have achieved mystical states by dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to the quest, yet who still live within the world and are keen to share their insights with those around them.

While mystics are clearly valued by the Church, claims to direct spiritual revelation of the Divine can also be a source of error, and all too often heresy, as some mystics find themselves moved to critique the Church itself. The Church therefore regards mystics with suspicion, and sometimes attempts are made to persuade lay mystics to join a monastery or convent where they can be more carefully supervised, or to prevent them from teaching

and preaching their opinions. Conflict, while frequent, is not inevitable, and many mystics are deeply committed to the Church. But even Francis of Assisi faced difficulties before his Order was accepted (see Chapter 8: Franciscans).

All mystical understandings are personal and difficult for non-mystics to comprehend. The mystical experience itself is ineffable and noetic, an inner experience that can not readily be explained, but must be personally experienced. Mystics often have True Faith, though not necessarily. Many mystics also have access to Methods and Powers, though they are only sometimes members of a Holy Tradition (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*), as the mystical path is a personal process of development rather than a corporate belief structure. Some Holy Traditions include many mystics; yet not all mystics, or even the majority, are members of Holy Traditions.

Individual mystical paths are varied and personal, and there is no set order of experiences that will be encountered in the process. (Many of the classics of systematic mysticism that players may be familiar with, such as the works of Saint John of the Cross and Ignatius Loyola, are not to be written for centuries, if ever in Mythic Europe). Mysticism is in a sense an experimental practice, and the rules offered here reflect this. Furthermore, while Methods and Powers and other Supernatural Abilities associated with the Divine are often increased by the practice of mysticism, these are in fact side-effects of the path, not the primary goal. That lies outside of game mechanic concerns — union with, and love of, God.

While individual mystical paths in Mythic Europe vary widely, there are two major strands of mystical thought. The first we can call **contemplative mysticism**, for it deals with the mystic's personal relationship with and identification with Christ, and her realization of her frailty and weakness compared with the glory of the Godhead. The mystic passionately strives to imaginatively identify with Christ — perhaps meditating on the Passion, imagining herself as a witness at the foot of the Cross, and experiencing God's love directly and through the ministering of angels. Slowly, in a process

## Experiencing Divine Ascent

The rules for Divine Ascent are in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 63, but the sections relevant to monistic and contemplative mystics are briefly summarized here for convenience. When a character aligned to the Divine realm gains 2 or more (or 1 or more for monistics who have already experienced Divine Ascent) Warping Points from a single event, she experiences Divine Ascent, in much the same way Hermetic magi experience Wizard's Twilight. Add the Warping Points to the character's Warping Score, and then roll:

### DIVINE ASCENT:

**Presence + Concentration (or Meditation) + Stress die vs. Warping Score + Warping Points gained + True Faith Score local aura + stress die (no botch)**

If the character succeeds, she is tied to the mundane world to temporarily ascend to the Divine. If she fails, she experiences Divine Ascent, which takes the form of Divine Form for Contemplatives and Divine Gloom for Monistics (see later). She receives a number of additional Warping Points equal to the margin by which the test was failed.

called *theosis*, the emulation of the example of Christ allows the mystic to become more and more a participant in the Divine. Yet at all times while her soul yearns for union with God, the mystic accepts she is the lesser party, not identical with the Godhead, and that the road to God is mediated by the incarnation and sacrifice of God in Jesus Christ.

The dangers of extreme contemplative mysticism manifest if the mystic loses sight of the difference between herself and God, and believes she is not just approaching the Godhead, but is actually now in some sense God herself. By rejecting the notion that she is a sinner and a mortal creature, believing that by her acceptance of Divine grace she no longer can sin, she begins to believe anything she does is lawful. Such mystics, corrupted by the Infernal to the ultimate in false pride — misidentification of the self with the Divine — are extremely dangerous.

The second type of mysticism is often called **monistic mysticism**, in that central to the experience is the loss of a sense of self and a discovery of a feeling of the utter oneness of everything. Just as all creation emanates from the mind of God, so identification with the mind of God completely breaks down the apparent differences between objects and persons, as all are seen as just aspects of a greater Divine reality. This tradition can readily become *panentheistic* (that is, the belief that God permeates every aspect of Creation, from the lowliest

worm to every fiber of our bodies, identifying God with nature). The visionary experiences of the monistic tradition often refer to the light of the Divine in nature, seen as a glowing nimbus around and suffusing everything.

The danger for extreme mystics on this path can be to find God even in that blighted by the Infernal, and reject the notion of the fall and corruption of this broken world. Some monistic mystics entirely reject the division of the cosmos into the four realms, claiming Divine, Faerie, Infernal, and Magic are all aspects of the ultimate reality of God misperceived by humans, angels, and demons.

Mysticism is inherently dangerous, as personal spiritual insights outside of the authority of the Church can lead one to

## Personality Traits, Sins, and Tempers

Personality traits can be assigned to two categories, Sins and Tempers, to help understand a character's overall orientation. This table first appeared in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 40.

**Proud**, including Arrogant, Haughty, Rebellious, Suspicious, Vain, Hubris, and similar traits opposed to ...

**Loyal**, including Dedicated, Faithful, Humble, Reliable, Trusting and similar traits.

**Wrathful**, including Angry, Desperate, Spiteful, Vengeful, Violent and similar traits opposed to ...

**Calm**, including Cheerful, Hopeful, Optimistic, Patient, Peaceful and similar traits.

**Envious**, including Cruel, Gossipy, Gruff, Jealous, Meddlesome and similar traits opposed to ...

**Kind**, including Charitable, Compassionate, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful and similar traits.

**Slothful**, including Cowardly, Cynical, Indecisive, Lazy and Shy and similar traits opposed to ...

**Brave**, including Bold, Courageous, Determined, Ready, Zealous and similar traits.

**Lustful**, including Fanatical, Lecherous,

Naive, Overconfident, Reckless and similar traits opposed to ...

**Strong**, including Healthy, Pious, Selfless, Temperate, Vigilant and similar traits.

**Greedy**, including Gluttonous, Indulgent, Selfish, Sickly, Weak and similar traits opposed to ...

**Wise**, including Careful, Cautious, Chaste, Practical, Prudent and similar traits.

**Avaricious**, including Ambitious, Corrupt, Cunning, Deceitful, Devious and Manipulative and similar traits opposed to ...

**Just** including Even-handed, Fair, Honest, Honorable, Straightforward and similar traits.

To indicate which temper or sin a trait is associated with, you can simply note it afterward (e.g. Dedicated +3 (Loyal) or Cruel +3 (Envious)). When dealing with opposing tempers or sins, treat the trait's value as negative. For example, Dedicated +3 (Loyal) means a character is Proud -3, and Cruel +3 (Envious) is the same as Kind -3. Not all personality traits have to fit into this model. It is perfectly possible to have morally neutral traits, like Whimsical +3, or Scruffy +1.



radically false (in the eyes of the Church) conclusions, and indeed can cause one to reject all spiritual authority in favor of personal experience. Such individuals can become overwhelmingly egotistical, but also intensely charismatic, and often form heretical groups that are unable to understand the errors in their thinking and lead others into further error and heresy. Such cults can be extremely dangerous, and soon attract demonic support and encouragement if the leader gives in to pride, refusing every chance to repent and be brought back under legitimate spiritual authority.

The two paths involve totally different ways of understanding, and are usually mutually incompatible. Contemplative mysticism refines the self in the imitation of Christ, while monistic mysticism negates it in the experience of ultimate oneness; perhaps only Saint Francis of Assisi reconciles the paradox and embraces both.

Both forms of mysticism require the character to be aligned with the Divine realm. Any Warping experience she undergoes will take the form of Divine Ascent, but the results will be Divine Gloom (for Monistics) or Divine Form (for Contemplatives), both of which are explained in the relevant section, later.

## Contemplative Mysticism

Pursuing contemplative-style mysticism involves an intense form of personal imaginative meditation on the life and sufferings of Christ; regular, often daily, attendance at Mass (and especially participation in the communion); and genuine personal repentance and abhorrence of sin. The aim is to lead an exemplary, Christ-like life, and to mold the rough clay of the personality in imitation of him.

Mystics on this path seek to mirror God's love, and in the process may gain new Virtues and Flaws, or learn Supernatural Abilities. The mystic character is not concerned with these side effects of her pursuit of personal holiness, but from a player's perspective they are very important, so mechanics are described here for the process.

At the root of the contemplative path

### Divine Warping and the Contemplative Mystic

Characters engaged on the path of contemplative mysticism always experience Divine Form as their Divine Ascent Warping experience.

If a character who is engaged in contemplative mysticism suffers a Warping event and gains 2 or more Warping Points, regardless of the cause she enters an ecstatic condition called Divine Ascent. If the roll to avoid Ascending fails, she immediately undergoes the dramatic changes of Divine Form, as *theosis* overcomes her and she comes to embody more of the purity and light of the Divine.

The full rules for Divine Form can be found in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 64, but are summarized here for convenience.

Once a Divine Form Warping experience occurs, several changes follow:

- The character's Warping Score is now always added to Magic Resistance granted by True Faith if the character possesses that Virtue.
- The character gains a bonus to physical Soak totals equal to the Magic Resistance Total divided by 5, or Warping divided by 5 if the character does not have Magic Resistance granted by the Virtue: True Faith.
- The character gains a Penetration Bonus equal to her Warping Score, with an additional bonus equal to her (True Faith Score multiplied by 5).
- God's holiness will not be profaned, and those who do so are punished. The die roll for any impious (as decided by the troupe) action on the part of the character must use a stress die with a number of additional botch dice equal to the character's (Warping Score multiplied by 3). Abilities or Powers that reduce the number of botch dice are applied before any botch dice gained from Divine Form.
- If the character commits a venial sin she automatically suffers a Light wound, while a mortal sin immediately inflicts a Medium wound. These wounds cannot be Soaked and must be healed naturally; no other power — Magic, Faerie, or Infernal — may repair them.
- The character also becomes intensely charismatic, developing a Commanding Aura. This is equivalent to a Penetration 0, Range: Voice *Aura of Rightful Authority*, and is continuously active.

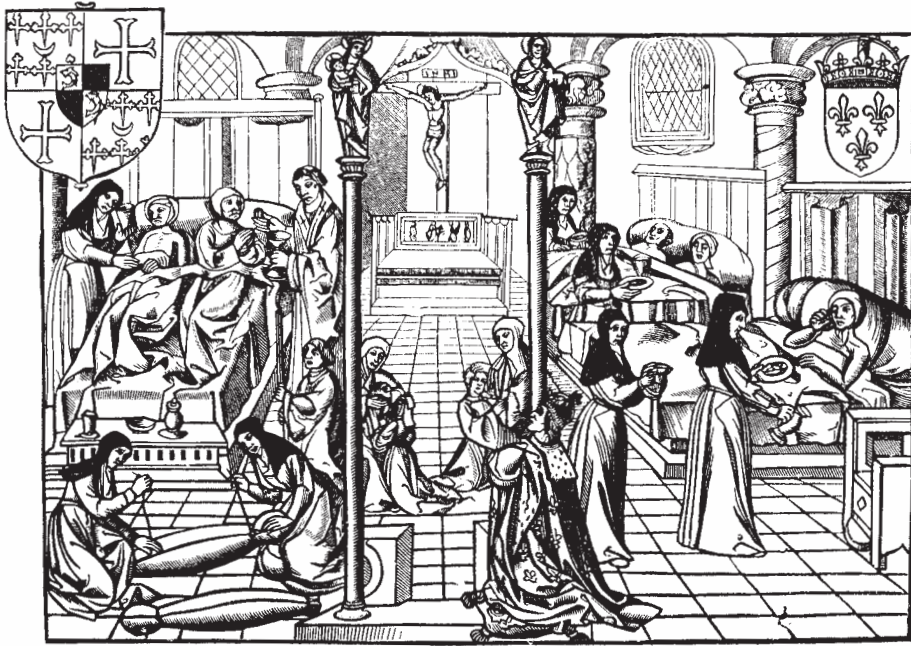
is the quest for personal holiness, and the mystic must possess a positive Pious Personality Trait score. The character must not have any of the Sinful Personality Traits described in *Realms of Power: The Divine* page 40, but you should remember that Personality Traits can be changed freely by the player to represent changes in her character between stories (*ArM5*, page 18).

The character must also be associated with the Divine realm. Association with the Divine realm can come from several sources: True Faith, possession of any Divine-associated Supernatural Ability, or even the possession of Warping Points from a Divine source. It would be expected that a character pursuing contemplative mysticism would develop Personality Traits in line with the ones associated with

the Virtuous Tempers, and would strive to act in an appropriate manner, given that imitation of Christ central to the path. Of course, being mortal and sinners, such behavior will not be constant and unchanging; the character still sins, and needs to repent through the Sacraments (see Chapter 3: Diocese).

### SPIRITUAL PATHS AND REVELATIONS

Contemplative mysticism involves a wholehearted devotion to a way of life that expresses Christian love and charity, maintaining hope and strengthening the faith of others. It is not just part of a character's life, but the major focus of such, and should be reflected in almost every action



the character takes.

The character performs actions called a Spiritual Path to learn new Revelations. Virtues, Methods, Powers, and Supernatural Abilities associated with the Divine are usually appropriate Revelations to pursue, but other possibilities exist; the troupe should decide if the goal makes sense in the context of the character's spiritual development.

To develop a new Spiritual Path, decide what form the resulting Revelation will take. The required Path Total to gain the Revelation is as follows:

**Path Total:** 15

**Revelation:** To discover a path to a Minor Holy Method, Power or Supernatural Ability.

**Path Total:** 18

**Revelation:** To discover a path to a Minor Virtue, other than the above.

**Path Total:** 27

**Revelation:** To discover a path to a Major Holy Method, Power or Supernatural Ability.

**Path Total:** 30

**Revelation:** To discover a path to a Major Virtue, other than the above.

Subtract the character's current score in the Personality Trait Pious from the Path Total to calculate the Path Target.

$$\text{PATH TARGET} = \text{Path Total} - \text{score in Personality Trait Pious}$$

A Supernatural Ability associated with the Divine gained in this manner is gained at a score of 1, and is not penalized by existing Supernatural Abilities or Arts. Perhaps surprisingly, the Virtue True Faith can never be gained by a Spiritual Path.

Developing the Spiritual Path requires a series of Quest Components with a total value at least equal to the Path Total for the desired Revelation.

$$\text{TOTAL QUEST COMPONENT VALUES} = \text{Path Total}$$

Example Quest Components include, but are not limited to:

**Value:** +1

**Quest Components:** The mystic sacrifices a Season serving the poor or the Church in some capacity, such as by tending the sick;  
; The mystic spends a season in personal devotion, gaining one Devotion Point towards a saint or the Virgin, but no

experience points except exposure in Dominion Lore.

**Value:** +3

**Quest Components:** The character dedicates at least one Season to preaching and spreading the Gospel (one bonus only).

**Value:** +6

**Quest Components:** The mystic undertakes a minor pilgrimage to an appropriate shrine or holy site, requiring a story, and gains no other benefit from the pilgrimage (see Pilgrimages, earlier);

The mystic undertakes a Vow, resulting in a new Minor Flaw Vow;

The mystic completes a specified Quest that requires a story, often involving defeating a dangerous supernatural adversary, protecting innocents, or healing the sick.

**Value:** +9

**Quest Components:** The character spends a season risking her life preaching to heretics, pagans, or infidels, running the risk of martyrdom and requiring a story;  
The character reveals serious error, heresy, or corruption in the local church and gets the Ecclesiastical authorities to act to resolve it, requiring a story;

The mystic sacrifices personal wealth or items of value, distributing their value as alms to the poor (the character either loses the Wealthy Virtue, or if she does not possess that Virtue, gains the Poor Flaw to represent her new-found holy poverty);

The character takes the cross and participates for at least a year in a Church-sanctioned Crusade, not necessarily in a fighting capacity, but risking her life in the process.

Having devised a Spiritual Path to the required Revelation, the character pursues the Path by completing enough Quest Components to equal or exceed the Path Total required. Success in this process grants the Revelation to the contemplative mystic.



## Monistic Mysticism

The monistic mystic perceives the whole of nature as suffused with the Divine, from the mystic themselves to every drop of rain, every tiny flower, every mighty mountain. This radical process of identification with the Godhead is a feature of some strands of Christian mysticism, where rather than defining and rarefying the self as in contemplative mysticism, the individual mystic seeks to lose the self in the eternal and endless reality of the Divine. Monism is at heart the sense that "all is ultimately One," and that One is God.

Gaining Methods, Powers, and Supernatural Abilities are at best side effects of the actual mystical tradition. Monistic mysticism is based around the development of Concentration as a way to focus intensely, and requires the mystic to possess either the Flaw Visions or the Major Virtue True Faith. If a character decides to follow this path, she must also possess a positive Pious Personality trait, and will be subject to unusual spiritual experiences that come unbidden. Strangely, many mystics of this sort appear to possess The Gift, for reasons not fully understood. The character must also be associated with the Divine realm, for example by having at least one Supernatural Ability associated with that realm. The path is usually entered following a Warping experience from a source associated with the Divine realm.

The character now suffers from a similar effect to that of the Hermetic Flaw Twilight Prone — she must test for Divine Ascent when only a single Warping Point from any source is gained. Given the dramatic effects of the Divine Gloom Warping experience on the mystic, this can rapidly result in a very otherworldly and yet spiritually potent character. Such characters learn not by pursuing Spiritual Paths as with Contemplatives, but from their Warping experiences.

### ADVANTAGES OF PURSUING MONISTIC MYSTICISM

The risks of monistic mysticism are extreme, but there are benefits as well. Firstly, the character, when practicing a Holy

## Divine Warping and the Monistic Mystic

Characters engaged on the path of monistic mysticism always experience Divine Gloom as their Divine Ascent Warping experience.

If a character who is engaged in monistic mysticism suffers a Divine Ascent event and fails the roll to avoid Ascent, she immediately undergoes Divine Gloom. She slowly loses her knowledge and understanding of the mundane, but excels in her comprehension of all things Divine.

The full rules for Divine Gloom can be found in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 63, but are summarized here for convenience.

Once a Divine Gloom Warping experience occurs, several changes follow:

- Each time the character gains Warping Points from any source, she gains the same number of experience points to divide between Dominion Lore and any Holy Power, Method, or Holy Supernatural Abilities she possesses.
- The Divine Gloom also results in

the loss of the character's mundane knowledge. The character must lose the same number of experience points from Abilities with a mundane focus, of the player's choosing, as she gained for Dominion Lore et. al. This process, however, may never reduce the Concentration Ability.

- Monistic mystics are not affected by Celestial Disorientation (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 14) as easily as other characters. They may add their Personality Trait Pious as an additional bonus to any Overcome Celestial Disorientation test they are required to make.
- The character is now a beacon to all manner of beings from the supernatural world: angels, demons, elementals, and faeries. To these beings the holy character shines like a torch in the night, and draws them like bees to nectar. Their reaction to the character depends on the circumstances, the character, and the being in question's nature.

## Improving True Faith

Gaining or raising a score in True Faith always requires a particularly arduous search for spiritual insights. It may be a result of a major pilgrimage, or it may arise from many other situations, but the gaining of the Virtue True Faith is always the result of a story and a troupe decision that it is appropriate to the character, not just a game mechanic. It may well occur in the context of a pilgrimage or as a result of an encounter with an angel, but True Faith reflects how the character is played and dramatic changes in her life.

Raising True Faith also has profound effects upon the mystic.

At True Faith 2 the character gains the Premonitions Virtue, and may dis-

pel any supernatural (Magical and Infernal) illusion or Faerie glamour, no matter what its level, by spending a Faith Point.

At True Faith 3, the character gains double Magic Resistance against Mentem spells and similar supernatural powers, and adds +6 instead of +3 to a die roll for each Faith Point spent.

At True Faith 5, the character radiates an Empyrean Aura (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 12) to Voice range, and may Temper the Aura. It interacts with other auras according to the normal rules for Aura interaction.

Full details and much on playing characters with True Faith can be found in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 56–63.

Ability — including Methods, Powers, and Supernatural Abilities — gains experience points equal to her Concentration Ability

score rather than 4 experience points, the usual amount granted by a season's practice. So a character with Concentration 8

who spends a season practicing the Supernatural Ability Sense Holy/Unholy would gain 8 experience points, not the usual 4.

On experiencing Divine Ascent, the character may attempt to understand the experience and integrate a Revelation in a manner similar to the way Hermetic magi attempt to understand Wizard's Twilight.

### MONISTIC REVELATION INTEGRATION:

**Intelligence + Concentration**  
+ stress die vs. **Warping Score**  
+ stress die (no botch)

If the test is failed, Divine Gloom occurs as normal. If the roll succeeds, the character still experiences Divine Gloom but the player may also select one of the following:

- She may choose not to lose experience from mundane Abilities, though the character still gains the Warping Points and the experience points in her Holy Abilities; OR,
- The character may take a new appropriate Minor Virtue if 3 or more Warping Points were gained, or Major Virtue if 5 or more Warping Points were gained — one that reflects the nature of the Revelation. The first Revelation gained is always the Virtue Second Sight; OR,
- If the character gains 7 or more Warping Points from the experience, and succeeds in the Spiritual Integration test, this option may be selected. The character may choose either the Magic

or Faerie Realm, and may subsequently substitute her Dominion Lore Ability for that (Realm) Lore Ability in any total or test. She has come to recognize the Divine within that Realm. She may choose this option again on another occasion, so that she becomes able to substitute Dominion Lore for both Faerie Lore and Magic Lore; OR,

- Finally, having integrated both the the Magic and Faerie Realms into her cosmological understanding, the character may choose to do the same with the Infernal, seeing the Infernal as simply an agent of the Divine that is subservient to the Divine Will.

## Life as a Hermit

A hermit is someone who chooses to renounce the world, and live alone observing the liturgical hours as a monk would. Some are mystics, most are not. The tradition is in decline, and many hermits now choose to join monasteries, or are at least associated with a monastery; but hermits remain a common feature of the landscape of Mythic Europe. A hermit need not settle down in one place, for some are wanderers who travel begging for alms or doing casual work such as repairing roads

and bridges, and hermits are not necessarily completely reclusive. Many hermits attend the local church, for example.

What marks a hermit is his choice to live alone, adopt celibacy, and keep the liturgical hours outside of any formal monastic context. Hermits as an unregulated and unsupervised spiritual force are potentially dangerous, especially when they decide to engage in preaching, and sometimes lead others into error through their own ignorance. Popularly believed to be especially holy and even capable of working miracles, people seek out hermits to gain knowledge, miraculous cures, or spiritual edification. It can actually be fashionable to ask advice from some hermits, and these unfortunates are constantly pestered by visitors seeking assistance.

The most extreme hermits are the anchorites, who are sealed alone into a small cell called an anchorhold that is built against the outside wall of a church. The entrance to the cell is bricked up, and food and waste is passed through a small window facing away from the church, through which visitors can also receive spiritual counsel of the hermit. A second window on the wall shared by the church allows the anchorite to hear Mass and receive communion.

There is also an obvious connection between hermits and the Beguines, their male equivalents Beghards, and holy widows (see Chapter 5: Women).



## Chapter Three

# The Diocese

Mythic Europe is a patchwork of dioceses: the Ecclesiastical territories of the bishops of the Church. This chapter describes the roles of the clergy, from parish church to papal court.

The head of the Church is the pope — the bishop of the diocese of Rome — and beneath him are the other bishops of Mythic Europe. Their dioceses are grouped into provinces, under the jurisdiction of an archbishop. Each diocese is split into archdeaconries, and further subdivided into deaneries. Finally, beneath the deaneries are the individual parishes, where each priest conducts Mass for his congregation.

There are about 800 dioceses in Mythic Europe. In Italy there are almost 200 dioceses, many barely bigger than a parish would be in other parts of Mythic Europe. In England there are 21 dioceses, around 30 in Germany, 79 in France, and 13 in Scandinavia.

## Clergy Characters

Virtually every Hermetic covenant is located in a parish, which is part of a diocese. This is a fact that magi cannot avoid. Even a covenant located within a regio must have an entrance that lies within a parish. Every covenant must thus sometimes interact with the local clergy.

To help decide the saga role of the local clergy, the troupe should describe some local churches using the Hooks and Boons system given later in this chapter, and create characters for a few of the priests,

whether they're player characters or non-player characters. This process (particularly selecting each church's Hooks and Boons) should suggest stories where the covenant may interact with the Church.

## Virtues and Flaws

Some important Virtues and Flaws for clergy characters are listed below. You should only take one of the Senior Clergy, Priest, or Clerk Social Statuses for your character.

## SENIOR CLERGY

### *Major Virtue, Social Status*

The character is an archbishop, bishop, abbot, abbess, or another senior member of the Church. He has access to the resources of the Church and may have additional duties and powers according to his office.

You may make take either the Wealthy or Poor Virtue/Flaw for the character. This does *not* necessarily represent the status of the character's diocese, instead it represents the personal wealth of the character. Senior clergy can amass



## Clergy as Player Characters

Clergy characters are created, following the standard rules in *ArM5* Chapter 3, as either grogs or companions:

- Magi or covenfolk could have relatives who are clergy.
- The clergy of the nearby parishes could be player characters.
- The covenant may hold benefices. The curates it employs could form a network of agents spread throughout the diocese or Tribunal.
- A priest (with a license of absence) could live in a covenant as a companion character. He may be a com-

panion of a magus who fights the Infernal, for example.

- Clergyman scribes and notaries could be recruited to work at the covenant.
- The covenant may have a chapel where magi and covenfolk to worship; the chaplain could be a companion character.
- The covenant could be built within a monastery or church (possibly within a regio located there). Many of the covenant's grogs and companions could be clergymen or other religious.

wealth by receiving the benefice of several offices. Indeed, it is not unusual for a character to receive the benefice from various parishes scattered throughout Mythic Europe. He may never even visit some of the dioceses in which his parishes are located, although obviously the character needs to employ a curate to discharge the actual priestly duties in these remote parishes.

The character has a Reputation of level 4, either good or bad, in both the local community and the Church.

You may purchase Academic Abilities for the character during character generation.

Senior clergy are subject to canon law, and must be celibate and tonsured (if male). Note whether the character has been ordained as a deacon, priest, bishop, etc.

This replaces the version of this Social Status that was printed in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 93.

### PRIEST

*Minor Virtue, Social Status*

The character has been ordained as a priest of the Church; he can conduct Mass, and is subject to canon law. Priest is a major order and the character must be male, tonsured, and celibate. See *ArM5* page 47 for details, however, the character need not take the Minor Personality Flaw Vow as stated there (see Vows, later).

You may take the Wealthy Virtue or Poor Flaw for the character. A Wealthy priest is probably wealthy because he is a pluralist (see The Benefice, later). A Poor priest probably works as a curate or chaplain.

### CLERK

*Minor Virtue, Social Status*

The character has been ordained as a member of the clergy. Note whether your character is in major or minor orders. Characters in major orders must be celibate. See *ArM5*, page 40, for details.

You may take Academic Abilities for the character during character generation.

### RELIGIOUS

*Minor Virtue, Social Status*

The character is a monk, a nun, a beguine, an anchoress or anchorite, a holy hermit, or similar. You may take Academic Abilities for the character during character generation. The Wealthy Virtue and Poor Flaw are unlikely to be appropriate.

Note that for a friar character you should take the Mendicant Friar Virtue instead (see *ArM5*, page 46). Monks ordained as priests should instead take the Priest Social Status. Senior monks and nuns should instead have the Senior Clergy Social Status.

### LICENSE OF ABSENCE

*Major Virtue, General*

This priest character has a license of absence that relieves him from some duties. The license might be valid for only a few years or it could be valid indefinitely. The character has an extra free season each year, but sometimes it is expected that the extra season is used for study. This Virtue is compatible with the Wealthy Virtue and Poor Flaw. A Wealthy priest with a license of absence thus has the whole year free; a character can never have more than four free seasons in a year. A license of absence may only be taken by a character with the Priest Social Status. It may not be taken by Senior Clergy.

### COMMANDING AURA

*Free Virtue, Supernatural*

This supernatural power is granted to characters by either the pope, or the Divine directly. It is an inherent benefit of Church office.

The character has a power equivalent to the Hermetic spell *Aura of Rightful Authority* (see *ArM5*, page 151), but with Voice Range; this power has no cost, and no penetration. The character also has a Magic Resistance and a Soak bonus that depend upon his rank in the Church. If the character carries a relic, this Magic Resistance is *added* to that of the relic.

**Pope:** Magic Resistance 25, Soak bonus +5.

**Cardinal, or legatus a latere:** Magic Resistance 20, Soak Bonus +4.

**Legatus missus:** Magic Resistance 15, Soak Bonus +3.

**Archbishop:** Magic Resistance 10, Soak Bonus +2.

Papal legates are the representatives of the pope (see Papal Legates, later in this chapter). If the legatus missus — a lower grade with limited powers — delays or deviates from his mission, then his Commanding Aura ceases to work until he completes penance. The Commanding Aura is also lost when a legatus missus completes his mission.

Some lay rulers ordained by the pope (mostly kings and emperors) also have a



Commanding Aura. See *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 42.

## DARK SECRET

### *Major Flaw, Story*

This Flaw (see *ArM5*, page 52) is appropriate for a clergyman who secretly violates canon law. If his secret is discovered he can be fined, removed from office, or excommunicated. Some examples of secrets include:

**False Presbyter:** This character works as a parish priest despite not being ordained as one. The parishioners may not know (or realize the significance) of their "priest's" lack of qualifications. The character must have the Priest Social Status, too.

**Heretic:** The character is a heretic. If a priest, then he must be careful that his beliefs are not discovered when his parish is visited. If he is a bishop, and does not repent if discovered, then the pope will excommunicate him and replace him with someone else.

**Secret Wife/Husband:** Despite taking a vow of celibacy, the character has a secret wife, husband, or concubine. The wife of rural priest may live with him as a "housekeeper." The wife of a monk or canon probably lives in a nearby town or village.

**Simony:** The character has bought or sold spiritual things, such as the administering of the Sacraments or an appointment to a holy office. Note which of the character's Virtues represents this thing; for example, a benefice (Wealthy), an ordination (Priest), or a relic (Relic). If the character's secret is discovered he will lose the Virtue.

## REGULAR

### *Minor Flaw, General*

The character lives according to a strict religious rule, which leaves little time for other activities. The character must spend one of his free seasons on the seasonal activity of worship (see later in this chapter). This is particularly suitable for monk and canon characters, but

it is not compulsory. The Regular Flaw is compatible with Wealthy/Poor, but a Poor Regular character effectively has no free seasons and may be unsuitable as a player character. Magi can be Regular.

## VOWS

The Major Story Flaw Monastic Vows (see *ArM5*, page 56) can be assigned to a character who has taken monastic or similar vows, as many members of the Church have. Of course, as this is a Major Story Flaw it may not be taken by grog characters, and it prevents other characters from having another Story Flaw. Obviously, this is an impediment to making grog characters and an interesting variety of other characters belonging to the Church. Thus, you should only take the Major Story Flaw Monastic Vows for a character if the troupe wishes to tell stories about his vows; perhaps stories about the moral dilemmas he faces, for example. If the troupe doesn't want to tell stories driven by the character's vows, then do not take the Monastic Vows Story Flaw. Take a Story Flaw that does represent the stories you wish to tell, instead.

Nonetheless, practically every Church character has taken some kind of vow. So, if you want a character deeply affected by religious vows (without committing the troupe to a Story Flaw), then assign him an appropriate Personality Flaw (Chaste, Dutybound, Higher Purpose, Obsessed, or Vow) or the Flaw Regular. Alternatively, if the character has difficulty following his vows, you might like to assign a Flaw that is the opposite of one of his vows. For example, the Personality Flaws Avaricious, Lecherous, or Proud could indicate problems with vows of poverty, chastity, or obedience, respectively.

Finally, it might be that your character has taken vows (and from time to time the character's vows may be an issue) but, in general, the troupe is not really interested in the effect vows have on him from either a story or personality perspective. In this case, just note that the character has taken vows, but do not assign a Virtue or Flaw to represent them.

## Faith Points

Faith Points may be spent like Confidence Points to gain a +3 bonus to a roll, and usually a character may only spend 1 Faith Point on each roll. Rare characters have the Virtue True Faith, which increases this limit and gives additional uses for Faith Points (see *ArM5* page 189, and *Realms of Power: The Divine* pages 56–60). Unless a character has True Faith, Faith Points do not automatically regenerate when spent, they must be earned.

## New Seasonal Activities

These seasonal activities may be performed by Church characters and others.

### WORSHIP

Worship is a seasonal activity (conducted during a *free* season) and is available to any Christian character with access to a chapel or church. This is different than the normal worship of God performed by virtually everyone in Mythic Europe (attending Mass, religious festivals, etc). This special sort of worship involves a demanding daily routine that includes fasting, prayer, and meditation.

Worship has a Source Quality equal to the Divine Aura in the church.

Experience Points from worship may normally be spent on Church Lore, Concentration, Music, or any Supernatural Ability or Art aligned to the Divine that the character *already* has a Score in. Note that most Supernatural Abilities and the Hermetic Arts are *not* Divine aligned.

### GOOD WORKS

This seasonal activity is available to any Christian character. He spends the season performing worthy deeds. For clergy, this can be a non-free season.

Good works often involves working in the community giving alms to the poor or sick, but building a chapel or similar could count, too. Good works has a Source

## Recommended and Required Virtues, Flaws, and Abilities

### THE POPE, CARDINALS, & ARCHBISHOPS

Required Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy; Commanding Aura, Temporal Influence.

Recommended Virtues and Flaws: Monastic Vows; Vow.

Recommended Minimum Ability Scores: Artes Liberales 1, Church Lore 5, Civil and Canon Law 5, Dead Language: Latin 5, Theology 3.

### BISHOPS, ABBOTS, ARCHDEACONS, DEANS, & SENIOR CURIA OFFICIALS

Required Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy.

Recommended Virtues and Flaws: Monastic Vows; Regular (for abbots),

Temporal Influence, Vow.

Recommended Minimum Ability Scores: Artes Liberales 1, Church Lore 3, Civil and Canon Law 3, Dead Language: Latin 5, Theology 1.

### CLERGY

Required Virtues and Flaws: Priest or Clerk.

Recommended Virtues and Flaws: Monastic Vows; Regular (especially for canons and monks), Vow.

Recommended Minimum Ability Scores: Artes Liberales 1\*, Church Lore 3, Civil and Canon Law 3, Dead Language: Latin 5\*, Theology 1.

\* There is no requirement for clergy to be literate, but many are.

## Story Seed: The Magus Bishop

A magus at the covenant, who has good relations with the cathedral canons, is elected bishop. If he accepts the office he will inevitably have to defend himself from charges of interference with the mundane. On the other hand,

his canon friends may be offended if he refuses, and if he is careful he could use the bishopric to ensure smooth relations between the Order and the Church within his diocese.

Quality of 2 in an appropriate Ability, and the character also gains 1 Faith Point.

### CARE OF SOULS

This seasonal activity can be undertaken by an ordained priest who leads a congregation. He spends the season, which can be one of his non-free seasons, preaching to his congregation. For the following year *willing* members of the congregation receive a +1 bonus to activities aligned with the theme of the priest's sermons, although a character may only benefit from one such bonus at a time. The themes may be Loyalty, Calmness, Kindness, Bravery, Wisdom, Strength, or Justice.

Care of souls has a Source Quality of 2 for the priest, in Leadership, Area Lore, or Church Lore.

Care of souls is similar to Tempering an Aura (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 38) and the troupe may use those rules instead.

## The Bishop

The bishop is the elected head of the diocese, and is the chief priest, judge, and ruler of his people. The bishop's election is confirmed, and he is ordained, by either his archbishop or the pope. The symbols

of the bishop's office are a ring and crosier (a staff topped by either a hook or cross). Creating, dividing, or suppressing a diocese is the sole right of the pope.

## The Cathedral Chapter

The cathedral chapter is a legal corporation made up of the canons of the cathedral (see Chapters of Canons, later), and it is very influential in the governance of the diocese. Characters who wish to petition the bishop will often need to negotiate with the cathedral canons — the clergy who serve the cathedral.

## Election of the Bishop

The bishop is elected by a simple majority, in a secret ballot, of the cathedral canons. A new bishop must be elected within three months of his predecessor's death, and it is not possible for a canon to cast a vote by proxy. Although a canon is often elected, candidates do not need to be a member of the diocese, and the pope sometimes proposes a candidate for an important see — the office of a bishop. The candidate does not even need to be an ordained member of the clergy; he will be ordained as required upon his election.

The Third Lateran Council (1179) decreed that a candidate for bishop must be aged at least thirty, have been born in lawful wedlock, and be worthy as evidenced by his life and learning. In game mechanics, this means that a character must be literate in Latin and must usually have a positive reputation within the Church. An illiterate bastard with a negative reputation can still be elected bishop, but this gives grounds for an election to be challenged.

Elections can be challenged by appealing to the pope (see *Petitioning the Church*, later). Apart from the candidate's poor education, birth, or reputation, other grounds for appeal include absence of some electors, people voting who were not entitled to, an election too soon or too long after the death of the previous



## The Pope

bishop, or candidates who had committed simony. It may take several years for appeals to be worked through, and if the election is overturned the pope appoints a new bishop, who need not be one of the original candidates.

In the past there has been considerable conflict over the appointment of bishops by lay lords, powerful nobles (for example, the Holy Roman Emperor) may still attempt to appoint bishops. Such appointments are typically overturned by the papacy.

### In Partibus Infidelium

If a diocese is overrun by infidel forces, a bishop is still appointed by the pope. A bishop whose diocese is in *partibus infidelium* has the same powers as a normal bishop, but lives outside his diocese. Which functions of the diocese are able to continue in this state obviously depends upon the attitude of the new infidel rulers.

If, in your saga, a diocese is lost to some supernatural catastrophe, a pagan revival, or a Muslim or Mongol invasion, then the papacy may declare the diocese to be in *partibus infidelium*.

### Bishops as Feudal Lords

In many German and Spanish dioceses, and a few in France and England, the bishop is also a baron. Controversy is common during the election of such bishops; the bishop is also a member of a feudal court, and he must choose sides in disputes between his lord and the pope. Jurisdiction in a bishop-baron's diocese, and its neighbors, is complex, especially as the borders of the barony and diocese may not quite coincide. A bishop-baron often has vassal knights, and just like any other feudal lord he could be embroiled in warfare, which is against canon law. Typically, a bishop-baron has the service of about 50 vassal knights, but he could have as many as 300. See *Lords of Men*, pages 30–36, for details on vassal knights.

The pope is the head of the Church and the bishop of the diocese of Rome. He is elected by a two-thirds majority of the cardinals, who usually elect a fellow cardinal.

The current pope is a Roman who was born as Cencio Savelli. He is an old man (born in the 1140s) who served the Church as canon, camerlengo, chancellor, cardinal-deacon, and cardinal-priest. He was also the tutor of the current Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Savelli was elected pope in 1216, taking the name Honorius III.

Like his predecessor, Innocent III, Honorius III is determined to reform the Church and recover the Holy Land. How-

ever, if your saga follows history, much of Honorius III's papacy is consumed by intrigue with Frederick II (whom Honorius III crowns in 1220). Frederick II's constant delay in departing on crusade is the principle reason that little progress has been made towards the recovery of the Holy Land. Honorius III has also dealt with rebellions by the Italian papal states. Even Rome rebelled against Honorius III, forcing him to flee from 1219 to 1220, and (if your saga follows history) again in 1225 to 1226. Despite such conflicts, Honorius III and his advisors usually manage to proceed via diplomacy rather than war.

If your saga follows history, Honorius III dies on March 18, 1227 and is succeeded by cardinal-bishop Ugolino, who takes





## Story Seed: The Proctor of Hermes

Quaesitors approach a player character (ideally a senior magus with the Gentle Gift) and explain that they want him to act as proctor for the Order of Hermes in the papal curia. The character will become a Quaesitor and travel to Rome. His task is to ensure smooth relations between the Order and the Church. He can do this by intercepting inappropriate

petitions from magi, presenting petitions on behalf of magi to the curia, and ensuring that no petitions that negatively impact on the Order are successfully brought by other parties. The position requires a magus so that he may resist both the Commanding Aura of Church officials and any efforts of other magi to interfere in Church processes.

## Some Papal Officials in 1220 AD

**Vice-chancellor:** Master Willelmus, sub-deacon. He is succeeded in 1222 by the notary Master Guido.

**Notaries:** Masters Guido, Fortis, Obizo, Maximus, all sub-deacons.

**Corrector:** Bandinus of Siena, deacon.

**Camerlengo:** Stefano di Cecanno, cardinal-priest of Saint XII Apostoli (1213), appointed camerlengo 1219.

**Penitentiarius:** Tommaso da Capua, cardinal-priest of Saint Sabina (1216), appointed penitentiarius 1219.

**Auditores:** Peter de Collemdio.

**Auditor litterarum contradictarum:** Master Otto da Tonengo, sub-deacon. He is succeeded in 1225 by Master Sinibaldus Fieschi (who is elected pope Innocent IV in 1243).

## Legates Sent to the Order of Hermes

The Church is present everywhere in Mythic Europe, and thus the papacy is aware, in some sense, of the existence of the Order of Hermes. Precisely how accurate papacy's knowledge is, how well spread that knowledge

is, and what its attitude to the Order is, is up to your saga. In any case, it is very likely that papal legates have been sent to investigate individual Hermetic covenants, and perhaps even Tribunal meetings.

the name Gregory IX. Ugolino (born in 1170) is a trusted ally of Honorius III, and his diplomacy as papal legate is famed.

but during the 13th century their influence varies. There are three ranks of cardinals:

## The Cardinals

The cardinals are the closest advisors of the pope. They help him to perform his duties in Rome and often act as his legates elsewhere in Mythic Europe. The cardinals are appointed by the pope, and in 1220 come from all over Mythic Europe. There can be up to 53 cardinals at any one time, but the number fluctuates throughout the 13th century and sometimes there are as few as ten. Cardinals are usually considered to outrank bishops and archbishops,

**Cardinal-bishops:** The bishops of seven small towns near Rome (Ostia, Porto, Silva Candida, Albano, Sabina, Tusculum, and Palestrina). The pope is ordained by a cardinal-bishop.

**Cardinal-priests:** There can be up to 28 cardinal-priests.

**Cardinal-deacons:** There can be up to 18 cardinal-deacons.

## The Papal Curia

The curia is the papal court, which has been both enlarged and streamlined

under Innocent III and Honorius III. One of their innovations is to assign many of the highest official roles to young, capable sub-deacons rather than to cardinals. If your saga follows history, the curia becomes increasingly powerful throughout the 13th century.

## THE CHANCERY

The chancery controls correspondence between the pope and Christendom. Petitions to the papacy (see *Petitioning the Church*, later) are dealt with by the curia, which receives up to 2,000 each year. Petitions are received and revised into a standard form by a notary, and then publicly read by the data communis. The most important are submitted to the pope. Petitions of lesser importance are sent to the penitentiaria, or the auditores. In any case, once a decision is made, a letter is then drafted, approved by the corrector, publicly read again, and sealed by the bullatores.

The offices in chancery are all held by clergy ordained as acolytes or higher:

**Vice-Chancellor:** The head of the chancery (the office of chancellor was suppressed by Honorius III in 1216, concentrating power with the pope).

**Notaries:** There are six notaries. Along with the vice-chancellor, they also take the role of the data communis.

**Abbreviatores:** Each notary has two or three of these assistants.

**Corrector:** There are usually two correctors.

**Bullatores:** These officials hold the papal seal. The seal is not applied until the petitioner pays a tax that meets the cost of the parchment, ink, etc.

## PROCTORS

Proctors are the representatives of bishops, nobles, or religious houses who attend the papal curia to ensure that their client's interests are represented. Proctors present petitions on behalf of their client, and appeal other petitions as presented. Appealed petitions are sent to the auditor litterarum contradictarum for arbitration.

There are four rules for proctors: procr-



tors cannot remain in office for more than two consecutive years, proctors cannot keep a concubine, a client may only have one proctor, and finally the proctor cannot send a substitute to petition in his stead. There are similar rules for proctors in the courts of lesser bishops.

### THE CAMERA

The camera controls the papal finances. It is directed by the *camerlengo*, and beneath him are a number of *collectors*. The actual administrator of the treasure is the *thesaurarius*.

The papacy does not tax churches directly. However, since 1199 the papacy has been taxing clerics' benefices. Ostensibly these taxes are levied to fight crusades, but they are used for other purposes, too. If your saga follows history, these taxes become increasingly common throughout the 13th century and range from two percent up to ten percent.

Other finances arrive from the fees charged for various services, and when a bishop or abbot is appointed he pays a third of his yearly income (the *servitia communia*) to the papacy.

### THE JUDICIARY

Judicial officials help the pope to make rulings on disputed cases, appeals, and petitions are as follows.

**Penitentiarius:** This official is a cardinal who deals with appeals to penances, who grants dispensations, and who can commute or postpone vows. He is also the confessor for the cardinals. He has up to 12 sub-penitentiarii — deputies who may be sub-deacons, deacons, or priests.

**Auditores:** These officials are appointed as required on a case-by-case basis from the cardinals, bishops, and the papal capellani as a temporary position. Auditores can judge any legal case or petition brought to the papacy, including those brought in person (rather than via letters). However, the pope reserves disputes over elections to himself. The precise jurisdictional

boundaries between the *penitentiarius* and the *auditores* are unclear in the 13th century.

**Auditor litterarum contradictarum:** This official receives appeals to petitions. He rejects foolish appeals, and otherwise usually tries to arbitrate a compromise solution.

### THE CAPELLANI

The capellani is the college of priests, deacons, and sub-deacons who serve in Rome. It is organized much like any other cathedral chapter. The capellani perform the liturgy in the Roman churches, serve in the *curia*, and act as papal legates. The number of capellani varies; in 1220 there are 70.

## Papal Legates

Papal legates are the representatives of the pope. Legates are appointed by the pope and there are several grades:

**Legati a latere:** These are usually selected from among the cardinals. Legati a latere represent the pope on the most important and long-reaching missions, and there are no more than a handful at one time. They have the widest powers of the legates, including the power to make their own decisions that bind even the pope. Legati a latere sometimes travel with retinues of hundreds.

**Legati missi (or nuncio):** are often priests or deacons appointed from the capellani, but they can be clergy from anywhere in Mythic Europe. A *legatus missus* is given a particular mission — reprimanding a bishop, carrying a message to a foreign court, investigating a heresy, etc. He only has the powers needed for his mission, which are described in letters he carries. Legati missi may travel with a retinue, but frequently only travel with a few acolytes for companions. There may be dozens of legati missi at any one time. Legati missi who perform well are sometimes rewarded with appointment as a cardinal.

**Legati nati:** Some archbishops carry this title. In earlier centuries, the *legati nati* (sometimes called *vicarii apostolici*) had geographical territories that encompassed several archdioceses. The *legatus natus* supervised his subordinate archdioceses and could consecrate archbishops. By 1220, the title of *legatus natus* has no real power associated with it, although some archbishops still use this historic title.

## The Archbishop

The archbishop (or metropolitan) is a bishop who also has responsibility over up to a dozen neighboring dioceses. An archbishop's jurisdiction is called a province, and nearly every diocese is part of a province. However, there are a few dioceses that are instead directly subject to Rome. Such *filia specialis* dioceses include most of Scotland; Leon, Cartagena, and Burgos in Spain; Bamberg in Germany; and Pavia and Ferrara in Northern Italy. Those dioceses within the province of Rome are also directly subject to Rome.

The archbishop is ordained by, and receives his symbol of office (the *pallium*) from the pope or a papal legate. The pope can raise any diocese to the rank of archdiocese, and usually each of the bishop's successors become an archbishop, too. The pope can also present the archbishop's *pallium* to a simple bishop, for noted service to the Church. In this case, the rank of archbishop does not pass onto his successor and he has no provincial jurisdiction, but he does receive the Commanding Aura supernatural power.

## Patriarch

The Latin Church has appointed patriarchs at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople, who serve either alone or in parallel with a Greek patriarch. Although it is not frequently used in the West, patriarch is a rank between archbishop and pope; many ambitious Western archbishops seek to raise themselves to the rank of patriarch. If your saga follows history,

### Story Seed: A Troublesome Minster

In parts of Mythic Europe, the system of parishes was predated by that of minsters. A minster was a superior church, which had aristocratic patronage and ruled over a constellation of subordinate churches who paid it tribute. In 1220, a few churches that were once minsters are still referred to as such, but often the minster is now technically a deanery.

Former minsters usually have a large number (up to a dozen) of dependent chapels, which were once the minster's

subordinate churches. The progress of these chapels toward parish status often provokes resistance.

A chapel near the covenant, where the covenant folk worship, is still trapped in this dependent relationship with a minster. The minster is attempting to reassert the payment of its tribute, and the chaplain asks the magi for assistance. Obviously, the magi will need to be careful if they get involved, as the minster is rich and influential.

### Major Covenant Boon: Archdeacon Agent

The local archdeacon is an agent of the covenant. He ensures that the Church does not pry too closely into

the covenant's affairs, and he keeps the covenant informed on changes among the local priests.

the following archdioceses are raised to primacies during the thirteenth century: Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Magdeburg, and Salzburg in Germany; Saint Andrew's in Scotland; Armagh in Ireland; Lund in Scandinavia; Gniezno in Poland; Toledo and Tarragona in Spain, and Esztergom in Hungary. However, again if your saga follows history, the efforts of these primates to create a new Western rank superior to an archbishop ultimately fails.

## The Archdeacon

The archdeacon, the bishop's deputy, has responsibility over a territorial subset of the diocese — the archdeaconry. He is usually appointed by the bishop, but in some dioceses he is elected by the canons of his church. Originally the archdeacon only advised the bishop, but over the centuries more and more power has accumulated to him. In 1220, he is the chief judge of canon law within the archdeaconry, and his court travels regularly among his parishes. He often retains a portion of the fines that his court imposes, and as he has the right of visitation he

has a large influence over the administration of his parishes. In some dioceses, the archdeacons have greater effective power than the bishop.

The archdeacon must be ordained as a deacon. Occasionally, a priest undertakes the office of archdeacon, but this is rare.

There is considerable regional variation in the number of archdeacons in a diocese. For example, in Canterbury there is one, in Cologne there are four, in Constance ten, in Mainz 22, in Munster 34, in Hildesheim 40. An archdeaconry may include anywhere between a few hundred and few dozen parishes.

## The Dean

There are two types of deans. A rural dean is the head of a group of up to two dozen rural parishes called a deanery. The other type of dean is the head of a chapter of canons; he is the leader of the priests of a large urban church. Chapters of canons and their deans are discussed later.

The rural dean's church is usually the oldest and largest in the deanery, and his office is an unusual one as the deanery is a subdivision of the archdeaconry; he is subordinate to the archdeacon, but the dean also represents the bishop directly. This means that the deans may be forced into choosing sides in the event of conflict between bishop and archdeacon. The dean convokes meetings of the deanery clergy several times a year, and he has visitation rights over his subordinate parishes. Some rural deans use the title archpriest, which dates from an earlier Church period.

## Clerics

In 1220, around two percent of the population are clergy, but they are not evenly distributed. In poor rural districts there is just the curate and his parish clerk, whereas in towns there might be several parishes each with a chapter of canons. Since the 11th century, the Church in Mythic Europe has emphasized that clerics are a separate caste, but of course, not all of the clergy are as pure and pious as the Church would claim. Clerics are born

### Story Seed: The Vicar-General

A new bishop is elected in the diocese, and he is appalled at the power that his predecessors have allowed to accumulate with the archdeacon. He creates a new office, the vicar-general, and assigns to him the duty of holding a canon court that visits the rural parishes — currently the main duty of the archdeacon. The archdeacon

approaches the covenant looking for assistance to thwart the bishop's plans. He is after evidence to challenge the election of the bishop, but will be open to other suggestions, too. The archdeacon is powerful, and in return he could promise to reduce the covenant's tithe, or he could even assign the covenant benefices.



## The Church

to common society, most are the sons of peasants, and they share all the faults of the laity. So there are always drunks, murderers, usurers, gamblers, robbers, and the wanton among the clergy. Indeed, in many dioceses much of the bishop's time and correspondence involves correcting wayward priests. There is a constant tension between the heavenly loftiness that clergy are supposed to aspire to and their earthly origins.

There are two main types of clerical members of the Church: those in minor orders and those in major orders. The minor orders are doorkeeper, lector, exorcist, and acolyte. The major orders are sub-deacon, deacon, priest, and bishop. A character progresses through each of these grades in order: becoming a doorkeeper, advancing to lector, and so forth. It is not expected, however, that everyone will progress through the entire sequence. In 1220 the ranks of acolyte, sub-deacon, and deacon are seen as life-long offices, and there is no sense that someone who lives to an old age as a deacon has failed because he has not become a priest.

## Ordination

Each step a clergyman takes through the orders is marked by an ordination ceremony, and in a populous diocese there might be 300 ordinations per year. Usually, a person is ordained in his birth-diocese; to be ordained elsewhere he needs the permission of the bishop of his birth-diocese.

Ordination is a seasonal activity, with a Source Quality of 2 in either Civil and Canon Law or Church Lore. Prior to ordination, characters usually study the liturgies (Church Lore) or canon (Civil and Canon Law), and candidates for doorkeeper are usually taught en masse by the archdeacon.

During the ordination season, the ordinand is examined by the bishop (or the delegated archdeacon or dean). The examination is oral and can take up to several hours; there is no requirement for clergy to be literate. Normally, the ordinand must travel for the examination, or he will have to wait until his parish receives a visitation.

In game terms, the examination is represented by comparing the character's Examination Total against the appropriate Ease Factor for that rank:

Rank: Doorkeeper  
Church Lore Ease Factor: 3

Rank: Lector  
Church Lore Ease Factor: 6

Rank: Exorcist:  
Civil & Canon Law Ease Factor: 3

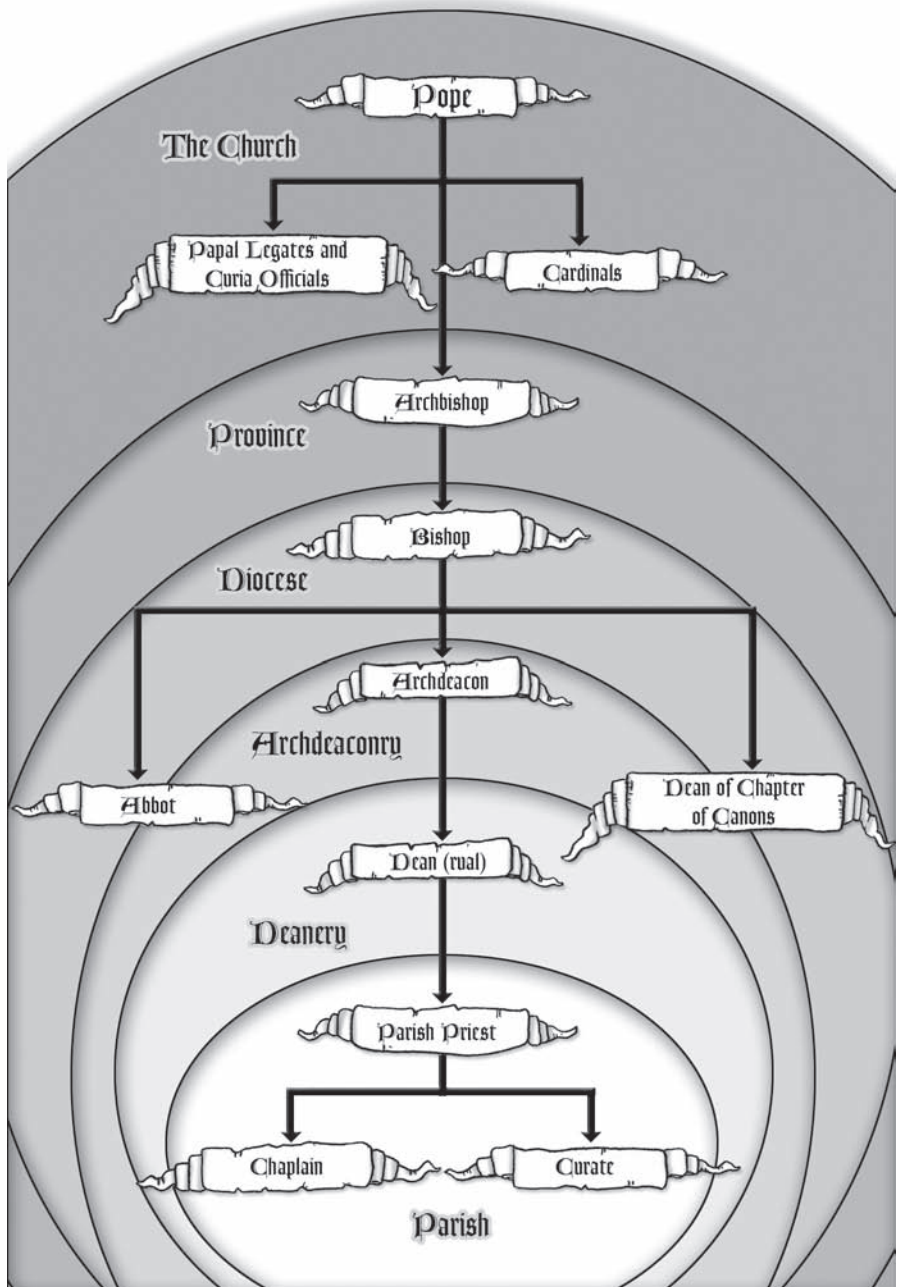
Rank: Acolyte  
Civil & Canon Law Ease Factor: 6

Rank: Sub-deacon  
Church Lore Ease Factor: 9

Rank: Deacon  
Civil & Canon Law Ease Factor: 9

Rank: Priest  
Church Lore Ease Factor: 12

Rank: Bishop  
Ease Factor: None; bishops are elected.



Whether the Examination Total is generated using the character's Church Lore or Civil and Canon Law Ability Score depends on the rank being obtained.

**ORDINATION EXAMINATION TOTAL:**  
**Intelligence + (Church Lore or Civil and Canon Law) + stress die**

If the character passes his examination, he is ordained by the bishop. It is usual for the bishop to ordain several people at once, so a successful candidate may need to wait a few days for other pending examinations to be conducted.

A character who is ordained gains the appropriate Social Status, and a Faith Point.

If the character's Ordination Exam Total is more than double the required Ease Factor, he gains a positive Reputation of 1 for being knowledgeable in either Church Lore or Civil and Canon Law (or increases an existing positive Reputation, or decreases a negative Reputation, by 1 Reputation "experience" point, see ArM5 page 167).

If the character's Ordination Exam Total misses the required Ease Factor by less than 6, he still "passes" his examination, but gains a negative Reputation of 1 for being ignorant of either Church Lore or Civil and Canon Law (or increases an existing negative Reputation, or decreases a

positive Reputation, by 1 Reputation "experience" point).

If the character fails his ordination examination by more than 6, he is not ordained but he can appeal the decision (see *Petitioning the Church*, later). The character can also try again another season.

If the character botches his ordination examination he can *only* try again if he successfully petitions the Church for permission (see *Petitioning the Church*, later).

### RAPID ORDINATIONS

Characters are usually ordained one grade at a time. However, sometimes an ordinand is accelerated through the grades. The main reason this happens is that a low-ranking clergyman (or even a layman) is elected bishop. However, even if a character is ordained in several grades at once, he gains only 1 Faith Point due to ordination.

## Minor Orders

The minor orders all wear tonsures and clerical robes. They are subject to canon law and may be married, although they are expected to marry a virgin. Characters in minor orders must be male.

## Possession and Exorcism

Possession by demons is a common occurrence in Mythic Europe, and exorcists have a special responsibility to help the possessed. Rules for possession are given in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 32; the demon invests a fraction of his Infernal Might Pool in the victim (the energumen) in order to control her.

To perform the exorcism rite, the exorcist must spend at least 1 Confidence (or Faith) Point and an Exorcism Total is generated (each Confidence/Faith Point adds +3, as usual). If the Exorcism Total equals or exceeds an Ease Factor equal to the number of Might Points invested in the energumen by the demon, then the demon is exorcised.

**EXORCISM TOTAL: Stress Die + Bonuses**

Any clergyman can conduct exorcisms. Those who have been ordained as exorcists receive a +1 bonus, and using holy water and a crucifix adds a further +1 each. Exorcism is a Divine supernatural power and the Total is affected by the aura in the usual way. If the energumen has Magic Resistance, it must be Penetrated by the exorcism; Penetration is calculated as usual (see ArM5, page 184).

A character must be literate in Latin to read the exorcism rite from a scroll, however an illiterate character (who has been told what to say) can still conduct the rite.

## DOORKEEPER

In the early centuries of the Church, doorkeepers (or porters) guarded the doors and contents of churches. However, by the 13th century these duties are actually undertaken by laymen. The office of doorkeeper is now held by young boys who are being trained to advance further in the Church hierarchy; their role is merely to assist the other grades during church services. In most dioceses there is a new cohort of several dozen doorkeepers every year.

A doorkeeper is usually ordained in his early teens. At his ordination he is blessed by the bishop and receives a pair of keys. A doorkeeper often receives further education in the cathedral school (or at another large urban church), and may spend his two free seasons in study (see *Art & Academe*, page 81).

## LECTOR

Lectors receive a codex of lessons (Church Lore Tractatus; Quality 6–8) when ordained, and in the early Church their role was to teach these lessons to the congregation. In 1220, this role has been usurped by the higher orders (usually the deacons), and the lector's duties are instead ceremonial ones. There is not even a requirement that a lector must be literate.

A lector is usually only a few years older than a doorkeeper, and he usually continues to receive an education. Almost all doorkeepers become lectors.

## EXORCIST

At ordination, an exorcist receives a scroll of exorcism rites. In the early Church, exorcists looked after those who were possessed and conducted daily exorcisms of adults who were being prepared for baptism, to clear them of any supernatural influences from their previous pagan faith. However, in 1220 adult baptism is rare (most characters are baptized as infants), and so there is less need for pre-baptismal exorcism. In 1220, clergy are usually ordained to the grade of exorcist in their late teens, and some clergy progress no further.



ACOLYTE

The acolyte is the greatest of the minor orders, and the symbols of his office are an extinguished candlestick and an empty vessel. These symbolize the acolyte's traditional responsibilities for keeping the church's candles lit, and for presenting wine and water at the altar. A character is not usually ordained as an acolyte until after he has reached the age of twenty.

Many acolytes serve as parish clerks, and others perform minor duties for the Church as scribes, messengers, or distributors of alms. Most Church characters encountered outside of churches are acolytes on minor missions for the diocese.

Major Orders

Like the minor orders, the major orders all wear tonsures and clerical robes. They are also subject to canon law. The major orders are celibate.

SUB-DEACON

When a sub-deacon is ordained he is presented with a paten (the plate on which the bread is placed during Mass), and a chalice by the bishop. He is also presented with a pitcher and a basin by the archdeacon. Sub-deacons act as parish clerks and canons. Sub-deacons also form part of the retinue of senior clergy.

DEACON

The symbol of the deacon's office is a stole, placed over the left shoulder. A deacon can serve as a parish clerk or a canon. The office of archdeacon is also held by a deacon, as are many of the offices in a chapter of canons or the cathedral administration. Deacons are also found in the retinue of the senior clergy.

PRIEST

A priest is ordained by the bishop laying hands on him. Each bishop was

once ordained by a laying on of hands by another bishop, who was likewise ordained and so forth. This chain of hands reaches back in time to the disciples (ordained by Jesus, from whom the power of the clergy originates). The priests of the Church are the successors of Christ's 72 disciples, the bishops are the successors of the 12 apostles, and the pope is the successor to the chief apostle, Peter.

A priest must be freeborn, legitimate, sound of body and mind, sufficiently well educated for his office, and at least 25 years old. Even if he fails to meet these criteria, a character can still be ordained, but he must gain a special dispensation from the bishop or the pope (see *Petitioning the Church*, later). Dispensations are quite readily granted, and it is common for characters who are bastards, missing limbs, underaged, or with poor eyesight to receive them. Even the bastard sons of priests can receive dispensation, although if the father was a canon then the son cannot be a member of the same chapter.

A bishop cannot ordain a priest who has no means of financial support. This usually means that a priest can only be ordained if there is a vacant benefice, or a if there is a vacant position as a chaplain or curate in the diocese; but priests of noble birth sometimes have private sources of wealth.

A priest should always wear his clerical dress, even when on journeys. The most important item of dress is his stole, which he receives at his ordination.

Canon Law

Canon law is based on papal decrees or bulls, and it is used by the Church throughout Mythic Europe, although there are minor regional differences in how some decrees are interpreted. There are several compendiums of papal decrees, called decretals, in circulation. One common volume is Gratian's *Decretum* (Civil and Canon Law Summa, Level 5, Quality 11).

Canon Courts

Archdeacons travel throughout their jurisdiction (see *Visitation*, later in this chapter) and hold court in the parishes they visit. The bishop's court is the court of appeal, and he can choose to hear other cases, too. The final court of appeal is the papal curia. In some dioceses rural deans, and even the parish priest, also act as canon judges, but generally the archdeacons have monopolized this duty. In any case, the judge employs a notary (usually an acolyte or sub-deacon) who travels with him, keeping a record of cases and judgments.

SECULAR JUSTICE

Clergy are not subject to secular justice, so clergymen found guilty by a secular court are passed to the bishop's court to be tried again. Most secular courts are thus observed by agents of the bishop to

Story Seed: A Catechumen Covenant

A pious *peregrinator* (itinerant magus) visiting the covenant is appalled at the covenant's isolation from the Church, and he fears for the immortal souls of the unbaptized covenfolk. He helps the covenfolk petition the Church for assistance, which dispatches a pair of bright young exorcists to the covenant. The eager exorcists spend the season at the covenant performing daily exorcisms

on the covenfolk, and providing verbal instruction on Christianity. At the end of the season spent as catechumens — adults undergoing instruction in Christianity prior to baptism — the covenfolk will travel to the nearby parish church and be baptized. As baptism dispels supernatural effects, this may cause problems if the magi are using magic to augment or control the covenfolk.



fenses of both laymen and clergy. This includes wills, church attendance, marriage, sexual offenses, brawling in church grounds, slander, usury, and breaches of contract, although secular courts also claim jurisdiction over some of these offenses. In civil cases (brought by one layman against another) there is a tendency to prefer canon courts, as cases are generally resolved more quickly and with less cost. On the other hand, secular courts dominate criminal cases where there is double jurisdiction. This is because canon courts have no officers to detain suspects, nor anywhere to hold prisoners awaiting trial.

### COURT PROCEDURES

Priests, or parishioners, are summoned to attend the canon court by a summoner (sometimes called an apparitor). This official may be an acolyte or sub-deacon, but often he is a layman. In either case, the summoner does not receive a salary, instead he charges a fee to those summoned. This arrangement is ripe for corruption, and some accuse summoners of inventing sins to report to the archdeacon.

A person cannot be forced, except by papal decree, to attend a canon court further than two days travel from his diocese. This law was introduced in 1215 to resolve abuses whereby someone was accused in a distant court and then convicted in his absence.

Cases are decided by the canon judge — there is no jury — although he can be held to account if the notary's record indicates corruption or poor decisions. There is usually little effort to examine physical evidence, and great weight is given to the testimony of witnesses.

An important, controversial, procedure of canon courts is the ritual of compurgation. In this ritual, about a dozen witnesses (the precise number varies) declare to the court, under oath, that the defendant is of good character and incapable of the offense. If such witnesses can be found, the defendant is acquitted. In other words, compurgation testifies to the character of the defendant rather than the facts of the case; this is the principle reason why secular courts dislike canon courts.

ensure that clergymen receive this protection. Secular judges find this exasperating, particularly as many clergymen are subsequently acquitted via compurgation (see Court Procedures, later).

However, canon law also states that clergymen should not, under pretext of Ecclesiastical liberty, attempt to undermine the authority of secular justice. So a clergyman who commits very serious

crimes against town or lord may find himself punished by a canon court, or excommunicated and returned to the hands of secular justice.

### CANON LAW JURISDICTION

Canon law claims jurisdiction over the religious obligations and moral of-



## Punishment

The following are the usual canon law punishments. Note that canon courts cannot pass sentences of death or physical punishment, as clerics cannot shed blood.

**Excommunication** is reserved for repeat, serious offenses, and a bishop can excommunicate anyone in his diocese. An excommunicated character is cursed and receives no benefit from any of the Sacraments except penance, and if he dies he cannot be buried in consecrated ground. An excommunicated clergyman is also no longer protected from secular justice. Excommunication can be lifted by the character confessing, repenting, and completing penance.

**Irregularity** automatically (and only) affects clergy who commit grossly immoral crimes (mostly shedding blood). An irregular clergyman cannot make use of Faith Points. Irregularity does not require a trial, or even for anyone to know of the crime, as this punishment is inflicted by the Divine. Irregularity is lifted by confession.

Lay and clergy can receive **monition** — an official warning. Even serious offenses by the clergy (non-residence, brawling, and concubinage) can receive monition, but usually only to first-time offenders.

Many crimes are punished by a **public penance**. Some examples include soldiers who make military use of church buildings presenting their arms to the altar; clergymen who argue in the church grounds then standing on opposite sides of the altar chanting the psalter at each other for a day; or a parishioner who stabs another in the church providing rushes to cover the church floor.

### Story Seed: The Heresy of Hermes

In parts of Mythic Europe, having a tonsure and demonstrating proficiency in Latin is sufficient evidence of being a clergyman. A magus accused of murder has thus claimed Ecclesiastical protection, and then (maybe via *Rego Mentem* magic) been acquitted of the crime via compurgation. Unfortunately for the nearby player-covenant, the

archdeacon is now suspicious of the Order of Hermes and has since pried into the covenant's affairs, which he concludes show evidence of heresy. The player-covenant could probably prosecute the magus for interference in the mundane, but dealing with the archdeacon's investigation is a more pressing concern.

## Bishops and Blood

Those bishops who are also feudal lords may have difficulty avoiding involvement in the shedding of blood. Confession lifts divine punishment for this transgression, though, and the pa-

pacy can also take action to correct or replace bishop-barons. However, the papacy will be cautious, as the bishop-baron's feudal allies may leap to his defense.

Canon courts can **imprison** characters in either a monastery or nunnery. Wealthy women who commit sexual offenses are often punished like this, as are clergymen convicted by a secular court when the bishop decides it would be impolitic to acquit by compurgation. Monasteries are not usually very secure, and are often easy to escape from.

**Fines** are imposed when a character fails to complete penance. Sometimes the fine is paid to the Church, but in cases where a man sins against another, the victim receives the fine.

Clergy can have their benefice **suspended**, either for short periods or permanently. Usually, suspension is only inflicted after the clergyman has been given a monition and a chance to reform.

## Canon Law Cases

The following types of cases are typical of those a canon court might hear.

### SHEDDING OF BLOOD

Clerics are forbidden to shed blood. The most recent reiteration of this rule

was the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). Clerics may not:

- Decree or pronounce a sentence involving the shedding of blood.
- Carry out or be present for a punishment involving the shedding of blood.
- Write or dictate letters that require punishments involving the shedding of blood.
- Command mercenaries, or crossbowmen, or suchlike men of blood.
- Be involved in any of the ordeals — see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 78.

In addition, clerics in major orders may not practice chirurgy.

### MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL CRIMES

Prostitution, casual sex, and giving birth within the first nine months of marriage are canon crimes, and men must usually support bastard children as penance. Marriage between close relatives and bigamy are crimes. Contraception and abortion are also canon crimes, but are only rarely prosecuted and are not harshly punished. Contraception is hard for the court to discover, and an unborn fetus is assumed to have no soul. On the other hand, a magus who sterilizes himself or others with a longevity potion has technically committed an offense.

### SANCTUARY

The church, churchyard, and cemetery are places of sanctuary, within which it is forbidden to spill blood or brawl. Many fugitives from lay justice thus seek the safety of a church. Sanctuary is granted for up to 40 days, after which time the fugitive should surrender to the lay authorities. In

some dioceses sanctuary is also extended to chapels.

## SIMONY

Simony is the buying and selling of sacred things, which is a canon law crime. Nonetheless ordinations, relics, benefices, burial rights, and places in nunneries and monasteries are sometimes bought and sold. When simony is identified by the Church, the usual penalty for the buyer is that whatever he gained is removed. The seller is fined twice the value of the transaction, and may be excommunicated for repeat offenses.

## USURY

Charging excessive interest rates on loaned money is the canon crime of usury. This is also a secular crime (in most dioceses) and is usually more effectively prosecuted by secular courts.

## WILLS

Disputes over the division of estates can be resolved by a canon court. Sometimes wills are registered in advance with the archdeacon's court, but many people are reluctant to do this, believing that writing a will invites death.

## UPKEEP OF THE CHURCH

If the archdeacon finds the church in a poor condition during his visitation, then the priest or representatives of the congregation can be prosecuted.

## RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Laymen can be prosecuted for failing to regularly attend Church festivals. Clergy can also be prosecuted for failing to fulfill their religious duties, or for heretical practices. Pagan magi and covenant folk may find that either their absence at

church or their unusual beliefs have been noticed and reported to the archdeacon for prosecution.

## TITHES

In 1220, everyone tithes a tenth of their income to the Church. However, the canon court commonly prosecutes people for paying less than the court believes is due. Hermetic covenants that evade the tithe may eventually be found out, and the magi prosecuted.

## SLANDER

Since 1215, slander has been a canon offense. The Church's intention is that by providing legal recourse, parishioners will brawl less over matters of "honor." In 1220, few cases have yet been heard by archdeacon courts, so it is unclear if this will succeed.

## SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT

Rarely, minor cases of sorcery are brought to the canon court. A typical penance involves wearing a white sheet before the congregation, although canon courts are ambivalent about whether minor sorcery (except as evidence of infernalism or paganism) is a crime. Serious cases of sorcery are prosecuted by secular courts, which can impose death as a punishment.

### Story Seed: Hermetic Sanctuary

A desperate magus seeks sanctuary during Wizard War. Does his opponent ignore the laws of the Church?

The player characters could be participants in the Wizard War. Alternately,

the players might be involved after the fact when the Church sends a legate to the tribunal to protest against, fine, or excommunicate a magus who has violated Church sanctuary.

## Relics

Relics are the remains of saints, or objects used by the saint, and are described in detail in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 43–46. The basics are summarized here:

- All relics have a Faith Score and an equal number of Faith Points.
- Anyone who holds the relic has a Magic Resistance equal to 10 x the Faith Score, and may spend the Faith Points as if they were Confidence Points. The Faith Points replenish each day.
- The relic has a Divine Might Score equal to 10 x the Faith Score.
- Relics radiate an aura hostile to the Infernal, which extends a number of feet equal to the relic's Might Score. Creatures with an Infernal Might may only enter the aura of hostility if their Might Score exceeds that of the relic, and even then, they suffer damage equal to the relic's Might Score each round (although this may be Soaked).
- Some relics have other supernatural powers related to the saint's life.

## The Parish

The parish is the main unit of Ecclesiastic administration in Mythic Europe, and a diocese might contain between several hundred and one thousand parishes. The size of parishes can vary considerably, from a few acres enclosed by town walls to a tract of land several miles across, encompassing thousands of acres of farmland.



## The Parish Church

Parish life is centered around the parish church, where the rector (a priest) recites the liturgy and conducts Masses and burials. The rites of the parish protect the parishioners from supernatural peril, and the priest provides a conduit to the Divine.

During construction, the parish church is consecrated by the bishop and the relics of a saint are interred beneath the altar. Many churches contain other relics, and some wealthy churches contain hundreds or even thousands of relics. Wealthy churches are also often decorated with frescoes, mosaics, carvings, and statues depicting saints and biblical scenes.

The two critical parts of the church are the chancel and the nave. The chancel is at the east end of the church, and the rear, east wall holds the altar. This is where the priest conducts the liturgy, and the chancel is often screened off from the rest of the church. Rarely, the chancel is placed at the west end of the church, so that the priest may face the congregation while he conducts the liturgy. The nave (at the west end of the church) is where the congregation stands during Mass. The congregation is responsible for the upkeep of the nave, and the priest is responsible for the upkeep of the chancel. This division of responsibility sometimes means that the two sections are rebuilt at different times and of different materials. The chancel is usually smaller than the nave, but an urban church with many canons may have a very large chancel.

Some churches include aisles, which are extensions to the nave. A large church may have additional altars built in the east walls of the aisles, each served by extra priests. Large churches also normally have transepts. These are wings built at right angles to the nave, giving the church a cruciform footprint. Transepts may also have extra altars built in their east walls.

Most churches contain towers, from which the church bells are rung. A few churches lack bells due to the expense of a tower, so their Divine aura does not extend beyond the consecrated ground of the church. Chapels do not have the right to ring bells, and so usually lack a tower.

Many churches have a raised platform

## Church Auras

Divine auras radiate from the church altar for as far as the church bells can be heard, or to the edge of the parish boundary, whichever is closer. A small parish might be entirely covered by a Divine aura. The strength of the aura depends upon the distance from the altar and the size of the church:

| AREA                     | AURA LEVEL |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Large church/cathedral   | 5          |
| Typical parish church    | 4          |
| Chapel                   | 3          |
| Within city walls        | 3          |
| Within town walls        | 2          |
| Fields of a rural parish | 1          |

## Spells in Church

A typical rural church has a floor area of about 500 square feet, but urban churches can be much larger. For Hermetic magic, the nave and each floor of the tower count as separate Rooms. Aisles and the transepts are a part of the

nave. If it is petitioned off, the chancel is a separate Room, otherwise it is also part of the nave. The entire church may be targeted as a Structure, and unless the church is unusually large no size modifier is required.

## Story Seed: The Reconstructed Temple

Some churches are constructed from stone salvaged from Roman buildings. A magus receives a vision that indicates how a temple of Mercury was thus broken down and rebuilt as the local cathedral. The vision is specific enough

for the magus to rebuild the temple, which his vision seems to indicate will form a gateway to a regio or possibly the Magic Realm itself. Can the magus find a way to reclaim the temple from the cathedral?

in the nave, or in an aisle, that contains a table and a chair. This is where the archdeacon's canon court is held.

The parish church is often constructed of stone, and may be the only strongly built structure in the parish. The church is usually kept locked and barred, and many parishioners store valuable goods within the church nave, although this is technically against canon law except in times of enemy incursions, fires, or other emergencies. Parishioners often retreat to the safety of the church in times of war, but most churches in Mythic Europe are not built with the intention of defense: the windows and entrances are too large, and the walls are not thick enough. On the other hand, in those parts of Mythic Europe that are frequently wracked by war, fortified churches are common, and even in relatively peaceful areas it is not surpris-

ing to find a few fortified churches scattered throughout the countryside.

There is a considerable regional variation in churches. Multiple domes and cupolas are common in Italy and southern France, whereas spires are more common in Germany, northern France, and England. Older churches that date to the Roman Empire are usually built in the basilica style (a long, columned east-west hall) with the altar in a semi-circular apse at the east end.

## The Parish Priest

The parish priest is the representative of the Church. He is usually locally born, or at least from within the diocese. For a priest from further afield, finding a common lan-

## Hermetic Magic and the Sacraments

Magi can observe the supernatural effects of the Sacraments, and it is common knowledge within the Order that the Sacraments are supernatural Divine powers. For example, a baptismal name cannot be used as a Sympathetic Connection to aid Penetration (unlike a birth name), Mass does indeed change simple bread and wine into something Divine, and bodies that have received Extreme Unction cannot be affected by

magic for three days.

Due to this overwhelming evidence of the Divine, most magi believe in the existence of God, and many would describe themselves as Christians. However, even a magus who identifies himself as Christian would almost certainly be considered by the Church to have a heretical view of the world, colored as it will be by the magus' knowledge of the supernatural.

guage to communicate with his congregation can be a problem, because many languages in Mythic Europe are spoken in dialects confined to narrow geographic regions.

The priest's main tasks involve reciting the liturgy, distributing alms, and caring for the spiritual needs of his congregation.

### THE LITURGY

The liturgy is the church service. It consists of the fasting parish priest reciting the Epistle and Gospel in Latin, while it is sung by the church choir. The priest also conducts Mass. During the liturgy the priest stands before the altar, facing east with his back to the congregation. In a large church he may be assisted by several clergy in lower orders, but in a rural church the priest is usually only assisted by his clerk. There is no attempt to translate for the congregation: their role is only to gaze upon the Host (the bread consecrated as the body of Christ).

### THE SACRAMENTS

The priest conducts the Mass and the other Sacraments. There are seven Sacraments, which are described in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 74. The Sacraments are supernatural powers. They do not need to Penetrate to have their effect, but the participants must be willing. A character may not have more than 1 Faith Point from each Sacrament.

**Baptism:** A character must be baptized for any of the other Sacraments to have

any effect on him, and he receives a new, baptismal name, which cannot be used for magical purposes. A character can only be baptized once, and any character who knows how can perform a baptism, anywhere. Even a pagan may perform the rite. However, baptisms performed by an ordained priest also dispel any non-Divine, non-permanent supernatural effects that are affecting the character at the time. Additionally, baptisms conducted by a priest at a baptismal font gain the character a Faith Point. All parish churches have baptismal fonts, but most chapels do not.

**Confirmation:** A character can only be confirmed once, which grants him a Faith Point. The confirmation Sacrament can only be conducted by a bishop. Confirmation is uncommon among the laity in 1220, but most clergy receive confirmation.

**Mass:** This is the most sacred and holy of the priest's Sacraments (also called the

Eucharist or Holy Communion). In this Sacrament, bread and wine is turned into the body and blood of Christ. This is consumed by the congregation, which grants them a Faith Point each. Every Christian must attend Mass at least once a year at Easter.

**Marriage:** Both husband and wife get a Faith Point from the Sacrament of marriage.

**Penance:** By this Sacrament, a character can be absolved of confessed sins by completing a penance that his priest assigns. The character receives a special Confidence Point that may only be spent on the penance task. Every Christian must confess his sins at least once a year, and a character may only confess to his parish priest, unless the priest gives permission to confess to another. Confession is secret and is privately whispered to the priest, but as confession boxes are not yet used, it is sometimes possible for confession to be overheard.

**Ordination:** Ordination Sacraments are conducted by the bishop (see Clerics, earlier).

**Extreme Unction:** Extreme Unction, or Last Rites, are performed just before, or just after, a person dies. He is absolved of all mortal sins and receives a Faith Point. In addition, his body cannot be affected by other supernatural powers for three days.

### THE PARISH CLERK

The parish priest is assisted by a clerk (often an acolyte, sometimes a sub-deacon). The clerk helps with the liturgy,

## Story Seed: The Lost Priest

A priest exorcises the demons from an abandoned village in his parish, after which he returns to his church and appears well. Unfortunately, in the weeks that follow the priest goes mad, until finally he locks himself in the church tower, braying like a donkey. In fact, a fragment of the priest's mind is trapped in an Infernal regio in the abandoned

village. The sundering of the priest's mind has driven him mad. A co-adjudicator is assigned to the village and he quickly learns from the parishioners about the parish priest's sojourn prior to his madness. The co-adjudicator seeks help from the nearby covenant, as the magi are famed locally for their knowledge and wisdom.



rings the church bells, and accompanies the priest in his travels about the parish.

The parish clerk is often selected by the priest, but in some parishes the parishioners elect him. In either case, the position is usually held for many years, and in some parishes has become hereditary. There is no expectation that the parish clerk will succeed the priest.

The parish clerk is paid a yearly wage by the parishioners, with the exact amount depending on the wealth of the parish; a London parish clerk could expect a wage of three or four pounds, whereas a simple rural clerk may only earn a dozen shillings. The clerk is a full-time position, but he can supplement his income by picking up small fees for writing letters for the parishioners.

### THE CURATE

The curate fulfills the liturgical duties of an absent parish priest, and is usually paid only a fraction of what the benefice is worth. The curate is often a second-rate priest who is barely literate and has only a poor grasp of theology.

### THE CHAPLAIN

Large parishes often contain subordinate churches called chapels. The priest appointed to hold Mass in the chapel is called a chaplain (see Rural Parishes, later).

### THE CO-ADJUDICATOR

When the bishop learns that a parish priest is ill, senile, or mad he appoints a co-adjudicator to perform the priest's responsibilities. Sometimes (especially in temporary appointments) the co-adjudicator is the priest of a neighboring parish, who must scurry between the two parishes. The incumbent priest may either recognize his incapacity and willingly accept his replacement, or he may fight the presence of a co-adjudicator. Sometimes the co-adjudicator takes advantage of his temporary control of the parish coffers and resources.



### The Perambulation

On Rogation Day (April 25th) the priest and parishioners walk the boundary of the parish. This rowdy procession, called the perambulation, can take many hours (or even a few days in a large rural parish), and there are frequent stops at charitable households along the way for food and drink. The perambulation is an opportunity for the parishioners to note how well crops are growing, for the clerk to assess the tithe, and for wayward parish boundary markers to be replaced. The yearly perambulation creates a path around the perimeter of the parish, which can become obscured if the perambulation

is not walked (as occasionally happens). This leads to confusion when the perambulation is resumed in later years.

As neighboring parishes walk the perambulation on the same day, two groups of walking parishioners may meet. Insults are likely to be traded between the two parties, and scuffles occasionally break out.

The perambulation is sometimes walked in urban parishes too, but it is less common.

### The Benefice

The benefice is the income associated with a parish church. This is usually as-



## Minor Covenant Boon: Holder of Benefices

The covenant is an institutional holder of several parish benefices. The covenant collects the benefice incomes (a Typical Source of income) and is responsible for assigning curates to perform Mass. The parishes need not necessarily be geographically close to

the covenant, and could even be in a different diocese. On the other hand, if the covenant is built within one of its parishes, then the congregation may be mostly covenfolk. This Boon may be taken multiple times.

## Story Seed: The Overgrown Glebe

In rural parishes part of the benefice is a plot of land, sometimes called a glebe. This is usually a plot of about 5 to 10 acres that the priest and his staff personally farm. This is much the same size as the land a freehold peasant would farm. In wealthier parishes the glebe could be hundreds of acres, and the priest can collect a substantial income from renting it out.

A priest newly assigned to a ben-

efice discovers that his predecessor has allowed the parish's small glebe to become overgrown with exotic plants that burst with exhilaratingly scented flowers, buzz with bees, and are heavy with succulent fruits. However, the parishioners also tell him frightening stories of plants moving about in the night. The priest's inquiries in the diocese lead him to the covenant, which is rumored to house horticultural experts.

signed to a priest by the bishop, but some benefices are assigned by archdeacons, nobles, guilds, or town councils. The ideal parish in Mythic Europe has a single priest — the rector — who holds the benefice, resides in the parish, and holds Mass in the parish church. However, in practice very few parishes are run like this. Most benefices are in fact held by absent priests who employ another priest (see The Cu-

rate, earlier) to actually perform the parish duties.

There are three main reasons why a priest might be legitimately absent from his parish:

- He could have leave to study in a university, to go on pilgrimage, or similar. A leave of absence of several years for these purposes is common.

- He could be in service elsewhere. The canons of the cathedral, for example, usually hold rural benefices within the diocese, as do the priests who serve in the private chapels of important nobles.
- The final (and most frequent) reason for non-residence is the widespread practice of a single priest holding several benefices. Pluralism, as this is called, is technically outlawed in canon law, and arouses much hostility within the Church. However, even the papacy frequently engages in pluralism. Some clergy (consequently the wealthiest) hold more than a dozen benefices, from which they collect total incomes of hundreds of pounds a year.

A priest with a benefice who is resident at a covenant, or spends a lot of time adventuring with magi, might apply for a license of absence from the bishop (see *Petitioning the Church*, later, and the *Minor Virtue License of Absence*, earlier). Depending on your saga, he may need to find another pretext for the license and, in any case, he must arrange for a curate.

Two priests can exchange benefices, the usual reason being a falling out between the priest and his parishioners. The exchange requires the permission of the bishop and if the benefices are in different dioceses both bishops must agree. In some parts of Mythic Europe, the bishop's clerks act as brokers for these

## Spells to Affect a Parish

If the parish is clearly defined by natural or man-made boundaries, then the entire parish may be affected using spells that have the Boundary target. This is rare, but if so, then participating in the yearly perambulation is an opportunity for a magus to cast such spells. A rural parish of typical size requires a spell with a Boundary target, with a +4 Size Modifier. A typical urban parish requires a Boundary target with a +1 Size Modifier.

An entire diocese might be affected by a Boundary target spell with a +7

Size Modifier, but the diocese's borders must also be very well defined (perhaps by rivers and forests) for such a spell to be possible.

### THE GREAT DISCORD

CrVi 55

R: Touch, D: Moon, T: Boundary, Ritual

The whole parish is tainted by magic, and for the spell duration everyone in the parish suffers from the social penalties of *The Gift*: husbands and wives bicker and

feud, brawls erupt in the fields, and animals flee from their masters. The parish is paralyzed by the social breakdown, and by the end of the spell several parishioners may have been murdered. The parish immediately gains a reputation for being cursed, and it can take years for harmony to be restored. Also, as the parish animals have fled and the fields have been only erratically tended, it is likely that the parish will suffer from famine and starvation in the following year.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +3 Moon, +4 Boundary, +4 size)



## Rural Parishes

exchanges and charge a fee for their services. These fees are strongly opposed by the papacy, which regards the practice as simony.

### BENEFICES HELD BY INSTITUTIONS

It is possible and common for institutions such as monasteries and chapters of canons to hold benefices; many such institutions hold dozens of benefices. In this case, the institution collects the benefice and is responsible for arranging for a curate.

### TITHE

The tithe is used to fund the benefice, to pay the rector, and to keep up church buildings. In addition, a proportion is forwarded to the bishop (or archdeacon), and another proportion is distributed to the poor of the parish as alms.

Hermetic covenants are not exempt from the tithe, and are occasionally visited by the parish priest and his clerk in order to assess what the covenant's income is. Obviously, there are many magical schemes that magi can use to avoid paying the tithe, and covenants that are hidden from the priest (perhaps within a regio) do not need to pay tithe. Nonetheless, most Christian magi would prefer to pay.

### PAPAL APPOINTMENTS TO BENEFICE

A character can petition the pope for a benefice, who may order a bishop to grant one. These requests are difficult for the bishop to refuse, and in 1220 a number of benefices scattered throughout Mythic Europe are effectively controlled by the pope. If your saga follows history, then this trend develops rapidly throughout the 13th century: in 1050 Pope Leo IX controlled no benefices outside the province of Rome, whereas by the end of the 13th century the pope directly controlled over 100,000 benefices (the majority in Europe). This increase in papal power is opposed by other bishops.

A typical rural parish has a congregation of a few hundred peasants, and covers several thousand acres of countryside (an area a few miles across). The parish lands are often coincident with a manor and might encompass several villages. If a parish includes the lands of several small manors, the parish church is usually constructed near the border between the manorial lands. A few enormous parishes cover up to 100,000 acres of land.

Sometimes there are arguments over which parish an individual field belongs to. Some farmers even owe tithe in one parish, but actually attend church in another. What makes matters worse is that some parishes are not continuous tracts of land, but composed of fragmented parcels of land encapsulated within the borders of other parishes. Such disputes over the jurisdiction of parishes can simmer away for hundreds of years, but can also be resolved by petitions to the bishop or pope.

### CHAPELS

As a rough rule, the Church accepts that no peasant should need to travel more than two miles to reach a place of worship

(a round journey of four miles). This means that many rural parishes have several small chapels (each with a priest) to serve the outlying population. It is common for the men of a village to petition the bishop for license to build a chapel near where they live, due to difficulty in reaching the parish church. Generally, bishops are supportive of these requests, but a chapel is a significant cost to the local parishioners. The parishioners must pay for the chapel's construction, its upkeep, the chaplain's salary, and their normal tithe to the parish. Sometimes a small pension is granted to the chapel by the parish church, but this is by no means guaranteed. Most chapels do not have baptismal fonts or a cemetery. This means that the parishioners must sometimes make their way to the parish church, anyway.

### PRIVATE CHAPELS

Nobles usually worship at private chapels, and virtually every castle has a chapel, as do many manor houses, guild halls, and similar places. Private chapels are not open to the public, and the license granted by the bishop often explicitly limits their use to the members of the family or community that established them. The license is sometimes limited to a particular period of time, too (a few years). Occasionally,

### Story Seed: A Concerned Priest

Many of the covenfolk travel to a nearby village to attend church. The parish priest is concerned at the long journey that the covenfolk must make,

and suggests that they apply to the bishop for permission to build a chapel nearer to the covenant (see *Petitioning the Church*, later).

### Covenant Boon: Covenant Chapel

A private chapel is built within (or very near) the covenant for the covenfolk and magi to worship at. It may be a room in a tower, or a separate building. The chapel has a Divine aura of 3, which will overwhelm auras of 3 or less aligned to other realms. However, unless the chapel has bells, the aura in

the rest of the covenant is unaffected. The covenant must pay the salary of the chaplain, who counts as a specialist for covenant expenses.

The chapel is worth a +20 situational modifier to Loyalty, assuming that the covenfolk are normal, Christian humans (see *Covenants*, page 38).

philanthropic owners open private chapels to the general public, but this is hardly ever done with episcopal consent.

Private chapels sometimes lack a nave, because in theory there is no congregation. On the other hand, the private chapel of a wealthy noble can often rival a parish church in scale.

The owner of a private chapel is expected to pay the salary of the chaplain and for the upkeep of the chapel itself. However, influential nobles can arrange for a priest with a benefice elsewhere to be granted a leave of absence to perform the service in their chapel instead.

## Urban Parishes

Within town there is roughly one parish church for every 300 to 400 inhabitants. Most towns thus have somewhere between one and six parishes, and very large cities (like London, Paris, Florence, etc) have more than 100 parishes. Unlike rural parishes, the jurisdictions of urban parishes are usually very precisely defined: they follow street or property boundaries, which are sometimes marked to indicate the parish borders.

In large towns, one of the churches is likely the cathedral — the church of the bishop. Usually, the cathedral is the largest church in the town, and the town is the largest within the diocese, or at least it was when the see was created. The bishop can move to a different church (it becomes the cathedral), and many bishops have moved to follow the growth of population and political power within the diocese. Such moves are rarely made more often than once every few centuries.

In large urban churches there are often several altars. These additional altars are sponsored by guilds and wealthy individuals; the endowment pays for the benefice of an extra priest who performs the liturgy at the altar.

## CHAPTERS OF CANONS

The clergy who serve an urban church often live together, sharing a common table and holding common property. This

community of clerics is called a chapter, and its members are canons.

Many canons lead lives similar to those of monks but, unlike monks, canons must see to the care of the souls of the lay congregation. The priestly canons thus each take weekly turns to lead the liturgy. Some chapters follow a monk-like rule called the Rule of Saint Augustine, and these canons are called regular or Augustinian canons (see Chapter 4: The Rule). Other chapters of canons are more lax: the canons can eat meat, wear linen cloth, and even own private property. Most urban churches in Italy and southern France are served by regular canons, but elsewhere in Mythic Europe regular and secular chapters are equally common. The similarity between monasteries and chapters of regular canons means that it is often possible for bishops to transform monasteries into chapters and vice versa.

In parts of France, Germany, and northern Italy there are also chapters of canonesses. These are always attached to and subservient to a chapter of canons.

Chapters usually range in size from six to a few dozen canons. Chapter offices include the following:

**Provost:** Historically this office was the head of the chapter, responsible for its administration. The provost is assisted by the **camerarius** and **cellerarius**.

**Dean:** The dean is responsible for the discipline of the chapter, and he is the provost's deputy. In 1220, the office of provost has disappeared from most chapters, and the chapter is headed by the dean instead.

**Cantor:** The cantor is responsible for organizing the liturgy and the sacred rites.

**Scholasticus** or **Chancellor:** This office is responsible for the church school (see *Art & Academe*, pages 81–83).

**Custos:** The custos is responsible for the church's treasury. He is assisted by the **thesaurarius** and **sacrista**.

**Hebdomadarius:** This is the canon whose weekly turn it is to lead the liturgy (he may hold one of the other offices, too).

The provost, dean, and hebdomadarius must be ordained priests. The other

canons (even the office holders) need not be ordained as priests — some are only acolytes in minor orders.

## Visitations

One of the duties of the bishop (which is frequently deputized to his archdeacons and deans) is to visit each of the parishes within his diocese, once a year. Monasteries and nunneries must also be visited, and an archbishop has visitation rights in any of the parishes of his subordinate dioceses. In addition, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) ruled that any parish with known heretics should be visited at least twice a year. Most bishops also consider the (known) presence of a Hermetic covenant to be a good reason for more-frequent parish visitation.

Visitation is an opportunity to check up on the parish priest (in case he has fallen into heresy), to ensure that the church is well maintained, and to deal with any Church business. It is also an opportunity for the parishioners to make complaints about their priest. Part of the visitation is to work through a formal checklist (of about 100 articles) which examines the state of the clergy and congregation, and the physical structure of the church. There are regional variations in the precise nature of the visitation articles, but a popular enumeration is given in *Homilia Leonis* (Church Lore Tractatus of Quality 8 by Pope Leo IV; 847-855).

Visitation can be extremely expensive for the parish. Usually a feast is provided for the visitor's retinue, and he may also claim visitation expenses from the parishes that he visits. Some members of the Church, and the papacy itself, are very uneasy about this practice and the abuses that it encourages (claiming for visits that never take place, for example). The papacy states that the guiding principle is that the shepherd (the bishop) should avoid burdening the flock (the parish), and should tailor the size of his retinue according to the resources of the parish. Consequently, the Third Lateran Council (1179) set the following *upper* limits



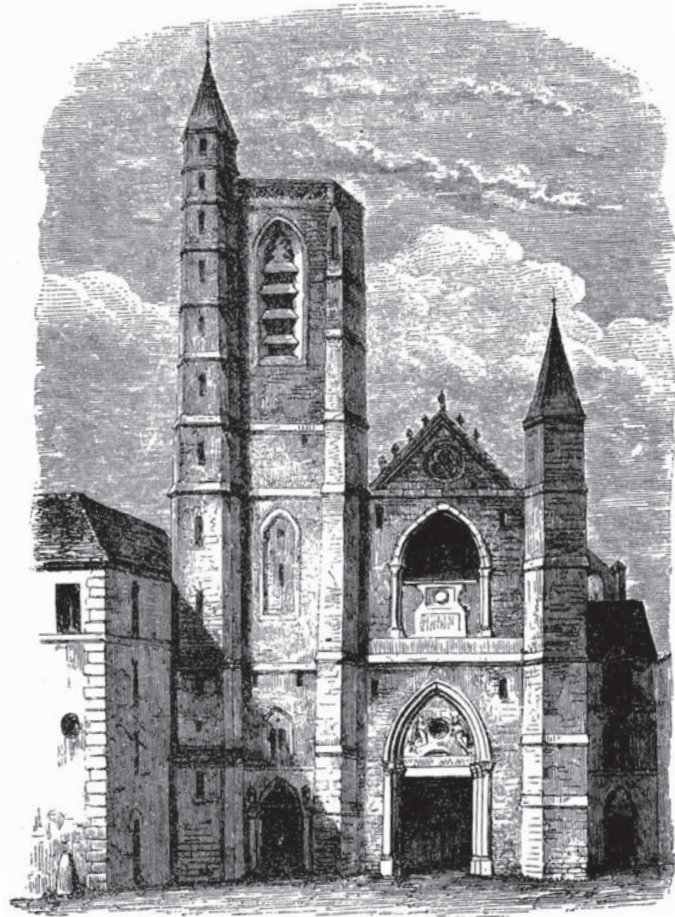
on the size of the traveling retinue of the senior clergy:

- Archbishop:** 40 to 50 horses.
- Bishop:** 20 to 30 horses.
- Archdeacon:** 5 to 7 horses.
- Dean:** 2 horses.

Most bishops, archdeacons, and rural deans spend at least one season a year in visitation. This can be one of his non-free seasons (as visitation is one of his duties). A season spent on visitation is worth 2 exposure experience points in Church Lore, Civil and Canon Law, Area Lore, or Ride for the visitor and his retinue.

## Visitatio ad Limina

Bishops are also required by canon law to report, in person, to the pope every four years on the state of their diocese. Many bishops are reluctant to fulfill this obligation (the journey can be long, dangerous, difficult, and uncomfortable), and need frequent reminders of their duty. It is allowable for the bishop to send an archdeacon in his stead.



## Synods

Synods are meetings of the clergy. The dean, archdeacon, bishop, and archbishop all regularly convoke synods to discuss the spiritual and material needs of their respective jurisdictions, and the meetings are usually hosted by their church. Most parish priests attend at least one synod a year, and maybe as many as one a season. Noble and monastic representatives are often invited to synods, and known Hermetic covenants might be invited to send representatives too. The synod itself takes a couple of days and, unless a character needs to travel an extraordinarily long distance, attending a synod does not disrupt his seasonal activities. Occasional absences from regional synods are willingly tolerated, but many absences will be seen as possible evidence of heretical beliefs.

## Ecumenical Councils

Ecumenical councils are special synods called and presided over by the pope. The last Ecumenical council was called in 1213 by Pope Innocent III and began in November 1215. The council was held in Rome and was attended by more than 400 bishops, the heads of the military orders, and over 800 abbots and deans of chapters. Envoys were sent by most of the major nobles of Mythic Europe and several attended in person, but there was little participation by the Greek Church. A number of magi also attended the council in the retinue of either lay or clerical dignitaries. As far as the Order of Hermes is aware, these magi only witnessed proceedings, none are known to have interfered in the council using magic. The council process took about two weeks, and its main purposes were

to make ready for a new crusade, to issue new Church doctrines, and to consolidate the pope's reforms of the Church and canon law.

There have been twelve Ecumenical councils: Nicaea I (325), Constantinople I (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople II (553), Constantinople III (680-681), Nicaea II (787), Constantinople IV (869), Lateran I (1123), Lateran II (1139), Lateran III (1179), and Lateran IV (1215). If your saga follows history, the next Ecumenical council is held in Lyons. It is convened to excommunicate and depose the Emperor Frederick II, and to call a new crusade against the Saracens and Mongols. Another council is held in Lyons in 1274; it effects a (temporary) reunion with the Greek Church and refines the rules for papal elections.

# Petitioning the Church

In Mythic Europe, the Church has a lot of resources that your characters may want to use. Perhaps they want to borrow money or land, exhume a body, move a church, build a new church, excommunicate an enemy, appoint an ally to the bishopric, have a departed friend made a saint, or have a crusade declared against their enemies. As the Church is a bureaucracy, it can be mobilized to do all of these things and more. However, *because* the Church is a bureaucracy, it also takes time and effort to access its resources. Of course, the higher a character is in the Church hierarchy the more independent

authority he has, but even a bishop must sometimes seek the permission or help of the papacy.

The following rules can help the troupe decide whether a character can convince the Church to take some particular action. The rules can be used both for clergy and also for outsiders (peasants, nobles, and magi, for example) who are trying to sway Church decisions.

Petitions can form the basis of rewarding stories, but sometimes your troupe will just be interested in whether or not a petition to the Church is successful, and not want to spend a long time on roleplaying events peripheral to the main story. These rules are intended to help in such circumstances. On the other hand, if you choose to tell stories about dealing with the Church, then these rules can be used as a guide to the sorts of resour-

es that a character needs to get certain things done.

## The Petition Total

The basic mechanic is to generate a Petition Total that is compared to an Ease Factor. If the Petition Total equals or exceeds the Ease Factor, then the request is granted by the appropriate officers of the Church.

### PETITION CHURCH:

#### Petition Total vs Petition Ease Factor

The following are example Ease Factors for petitions. The list is not exhaustive, it is merely a guide.

## Modifiers to the Petition Total

The following modifiers apply to both a written and audience petition.

Some of the modifiers require the troupe to judge whether something is "significant." Rather than provide hard rules for this, it is best for the troupe's players to use their own judgment based on the circumstances of the petition and their saga.

Some of the modifiers add a bonus if the petition is supported by arguments based on Ability Scores. To determine whether the argument is successful, roll as follows:

#### ARGUMENT SUCCESS:

**Int + Ability Score + stress die vs Ease Factor of 9**

If the argument is successful, the bonus is gained. If the argument botches, subtract the bonus from the Petition Total; it is a penalty instead. The storyguide may modify the Ease Factor of this test depending on the quality of the argument.

Some of the modifiers require the petition to be supported by other characters (a bishop, a king, etc). Gaining the support of these individuals creates opportunities for the troupe to tell stories. Gathering this support also takes time, so in

some cases it may take many years for the character to gather all the support that he needs for a successful petition.

Modifiers are as follows, if the petition is supported by certain people or circumstances.

#### Modifier: +1

Support: The testimony of a significant number of individuals, a priest or deacon\*, a knight\*\*, magical evidence\*\*\*

#### Modifier: +1 to +3

Support: A significant donation to the Church, an argument based on Civil and Canon Law, an argument based on Artes Liberales (Logic), an argument based on Intrigue

#### Modifier: +3

Support: A holy vision, a senior clergyman (bishop, abbot, abbess, archdeacon, etc.)\*, a nobleman (baron, count, etc.)\*\*

#### Modifier: +6

Support: One or more miracles, an archbishop or higher ranked official\*, a king (duke, earl, or emperor)\*\*

#### Modifier: Variable Bonus

Support: The character has a positive reputation with the Church, spell effects that make the petition more persuasive\*\*\*

#### Modifier: Variable Penalty

Support: The character has a negative reputation with the Church

\* These modifiers are not cumulative with each other; use the highest that applies, once only.

\*\* These modifiers are not cumulative with each other; use the highest that applies, once only.

\*\*\* Magical evidence includes the results of scrying effects that are intended to show the Church it should act in a particular way (for example, InMe effects that show a character is innocent of a crime is magical evidence). Spell effects to make a petition more persuasive are spell effects (successfully) cast on the clergy who are making decisions concerning the petition (for example, ReMe effects to cause the bishop to look favorably on a petition).



**Ease Factor: 3**

**Petition:** A marriage blessing.

**Ease Factor: 6**

**Petition:** Access to the parish crypt; access to the parish library (possibly just a single book, the missal); convince a priest to travel two days to administer last rites; enroll a child in a parish school; grant pilgrims a letter of safe passage.

**Ease Factor: 9**

**Petition:** Access to the bishop's chambers; access to the cathedral library; act to protect a local minority (such as Jews) from persecution; annul a marriage between common folk (given appropriate grounds); appeal an ordination exam; appoint a character to a vacant benefice; assist in a Quaesitorial investigation; attempt to interfere in secular justice to show leniency to a person sentenced to death; commission an extension to a cathedral; dispensation to reach a clerical grade despite not meeting one of the grade's criteria; establish a chapel; excommunicate a freeman or a clergyman of a lower rank than priest; exhume a corpse; license for absence from a clergyman's benefice; move a parish's celebration of a saint's feast day; swap benefices with another priest.

**Ease Factor: 12**

**Petition:** Excommunicate a magus or a priest; move a church to a new location; rent land to a Hermetic covenant.

**Ease Factor: 15**

**Petition:** Consecrate a parish church; excommunicate a nobleman; interdict a town.

**Ease Factor: 18**

**Petition:** Appeal the election of a bishop; establish a monastery.

**Ease Factor: 21**

**Petition:** Create a new diocese; crown a king; excommunicate a bishop.

**Ease Factor: 24**

**Petition:** Change or reform canon law (priests can marry, for example); interdict an entire kingdom.

## Henri of Toulouse's Petition

One night Henri of Toulouse has a vision in which he builds, stone by stone, a monastery on a hill overlooking a gently winding river. Some weeks later, while traveling between two towns, Henri finds the exact location. To found the monastery he directs his scribe to write a petition to the papal curia. In order to make a convincing case, Henri needs a Petition Total of 18 or greater:

- Henri's scribe has a Com + Church Lore Total of 4.
- Henri is a wealthy merchant and can afford to pay for the construction of the monastery and to pay a generous benefice to the new abbot (which the storyguide decides is a +3 significant donation).
- Henri is interviewed by the bishop, who establishes that the original vision was a holy one and also gives his support to the monastery (+3 holy vision; +3 support of senior clergyman).

- Henri then visits the court of the Count of Toulouse who is impressed with Henri's dedication and gives his support to the project (+3 support of a nobleman).
- Next, Henri meets with the monks of a Benedictine monastery in Italy who agree to send some of their number to colonize the new monastery site (+1 testimony of a significant number of individuals).
- Finally, Henri notes in his petition that the site is further than two days' travel from the nearest chapel, and so the monastery chapel will serve travelers that pass through the region (+2 argument based on Civil and Canon Law).

This gives the petition a Petition Total of 19, which is a convincing case. For the troupe, Henri's attempts to gain all this support are opportunities to tell stories.

## The Petition of the Parish of Long Melford

In 1220 the parishioners of Long Melford have a late harvest, and it is obvious that faithfully observing all the scheduled religious festivals will cause the parishioners to starve over the winter. Thus, their priest writes a petition to the bishop for permission to move the saints' feast days until the winter. This requires a Petition total of 9, which is met by:

- The priest has a Com + Church Lore Total of 5.

- The parishioners testify that moving the feasts is necessary (+1 testimony of a significant number of individuals).
- The local knight gives his support for the petition (+1 support of a knight).
- The priest makes the argument that the parishioners will suffer over the winter if the feasts are not moved (+2 argument based on Artes Liberales (Logic)).

**Ease Factor: 30**

**Petition:** Declare a deceased person a saint.

**Ease Factor: 42**

**Petition:** Call a crusade; found a religious order.

There are two ways to generate a Petition Total: one involves writing letters to Church officials, and the other depends on gaining an audience with Church of-

ficials. Even if your character is actually using both methods, decide which method your character is mostly using and use that total.

**WRITTEN PETITION TOTAL:**  
Com + Church Lore + Modifiers

**AUDIENCE PETITION TOTAL:**  
Pre + Church Lore + Modifiers

Note that there is no die roll added to the Petition Total.

Usually a character may only make one petition each season. Making a petition does not interfere with other seasonal activities. However, if the character needs to travel to Rome, or seeks audiences with Church officials elsewhere, then his travels could interfere with other seasonal activities. Petitions are often made directly to the papacy, where they are dealt with by the machinery of the papal curia, but petitions with an Ease Factor of 15 or less can be made to the local bishop, and those with an Ease Factor of 6 or less can be made to the local priest.

Your character does not need to be literate to write letters to the Church; he merely needs to find a scribe who can read and write letters on his behalf. In this case, use the Com + Church Lore total of the scribe rather than the applicant.

An audience petition is a social interaction so penalties for The Gift apply to this total, but they do not apply to a written petition. Of course, if a magus meets Church officials directly he could take the opportunity to cast spells to encourage officials to make the correct decision.

### Acting Without Authority

A bishop (or equivalently ranked character) may grant any petition or take any action with an Ease Factor of up to 15 without consulting his peers or superiors.

A priest (or equivalently ranked character) may grant any petition or take any action with an Ease Factor of up to 6 without consulting his peers or superiors.

However, such decisions will not be automatically supported if the Church hierarchy is questioned later. For example, a priest is perfectly within his rights to grant a magus access to the parish church's crypt, but he will still be held to account if it is discovered that the magus has been using this access to cast unwanted spells on the corpses in the crypt. Therefore, priests and bishops may still seek permission for doubtful actions that are technically within their remit.

A character may also take actions that

he does not have authority for. Whether this causes a problem or not depends on whether the character's superiors find out, the personalities of the characters involved, and the particular circumstances.

### Appealing a Petition

Your characters may appeal another character's successful petition. An appeal is treated like any other petition: a Petition Total is generated, and the Ease Factor to overturn the original petition is 3 + the Petition Total of the original successful petition.

If the appeal's Petition Total is insufficient to overturn the original petition but exceeds the original Petition Total - 3, then the papacy, or the bishop's court, will attempt to broker a compromise solution between the parties.

**EASE FACTOR TO OVERTURN A PETITION:**  
Original Petition Total + 3

**EASE FACTOR TO OPEN  
NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMPROMISE:**  
Original Petition Total - 3

If an appeal is not made in the same season as the original petition, then the appeal has a -3 penalty to its Petition Total. Politically active characters keep a close watch on the Ecclesiastical courts in order to rapidly appeal unfavorable decisions.

## Creating Game Statistics for a Church

These rules allow the troupe to describe a church using Build Points, Hooks, and Boons in the same way that a covenant can be described using these terms (see ArM5, page 68-74). Describing the churches near the covenant helps indicate how the Church may have an impact on your saga.

## Basic Church Features

Every church has an altar at which the liturgy is conducted, and it consequently has a Divine aura.

You purchase resources such as books, relics, and specialist characters with Build Points.

Each church has a number of Hooks. Hooks create stories and also provide points that may be spent on Boons for the church. Boons make the church better. Hooks and Boons can be either major (provides or costs 3 points), or minor (provides or costs 1 point). Some Hooks and Boons can be Unknown, which means that the characters living in the church are not currently aware of them. Some Hooks and Boons are about the church and its priests, while others are about the congregation and the surrounding diocese.

You may usually choose up to 10 points of Hooks for the church.

**Cathedral:** The cathedral is the seat of a bishop or archbishop. If that of an archbishop, it has a base Divine aura of 5 and 1000 Build Points. If that of a bishop, it has a base Divine aura of 5 and 500 Build Points.

**Monastery/Nunnery:** A monastery/nunnery has a base Divine Aura of 5, and 500 build points.

**Large Urban Church:** This church has a base Divine Aura of 5, and 500 build points.

**Parish Church:** A parish church has a base Divine Aura of 4, and 250 build points.

**Chapel:** A chapel has a base Divine Aura of 3, and 50 build points.

## Resources

Churches may have these resources:

### BOOKS

Every church has a copy of the missal and many churches have substantial libraries, which largely concern Church Lore,



## Some Common Christian Books

*The Bible*: Summa, Theology (Level 10, Quality 3); Summa, Church Lore (Level 3, Quality 3). See *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 86. (45 build points)

*The Parish Register*: Treat the register as a Summa, Area Lore: Parish (or Diocese) of Level 1 + 1 for every century of records, it has a Quality of 5. (5 + 3 x Level build points)

*The Missal*: Tractatus, Church Lore (Quality 7); Tractatus, Music (Qual-

ity 7). This contains instructions, text, and music for Mass. Each diocese has a slightly different version, which may each be treated as different tractatus. (14 build points)

*Breviary*: Tractatus, Church Lore (Quality 6-10). This contains instructions for the prayers to be recited at the canonical hours. Breviaries designed for parish priests (rare in 1220) are lower Quality than the versions used in monasteries. (6-10 build points)

## SPECIALISTS

Specialists are characters who serve the Church in some limited way that does not require the troupe to generate an entire character sheet. Examples include teachers in a cathedral school, scribes working on illuminated scripts, and stonemasons working on the cathedral structure. Purchase specialists using the same number of Build Points as a covenant; see *ArM5*, page 72.

## VIS

Some churches control vis sources, or have stocks of vis, which is usually tainted by the Divine (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 69). Note that just because a church controls vis sources, or even has stocks of vis, this does not necessarily mean that the clergy have any use for the vis, or are even aware of the vis.

Churches purchase vis at the Build Point cost of a covenant; see *ArM5*, page 72.

Theology, Civil and Canon Law, Area Lore, and Artes Liberales. Texts on other subjects can also sometimes be found.

Books cost a church the same number of Build Points that they cost a covenant; see *ArM5*, page 71. Note that a Bible can be purchased even though it exceeds the maximum summa level limit.

| FAITH SCORE | BUILD POINT COST |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1           | 1                |
| 2           | 3                |
| 3           | 6                |
| 4           | 10               |
| 5           | 15               |

## ENCHANTED ITEMS

Some churches have enchanted items that have been donated, found, or purchased from magi. However, it is unlikely for a church to have an enchanted item that contains more than 50 levels of effects. As churches cannot create enchanted items, it costs a church more Build Points to purchase an enchanted item than it costs a covenant.

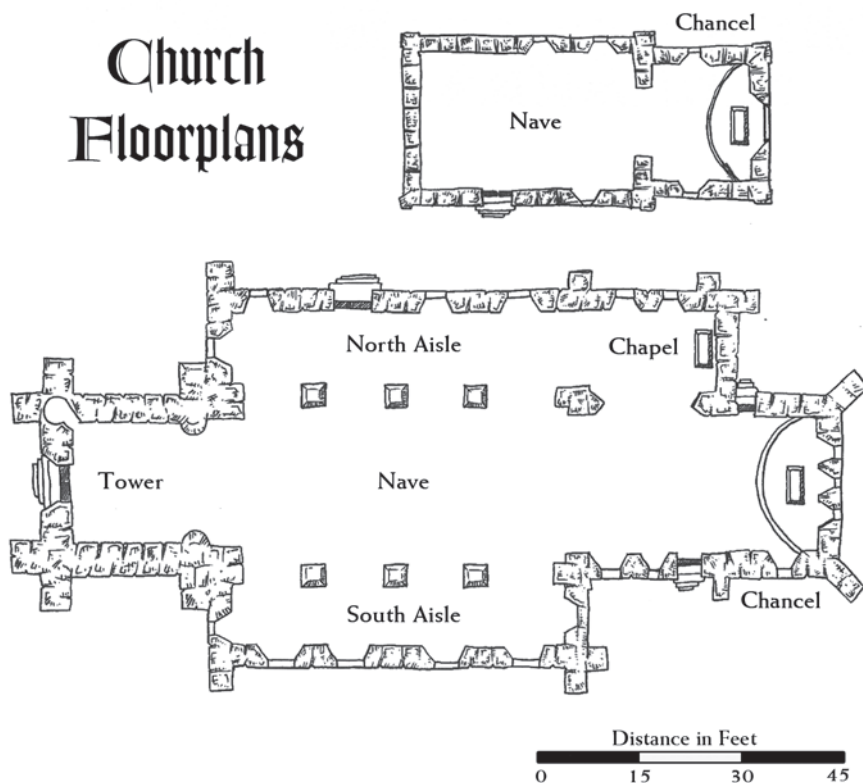
ENCHANTED ITEM COST:  
1 Build Point per Level of Effect

## RELICS

Practically every church contains a number of relics. Even a poor church should contain at least one relic interred beneath the altar. The cost of a relic depends on the Faith Score (see the chart) and its number of powers (in addition to the standard relic powers).

RELIC COST:  
Cost for Faith Score  
+ 5 Build Points per Power

## Church Floorplans



### Hooks and Boons

Most of the Hooks and Boons in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* (pages 72–74) and in *Covenants* (pages 6–27) are suitable for a church, although some may require interpretation by the troupe. Some new Hooks and Boons are provided here.

#### MAJOR CHURCH BOON: MILITARY ORDER

The church is an outpost of one of the military orders, with barracks for a number of knights and men-at-arms.

#### MINOR CHURCH BOON: ANCHORITE/ANCHORESS

The church has a small cell built in it, in which an anchorite (male) or anchoress (female) lives, devoting his or her life to wor-

ship (see Chapter 5: Women for details). The presence of the anchorite/ anchoress increases the Divine aura in the church by 1.

#### MINOR CHURCH BOON: BURIAL RIGHTS

The church or monastery has a large cemetery, and it collects a fee for conducting burials. This is worth a Typical Source of Income. Some urban parishes have no cemetery due to lack of space.

#### MINOR CHURCH BOON: CHANTRY

The church or monastery collects a substantial income for reciting Masses for the dead. Masses are held for the dead when a person is buried, one month later, and one year later. Wealthy characters often leave substantial endowments for hundreds or even thousands of additional Masses to be said, for the good of their soul. Reciting

the chantry Masses requires four seasons of work each year by a priest — for example, four priests could each perform for one season in the year. The chantry is worth a Typical Source of Income, and this Boon may be taken multiple times.

#### MINOR CHURCH BOON: CHAPTER OF CANONS

The church priests form a chapter of canons, and there are always at least half a dozen priests within the church. They collectively hold a number of benefices. This is worth a Typical Income Source.

#### MINOR CHURCH BOON: CHURCH SCHOOL

The church (usually a cathedral) has a school attached. There are many characters in minor orders attached to the church as either pupils or teachers.

## Example Churches

### URBAN PARISH

This parish is in one of the larger towns in the diocese. The town also has a substantial minority of Jews who the church canons must sometimes protect from persecution. The town guild master is a close ally of the dean, and the guild has sponsored its own altar in the church.

**Hooks:** Urban, Protector (Jews)

**Boons:** Chapter of Canons, Edifice (church tower), Local Ally (guild master), Minority (Jews).

**Resources:** Divine aura 5. Books: 150 Build Points. Relics: Two relics (Faith Score 3; each with two powers), ten minor relics (Faith Score 1). Vis Sources: 5 pawns Creo (sound of the pealing bells at Easter Mass). Specialists: 6 Canons (Church Lore 5), 2 Notaries (Profession: Scribe 5), 1 Master Stonemason (Profession: Mason 6), 8 Churchwardens (Brawl 4). (295 Build Points)

### VILLAGE PARISH

This church serves three small villages constructed on the edge of a forest, which was once a nobleman's hunting estate and is now used as a resource by the peasants. The church is very old and in a bad state of repair, which makes climbing the bell tower perilous. The decay is caused by spells cast by the lords of a faerie court, who haunt the dark places in the forest. In addition, perhaps due to the presence of the faerie court, unless the church relics are carried on the perambulation the Divine aura reduces to 3 for the following year. The curate's cousin is the bishop of the diocese.

**Hooks:** Absent Rector, Crumbling, Faerie Court, Flickering Aura.

**Boons:** Powerful Ally (bishop); Chase.

**Resources:** Divine aura 4. Books: *Bible*, *Missal*, *Parish Register* (Level 7). Relics: one relic (Faith Score 2; with two

powers), three minor relics (Faith Score 1). Vis Sources: 3 pawns Animal (first boar of the hunt), 5 pawns Imaginem (mid-summer dawn light penetrating the bell tower). (141 Build Points)

### COVENANT CHAPEL

The chapel is a separate building built in a shaded glen a few minutes' walk from the covenant tower. It was once the site of a pagan temple. The parish clerk secretly reports to the bishop on the affairs of the priest.

**Hooks:** Fallen Temple, Spies.

**Boons:** Burial Rights, Seclusion.

**Resources:** Divine Aura 3. Books: *Breviary* (Quality 6), *Missal*. Relics: Saint's Thigh Bone (Faith Score 3; Cure Blindness power). (29 Build Points)





## The Church



### MAJOR CHURCH HOOK: CORRUPT

The church priests are corrupt. The church has an Infernal aura instead of a Divine one. If the corruption is discovered by the archdeacon or bishop, the priests will be excommunicated and replaced.

### MAJOR CHURCH HOOK: HERETICS

The church priests have heretical beliefs. If discovered, the church is likely to be frequently visited by the archdeacon, bishop, or even a papal legate. The priests run the risk of excommunication and even crusade.

### MAJOR CHURCH HOOK: JURISDICTION

The church is a cathedral, archdeaconry, or deanery, and has jurisdiction over dozens or even hundreds of subordinate churches. Regional synods are held at the church at least once a year.

### MINOR CHURCH HOOK: ABSENT RECTOR

The priest who collects the benefice does not live in the parish. The priest's duties are undertaken by a curate.

### MINOR CHURCH HOOK: INCOMPETENT CURATE

The church curate is incompetent. If discovered, the curate may be removed and the church will be subject to many visitations. This cannot be taken for a major church.

### MINOR CHURCH HOOK: VAST SANCTUARY

By custom, anyone may seek sanctuary within a vast area of land several miles around the church (this may be the entire parish). This means that the priest is often in conflict with the sheriff.



## Chapter Four

# The Rule & Religious Life

This chapter discusses the life of the religious of western Mythic Europe. In the east the religious of the Orthodox faith follow different traditions, but even there monasteries of the Western orders can be found.

The role of the contemplative life is to observe the canonical hours, a series of services that form a regular daily cycle,

devote oneself to prayer for both the self and the world outside the monastery, and to serve God.

Religious houses play an important role in the world outside their walls, providing much education and health care to the wider community, and forming centers of scholarship as well as supporting the indigent and disabled.



## Benedictine Life

The majority of monks in western Mythic Europe follow the Rule of Saint Benedict. The assumption is that in your saga the Benedictine order is neither corrupt, nor necessarily filled with holy monks. Instead, like any institution, it is a mix of good and bad, saints and sinners. Depending upon the way you want to portray the Church in your stories, you may wish to alter this to suit your individual saga's themes. As most of the religious orders follow variants of the Rule of Saint Benedict, this "standard" is set out in some detail.

## Becoming a Monk or Nun

Those who wish to join a monastery or nunnery are actively discouraged and treated harshly for four or five days upon their arrival, to ensure they are truly committed to the vocation. If they persist they are admitted, and become novices. Their clothes are kept, however, and put in storage, in case they should be expelled before taking vows.

Even a priest who wishes to join the community must undergo the same process, as must a noble, irrespective of rank. Monks who seek admission are treated as guests, and may join the monastery as long as their previous abbot gives written permission and the abbot of the new house consents.

In the past, children were admitted as oblates, educated and raised within the monastery, and on reaching maturity were given the opportunity, if suitable, of taking vows and becoming monks. This process is now considered to be highly question-



able, and was outlawed by a ruling of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, though some monasteries still have oblates. No girl of less than six years of age should be admitted to a nunnery, since she must be able to learn to read, write, and obey the rules; the nunnery must not be used as a nursery or school, expected to raise and educate girls.

Monks are expected to obey three vows made on formal admission to a monastery. However, after applying to join it is necessary for a monk to spend one year serving as a novice or junior monk before the vows are sworn, and during that year he can choose to leave the monastery if he wishes. In the probationary year he is not counted as a full member of the community. Many decide that the religious life (a term meaning the vocation of a monk or nun) is not for them, and depart on good terms.

The three chief vows that are sworn as solemn oaths are for chastity, poverty, and obedience. These are common to almost all religious.

The vow of obedience entails observ-

## A Note on Terms

The term "religious" is the technical term for monks and nuns. "Houses" in the religious sense are simply monasteries or nunneries. In the 13th century, the word "convent" applies to the body of monks (or nuns) who comprise the monastery (or nunnery), and the place where nuns live is always a nunnery. Other terms can cause confusion; for example, a "monastery" can be an abbey ruled by an abbot, or a priory ruled by a prior, but the monks live and pray the same way.

ing the Rule of Saint Benedict (or other applicable rule) and the will of the abbot, without question. It means subjecting oneself to the discipline of the community, and becoming a full part of the community.

The vow of humility or poverty is a central part of the life of the religious,

## Story Seed: The Novice's Nuptials

The son of a friend of the covenant, after being disappointed in love, has run away and joined a monastery. The misunderstanding has subsequently been cleared up, his lover now wishes to marry him, and his father is desperate to get news to him. The abbot, who believes the boy has a true vocation, is blocking messages and letters. Can the characters find a way to communicate to the lad, or perhaps get his clothes to act as an Arcane Connection? What if he does not wish to leave the monastery?

and if one should err he must demonstrate penitence by laying flat on the floor before all the convent, arms spread out in a cross, and confessing his sin. Poverty means renouncing any hope of inheritance, and handing over all one's worldly goods to the house. Everything the religious use,

## The Opus Dei, Divine Office

The recitation of the Divine Office — daily prayers recited at the canonical hours, also called the Liturgy of the Hours — is as follows.

**Midnight, Matins:** Roused from sleep by the sacristan with a bell, the monks attend the first service of the day. In the summer months this is held an hour or so before dawn in the original Rule of Saint Benedict, and some houses celebrate matins an hour before dawn all year round — the practice varies.

**12:30 am:** Matins ends, and the monks pray or walk in cloisters. According to the rule, they "may go out for the necessities of nature."

**1 am Lauds:** Another service, after which the monks return to bed. In the summer it might be held at dawn.

**7 am Prime:** Monks are roused from bed for another service.

**8 am:** Mass for non-monks, then ablutions and breakfast. The monastery gates open, and Mass is celebrated

for servants and lay folk. The monks meanwhile "break their fast" with their morning meal and wash. During breakfast a passage from a hagiography, the psalter, or other devotional book is read. Breakfast is bread or gruel plus beer or watered wine.

**9 am Terce:** A morning service is now sung, and today's designated chapter from the scriptures is read. After this, there is a meeting of the community in the chapel, where duties are assigned, disciplinary proceedings conducted, and other matters settled.

**9:30 am:** The monks begin their daily duties

**11 am Dinner:** Monks eat very little meat, though fish may be eaten sometimes. Abbots may enjoy meat more frequently and also good wine, rather than the vegetables and beer of the monks. The meal is eaten while the scriptures are read.

**Midday, Sext:** Back to the chapel for this service.

**12:30 pm:** A break. Monks pray or walk in cloisters, and according to the Rule "may go out for the necessities of nature."

**3 pm Nones:** Afternoon service provides a break from duties.

**5 pm Vespers:** The service marking the end of the day's labors; the gates are often locked now.

**5:30 pm:** Evening meal accompanied by readings from a devotional book.

**6 pm:** Chapterhouse readings. The monks gather in the chapterhouse to hear today's readings from the scriptures.

**7 pm Compline:** The evening service, after which the monks retire to bed by half past seven.

The rule, while it varies by locality and slightly by order, and is enforced with varying degrees of rigor, provides storyguides with a fairly good guide as to what monks will be doing and what limitations are upon them at any given time that characters choose to visit.

## Monastic Gardens

While the cloister garth is almost invariably simple, with a lawn and pleasantly scented green herbs where the climate allows, and maybe one or two trees, monasteries and nunneries lead the way in horticulture. Techniques for irrigation, soil enrichment, land reclamation, and grafting have been adopted, developed, and exploited. Emphasis is on the cultivation of plants for food, for both residents and visitors, since self-sufficiency and hospitality are in line with the Benedictine Rule. As well as herbs and vegetables for the kitchens, hay, rushes, and strewing herbs are needed. Beehives are always kept for the wax required to make the best church candles, and for their honey, as well.

An orchard of fruit and nut trees is frequently planted in or around a cemetery, especially in southern countries where the Islamic vision of the gardens of Paradise has influenced taste. Planting is in straight rows as formal patterns are favored. If there is no orchard, a few fruit trees are grown nonetheless, and vines are grown where the climate permits. Rich abbeys have gardens, orchards,

and vineyards extending beyond their boundary walls. The orchard of Llanthony Priory in Wales extends over twelve acres with hundreds of trees, while that of Saint Gall in the Alps has just thirteen trees planted among the graves.

Medicinal plants are equally important. These are grown in the physic garden in small beds divided by paths in a regular layout. A closed-off area is used to grow poisonous plants. Close by is the infirmary garden, which is designed for the patients to relax; benches, pools with decorative fish, and attractive flowerbeds are featured. Gardens for pleasure, or herbers, are attached to the guest quarters also, and there is an area of grass close by to graze visitors' mounts. An abbot or prior with private rooms also has his own garden for pleasure and relaxation, where sweet-smelling herbs grow alongside plants chosen for their flowers, and shade is provided by trees and climbing plants trained over frames. Garden designs and planting schemes are often chosen for biblical significance; for example, twelve trees in a row represent the apostles.

even their habits, belongs to the house, and personal possessions are banned.

The vow of chastity entails celibacy, no relationships with the opposite sex, and a breaking of relationships with friends and families, as well. The religious enters into a completely new life and discards the old. This does not mean, however, that family visits or correspondence are completely discouraged, but they are subject to the abbot's approval.

The monk, on taking vows, has his head shaved leaving a ring of hair called a tonsure. A nun has her hair cut short.

## The Rule of Saint Benedict

Monks live under a rule, which lays down a complex set of regulations for community life. The most famous and

most widespread rule in Mythic Europe is that of Saint Benedict. The rule also sets out in some detail the day-to-day cycle of life in the monastery, for monks and nuns live by a timetable and are deeply aware of the passage of time.

While the rule may seem very severe, it is attractive to many as an escape from the uncertainties of life in dangerous times, and offers food, shelter, education, stability, companionship, and the chance to learn and develop spiritually. It is an extremely attractive lifestyle to many, and it has produced a flowering of deep and fulfilling devotion. Monks are often very happy in their lot, but there are always exceptions.

### DAILY ROUTINE

The daily routine is marked by bells, which summon monks to devotions and inform them of meal times and work periods.

Every day apart from Sunday the monks labor, whether copying books in the scriptorium, studying religious works, cleaning, cooking, repairing buildings or clothing, or working in the fields and gardens. A monk with whom characters seek to speak may be out on a journey to distribute alms, visit the sick, or instruct a vicar, or he might be in the monastery but occupied with teaching duties. There is no manual labor on Sunday, only reading and study.

### DISCIPLINE

Monks and nuns are expected to obey their superiors without hesitation as a sign of their humility, and to be respectful to each other. None may strike or insult another brother, or belittle them. Silence is practiced for long periods, and even when speech is allowed, jokes, gossip, and idle banter are specifically forbidden. Long silences are used to teach discipline with respect to speech, with the right to speak conferred by the abbot as a privilege. Speech may be used when working, and is allowed at various specified times; at other times, monks use a series of hand gestures to communicate with one another. This sign language is a silent language that is not understood by outsiders. Monks may not speak to guests and visitors, but may offer a blessing if spoken to, and may inform them politely of the rule.

Younger monks are addressed by their elders as monk, as in "Monk Thomas, fetch the hoe," and older monks are addressed as elder, as in "Elder John, please tell me the way to the village." The abbot is referred to by the title lord and abbot, as in "Lord Abbot Samson." However, age is counted not from birth, but from joining the monastery. This reckoning is used to determine the order of precedence among the monks at all times, but it may confuse visitors to see an elderly monk address a much younger man as "elder."

If a monk is commanded to perform an impossible task, he may meekly state his case as to why it is beyond his powers. If the abbot insists he attempt it, then he must endeavor to succeed and trust in God to help him. No monk may question the abbot's decision on this, or any other



## PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS

matter, or attempt to defend another monk by joining in his rebellion.

Pride is a deadly snare. Humility includes humbly submitting to God's will and renouncing all worldly desires, and breaking the rules is often a sign of pride. One in ten monks is appointed a dean of order, responsible for keeping good order among his brethren. He quietly speaks to them if their behavior lacks in some way, or reports serious offenses to the abbot. It is sinful to fail to reprove a brother or sister seen to be in error. If a monk persists in error after the abbot speaks with him privately, he is then publicly rebuked in front of the whole monastery, and if he continues thereafter, he is punished.

The usual punishment is first exclusion from communal meals — the monk is forced to eat alone at a later time and, as meals are social occasions, this is a severe penalty. A nun excluded from the community for a transgression must reside where the abbess says, with one other nun, until repentant and forgiven.

If further offenses occur, or a graver offense must be punished, then a monk is totally debarred from speaking or being spoken to, or communicating in any way with any of the other monks, who all ignore him. If this fails he may be whipped, and if that is not sufficient, he is expelled from the monastery. Nuns and younger boys receive more merciful sentences, including enforced fasting. If an expelled monk or one who has left returns and makes amends for his faults, he is readmitted, even up to the third time, but thereafter he is refused entry.

Nuns often argue, under the influence of the devil. Quarrels must be ended as soon as possible. Anyone who injures a sister, by word or deed, must ask for pardon. A nun who refuses to forgive must be excluded from the community until she repents. The prioress who uses harsh words to a nun who is at fault when correcting her need not ask forgiveness from the nun, even if she is more severe than necessary to preserve discipline, but must ask God to forgive her.

Numerous examples of story ideas based on disciplinary problems are presented in Chapter 5: The Women, Misbehavior, many of which are applicable to male characters, also.

Monks are clothed appropriately for the local climate, with two woolen robes and cowls each, and a pair of sandals. These are provided by the monastery, and repaired or replaced as required when worn out. Also provided by the monastery are stockings, girdle, knife, pen, needle, towel, and writing tablet; however, a monk found keeping private property beyond this, especially if not specifically allowed to do so by the abbot, faces severe disciplinary measures and loss of all the above, leaving him naked but for an undergarment while he does penance. Curiously, the keeping of personal pets is widely accepted and common — dogs, songbirds, and even monkeys and squirrels are kept by both monks and nuns.

Religious may not give or receive gifts or letters except with the abbot's direct approval, and all gifts are taken by the porter

to the abbot on arrival, who may distribute them to the intended recipient, or to any other as he sees fit.

Any wealth owned by someone entering the religious life should be humbly offered to the abbess for the benefit of the nunnery. Those who enter a nunnery after marriage must dispose of all their worldly wealth before taking the veil. Those who inherit after joining the nunnery must dispose of their inheritance appropriately.

No nun should have a personal servant, but may be helped as necessary by younger members of the community.

## Food and Drink

Two different types of meal are prepared, in case one meal is not liked by some of the monks, so they may choose. A

### Sign Language (Monastery)

Sign Language is a number of related languages used by monks to communicate with each other when speech is forbidden. A score of 5 allows fluency equivalent to a native spoken language Ability, while a score of 1 represents simple everyday monastic terms only. While it is usually clear that sign language is being used, characters may choose to use it subtly so that it is not obvious that they are speaking about someone present. A score is in the language employed in a specific monastery (or nunnery). It defaults to an Ability in the language of other monasteries of the same order at -3, except in the case of

daughter houses and the parent house, where the relationship is -1, and those sharing a parent house (-2). Other orders give a penalty of -4, as the language has diverged considerably. So, for example, a Cistercian and a Cluniac monk are only likely to be able to share very basic information. Within a particular house, however, the language adapts to local needs, and it can have a surprisingly rich vocabulary for normal situations. The unexpected and unique may prove impossible to convey even if totally fluent — there is probably no sign language for "Are the guests casting spells in the Chapterhouse?" for example.

### Story Seed: Signs in Silence

The characters are staying at a monastery where they believe an Infernal cult may be operating. Unfortunately, the abbot is suspicious of them because of The Gift, and has imposed strict silence upon the monks. (Monks may only speak to guests with the Abbot's express permission, anyway.) The investigation has

run into a wall of silence: all around them sign language is employed, but what is being said? Can the characters manage to understand somehow, or find a way to communicate with the monks without spoken words, and avert disaster? The passing of notes by monks, if observed, is punished as a breach of the rule.

pound of bread is given per day, and three meals in total, with fruits and vegetables that are in season. The job of preparing food and serving in the kitchen is rotated each week, so only the sick and the abbot do not have to do it. It is an unpopular job, but is rewarded with a little extra food and drink. Those who prepare the meal eat in the kitchen after the other monks have finished. Children and the elderly also receive larger portions, and the sick get the best possible food for their conditions. Excess and drunkenness should be avoided, but alcohol is, of course, served as it is throughout Mythic Europe, in the form of wine or beer. Abstinence and self-denial are expected of monks, but in Lent every monk goes to the abbot and swears to give up one additional thing for the forty days. Only the sick and the very young or old are exempt.

A reader is appointed each week to read at meals, starting on Sunday, and another monk is charged that week with ringing the bells that punctuate the day.

The abbot always dines with guests and travelers alone in his lodgings. If there are no guests he may choose to invite some of the brethren to eat with him, and they may have the privilege of enjoying meat and superior wine.

### SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

The monks are provided with beds arranged in dormitories. In a small monastery they may all share the same room, but in larger monasteries several dormitories, each housing ten to twenty monks, are provided. Each dormitory has a senior monk appointed to keep good order. Each monk sleeps fully dressed, but removes his eating knife to prevent any dangerous accidents. A straw mattress, a blanket, a coverlet, and a pillow are given to each monk, who will have that bed as his own from then on. The abbot examines the beds without warning from time to time, according to the rule, to prevent personal goods from being concealed there. Dormitory inspections are common, even though the dormitory supervisors should keep order.

### HOSPITALITY AND VISITORS

Guests are expected because many travelers avail themselves of monastic hospitality and, by the rule, none may be turned away. They are generally invited to meet the monks at the chapter meeting, and be formally received by the abbot, who is expected to pray with them, and then exchange the kiss of peace. In practice only important guests are usually greeted this way; in houses on important routes, there are so many guests that they are entirely dealt with by deputies. The abbot invites important guests to dine with him in his quarters, unless the monks are fasting, when the guests eat alone. In theory, and by the rule, the monks wash their guests' feet, serving the poorest with humility, but travelers may find the custom is not always observed.

The guest quarters are situated away from the monks' quarters, so that they do not interfere in the smooth running of the monastery, and certain monks and some servants of the monastery are assigned to look after guests, and meet their needs. Other monks may not speak to guests, but may offer a blessing if spoken to and may inform them politely of the rule that forbids conversation.

### THE INFIRMARY

Sick monks are given a room of their own, meat with meals, baths as desired, and they have another monk appointed to look after them while, in ideal circumstances, everything possible is done to restore them to full health. Larger houses have an infirmary; the role of infirmarian is often unpopular, as this person eats in the area where the sick are kept and has limited contact with his fellows while looking after his charges.

Not all infirmaries are given over to the care of the sick. Large monasteries might have a detached infirmary, where elderly, indigent, and unhealthy individuals live and are cared for by the monks, receiving alms. In the case of the elderly whose children have now inherited their estates, as they are no longer capable of the work needed for sustenance, they may well have

made payments during their working lives to the monastery in return for a promise that they would receive care in their dotage. Others are simply charity cases taken in by the monks, who gladly receive donations toward their upkeep.

Nonetheless, a monastery always has individuals knowledgeable in Medicine and Chirurgery, and herbs and medicines are often available here.

### WORK OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY

Monks are often called by duties to go on a journey, or they may be working too far away to get back for one of the seven divine offices. If so, they must perform it reverently on their knees wherever they happen to be. Most monks know the Psalter by heart. Monks sent out on business should always try to return the same day, if at all possible, and should eat nothing outside unless specifically allowed to do so by their abbot.

If a long journey is undertaken, the other monks should pray for their absent brother daily, and on his return the traveler must go to the chapel, prostrate himself, and give account of his sins. He may not speak of anything he saw or heard outside of the monastery to other monks, though one assumes he reports fully to the abbot.

## Monastic Roles and Positions

The monastery is a complex and completely self-supporting community, at least in theory. However, by the 13th century the Benedictine houses often rule large estates gained through donations, and some abbots are also lords of manors and even have knights owning them feudal dues and military service. It is by this time common for monasteries to possess servants, and also considerable numbers of peasants who work the fields for them, giving them more time to work on copying books, prayer, and good works at best, and to spend in moral laxity and luxury at worst.

Houses are very complex in their organization, and the exact titles and roles of







## Story Seed: Electoral Difficulties

When a great monastery, holding fifty knights' service and many manors, is saddened by the death of their abbot, the monks meet to elect a new father to lead them. At this point, however, representatives of the king or of a great noble arrive, claiming that they have a charter dating from the endowment of the monastery that allows them to appoint the abbot. They break up the chapter, and a strange, foreign monk is presented. Shortly afterwards, the local

bishop reveals he has the right to appoint the abbot, and his brother is put forward. The situation deadlocked, both candidates head off to Rome to seek papal confirmation of their claim, and the monks elect their own, third candidate. One or more of the candidates wishes the covenant to lend assistance to their cause, and threatens serious repercussions if subtle aid is not provided. How can the magi resolve the situation without breaking their oaths?

the senior religious varies between houses, depending on local conditions. All monasteries, however, share certain roles like abbot, and other positions generally vary depending on needs. In some large monasteries, even the most minor roles are comparatively powerful.

The most important roles are described here. Other posts exist depending on the circumstances of the house, and in many smaller houses the abbot or prior fills many positions in person. The power, privileges, and responsibility of each position also vary from house to house.

### THE ABBESS OR ABBOT

The abbot is effectively the house's ruler, its spiritual father, and is responsible for the spiritual and physical welfare of all the monks. It is a position of great responsibility, and abbots are often extremely powerful, even in national politics, though this varies with the wealth and influence of their monastery. Strictly speaking, the abbot is first among equals, and while his status is as head of the monastery, he is technically a servant to all. The rule is also clear that the abbot must be fair and evenhanded, saying "Let him make no distinction of persons in the monastery. Let him not love one more than another, unless he finds them more exemplary in good works and obedience." Although the abbot holds supreme authority, the monks should be consulted on important matters. When a decision is required, such as if the player characters make a request of the monastery, the ab-

bot should call all the monks before him in the chapterhouse and explain the situation, then listen to their advice. Regardless of the opinions expressed, the abbot is not bound by them; he alone takes the final decision, by which the community must abide. The abbot holds his role for life.

The abbot is usually elected by the whole community of monks. Electoral disputes are common, and the pope is often called upon as final arbiter. King John of England notoriously intervened in the election of the abbot of Bury Saint Edmunds in 1210, refusing to accept the elected abbot and claiming the right to make the appointment himself. Such problems are not uncommon. Nobles at times try to influence the decision, and it often proves disruptive to the order of the monastery. Sometimes a bishop has the right to appoint, and this can be unpopular as well. It is also not uncommon for a patron or a motherhouse to claim right of veto over the election of an abbot.

On election, the new abbot effectively leaves the community of monks, and is welcomed into his new house, or even a palace, where he is expected to live in considerable style. He must wine and dine not only all guests but also the local nobility, whom he often equals in status and may well be related to. Great abbots are princes of the Church, often as powerful locally as a cardinal or baron, and may command a considerable number of knights. For example, the abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, in England, controls well over a hundred and fifty manors and has fifty knights as vassals. The shock of

the change in lifestyle from one of obedience and extreme temperance to fine wines, meat, and lavish entertaining must be unsettling for many new abbots, especially as they now also have to cope with a new role in the politics of the world that they left many years before.

The larger nunneries are headed by the abbess. In a world where, outside a covenant, women typically have little power or authority, the abbess is an important exception, and represents the most powerful position a woman can attain (unless she is a strong regent for a child king). She has responsibility for the souls of the nuns in her care above all, acting as spiritual guide and disciplinarian, but also for their bodily needs. Administrative skills and financial acumen similar to those associated with Profession: Steward are useful. The abbess of a rich nunnery may have extensive lands under her control, and collects rent from those who live on and farm it.

It is her duty to set a good example. She should not show favoritism, and she should not abuse her right to separate lodgings by living significantly more comfortably and eating more lavishly than the others. She ought to handle the nunnery's finances with care, and must represent the nunnery in dealings with the outside world. She has a reputation of level 4, either good or bad, in both the local community and the Church.

The Abilities for an abbot or abbess should include Leadership. Intrigue and Church Lore are important for the abbot, who must protect the interests of his abbey against pressures from the world outside, and especially townsfolk and nobles who would impinge upon the abbey's estates and privileges. The character probably has Folk Ken and Etiquette, perhaps specialized in nuns or monks, or, if he has important contacts outside the walls, maybe in senior clergy or nobility. These Abilities are also important to an abbot who must deal with the bishop's visitations and papal legates, as well as every passing lord who seeks hospitality, and even kings and queens. An abbot or abbess probably has some knowledge of Theology and Civil and Canon Law, and may have Philosophiae and Dominion Lore. Such a character is likely to have Temporal Influence and Social Contacts with other



senior clergy, and with the nobility at a level depending on his or her family background. Details of the appropriate Social Status Virtue, Senior Clergy, are presented in Chapter 2: Diocese.

### THE PRIOR OR PRIORESS

A prior's role can be hard to define. Second in command to the abbot (except in a priory, where he is its head and the abbot lives at the motherhouse), he deals with many issues of administration and supervises the abbey's dealings with the outside world. Often priors find themselves in dispute with the abbot, a situation that can lead to factions and power struggles. The prior mainly deals with relations with the nearby towns, provisioning, and administration, while the abbot deals with internal matters, as well as politics and important outside affairs. It is usual for a prior to be appointed by either the abbot, the patron, or the motherhouse, from among the best monks in the monastery. Large houses may have a sub-prior as his deputy, and even a third prior as the sub-prior's assistant.

Players should pick from the same range of Abilities for an abbot or abbess. The appropriate Social Status Virtue is Religious, unless the prior is unusually powerful and influential, when Senior Clergy may be more suitable.

### THE TERRAR

The terrar is the monastery's land agent, responsible for estates and lands. Nunneries are rarely rich enough to require one. If no suitably skilled monk is available, a professional layperson is employed in this capacity. It is a demanding job, ensuring

that tithes are paid, that manors are properly productive, and balancing the accounts. It is also a job that provides excellent opportunities for the avaricious to steal from the monastery, and build up a tremendous personal fortune. Relatively few monks are likely to have the relevant Abilities — Profession: Terrar, Profession: Reeve, Profession: Steward, or similar, as well as a good knowledge of Civil and Canon Law, and in some regions Common Law, as well as Leadership, Intrigue, and Folk Ken at a minimum. Therefore, very often the role of terrar — effectively the prior's lawyer and accountant — must be given to an employee; finding an honest, educated employee who can resist temptation is very hard, however. Magi may even find themselves approached with an eye to filling the position, if they have a reputation for honesty.

### THE CELLARER OR CELLARESS

The cellarer or cellaress is responsible for everything concerning provision of food and drink. She has to make sure

is the superior, and can give the prior four warnings, after which he can be disciplined, then deposed, and finally expelled. Cunning priors sometimes manage to keep the struggles going for years, with enough support from the monks to paralyze the abbot and prevent him disciplining them. In some houses, the situation becomes bad enough that the abbot's and prior's factions actually resort to brawling, even in church.

that supplies are obtained regularly from the local market, or are sent directly to the nunnery, and may send agents to the nearest fair to obtain imported wines and other specialties if the nunnery is rich. As well as dealing with day-to-day matters in the kitchens, this role for a monastery may involve organizing the work of monks in the kitchen garden and orchard, while for a nunnery this requires supervision of laymen working for the nunnery. For a large establishment, the cellarer must deal with those who run the farms owned by the monastery, and is often responsible for collecting produce and tithes from the monastery's farms and manors. Most abbeys include their own vineyards or brew houses, plus a mill. Locals are often expected to grind their corn at the monastery mill and pay fees, and are prosecuted for possession of querns (hand mills), as by a secular lord.

The rule states that humility and obedience to the abbot are the desired traits in a cellarer, yet cellarers are often accused of corruption, and especially secret gluttony or drunkenness; in some cases this accusation may be true. However, many a cellarer has managed to bribe, intrigue, and gain influence by secretly giving extra food and drink to individuals he wishes to curry favor with; such actions, which corrupt others, are more dangerous than mere thievery.

This character will benefit from Abilities such as Bargain, Folk Ken, and Profession: Cellaress. A cellaress character with Premonitions (unexpected visitors) could be entertaining.

## The Problem with Priors

"It often happens that grave scandals arise in monasteries out of the appointment of the prior; since there are some who, puffed up with the wicked spirit of pride and thinking themselves to be second abbots, set up a despotic rule, foster scandals, and excite quarrels in the community ..."

— *The Rule of Saint Benedict*

The abbot and the prior can fall out, but the rule is clear that the abbot

### Story Seed: Good and Faithful Servant?

A friend of the covenant is employed as terrar at a large Benedictine monastery nearby. He is honest, friendly, and curiously naive and gullible, but he seems to do an excellent job. One day he is seized by men acting on command of the abbot, when it becomes clear there

is a very large sum of silver missing from this year's accounts. It becomes clear that the terrar's wife had been doing almost all the work for years, with her husband as the public face. Is she guilty of the theft? Or has someone else taken the money, and if so, who and why?

### THE BURSAR

In smaller houses one person often fills the roles of both cellarer and tarrar. This is the bursar, who is responsible for both estate management and keeping the monastery stores and accounts. In larger houses, where both those positions exist, the bursar is an official charged with keeping the monastery's internal accounts, and maintaining good order concerning stores for the buildings, vestments, and ritual supplies.

### THE INFIRMARIAN

The infirmarian looks after the sick and elderly, and also looks after the general health of the monks or nuns, including bloodletting and maintaining a suitable regimen if he has the necessary knowledge. The infirmarian is often isolated by these duties from the other monks, and so is required to eat alone and remain with the patients, missing the hours and chapter meetings as required. Smaller monasteries may rotate the role, and ones that appoint a specialist infirmarian usually provide him with a weekly assistant or two drawn from a rota.

The infirmarian frequently travels to purchase supplies, gather herbs, and consult with other medical men outside the monastery. Some take the opportunity to sin on those visits. Some others, wearied by hours of dealing with the sick, the old, and the feeble, become bitter and lacking in Christian love, developing an unfeeling hardness and business-like bedside manner.

In a monastery, the infirmarian should have the Abilities Chirurgy and Medicine. In a nunnery, she should have the Ability Chirurgy and may have picked up a little knowledge of Medicine from her books or tuition; however, unless she has a very unusual background story, she will not have acquired any formal education in medicine at a university (see *Art & Academe*, page 52). An infirmarian almost certainly has to call on apothecaries and more-skilled doctors from time to time. In a large establishment, he may have underlings and hence a Leadership score, and any may pass on his knowledge and develop his Teaching Ability.

The herbalist will have a very different lifestyle than the herbwife (see *Art & Academe*, page 55), but she has the Herbalism

Virtue and its associated Herbalism Ability and Profession: Apothecary. She has permission from the abbess to cultivate useful herbs within the nunnery grounds, and to leave the nunnery periodically to purchase or collect those she cannot grow.

### THE HEAD OF THE NOVITIATE

The head of the novitiate in a nunnery has responsibility for women and girls preparing to take religious vows. A similar post exists for monks. Useful Abilities include Awareness and Folk Ken to monitor novices' behavior, as well as Teaching and the subjects she needs to teach, particularly Church Lore, Latin, and Artes Liberales.

### THE SACRIST

The sacrist is responsible for vestments, candles, incense, and other elements of church ceremonies, and the upkeep of the church and chapels. The sacrist has access to the sacred host and consecrated wine, and is accused sometimes of selling it to individuals willing to pay, for nefarious purposes. Such a grave sin must be very uncommon, if it occurs at all.

### THE PRECENTOR

This monk is responsible for the provision of music and chants. He requires Abilities in Music, Church Lore, and Teaching as a minimum for his duties. Rumors of precentors leading monks in bawdy songs or blasphemous parodies of the Mass are surely untrue.

### THE PORTER

The porter's job is to answer the door, at any time of day or night. The rule says of him, "Let a wise old man be placed at the door of the monastery, one who knows how to take and give an answer, and whose mature age doth not permit him to stray about." Although the main gates are locked every night, and townfolk, pilgrims, and casual visitors not admitted, honest travelers seeking shelter, especially in remote

areas, can usually waken the porter and ask for hospitality. Some monasteries have notoriously deaf porters, who seem to take pleasure in not admitting latecomers.

The portress has the responsibility of making sure no person or thing enters or leaves the nunnery that should not. She knows if gifts arrive for a particular nun, and makes sure they are used for the common good.

### THE HOSTILLAR

This monk is in charge of the guest house and visitors' welfare. As such, this is the individual who the player characters will most often deal with, and the hostillar is not bound by the rules of silence common to other monks. In many ways, the personality of the hostillar at a particular monastery comes to define the personality of that establishment to travelers on the roads. An abbot wishing to discourage lengthy visits or weary travelers seeking shelter might appoint the most rude, abrupt, sly, bitter, or otherwise unpleasant individual he can to this task, and instruct him to refuse all requests that can be refused within the bounds of hospitality. As most visitors do not know the rule, and are not aware they are supposed to dine with the abbot, they easily can be kept in the guest quarters, watched constantly by servants, and kept from prying into the secrets of the monastery. In other houses the hostillar is friendly, hospitality is lavish, and visitors are treated well. Visitors with The Gift will, however, provoke suspicion whatever the hostillar is like.

### THE ALMONER

One monk has responsibility for distribution of surplus food, and sometimes other goods, to those who come begging at the gate. Since this monk has a good reason to interact with those from outside, he can be a useful point of contact. Beggars go to nunneries too, although, to keep clamor away from the door, the nunnery should not distribute alms to the poor at the nunnery; if possible, arrangements are made for any surplus to be given away through the nunnery's benefactors.



### THE CHANCELLOR

The chancellor is the librarian, and also oversees the scriptorium and acquires and arranges copying of books for the monastery. Monks do not just copy Bibles, Psalters, and other religious books, and many monasteries contain books of great interest to magi. In fact, monks tend to copy any ancient book they find, and the occasional lost Hermetic work might exist

in a monastery somewhere. If it was purchased, then stored and forgotten, it may be of use; but if it is a copy it is unlikely to be of any use, as the scribe lacked Magic Theory, rendering the book worthless. Consulting historical records for clues, charters for a legal case, or the many other books in the monastery library requires first the permission of the abbot, and then an interview with the chancellor, who will negotiate the terms of the access. A loan

of a book to the scriptorium for copying usually suffices.

Two types of chronicle found in monastery libraries are of particular interest to magi. *Miracula* contain ghost stories of those returning from purgatory to warn others, and miracles of the saints, especially the local saints celebrated in that house. They are read by the devout to foster Devotion (see Chapter 2: Congregation, Devotion), but are also useful for

### Some Religious Orders

Traditionally, all monastic foundations, whether for men or women, followed the Rule of Saint Benedict or that of Saint Augustine. During the 12th century, the number of religious foundations grew dramatically. While many took the conventional line, several alternatives to the traditional rules became available. The Cistercians did not officially acknowledge nunneries in their order until 1213 (and if your saga follows history, will try to stop any more women joining them in 1228). Some communities of religious women ran without adherence to any of the officially recognized rules but, at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the pope obliged all such institutions to formally adopt one of the existing, approved rules. The Augustinian Rule was fashionable at the time, so was taken up by some. A few communities are as yet undecided.

While the Cluniacs, Cistercians, and Vallumbrosans are detailed in Chapter 6: The Corrupt, and the Benedictines are discussed in detail in this chapter, Mythic Europe has many other orders varying in size. The mendicant orders of friars are discussed in Chapter 8: The Franciscans, the military orders in Chapter 9: The Templars.

#### AUGUSTINIAN CANONS

The majority of Augustinian canons, known as Black Canons for the color of their habits, can be found in cathedral chapters. They are regular clergy performing the usual priestly and administrative functions, who have tak-

en monastic vows and live according to the Rule of Saint Augustine. They enjoy excellent relations with many bishops, as they form the staff of many cathedrals in the Italian peninsula, Bavaria, and Provence, but they can be found much further afield. They are well liked for the generosity of their alms-giving to the poor.

#### CARTHUSIANS

The Carthusians follow the Statutes of Saint Bruno rather than the Rule of Benedict, and the order consists of both monks and nuns. Monasteries and nunneries consist of individual cells within a larger complex, with an emphasis on personal devotions and strict withdrawal from the world, and the life is far more austere and less communal than in the other orders. The monks only gather for holy office in the monastery church, but they cultivate land and perform manual labor together to support their communities. Carthusian houses are closed to outsiders, and do not have pilgrim hostels or encourage visitors. They practice complete silence, and all necessary communication is by sign language.

#### GILBERTINES

Found only in England, the Gilbertines were founded in 1130 at Sempringham, Lincolnshire. Their distinctive habit is black with a white cowl, and as a double order they have both monks and

nuns, sharing a church with a wall dividing them. Lay brothers toil in the fields, and conditions are hard. Recently some monks have appealed to the pope, who ruled in favor of Gilbert's austere rules, but since the death of Gilbert in 1190 things have become more relaxed. Saint Gilbert was canonized in 1202, and his saint's day is celebrated on February 4th.

#### PREMONSTRATIENSIS

Founded by Saint Norbert with 12 disciples, these 13 monks were to create one of the great orders of the Rhine, and were instrumental in converting the Wends. Following the Rule of Augustine, the order was initially composed of both nuns and monks, but since 1198 has closed the nunneries and only admits monks. They do not own land, but work as hired laborers in exchange for food and goods. This money is used to support the community, and each evening the surplus is distributed to the poor at the almshouse of the monastery.

#### TRINITARIANS

Known as the Red Friars for the color of their habit, the Trinitarians were founded in 1198 in France for the purpose of rescuing and ransoming Christian captives. One third of their income is set aside to ransom Christians who have fallen into captivity, and they also perform educational and hospital duties in the regions around each of their houses.

research into past events. Another type of book, the *mirabilia*, contains stories of faeries and magical and unusual natural phenomena, signs, and wonders. Books of this kind are a research resource that may provide clues in many stories.

### THE PRIEST

Many abbots are ordained as priests, on election if not before, but not all. In monasteries where there is no ordained priest, a clergyman must be retained to celebrate Mass. In many Benedictine monasteries one brother is ordained and performs this role, but receives no special privileges. A nunnery also has a priest who celebrates Mass and takes confession; he is one of the few men who can enter the guarded confines of the women's world.

## The Religious in Your Saga

An obvious question is why would anyone want to play a religious in a saga, and how do they feature in stories, given that they live in enclosed communities, and have retreated from the world?

Playing a religious as a companion may prove a challenge, as even the most trust-

ed monk may seem unlikely to have more than one free season outside the monastery each year, unless on a pilgrimage.

The religious can and do leave their houses, and many of the roles performed by the religious require extensive interaction with the wider world. In some large abbeys, for example, the prior has a townhouse where he lives just outside the abbey walls, as his responsibility is the relationship between abbey and town. Terrars are constantly traveling around the abbey's manors, and chancellors may visit a covenant to seek rare books or ask advice on an unusual manuscript. Even ordinary monks trek across the fields to work, or are sent out into the community to tend the sick, gather herbs, or distribute alms. As such, monks are a common sight around town and countryside, and while they often remain silent in the monastery, they may talk freely as required for their duties and for common courtesy while on the road.

Secondly, it is easy to underestimate the sheer importance of religious in terms of wealth and power. Benedictine abbeys owe knightly service to feudal overlords, and hold many manors. Many a knight character may have an abbot as a direct liege lord. A huge amount of land is taken up in manorial farms. In 1220 there are just under seven hundred monasteries in England, with 12,500 monks; it is estimated that one fifth of the nation's wealth is in monastic hands, and monasticism is equally important across Western Mythic Europe.

A small monastery might have four to six monks, a large one over a hundred, but both have a huge impact on the local economy, as monasteries are often also pilgrimage centers. In addition, approximately a quarter of the parish churches in England are the responsibility of a monastery. In such a case, the monastery appoints a priest, called a "vicar," to administer the parish on behalf of the monastery. The vicar is paid a wage, and the monastery receives the tithe, which frequently leads to abuses. The bishops retain right of visitation, and may offer to try to improve the wages of the vicars and condition of the churches, but abbots can prove as intransigent and neglectful as any other absentee landlord, so long as the tithes keep coming in.

Even if the magi have no direct connection with a monastery town, or with land owned by a monastery, and their local church is not appropriated to a monastery, they will still probably stay at a number of Religious Houses. When moving around the countryside, where inns and accommodation can be sparse, it is customary to seek shelter and hospitality at a local monastery, and offer a small donation in the morning for the night's accommodation. Any characters who set out on a journey are likely to spend a considerable amount of time in monasteries, and will find the porters and hostillers an excellent source of local news and geographical information gleaned from other travelers.



## Chapter Five

# The Women

When it comes to the roles of female characters in a saga, troupes have total freedom to decide for themselves how closely they want to abide by the conventions of medieval society. Historically, options for women in the Church in 1220 are restricted, of course; troupes playing in the canon version of Mythic Europe, or wanting even closer similarities with real history, are limited to the characters described in this chapter. However, *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, pages 220–222, sets out a range of saga types with different degrees of historical research. If you want nuns with an active social life outside the nunnery, or women priests, then go ahead.

The troupe must also decide how strictly the characters enforce the detailed rules governing the lives of women religious. The rules outlined here are a digest of typical regulations which, if held to strictly on all counts, could make life more difficult and restricted for characters than many players would find entertaining. So again, modification by the troupe is encouraged.

Remember that player characters are unusual, often exceptional, people; strong and influential female religious characters are entirely appropriate in this context. See the details on Hildegard of Bingen later in this chapter for an example of such a character.

## Female Religious in the Covenant

A player character may live in a covenant as a female religious if she is a beguine or penitent. She may also do so as an anchoress if there is a church at the cove-

nant suitable for her cell. In most dioceses, permission from the bishop is necessary in both these cases; a Petition Ease Factor of 9 is appropriate. If a player character nun wants to live at a covenant, or indeed, anywhere outside a nunnery, the Petition Ease Factor is 12 and senior clergy from other dioceses are likely to question the situation if it comes to their notice. The

Monastic Vows Story Flaw is probably suitable for all female religious characters trying to live correctly in a covenant. The exception is if the covenant itself is in a nunnery, beguineage, or cell; this concept is exemplified by the covenant of Cunfin, which hides in a regio at a Cistercian monastery in the Champagne region of France (see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 106).



The bishop or his appointed deputy will want to visit the character periodically, usually once a year. If the covenant is not on good terms with the local senior clergy, this is an opportunity for some anxious days for the characters. If the covenant is hidden or otherwise hard to reach, the bishop will certainly cause trouble. What the bishop believes the nun's home to be depends on the details of the particular saga setting, of course. The nature of the covenant may well be secret, so that as far as the diocese is concerned, the religious character is living with a group of scholars or perhaps in an unusual village.

A player character in a covenant, whether grog, companion, Mythic Companion, or maga, may adopt the lifestyle of a religious without taking formal vows, but the Social Status reflecting the character's situation cannot then be Religious. The character is likely to experience considerable difficulties in adhering to her chosen way of life, and should take Flaws to reflect this. The reaction of the other inhabitants to the behavior and ideas of this character should generate stories. The Living Covenant character Isabelle the Beautiful could be modified, with very few changes, to be such a character (see the Atlas Games website).

Characters who previously lived the life of a religious might join a covenant as a place of refuge. An example is the Curious Nun from *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 95, who brings several useful Abilities to the covenant. An educated nun could prove a valuable teacher of Artes Liberales and Latin for children in a covenant, particularly young apprentices, and her knowledge of Church Lore could help the covenant in its relations with the Church. Harboring a runaway nun is risky, howev-

er, as the Church authorities will seek her out in order to return her to a nunnery.

## Options for Absent Players

The enclosed lives of most female religious characters, and some of the men, does not mean that characters like them cannot be used in stories. Such a character would be suitable for a player who wants to be part of a saga but lives too far away to participate in game sessions in person. The character could interact with the others by correspondence, if some way can be found for letters to pass to and fro with sufficient speed and reliability. This might be by means of a servant at the nunnery who has reason to meet someone from the covenant regularly, perhaps at the local market, to exchange letters. The enclosed character might let down letters in a basket from a window to a young person from the covenant, who is sent every other afternoon to wait an hour in case the basket appears. If the character's communications are important enough, and the covenant can afford it, a box could be enchanted with a suitable Rego Animal spell to transport a parchment put inside it; although discovery of such a device would undoubtedly cause difficult questions to be asked, both by the Church and by the Quaesitores.

The enclosed character, if an anchoress, is less restricted, since she can legitimately talk with visitors and pass things through the window of her sealed cell. A letter tucked under some vegetables or slipped inside a book could be passed unobserved, although the servants of an an-

choress would notice eventually. Visitors to the anchoress could carry verbal messages, though, with predictable possibilities for error in repeating them.

## Nuns

The life of a nun is in many ways very similar to that of a monk, following the Rule of Saint Benedict or one of the more recent derivations (see Chapter 4: The Rule and Religious Life), although the rules concerning enclosure are usually more strictly enforced for women. Many nuns are forbidden to step outside the nunnery and may not receive visitors without permission. This suits many of them well, especially the most pious, who are eager to put worldly things behind them and devote themselves to a life of prayer and service to God. Others may welcome seclusion because there is something outside the walls that they fear, such as an unwelcome arranged marriage or a violent husband. Life in a nunnery is just about the only honorable alternative to marriage for women, unless they find an opportunity to join a covenant.

Nuns are almost exclusively women from the higher social classes, and it has been this way for several hundred years. Her family gives a sizable donation to the nunnery when a nun takes up residence there, so only the richer families can afford this. A few nuns are from wealthy merchant families, but most come from the nobility, even royalty. If the woman or girl has entered the nunnery while on good terms with her family and other people from the same social sphere, her social contacts can continue to be of use to her and those she lives with. They can also be a source of disturbance. A woman from a mercantile family may find life difficult, for example, when the other nuns look down on her family background and treat her more like a servant than a peer.

Within the nunnery, a holy sister has greater freedom than most women in certain restricted ways. She is very likely to be taught to read and write in Latin and the local language, if she cannot do this already. She is probably encouraged to

### Story Seed: The Visitation

The covenant is home to a beguine or anchoress character. The local bishop must be kept unaware of the magi and the nature of the community where the beguine dwells; or, if the bishop knows of and is accepting of the covenant, a substitute is sent because the bishop is unwell. He expects to talk with the beguine character about her work and spiri-

tual well-being, which includes asking about where she attends Mass and who her confessor is. If the character visited is an anchoress, the visitor must be satisfied about the cell she occupies. Meanwhile, the rest of the community must conceal any hint of magic and the Order of Hermes from the inquisitive visitor and his retinue for the three days of his visit.



develop craft skills including needlework, cookery, and horticulture, and may learn to deal with accounts or to tend the sick. Nuns elevated to positions of responsibility may have more power and freedom to run their own lives than most single women could ever hope for, and the abbess of the greatest nunneries can expect to be in frequent correspondence with bishops and even the pope.

Some of this freedom is under pressure from the Church. In earlier times, nunneries were all founded by royalty or the nobility for their relations and friends, and these founding families had control over who could enter the nunnery and who would run it, often appointing family members to the senior posts. Such patronage directly influenced the social, political, and economic standing of the nunnery. In recent years, the Church has been trying to get control by ensuring that the local bishop chooses the abbess on the grounds of piety and leadership ability, rather than because of her temporal influence or social contacts, but the funds for the nunneries still largely come from royal and noble sponsors. At times, this can create a conflict of loyalties in the nunnery, or a religious house can find itself a pawn in a struggle for supremacy between officials of Church and state. The nuns often select and propose a candidate for abbess or prioress, but the bishop has to give his approval for the appointment and may pick someone else of his own choosing, which can upset the inhabitants of the nunnery and its patrons.

A small nunnery might have only three or four professed nuns, while a medium-sized one typically houses twenty. Nunneries are almost invariably poor compared to monasteries. The annual income per head may be as low as 10% to 15% of that for a monastery of comparable status, and is hardly ever over 50%. Benefactors prefer to donate to a monastery where there are priests who will celebrate Mass for their souls when they die. Financial difficulties also arise from the limitations for nuns regarding hard manual labor, so they are much less able than monks to generate income for themselves. A nunnery is also far less likely than a monastery to own a relic, and its library is usually considerably smaller and less likely to own rare books unless there have been authors living there. One

## Fontevrault and Las Huelgas

These are examples of the richest, most influential nunneries.

Robert of Arbrissel, a charismatic ascetic hermit and preacher, founded the Abbey of Fontevrault in the Forest of Bart, Anjou, in 1100. He gathered about him both men and women in such numbers that before long the scattered hermitages had developed into separate houses for monks and nuns, and for groups of lay men and women who did most of the work, as well as a home for repentant prostitutes and a leper colony. The community follows the Rule of Saint Benedict. Robert insisted that the foundation should continue to house both sexes and be headed by a widow as abbess. During the 12th century, the foundation attracted a great many people, and before long the royal family of Aquitaine and Anjou was involved. Henry II and Richard I, kings of England, were interred here, and Eleanor of Aquitaine spent the last ten years of her life here and was buried here in 1204.

In 1220, the abbess, Berthe, has been in charge for two years.

A daughter establishment was set up in Amesbury, England by Henry II, and richly endowed. It soon grew to house dozens of nuns, more than one chaplain, and numerous lay workers, and to control extensive lands with many livestock.

The daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, also named Eleanor, married Alfonso VIII of Castile and they founded a nunnery at Las Huelgas near Burgos in 1187, putting their daughter in charge. In 1220, their daughter Constance is abbess; she is a very powerful woman, ruling the richest nunnery under the Cistercian Rule. The abbess and prioress are permitted to preach, hear confessions, and administer sacraments; Pope Innocent III tried to stop them by writing to the local bishop in December 1210, to little avail. Many royal family members have become nuns here, and it has become the burial place for the royal family.

source of income adopted in some nunneries is taking in boarders, but this can be a severe threat to decorum and cause all sorts of problems. In extreme cases — through bad luck, incompetence, or sin — nuns are reduced to begging by appeal to royalty, nobility, highly placed Ecclesiastics and, if they know of any, covenants. If such appeals fail, nuns may be forced to beg in the marketplaces and churches.

In addition to requiring men as laborers, and perhaps a steward, nunneries need priests to say Mass and hear confessions, acting as chaplains (the situation in the Castillian dioceses of Burgos and Palencia is an exception; see the insert on Fontevrault and Las Huelgas). They also need clerics educated in Church Lore and Theology to act as spiritual advisors. A small nunnery typically calls on the services of the local parish priest, but many have their own resident, secular priest (i.e. one not belonging to a religious order) as chaplain, living close to, but not inside, the nunnery. Men who enter a monastery for the communal religious life are generally reluctant

to give this up for the sake of ministering to a nunnery; this is particularly marked in the Cistercian and Premonstratensian orders. Most of the old double foundations — a monastery and nunnery built close together — are closed now, because the bishops felt them unsuitable or God brought about their end. For example, that at Coldingham was burned down on account of vanity among the nuns, and excessive familiarity between the monks and nuns.

Reading the word of God, recitation of the psalms, and praying are the prime duties of nuns, so all have some familiarity with Latin and most can read and write. Coming from noble families, many were educated to some degree before leaving home; tuition in Latin, reading, and writing is provided to any novices who require it. Rarely, a nunnery provides some education to girls who are not intending to take up the veil.

In addition to the traditional nunneries, where prayer and contemplation are meant to be the center of the inhabitants' lives, there are also religious foundations

## The Rule

for women where care of the sick in a general hospital or in a leper community is their purpose in life. In these places, much of the work is likely to be undertaken by laywomen attached to the nunnery, who often come from the poorer groups in society. A place in this type of establishment may be the closest a pious woman from a family outside the nobility can get to becoming a nun.

Life in a nunnery generally follows the same pattern as that in a monastery; see Chapter 4: The Rule and Religious Life for details of the offices that structure the day, and the general style of life lived according to the rule. This section covers regulations and practices that govern

the daily life of a nun that are particular to women.

The first regulations drawn up specifically for nuns were by Caesarius of Arles in the early sixth century, using the earlier writings of Saint Augustine and John Cassian as inspiration. These were based closely on the rules for monastic life, and were adopted and adapted for many nunneries across Europe in the centuries to follow. They are so restrictive and prescriptive that there is plenty of scope for stories based on real or apparent transgression. The major difference from the rules for men is the emphasis on enclosure and "stability;" that is, remaining in the nunnery where a nun took her vows. In the stricter cases, the nun is forbidden from ever leaving the nunnery and is warned against entering any building, even a church, where a door to the world outside is visible. The bishop may give permission for a nun to transfer from one nunnery to another in rare circumstances, for example when appointing a new abbess from another location.

Nuns may not choose their work, but must do the tasks given by their superiors; only the abbess and prioress are excused the daily chores. If possible, work with wool and cloth in the nunnery should be sufficient to supply all the needs for clothing. Permission from the abbess must be obtained before starting any private work, and no one may take in washing, sewing, mending, or dyeing from outsiders. Clothing and bedding should be un-bleached and un-dyed. Nothing, even in the oratory, should be embroidered. Ornamentation other than simple crosses should be avoided; plaques and paintings are forbidden, also.

To keep sleep at bay during vigils, light work is encouraged, of a sort that will not distract the mind from the readings. Anyone who does get sleepy must stand. Nuns must not talk at table, but must listen attentively to readings then meditate upon them. In need, signs may be used to communicate. The nun is urged to avoid oaths and curses, nor should she speak loudly. Conversation should not take place during work unless unavoidable and, while working, the nuns should listen to suitable readings, meditate on God's word, or pray silently. All nuns should spend the first

### Story Seeds

#### APPEALING TO THE BISHOP

A nun is unhappy in her nunnery and contacts someone at the covenant for help in persuading the bishop to authorize her transfer.

Or, a nun is selected by the bishop for a senior role in a nunnery on the far side of the diocese, and she asks for help to avoid the transfer without bringing any disgrace or disapproval upon her.

#### PERSONNEL MATTERS

The abbess or prioress or portress, who is sympathetic to the covenant, or to at least one person important to the covenant, is moved elsewhere, promoted, retired, or dies. Can the player characters influence the choice of successor? How do they win over or otherwise cope with the new appointee?

#### VOCATION

One of the young female servants at the covenant decides she has a religious vocation and announces she is going to ask to be taken on as a novice. Do player characters try to dissuade her, or prevent her? She might appeal to a priest for help if they do. If the covenant helps her in her endeavor, providing the required donation may be a challenge. What if she takes and donates something that is valuable covenant property, perhaps by mistake? This may be a minor enchanted item, something she is so used to that she does not think of it as appearing strange to outsiders.

#### CHEAP EDUCATION

A nunnery near the covenant is hard up and decides to offer elementary schooling in Artes Liberales and Latin to girls for a very moderate fee. Does the covenant take advantage of the offer? If they do, how do they handle the situation when a pupil talks about unusual things she has seen or heard about at home? What about when senior visiting clergy investigate, and try to close the school?

#### COMMUNAL LIFE

A nun with links to the covenant or to a player character is punished for a moderate transgression, either deservedly or in error. She is put under the vigilant eye of a strict nun who notices, forbids, and reports anything unusual. This includes the sending or receiving of messages and the possession of anything personal. What if the unfortunate nun talks in her sleep?

#### WORKS OF CHARITY

The prioress at a nunnery friendly to the covenant asks a player character from the covenant to distribute alms on its behalf. Will the character accept, or seek a suitable substitute? Can the character find somewhere other than the covenant itself as the focal point for distribution, rather than encourage a stream of poor people visiting the magi?



two hours of the day reading.

There must be no desire to look attractive. If any men are seen, the nuns must not look on them immodestly and all must guard each other's modesty. Men must not be admitted to the enclosed area, apart from the bishop, the sponsor of the nunnery, priest, deacon, subdeacon, and one or two readers. If the sponsor is admitted, the abbess or an alternative respectable witness must accompany him. If men must be employed for building or repair works, the abbess must approve them. Women who are not nuns or do not belong to the nunnery community may not enter. The abbess may meet callers in the parlor with two or three nuns in attendance. Banquets must not be provided for anyone except, very rarely, for a benefactress or visiting holy woman. A nun may speak with a female relative in the presence of a superior. A nun may not be godmother to anyone.

## Characters in a Nunnery

All nuns have taken vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Characters will normally only take the Monastic Vows Story Flaw if some highly unusual circumstance means they are living away from the religious community, in an environment where keeping those vows is a struggle and stories develop from this. The other women living in a nunnery —lay sisters, novices, and, in some, ladies who have retired from the world outside — do not take these vows. The Minor Flaw Regular is often appropriate for nuns.

Most nuns come from a noble family, so Privileged Upbringing is a common Virtue. Artes Liberales, Latin, and Church Lore are the Abilities expected of all nun characters, even if only at a low level; some suitable background detail is needed to explain why a character lacks any one of these. Noble women usually learn needlecrafts as they grow up, so most nuns have Craft skills in one or more of embroidery, seamstress, and perhaps even lace making. The Ability to spin wool is also very common. There are other practical skills that are important to the nunnery, as well. In large, richer foundations the cooking,

### Story Seeds

**TOO LATE**

A lady who has failed to find a husband because she was too proud to accept the advances of any of those who showed interest, or one who was too cold, coy, or teasing and put off men by her behavior, has been in the nunnery long enough to recognize her error. All through her time as a novice, she thought she would manage very well despite her poor vocation but, some time after taking her vows, she realized that she was mistaken. She takes every opportunity she can contrive to speak with visitors to the nunnery, begging for their help to appeal to the bishop for release from the way of life she now detests. She refuses any plan that involves escape without all the necessary permissions.

**THE FRUSTRATED LOVER**

A man comes to the covenant because he has heard that there are some very clever scholars there, or perhaps he knows one of the grogs. He seeks help to get inside a nunnery to be with his beloved, who has been shut up there against her will. Her family does not approve of her relationship with him, because he is the younger son in a relatively poor noble family and unlikely to come into any significant inheritance. Are any of the covenant inhabitants soft hearted, or willing to help him for other reasons? If the grogs

agree to help, how much disturbance will they cause, stirring up trouble between the covenant and the nunnery? If a maga agrees to help, can she avoid upsetting the Quaesitores? And what happens when a demon takes the opportunity to help bring about a serious sin?

**THE GIFTED NUN**

A traveling Redcap is obliged, by foul weather or accident, to seek hospitality at a small nunnery; or perhaps a member of the covenant visits the nunnery to talk to a contact there, or to consult a book. While there, they observe a young nun sitting on a stone step eating a crust of bread and a bowl of pottage, while her sisters are eating together in the refectory. It soon becomes obvious to the visitor that the girl has The Gift and could be a valuable apprentice. Getting into conversation with her is not easy, owing to both the rule and the attitude of the prioress toward the unfortunate girl. Can the visitor persuade the prioress to allow a conversation? If the girl has a real vocation, it is hard to convince her of any advantage in leaving the nunnery. In contrast, the prioress would be glad to be rid of her, but a wealthy family put her there and the prioress cannot risk offending them. Can a compromise be reached? And how will the nunnery and the covenant deal with the bishop when he finds out, and tries to return the nun to the cloistered life?

brewing, and horticulture necessary to provide food and drink are probably all in the hands of lay helpers, but a smaller nunnery may require the sisters to carry out these tasks themselves.

It is not unusual for a widowed woman to take up residence in a nunnery rather than marry again. She might pick one she has family links with, one she has supported over the years, or she may choose to found a new one. In some instances this is under pressure from her offspring or other members of the family, who want her out of the way. Some, but not all, take vows eventually. They share in the life

of the nunnery and bring valuable, but sometimes unsettling, experience of the world outside, as well as money to support the sisters.

## THE SCHOLAR

As a nun, a woman has more opportunities for education than in any other common calling. Many come from a Privileged Background, and enter the nunnery with Artes Liberales and maybe one or two other Academic Abilities. A scholarly nun may have Virtues that enhance her learn-



## THE REFUGEE



ing, particularly Apt Student and Book Learner. She is encouraged to spend time in reading the Bible and other holy books, and to contemplate their contents. She may find the nunnery's own collection of books very quickly exhausted, and be keen to borrow from other collections — even from a covenant library, if she finds out that one exists. She may also compose books, either writing them herself or, at least as often, dictating to a scribe.

There are, across Mythic Europe, a number of scholarly nuns with prolific correspondence. In designing such a character, first decide what the primary nature of her correspondence is to be. She may meddle in Church or lay politics through letters to family members, or she may have a good reputation such that senior clergy or nobility seek out her advice. Assign suitable Reputations and make sure she has appropriate scores in the relevant Abilities, whether it is Canon Law, Dominion Lore, or Church Lore. She is very likely to have a good score in Intrigue.

Also see the section headed Mystics for details on Hildegard of Bingen, for an example of a female character famed as a scholar.

### Héloïse

Héloïse is the most famous example of the disappointed lover as a nun. Canon Fulbert of Notre Dame set in motion a tragic love affair when he engaged a tutor for his niece Héloïse. The tutor, Peter Abelard, was a highly regarded scholar in the young University of Paris, while Héloïse was an intelligent young woman who loved learning. When a child was born and their secret marriage was discovered, Abelard was sent away, disgraced and mutilated, to live in a monastery. He, in turn, persuaded Héloïse that she must become a nun.

Initially she agreed, not for love of

There are quite a few unhappy lovers in nunneries. A girl who sees the man she loves marrying another or becoming a monk or priest, or who is prevented by her family from accepting her preferred suitor, can see life in the nunnery as her only option. Stories abound concerning women taking the veil to avoid an unpleasant arranged marriage. A married woman who finds her husband violent or his immediate family unbearable can enter a nunnery as the only honorable escape. A girl who sees her mother's marriage as unhappy may choose the nunnery rather than risk similar treatment at the hands of a husband.

If a nobleman is defeated in battle, the noble women of his household often choose to take refuge in a nunnery to avoid harsh treatment by the victor. Sometimes a woman enters a nunnery because her husband decides to become a monk. Once there, she may decide to take vows after a suitable period in the novitiate. Such a woman may struggle since she arrives with an unsound vocation, and she probably suffers from a reluctance to be there compounded by anger and resentment. She brings knowledge of the world outside, which is of interest to those enclosed before they had a chance to learn about men and running a household. Such a woman could be a very unsettling influence in a nunnery, and an interesting character to play.

God but for love of her husband. However, as time passed her relationship with God deepened. While continuing her intellectual interests, she worked hard to be the best nun she could, first as prioress at Argenteuil then as abbess of the Paraclete. Through letters, she argued skillfully with Abelard about how the Benedictine Rule should be adjusted to suit women.

Abelard died more than twenty years before Héloïse. Her last wish to her nuns was that she be finally laid to rest in the same tomb as her husband, and on her burial his corpse was seen to reach out to embrace hers.



THE PRISONER

Some women live in a nunnery because they were put there by their families, without regard to lack of vocation or piety. This can happen because the girl is too expensive to marry off, or is a social embarrassment in some way — perhaps on account of deformity, mental deficiency, or a supernatural gift or The Gift itself. If the family can afford a sufficiently generous endowment, a poor nunnery is likely to take in a girl with even The Blatant Gift. The life of any Gifted girl in a nunnery is difficult, unless she has the Gentle Gift Virtue, as she will be distrusted and shunned, picked on for unpleasant duties, and often blamed and punished through no fault of her own.

In some ancient noble families, it has become traditional for some of its women to enter a nunnery; one of the daughters, for example, might be obliged to take up an inherited senior position in a nunnery where the family is a sponsor. In some circumstances, it is also possible to prevent a woman from inheriting wealth by making her take the veil as a nun, which explains a few reluctant nuns. Some noblewomen are sent to a nunnery because the men responsible for them have been defeated in battle, so that support for their defeated lord cannot rally around them. Defeat in law, bankruptcy, or a falling-out with a king can also put a noblewoman behind nunnery walls. Illegitimate daughters of nobles and senior clergy are likely to be put in the nuns' care at a very early age, and often have no option but to take the veil before they understand the implications. And her family might put a woman into a nunnery against her will because she has fallen for an unsuitable suitor.

Characters should have some significant reason for their situation, if unwillingly placed in a nunnery; this includes a substantial number of the Virtues and Flaws. A character with Plagued by Supernatural Entity, Supernatural Nuisance, Faerie Friend, or Ghostly Warder can be too much trouble for their families. Strong Faerie Blood and Giant Blood can result in an unnatural appearance just as off-putting to a potential husband as Crippled, Disfigured, and Hunchback. A nunnery might take some persuading to accept a young girl who is Tainted with Evil, though. Sim-

Christina of Markyate

Christina's story provides ideas for use in the background of a character who takes refuge in a nunnery, or for a story about such a character.

Towards the end of the 11th century, a daughter was born to a noble family of Anglo-Saxon lineage in Huntingdon, England. The girl accompanied her parents on a visit to the shrine of the martyr Saint Alban, where the holy monks made a great impression on her; she vowed to follow the life of a religious herself and remain a virgin.

Her family had other ideas, though, and arranged a betrothal to Burthred. Christina refused to have anything to do with the young man, claiming her vow of virginity. Her parents tried nagging, bribes of rich gifts, and threats. They enlisted Christina's best friend to try flattery, and convince her of the joys of being mistress of her own affluent household. Eventually Christina gave in

and accepted the betrothal.

The pair were married, but Christina refused to have any physical contact with Burthred. All attempts at persuasion failed, despite isolating the girl from contact with any clergy and filling her life with worldly pleasures, until eventually her parents arranged for Burthred to hide in Christina's bedroom. She greeted him as a brother and kept him talking all night. Burthred was mocked for this and, goaded by her parents and others, agreed to try again. This time he was determined to play his role as husband, but Christina concealed herself behind the bed hangings and, with God's grace, remained hidden.

Christina's father sought support from the prior at the local abbey to persuade his daughter, but the bishop ruled that her vow of chastity prevented him or anyone else from forcing her to accept the marriage.

ple-Minded characters or those with certain Social Handicaps might be marriageable if they are attractive and/or wealthy; but once wed, a husband may send his unpleasant wife to live in a nunnery, just to get her out of his way.

THE REVOLUTIONARY

There are new spiritual movements growing across Europe, some tending towards the heretical and others seeking to revive the ways of the earliest days of the Church. A woman or girl with new ideas can be a very unsettling influence in a nunnery, whether her ideas are orthodox or not. The strongest such development is the followers of Francis, as described in detail in Chapter 8: The Franciscans.

Misbehavior

Entertaining story opportunities are easy to find in breaking the rules and flouting authority, and the following should

provide a storyguide with some ideas. Since the percentage of nuns without a true vocation to the religious life is higher than found among monks, it is hardly surprising that there is more bad behavior among the inhabitants of nunneries. Demons take every opportunity they can, but it is the Tempters (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 43–44) who are busiest in a nunnery, using people with no real commitment to the religious life as willing and unwilling tools to spread sin. They assail the devout by playing on any wavering of confidence in their faith or in their calling to religious life. They tempt those with any sort of power to abuse it. See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 20–24, for the background and game treatment of sin and temptation.

Minor infringements like being late to chapel, speaking when silence is in force, and eating something forbidden during a period of fasting or abstinence from meat are common. Being absent without leave is more serious, as is being absent with permission but for invalid reasons. Valid reasons for being outside the nunnery walls, after permission has been obtained, include collecting rent from tenants who

failed to bring payment, buying essentials when delivery could not be arranged, visiting sick relatives, and attending a family wedding or funeral. Some nuns have an amazing variety of close relatives with unusually poor health, requiring their cloistered relation to step outside the nunnery and visit them frequently. A nun outside on a justifiable errand should not be seen in idle conversation, or talking to a peddler about ribbons, or quaffing ale in the marketplace, nor should she enter anyone's home to be sociable. Ideally, a nun should only go outside with a trusted companion nun. A nun who uses devious

means to circumvent these restrictions has to deal with her own conscience whether she is caught or not.

If the rules are followed, the only opportunity that a nun has for private conversation with a man is when she makes confession of her sins to a priest. It is not very unusual for a priest to be tempted by one of the nuns, either because she unwittingly engages his attention or because the nun makes overtures. In a more lax nunnery, a nun can find occasions to flirt with other clerics — perhaps the deacons or scribes who accompany the bishop on his visitation. Sex with male religious is called

incest since, spiritually, a monk and priest are, respectively, brother and father to the nun. Where the regime is lax, a nun can quite easily contrive to get to know men who enter the nunnery to deliver messages or goods, those who carry out work in the garden or on the buildings, and so on. It is almost always much harder to create an opportunity to be alone together, but it happens and pregnancy is hard to conceal.

It is Church policy to avoid scandal by keeping such things secret as far as possible, so lapses are often known of only within the nunnery. If the mother survives childbirth, she must confess and is punished, but not usually severely. She is welcomed back into the community once her penance is complete. The punishment may simply be to always take the last place when the nuns are seated, or to lead a procession to the chapel one Sunday wearing a white gown and no veil, or to fast three days a week, or to be confined to the inner part of the nunnery for a year. She is typically prohibited from holding any position of responsibility within the nunnery. If the news does get out, punishments for the nun's lover can be harsh, particularly if he is unrepentant; both Church and state treat the violation of a bride of Christ very seriously. He might well be made an example of, perhaps being made to wear a simple tunic only and, with bare head and feet, stand at the church door every Sunday for a season carrying a heavy lighted candle. Or he might be clad in the same way, then be beaten with sticks around the church and through the marketplace on several holy days. The fate of the child is usually to be sent out for adoption, but sometimes one might be raised within the nunnery.

Nuns with power over others can be tempted to abuse it. The distance between exerting discipline for the good of the souls of those for whom she has responsibility, and wielding power for the thrill of controlling others or for sadistic pleasure is small and easily exploited by Tempters. Nuns who have control of resources can choose to give so much away as alms that her sisters are left in dire need, to keep the best for herself, to show favoritism, or to spend communal funds on fine clothes and jewels for herself and entertainments for her guests.

It is usually easy for a nun to get permission from her superiors for a visit to the

### Story Seeds

#### FORBIDDEN LOVE

A young nun entered the nunnery with enthusiasm at the age of 11 but now, nearing 16 years of age, she feels attracted by news of fine clothes, good food, dancing, and so on that she hears from the women who entered the nunnery after enjoying several decades of life outside. The abbess is strict, so the young nun has had very little contact with men since she was a child.

Up until now, the nun's confessor was an elderly priest with failing eyesight. This has meant that her Curse of Venus has so far been hidden owing to lack of opportunity. But the priest's replacement is a much younger man, who struggles with the temptation offered by the attractive nun. How this story plays out depends on the details of each of the protagonists. If one of the two admits to the attraction, the other may accept or reject the approach. If they do something about it, can they find opportunities to spend time alone together, and can they contrive to keep the liaison secret? The abbess will arrange for the priest to be replaced by a more suitable elderly man if she finds out, and will require the nun to repent, confess, and take her punishment.

If love takes its course, the nun becomes desperate about her unborn child and somehow a message reaches the covenant, asking for help. It is unlikely

that the nun will agree to terminate the pregnancy, either by magical or mundane means, but she might be persuadable. More likely, she wants assurance that her child will be taken in by the covenant and cared for there. She asks for regular news of the child, but the abbess will forbid this if she finds out. The nun then asks the covenant to help her leave the nunnery and join her child.

#### GUESTS

The abbess, who is the youngest daughter of a noble family, has had no option but to allow her aunt to take up lodgings in the small guest quarters close to the entrance gate of the nunnery. The aunt pays more than enough to cover the cost of food for herself and her two female servants, but she receives many visitors who come accompanied by their own attendants. How can the nunnery accommodate and feed so many?

Some of the extra guests and their followers are male. A few of the nuns are attracted by the sounds and smells of high living and jollity coming from the guest quarters, and find a way to observe. Soon they are in contact with the men. Can their more-strict sisters stop them before more harm is done?

And what do the nuns do when the bishop's visitation is due, and the guest quarters are required for him and his entourage?



nunnery by female members of her family. It is harder to get permission for a visit by male relations, but all the nuns come from the same high strata in society, and most have contacts among the nobility and clergy through whom pressure can be applied, so such visits are by no means impossible. Noble visitors also come with attendants, who may be male or female. Sometimes they bring horses and dogs, too, all requiring accommodation, sustenance, and entertainment. Only the larger abbeys can easily deal with visitors on this scale, having extensive guest quarters separate from the enclosed part of the foundation. In addition to being a drain on the resources of the nunnery, secular visitors can be a major disruption to routine and a dangerous distraction from work and prayer, luring the nuns into spending time on worldly concerns and reminding them of what they have cut themselves off from.

Note that sins involving vanity, greed, and lust are less serious than pride, while apostasy is the worst sin of all. A nun who tries to give up her place in the nunnery and return to the world outside is guilty of a grave offense, and every means will be used to return her to the cloister. A covenant may well be asked to use its specialized resources to track down the escapee, find her, bring her back, and make her stay. This probably poses ethical difficulties for some of the magi, but turning down the request from a powerful or particularly useful abbess or bishop could have unpleasant consequences. A recaptured fugitive who is unrepentant is usually put in solitary confinement in a nunnery.

When the bishop discovers a nunnery where many of the nuns are living sinful lives, and the misdemeanors have caused public scandal, the nunnery is closed. The inhabitants are usually sent separately to live in other, trusted nunneries where they can repent and return to a correct way of living.

### REPORTS OF WAYWARD NUNS

Contrasting sets of written records provide examples of misdemeanors on the part of nuns. Bishops are required to make visitations every few years to check on each nunnery. Their reports

## Story Seeds

### NEW FOUNDATIONS

Someone plans to found a new nunnery not far from the covenant, or too close to an important vis source. Whether it is a wealthy religious foundation sponsoring a sister-house, or a member of the nobility endowing a new one for personal reasons, the covenant has a problem.

### POWER PLAY

In the nunnery most closely associated with the player characters, a conflict builds up gradually between the abbess (or prioress, if it is a small or subsidiary establishment) and an older noble widow who has come to live there. The newcomer is pious enough, but she is used to having servants at her command and to running her own household. Infernal intervention fans the flames and soon it looks as if the conflict will either come to the attention of the Church authorities, or else the widow's influential family will step in. Any intervention risks exposing links between the nunnery and the covenant that will bring the covenant unwelcome attention from Church, state, and the Quaesitores.

### BAD PRAYER

A priest hears a woman's confession, and is horrified to find that she has been fervently praying that her husband and his mother take ill and die so she would be left free to enter a nunnery. A demon hears of the desire and steps in to offer a bargain.

### GONE MISSING

One morning a nun goes missing from her place in the chapel. Unhappy with her lot, she has been cursing everyone and everything that had to do with her enforced way of life. Finally, a demon appeared and agreed to take her away. The demon, a Tempter (see *Realms of Power*. The

*Infernal*, page 43; Nitibus on page 56 in the same book could be used) is waiting for her to commit a mortal sin. Help from the covenant is needed to find out what happened, and then to rescue her.

### SUSPICIOUS MIXTURES

During the bishop's visitation, he is accompanied by a learned monk who takes a great interest in the nunnery's herbalist. While discussing with her the best treatments for this and that ailment, he comes across some ingredients and concoctions in her collection that he thinks are very suspicious. He finds a paste of camphor and cumin, a sticky mix of ginger, lemon peel, and honey, some dried rose petals mixed with cinnamon, a compound of saffron and orchid pulp, and some cloves mixed with marigold petals. He recognizes the first three as treatments for impotence and the other two as stimulants designed to induce lust. If he says anything, though, he is going to have to explain how he knows so much about such things. If he challenges the herbalist, can she convince him that she knows of these only as innocent remedies, perhaps for the sort of female problems she must not discuss with a man? Perhaps the herbalist is totally clear of blame and her apprentice or assistant made the mixtures.

### BRIDES OF CHRIST

Having given up any thought of a human husband, nuns see themselves as brides of Christ. A Twilight-addled magus arranges for a nun to be kidnapped and brought to his laboratory, where he intends to exploit the holy connection that marriage creates between husband and wife to use the nun as an Arcane Connection to God. The nun could be a player character, or someone from a nunnery where the player characters have a contact, such that they are called upon to carry out a rescue.

from such visits include details of faults found in administration and behavior, with the measures taken to correct them also documented.

In the secular sphere, the exploits of misbehaving nuns are equally noted. Educated people write instructive verses and stories about them, with a moral attached. Jongleurs and goliards report the same things, but in the form of poems, songs, or stories for entertainment. Sometimes they emphasize the plight of the nun enclosed against her will, drawing out the sympathy of the audience, while at other times they give a bawdy account of sexual activity. Verses like this are so common that the reprobate nun is a character type known to everyone.

## Canonesses

Like a nun, a canoness takes vows of chastity and obedience and lives according to a religious rule, usually the

### A Note on History

In 1220, the beguine movement is very much in its infancy; there are few adherents and these are only in a small region of Flanders. Because they have so much more freedom than women living in an enclosed order, they are

likely to be a much more attractive option for player characters in troupes not intent on historical accuracy, and so information presented here covers the movement in its slightly later, more developed state.

Augustinian Rule. Most live in community, but some live independently, either way, they are usually urban. In general, they are less severe and strict in their poverty than Benedictines, and are allowed to own some personal property. Their chief interest is the recitation of the Divine Office each day, but they are more likely than nuns to interact with the surrounding populace, and may serve them by nursing the sick and educating the young who are not destined to join their ranks.

For canonesses, use the guidance on nuns as characters and the ways to use such characters in stories.

## Beguines

During the early 13th century, a new way of life for pious women grew up in the area of northern France, Flanders, and parts of Germany, where there were far more daughters of the nobility than could find suitable husbands. These women — who could not marry, were forbidden to work in any trade, and did not want to cut themselves off from society — found a new way to live, dedicating themselves to prayer and good works. This approach has since attracted many who cannot afford to enter a nunnery or cannot find a place in one, yet still wish to follow the religious life, and the movement is spreading fast.

Some call these women beguines, although that name was pejorative at first so others prefer to call them simply “holy women.” In contrast to nuns, they do not take formal vows so may leave the community at any time. To be accepted as a beguine, a woman must promise to be chaste for as long as she is part of the community, but she does not have to relinquish her right to own property. It is not unusual for a woman to live as a beguine for a few years and then to leave to marry. As a respectable way for a single woman to leave the parental home, without committing herself to a life as a nun, it attracts some independent spirits. Some married women, interested in the beguine way of life, convince their husband to adopt celibacy so that the pair live chastely, following the beguine lifestyle; the name used for a man living this way is beghard. Sometimes affluent families send their daughters to live with the beguines for a while to learn manners and domestic skills.

Some beguines remain living in their families, others live alone, and yet others





live together with like-minded women; the home of such a group is known as a beguinage. At first, when the movement began in the previous century, the Church took no official notice, but that soon changed. As with nuns, the Church keeps a close eye on the beguines and the local bishop must give his approval before a beguinage is established. The beguinage is an urban establishment, usually housing just a few women. The women work to support themselves, and to have enough left over to give alms. Often they work at spinning and weaving; this can put them into conflict with the trade guilds, since the beguines avoid guild control over buying and selling and do not require new recruits to serve a formal trade apprenticeship. To counter this, the women emphasize their spirituality and try to only do sufficient work to meet their basic needs and support their charitable activities.

Each individual community, to suit local circumstances, agrees to the rules governing the life of a beguine. As many grow up around holy individuals who settled close to hospitals and leper colonies, service to these is often an important part of the beguine's life. Many beguines support themselves by manual labor, for example taking in washing; in the larger communities, the mistress of work supervises this activity. As they are not confined within the beguinage, they often go out to visit the sick, although they need to be careful since tending men risks accusations of improper behavior.

They start and end the day by gathering together in the church for prayer, and hear Mass every morning before they go to work. While they work, they maintain silence as far as possible, unless one or two of them recite psalms or prayers aloud. Their diet is simple, as is their clothing; there is no fixed habit but, within the larger groups, all tend to wear the same in order to avoid distinctions.

Beguines rely on the local parish priests to say Mass and hear their confessions; although in some instances, in towns and cities where there are numerous churches, the link between beguines and any specific priest is less fixed than the Church likes, because it makes it harder to monitor their activities. Most

beguines are looked on favorably by the Church authorities on account of their chastity, good works, and prayer. However some of them are teaching, writing, and even preaching, which brings them into conflict with Church authority. They use the language of those around them in preference to Latin, which upsets Church leaders. Many of them have an intense devotion to the holy eucharist and desire holy communion as often as every week, which is viewed as very disturbing since the custom among most religious is to partake just a few times annually. Such devotion leads some beguines along the path to mysticism (see later), and some of them slide into heresy through lack of close spiritual guidance.

## Beguines of the Near Future

A very substantial beguinage — such as that of Saint Elizabeth in Ghent — grows, if your saga follows history, to occupy a plot of land encircled by ditches and a wall within which are a church, a cemetery, a small hospital for the inhabitants, and homes. There are numerous houses in the enclosure, where the women live in small groups and each has a small garden. The women have little personal property, just their clothing, a bed, and a chest. There are two chaplains resident. One woman, called the principal mistress, is selected to be in charge of the beguinage; her position is reviewed annually. She appoints the women who are responsible for each of the houses in the community. Any woman wishing to absent herself from the beguinage for more than an hour or so needs her permission, and must go with companions, so each can watch the other. The principal mistress must give her permission for anyone joining the community and for any building or demolition work. She also has the duty to correct any member who breaks the rules. Punishment in extreme cases may involve transfer to a different beguinage or expulsion. With care, it might just be possible for a covenant to hide inside one of the larger beguinages.

## Penitents

Not long ago, swept up by a similar sentiment, women in northern Italy began living as penitents, and the movement is spreading fast. It began among the ruling classes as an urban interpretation of the eremitic life. In contrast to the beguines, the emphasis is on penitence, and they take up the religious life with the intention of permanency. At first, the movement accepted only married and widowed women, but now it is beginning to allow others. The essential feature of their life is following traditional personal penitential practices, including lengthy fasts and dressing in sackcloth and ashes. They hold property in common in small groups, but lack any organization, unlike beguines. Also unlike beguines, they remain at a distance from society and do not engage in work or trade.

These women are known as *bizzoca* (plural *bizzoche*) in north Italy and *Pinzocheri* in central Italy (and *continentes* in Latin). Typically, they live in small groups or in their own homes, closely linked to a specific church. They need permission from that church and the local bishop to set up their community, but there is no formal hierarchy within the group and no need for anyone other than the members of the community to decide who may be admitted. Recently, penitent communities are settling on lands donated by urban nobles and burghesses where, by not having an oratory, they remain outside Church control. Their supporters seek forgiveness for their sins by providing for the holy women who pray for them, but may also be using them for social or political advantage.

In years to come, if your saga follows history, women alone or in small groups live as beguines or penitents in most countries of mainland Western and Southern Europe.

The Social Status Virtue Religious is correct for characters of this type; however, most are illiterate. Players may take the Flaw Ability Block: Academic to cover this situation.

## Using an anchoress in the Saga

An anchoress can live in a village closely linked to a covenant, or, with care, can be located actually in a covenant. And unlike cloistered religious, she can interact with a wide range of people through her window and act through intermediaries, particularly her own servants. Two different players might enjoy taking the roles of anchoress and servant to develop stories through their relationship. It may well be more fun if they do not adhere too strictly to the ideal rule, but find entertaining ways to

bend and break it — and then have to make their confession and excuses.

A covenant may have contacts with an anchoress in town who is something of a busybody or gossip, or the covenant may support an anchoress to teach the younger children, and to pray for covenant members.

This can be a good choice of character type for someone who wants to be involved as a player character in a saga but is living away and will participate by email.

## Becoming an anchoress in England

Before being allowed to take up the enclosed life of an anchoress, a woman in England requires permission from the local bishop, who has a duty to test her vocation. When he is convinced, a special ceremony is performed. The candidate enters the church and prostrates herself at the western end, opposite the altar. Two clerks stand over her and recite a litany. She is blessed by the sprinkling of holy water and the smoke

of burning incense. She stands and is presented with two lighted candles, one representing love of God and the other love of one's neighbor. Readings from scripture and a psalm follow, then the two candles are placed on the altar and Mass is celebrated. After Mass, the clerks recite the psalms for the dead while the candidate is led to her cell. There she is sprinkled with dust before entering, and the door is closed behind her.

## Recluses

Holy hermits are not rare, although they are not often female. Women living alone in remote places may be suspected of being hedge magicians, cunning women, or witches, and may have to try to prove themselves otherwise. There is a growing tendency among Church authorities to disapprove of women living in this way, so a hermit character may come under pressure from nobility or clergy to enter a nunnery. It is not at all unusual for a woman ostensibly living in solitude to be accompanied by a female servant or two, especially if the woman concerned is from a noble family; these still count as hermits. A holy hermit probably gets gifts of food from the people living in the vicinity, who hope she

will pray for them. Their isolation and chosen lifestyle make such characters hard to incorporate into a saga. They are probably most useful as occasional non-player characters.

A pious woman with The Gift may find the life of a holy hermit to be a good option, and a maga with no inclination to piety but with The Blatant Gift may find the hermit life suitable. A character of this sort can be a useful choice for a storyguide who wants to run a player character just once in a while. Another possibility is for the isolated maga to be a shared character who is a specialist in something the player characters are weak in, and who might step in from time to time to help out in stories of a particular sort, when she can be played by a member of the troupe whose own magus is not involved in the story.

## Carmelite Nuns

The Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (or Carmelite Order) is a religious order, which originated from groups of hermits living in the Holy Land, on the slopes of Mount Carmel. There are numerous caves there, around the site of the well that was used by the prophet Elijah. In 1220, the group is well established there and lives under a rule approved by the papal legate in Jerusalem. Its members devote themselves to solitude, penance, prayer, and contemplation. Originally all men, a few women find themselves drawn to the same style of life. The women are likely to be found in the most remote caves, living in total poverty and seclusion. If your saga follows history, the rule followed by the Carmelite hermits receives papal approval in 1226. The hermits move from the Holy Land in 1238 to settle in Cyprus and Sicily, reach England in 1240, and establish a settlement in southern France in 1244.

## Anchoresses

The life of an anchoress is more closely linked to society than that of a nun, while still being enclosed to a significant degree, and is a highly respected mode of life. It is governed by rules, but many of them are optional. It is suitable for the woman who has a vocation to the religious life but who does not want to be entirely cut off from the world. It is typically only open to the more wealthy, but an anchoress has female servants who also follow the rules and routines of religious life, so the role of servant to an anchoress is a choice available to poorer women. Prior to taking up residence in her cell, an anchoress may have lived as a nun, but this is not usual. Once installed as an anchoress, the woman's former life is irrelevant, and she is equally respected whether a widow or a virgin.

Many anchoresses' cells are attached to a church, built onto the side or end of the building in such a way that the anchoress has a window that gives her a view of the altar. Less often, a cell may be attached



to a nunnery or stand alone. There is usually a window giving onto the street, and a door through which her servants come and go.

## The anchoress' Rule (Ancrene Riwe)

The Ancrene Riwe was written in England during the early 13th century for a group of three anchoresses. It is based heavily on the rules that govern monks and nuns, but differs to suit the circumstances of an anchoress in general and allows for individual variations under the guidance of the woman's confessor. The primary requirements of obedience, chastity, and permanence of abode remain. The rule warns against making other vows, for example with regard to fasting, dress, or times of prayer, because of the danger of breaking such a vow. Instead, it recommends only acting as if such vows have been made. By adopting some of the rules in play, a character becomes distinctively religious.

The window through which the anchoress interacts with the world outside should be small and covered with a black cloth, on which there is a white cross on both sides. If anyone comes to the window, the servant should first find out who it is, so the anchoress can avoid contact with unsuitable callers. If it is a priest, she should sit still and silent and listen to him. She should not speak long with anyone without a suitable witness; her servant often takes this role. She should never speak to anyone through the window that gives onto the church. The servant may go outside to entertain a visitor who is dear to the anchoress, in her stead.

The anchoress should refrain from speech on a Friday, and more often in Advent and Lent, but may say a little to her servant, and speak briefly to anyone who has traveled far to speak with her. She should not preach to, give counsel to, or take advice from any man, but she may converse with women. These rules are frequently ignored.

The Riwe suggests that the anchoress limit herself to receiving holy communion 15 times a year, on certain feast days, so

it does not become a habit or less than special, and make a full confession before each occasion.

The anchoress may eat twice a day on Sundays and every day from Easter until the feast of the Holy Cross (the 14th of September), except on Fridays, Ember days, and during vigils. On those days and throughout Advent she should avoid white food. She ought to fast on all other days apart from Sundays. When fasting, she should avoid meat and fat unless ill, but fasting should not be taken to excess and she must only limit herself to bread and water if instructed by the priest.

The anchoress must live on alms, and take only what she needs. She should provide for her servant and may eat with women or children who work for her, but not with a man. She should only ask for something when her need is very great.

She should not keep an animal other than a cat, so she is not distracted from prayer by concern for the animal. She must not buy and sell things, nor look after anything for anyone.

The anchoress should dress simply in plain, warm clothing. She should not do penance in coarse cloth or by flagellation of any sort unless advised so by her confessor. She may work with a needle to mend church vestments and the clothing of the poor, and to clothe herself and her servants. She may not send or receive letters without permission.

The anchoress should gently correct faults in the behavior of her servants, imposing penances if need be, and should work to maintain harmony between them. She should sometimes read to her servants, to instruct them. She should be more generous with food, drink, and clothing to her

## Story Seeds

### DEFYING THE BISHOP

Three young women live together as penitents in a house near the city wall, provided for them by a merchant grown rich on trade in fine fabrics. When their sponsor finds himself in dispute with the bishop, the women come under pressure from the Church to abandon their present home and move in with another penitent community on the other side of the city. Under normal circumstances, they may be able to agree to go along with the proposal, even though they know there will be personality conflicts if the groups are forced together in this way. However, these penitents are actually a Jerbiton maga with her two servants.

### UNEXPECTED VISITATION

An anchoress player character, or one closely associated with the covenant, uses disguise (mundane or magically assisted) to change places with her servant and go out. She does not usually stray more than 15 minutes' walk from her cell, but the unexpected may lure her further. One day she is further from

home than usual when an archdeacon, or maybe even a papal legate, passes by her cell with a small retinue and, on a whim, stops to speak with her. Can the servant maintain an adequate deception for the duration of the visit and allay any suspicions? How does she explain the long absence of her "servant," who ought to be outside providing refreshment to the retinue while the "anchoress" talks at the window with the important visitor?

### MENAGERIE

Tired of walking to the farm every day to collect milk, the anchoress' servant persuades the farmer to give a cow, which is put to graze on the common land close to the church where the cell is. Before long, the anchoress has acquired two more cows, four goats, three pigs, and a small dog that lives in the cell with her. The servant spends much of her time tending the livestock. The local populace increase their donations to feed the animals as well as the anchoress and her servant. Then someone, perhaps the priest himself, passes a complaint to the bishop.



servants than to herself.

There are rules to govern the anchoress' servants, too. The servants must be always attentive to their mistress and be obedient, unless that would lead to sin. They must take care not to disturb their mistress' prayer and contemplation. They must behave demurely and dress modestly and plainly. They should pray at the same hours as their mistress and, if they cannot

read, should recite the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary.

They must have the anchoress' leave to give or receive anything. They are forbidden from admitting a man into the anchoress' cell and should be careful in their own interactions with men, not gazing on a man nor embracing one, even a relative.

If someone has to go out to obtain food, the anchoress should have two ser-

vants so she always has a companion. The one who goes out should not be young and pretty, should stay away as short a time as possible, and minimize her interaction with other people. Servants should not carry news or gossip to or from the anchorhold, but many are inclined to.

An anchoress may have unusual means of leaving her cell, and might be able to get away with it, if she is careful, although she will have to deal with her conscience. She may, for example, have an enchanted item that allows her to leave her cell through a wall, or the means to use Leap of Homecoming to reach another location, and later return to the cell. Perhaps one unique cell contains access to a regio where the anchoress can work and explore without technically leaving her cell; this could suit a pious maga.

## Mystics

Among religious women, gifts of prophecy and visions are sometimes a blessing and sometimes an affliction. Such people can be found in nunneries or living in seclusion. They are not easy to live with, but their intimate link with God earns them the care and respect of those around them. The mystical state is generally understood to be a form of prayer. It is commonly believed that God gives such gifts to those who live most closely according to his commandments, and are seen to show humility, penitence, and great love. However, it is hard to prove whether this way of life is the cause or the result of profound mystical religious experiences, which impart direct personal knowledge of God. See Chapter 2: Congregation, Christian Mysticism for more information on mystics and their lives, and for rules governing mysticism in play.

In most case, the experiences of a religious mystic are covered by the Visions Flaw. Religious and pious characters in this category almost always interpret their vision as coming from God, whatever its origin. For a few characters, their visions derive from True Faith with the Major Virtue and Supernatural Power of Understanding and its associated Supernatural Abil-





ity Understanding, which requires that the character also have the Major Virtue and Supernatural Method of Meditation (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 34, 36, 37, and 54).

In the 12th century and early 13th century, more mystics live in Germany and Flanders than elsewhere, and they usually live in nunneries. In other places, there are a few mystics among the beguines and anchoresses as well. If the local bishop is convinced that a nun's mystical experiences are genuinely of divine origin, the nun gains a Reputation as a mystic, which is likely to spread rapidly throughout the local diocese. If the content of the visions touches on points of theology, it is usual that the pope must also be convinced that the revelations come from God. Mystics with the most profound visions may be commanded by God in their visions to write them down, or they may choose to do so for themselves, or be told by a superior to record their experiences or dictate them to another. Once recorded, they may be disseminated and the mystic's reputation be carried further afield.

## Hildegard of Bingen

Hildegard, who died in 1179 in the Rhineland, was a renowned mystic during her lifetime and in 1220 is known and honored throughout Mythic Europe for her visions and also for her scholarship. Characters may want to study her writings and could meet people who knew her personally. Many describe her as having had an "overpowering, electrifying presence," although this may derive as much from her reputation as her personal Presence.

She was the tenth of her parents' children, so they promised her to the Church. It became apparent very early on that she had a special relationship with God, but she kept her earliest visions secret. At the age of eight she was sent to live with an anchoress named Jutta, who taught her the rudiments of reading and writing. For many years, Jutta was the only person with whom she shared what she learned in her visions. Hildegard and Jutta joined the community of nuns at the Benedictine abbey at Disibodenberg, in the Rhineland,

## Some Books by Hildegard of Bingen

*Know The Ways Of The Lord (Scivias) Tractatus*, Theology (Quality 13)

*The Book Of Life's Merits (Liber Vitae Meritorum) Tractatus*, Philosophiae (moral philosophy) and Theology (Quality 13)

*Book Of Divine Works (Liber Divinorum Operum) Summa*, Philosophiae (metaphysics) 2 and Theology 5 (Quality 13)

*Physica or Book of Simple Medicine (Liber simplicis medicinae) Tractatus*, Philosophiae (natural philosophy) and Medicine (Quality 13)

*Causes And Cures (Causae Et Curae) or Book of Compound Medicine (Liber compositae*

*medicinae) Summa*, Philosophiae (natural philosophy) 2 and Medicine 3 (Quality 13)

*Symphony Of The Harmony Of Celestial Revelations (Symphonia Armoniae Celestium Revelationum) Tractatus*, Artes Liberales (astronomy, music) (Quality 13)

*Unknown Letters (Litterae Ignotae) And Unknown Language (Lingua Ignota) Two tractatus*, Dominion Lore (Quality 2), possibly also Enigmatic Wisdom

Note that the high quality of most of her writings applies to the original books only, and that copies may well have lower Quality.

when Hildegard was fifteen. When Jutta died in 1136, Hildegard was elected in her place as the teacher of the nuns. She then talked about her mystical experiences only with Volmar, a monk who was her tutor until, in 1141, she was instructed to write it all down. This command came to her in an intense mystical experience in which she gained a sudden and clear understanding of the Bible. At first the burden of this knowledge, and the command to write, overwhelmed her and she became ill. But after a while, with the help of Volmar and a nun called Richildis acting as secretary, she began to record her visions. By the end of her life, she had produced three books recording her visions and explaining them with reference to the Bible. The books are beautifully illustrated by artists who worked under her close supervision, to ensure the representations of her visions were as accurate as possible.

Hildegard was always adamant that her insights into the mind of God and the wonders of his world derived entirely from divine inspiration, she was only the weak, fearful channel through which God chose to communicate. She claimed that the airy humor was particularly strong within her, and that this made her unusually receptive to the Holy Spirit. The truth of the visions recorded in her book *Scivias* was accepted by the archbishop of Mainz and then, when Bernard of Clairvaux gave his support, by Pope Eugenius III. Her reputation

was very widely known in the following years, when she was abbess at Rupertsberg, near Bingen on the Rhine, where she moved in 1150, and then at Eibingen on the other side of the river, where she founded a nunnery in 1165.

She was so highly regarded that she was able to speak with authority as a preacher, despite being female, and she was allowed to travel. She made four tours to preach through the area drained by the middle and upper Rhine and its tributaries — the Main, Neckar and Mosel. Characters may well meet some of those who heard her and were inspired by her. She was known to a few magi, in particular some members of House Jerbiton, and it is rumored that she was adopted into their ranks despite being unGifted, although there is no known formal record of that within the Order.

As well as being a pre-eminent mystic, Hildegard was also a scholar and artist. She wrote commentaries upon the gospels and on the Rule of Saint Benedict, and she wrote the lives of two saints. She also wrote poetry and plays, including *Play of the Virtues (Ordo Virtutum)*, a morality play with music designed for the nuns to perform. Music was a source of joy to her, and she composed at least 70 pieces of music, including hymns with innovative vocal lines (some collected in the book *Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*). She was skilled in herbalism and medicine:

## Books by Elizabeth of Schönau

*Books Of Visions (Libri Visionem) Tractatus, Theology, Quality 6*  
*The Book Of God's Way (Liber Viarum Dei) Summa, Church Lore 4 (Quality 7)*

*Revelations Of The Sacred Company Of Virgins At Cologne (Revelatio De Sacro Exercitu Virginum Coloniensium) Tractatus, Dominion Lore, Quality 6*

her book on the subject includes her understanding of the flow of the blood, reproduction, headaches, faints, frenzy, and obsession. Her writings on natural history include studies of the elements, minerals, plants, birds, and animals, with reference to healing properties, and all in the context of the microcosm and the macrocosm (see *Art & Academe* for more on these subjects). In addition, she had a profuse correspondence with popes, members of the nobility including the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I and King Henry II of England, and senior clergy including Bernard of Clairvaux and the pope, mainly to give advice.

A few writings in Hildegard's own hand — her *Unknown Letters and Unknown Language* — are in a script of her own devising and use complex constructions, novel words, and abbreviations, which makes them hard to read. Characters will be better off with copies made using conventional script and vocabulary, if they can find any. Some members of House Criamon have been working to decipher these, in expectation of finding there a link between the Divine and the Enigma.

## Marie of Oignes: Beguine and Mystic

Marie was one of the founders of the beguine movement, and her story may provide inspiration for a beguine character's background, or her visions might feature in a story.

Marie was born in Nivelles, Brabant in 1176. Her wealthy parents arranged a marriage for her to a very eligible young man when she was 14 years old, even though she had expressed a desire to enter a nunnery. She persuaded her husband that they would remain celibate and live a life of poverty and service. At first they

worked together, looking after the lepers in the hospital at Willambrouk in Brabant. In 1207, with her husband's agreement, Marie retreated from the world to live in complete poverty in a cell close to an Augustinian priory at Oignes. There she did manual work and spent the rest of her time in prayer.

The Holy Spirit inspired her to cry, enraptured, whenever she gazed upon a crucifix. She conversed frequently with her guardian angel and Saint John the Evangelist. Her mystical visions are well known in the area around the nunnery where she lived, and characters may meet people able to tell them about her. Study of her mystical visions could benefit characters seeking insight into the Divine, but hers are not written down so can only be studied by talking with those who knew her. However, one of her special gifts was Divinely inspired insight into the heart and soul of those who consulted her, such that she discovered their major temptations and secrets; this may make those with the most valuable information the least willing to discuss Marie's visions.

A community of lay religious women grew up around her at Oignes, and Marie died there in 1213.

## Elizabeth of Schönau

Elizabeth was born in 1129 near Bonn to a family with strong connections with the Church, went to live in a Benedictine nunnery in Schönau at the age of 12, and took her vows a few years later. Her mystical experiences, which began in 1152, were usually inspired by participation in a religious service or listening to readings from the Bible or the life of a saint. In her visions, Christ, his mother Mary, an angel, or the saint of the day appeared to instruct her about the readings and liturgy, or she saw scenes from the life of Christ or the saints that she had heard about.

She corresponded with Abbess Hildegard in Bingen and, like her, wrote of her visions, producing her *Books of Visions* in three volumes. Elizabeth had help from her brother Egbert with the later reports. Separating the insights gained by the nun in her visions from the ideas added by her brother is not easy in the first volume. It is even harder in the other two books, which contain reports of what Elizabeth saw and heard when she put questions posed by her brother and his abbot to her mystical teachers.

The Church has not tested the validity of these visions as yet, because, unlike Hildegard's, they do not deal with theology; the Church authorities might call on religious player characters to help if such examination was called for. Elizabeth wrote other books, including *The Book of God's Way*; this writing includes warnings and instruction to laity and clergy at all

## Saint Severus of Ravenna

Severus was a married archbishop who lived in the fourth century. He is a saint that a married priest or priest's wife might well call on for support (see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 87). Severus was married to Vincentia and they had a daughter, Innocentia, before his election to the post of archbishop of Ravenna. At that time, clerical wives were common and had the title of presbyteria or sacerdotissa. The

marriage was clearly entirely acceptable to God because the archbishop was chosen directly by him, signaled by the sending of a dove to settle on his head not just once, which was all that was necessary to indicate who should have the post, but three times. The family stayed together until death and all three share the same grave, which could be a place of pilgrimage for a married priest or his wife.



levels, and at all stages of life, against sins of hypocrisy, heresy, avarice, and so on. Copies of her *Revelations of the Sacred Company of Virgins at Cologne* are available in many monastic libraries. It concerns Saint Ursula, a fourth century English princess, and her companions who were martyred in Cologne and whose bones were discovered there in 1155. There were a great number of bones and every establishment that obtained a relic wanted a copy of the book containing conversations between the martyrs and Elizabeth, to support the authenticity of the remains. Investigation can probably prove these visions false.

## Visions to Come

If your saga follows history, mystics soon become more common. There are some who, in 1220, are young children. Hildegard's mystical visions started when she was only three years of age, so it would not be surprising if some these little ones were also having mystical religious experiences. Characters may encounter the likes of Zita and Malfalla of Portugal, who are infants in 1220; Hadewijch of Antwerp, who is a child still in 1220 but so overcome by her intense love of God that she feels she will die of love without his strength to support her; or Mechthild of Magdeburg, who was born in 1210 and starts having her visions in 1222, with direct experience of the Holy Spirit.

## False Visions

Given the slightest chance, a Spirit of Deceit delights in giving people false visions (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 38). It can be very difficult to prove whether or not a particular mystical experience is genuinely divine. The task usually falls to the local bishop; if there is a degree of understanding between a bishop and a covenant or an individual member of the Order of Hermes, he may well request discreet assistance. If the person under investigation is a nun confined within an enclosed community

## Story Seed: Novices

A well-dressed, mature woman approaches the nunnery to ask if they are willing to take in three girls as novices. Her story is that she is a widowed noblewoman fallen on hard times since her husband died, and these three are her charges, daughters of herself and her deceased sister. The girls say all the right things to support this, and profess a strong desire to devote their lives to God. In fact, the three girls are nothing of the sort, but are boys disguised with help from the demon that is masquerading as the older woman (a Spirit of Deceit, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 38). The "novices" aim to maintain the disguise as long as possible, only dropping it when they have contrived to be alone with a nun and persuaded her to commit a serious sin. However, lacking patience

and restraint, they reveal themselves in the dormitory after a few nights have passed without a successful seduction. Demonic help should enable them to keep this up for quite a while if the nuns do not let on, and if the "novices" can cope with the long periods of prayer in chapel, but their time will be up when a pregnancy is detected. Unless something is done to remove them before then, the young men leave once all the nuns have betrayed their vows, at which point the demon stops helping them, its job done.

Note that, if the nunnery closest to the covenant is rich and has relics, and has a Dominion aura strong enough to keep the demon outside, it will attempt to enlist the help of player characters to introduce the three potential novices.

with a Dominion aura, Hermetic investigation by a maga can prove quite a challenge, and a magus would find it considerably harder.

Someone might pretend to have religious visions in order to gain attention, perhaps to get out of a difficult situation by making themselves seem a danger best sent away, or to appear more important. Also, people can delude themselves. In such cases, members of a covenant may be called upon to find out what is really going on. Does the strange novice really have mystical visions, is she just trying to avoid getting up to pray at night and dawn, or does she have The Gift? What about characters who have visions that are nothing at all to do with the Divine? A nun who starts to have visions probably finds her community determined to consider the experience a religious one, and she will have a hard job convincing them otherwise. She may well opt not to make the attempt if she can endure the consequences, but what can she honestly say if examined by the bishop?

Take as example the case of a young woman out gathering firewood in an ancient forest, who stumbles into a Magic aura aligned with Intellego manifesting

as understanding or insight. Feeling a little alarmed, she prays and the aura influences her understanding of the words she utters. She believes she has had a divine mystical experience and makes haste to tell a priest all about it. Does he believe her, and if he does, what does he do? Eventually any reputation she gained as a mystic fades if she never has another insight. Does she fake it to retain attention? Can she return to the same Magic aura? This may be particularly hard if her "vision" has led her to enter a nunnery. What do the magi do when they find out about the aura?

The fae may also be inclined to give illusory substance to characters and incidents they find out about, for instance when they overhear someone praying aloud or reciting a psalm or parable. The person who witnesses an illusion will very likely claim to have seen a vision. What does the Church do when the apparently mystical experience is reported? How do the fae respond, if a group of clergy turn up in one of their favorite spots determined to pray for a vision themselves?

## Priests' Wives and Mistresses

In 1123, at the First Lateran Council, Pope Calistus II decreed that clerical marriages were invalid. The ruling was widely ignored, so in 1139, under Pope Innocent II, the Second Lateran Council confirmed the previous council's decree. In 1215, Pope Innocent III's Fourth Lateran Council reinforced it. Nevertheless, in a great many places, and not all of those remote from the bishops' power centers, there are priests with wives or "hearth-mates." Acknowledging this fact, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II made a ruling that the offspring of clerical marriages be provided for from their parents' estates. This is because one of the greatest fears is that Church property should fall into the hands of a priest's family, that their support should become a burden to the Church, and that money donated to the Church should be used for support of a priest's family. Saint Paul's recommendation that a priest without a wife is better able to give his attention to God is, for many, of secondary importance here.

If your saga follows history, disapproval of priests' wives and mistresses grows much stronger soon. Troupes with a female player character who lives with a priest should decide whether the priest and his wife consider themselves to be living under valid vows of marriage, or whether they believe themselves to be in a sinful relationship. Either way, they also should decide whether or not the union is a Dark Secret, to be used to fuel stories. It is perfectly reasonable to say that the local populace knows about the relationship and see nothing wrong or odd in it, treating the couple just like any other married couple. But in all but the more remote areas, it is probable that the bishop opposes the union and may well attempt to separate the couple, and he will probably punish both. Lesser senior clergy and religious may disapprove, but many accept it as normal for a priest to have a female companion. In Wales and many parts of England, for example, it is not uncommon for a priest to have a wife and to pass the care of the parish to a son.

A large parish probably has clerics in minor orders to assist the priest, and also laymen with special responsibilities. A deacon or sub-deacon should be unmarried, but a married man who promises complete sexual abstinence can be admitted to these orders, and his wife has a position within the local church. Other Church assistants provide opportunities for female characters, as well; for example, a sacristan can be a married layman, and the wife of such a person could be a suitable choice for a female character intended to be closely involved with the day-to-day running of the parish while married, in an area where married priests are inappropriate. See *Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 81–82 for examples of clerics in minor orders who can have wives.

## Imposters

A woman may pretend to be a man in order to get access to positions in the Church that are denied to women. She may want to enter a monastery for pious or impious reasons, for example. Without supernatural aid of some sort, it is highly unlikely that a woman could masquerade as a male for long enough to obtain the education necessary to become a priest, or to keep her disguise well enough to survive the close communal life of a monastery. However, in very unusual circumstances, or with supernatural assistance, anything along these lines is possible.

The life of Saint Hildegund may provide inspiration. When Hildegund was 12 years old, her father decided to take her with him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He decided she would be safer in disguise, so dressed her as a boy and called her Joseph. Her father died during the early stages of the return journey and entrusted the care of "Joseph" to a fellow traveler, who robbed her and abandoned her on the coast of Palestine. She maintained the disguise and worked her way back to Germany. A few years later, after several adventures, an elderly female recluse advised her to enter the Cistercian monastery of Schönau as a lay brother. The deception was not discovered until she died a few

months afterwards, in 1188.

Characters may know something of the legend of "Saint Joan," said to have held the papacy as Pope John VIII for two and a half years in the mid-ninth century. The story tells how a girl was disguised as a man by her lover, and traveled to Athens with him. There she maintained the deception and began to study. Her scholarship took her to Rome, where her learning was so admired that she was appointed to the curia and before long nominated as pope. Then she became pregnant. The child was born unexpectedly while Joan was taking part in a religious procession, so the secret was out. Some say the child was a girl and survived, while all versions say that Joan was killed. No written reports of a female pope are known to exist, though, and the Church considers it a recently-made-up folk tale. The story was initiated about 100 years ago by a demon who is eager to aid characters ready to stir up trouble on the basis of the story.

A female character desiring to take up the religious life as a man might pray for aid to Saint Eugenia, an early Roman martyr who, legend has it, took on men's clothing to escape persecution and went on to become an abbot. If Divine help is not offered, Infernal help might well be; demons will make it easier for women to pretend to be men, and vice versa. Men pretending to be women in order to get inside a nunnery are a popular topic for bawdy songs. A character able to Gender Shift (an Infernal Minor Supernatural Tainted Virtue, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 85) can play it both ways, of course.

## Sample Characters

These stats are provided to help integrate female religious into your saga.

### Holy Maga (House Ex Miscellanea)

**Characteristics:** Int +3, Per +2, Pre -1,  
Com 0, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex -2, Qik -1  
**Size:** 0



**Age:** 31 (30)  
**Decrepitude:** 0  
**Warping Score:** 3 (3)  
**Confidence:** 1 (3)  
**Virtues and Flaws:** The Gift; Hermetic Maga; Holy Magic, Meditation, Purity, Transcendence, Quiet Magic (x2); Blatant Gift, Necessary Condition (Sign of the Cross), Weak Magic Resistance (when unaware of the caster), Flawed Parma Magica (Vim), Pious, Weak Magic, Weak Parens  
**Personality Traits:** Pious +3, Patient +2, Reclusive +1  
**Reputations:** Fearsome (local children) 3, Holy hermit (local peasants) 2, Hedge Wizard (Rhine Tribunal) 3  
**Combat:**  
*Dodge:* Init -1, Atk n/a, Def -1, Dam n/a  
**Soak:** +2  
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious  
**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-16), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)  
**Abilities:** Home Woodlands Area Lore 4 (places of refuge), Artes Liberales 3 (logic), Awareness 3 (animals), Church Lore 1 (prayer), Code of Hermes 1 (mundane relations), Concentration 2 (when meditating), Dominion Lore 1 (angels), Finesse 1 (Mentem), Folk Ken 3 (peasants), German 5 (persuasion), Guile 1 (excuses), Holy Magic 4 (meditation), Latin 4 (composition), Meditation 4 (in silence), Parma Magica 1 (Intellego), Philosophiae 1 (Ceremonial magic), Purity 5 (cold), Theology 2 (biblical knowledge), Transcendence 4 (3) (resist aging)  
**Arts:** Cr 2, In 2, Mu 0, Pe 0, Re 2, An 2, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 3, He 0, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 3, Te 0, Vi 0  
**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)  
**Spells Known:**  
*Bind Wound* (CrCo 10) +7  
*Touch of the Pearls* (InAq 5) +4  
*Sight of the Transparent Motive* (InMe 10) +7  
*Circle of Beast Warding* (ReAn 5) +6

The Holy Maga was taken as an apprentice at the age of 12 by an elderly holy hermit of House Ex Miscellanea, who initiated her into Holy Magic (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 34). Her training was dedicated to the Holy Powers and Methods

(*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 34-37). It is only since the death of her parents that she has learned anything about the normal Hermetic Arts; she is very dubious about the rightness of using them and has learned very few spells. She has little to do with the Order but is not antagonistic towards other magi. She would like eventually to turn more of them towards Holy Magic, but has not yet decided on the best approach. The maga may develop further in Holy Magic and help the covenant in dealings with the Divine and Infernal. She may become active as an advocate for Holy Magic, or develop a keener interest in traditional Hermetic magic. The troupe could also tell the story of her loss of Holy Magic, gradual development as a normal maga, and integration into the wider Order of Hermes.

As a player character, this character is suitable for a player who is not always available, or for an alpha storyguide.

The character can be customized with 60 points of spells.

## Companion Templates

The following female companions are suitable for *Ars Magica* sagas.

### MYSTIC NUN

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Pre -2, Com +3, Str -1, Sta +2, Dex -1, Qik -1  
**Size:** -1



**Age:** 23 (23)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Privileged Upbringing, Puissant Concentration, Social Contacts (diocesan clergy), Social Contacts (local nobility), True Faith (Faith Score: 1, Faith Points: 3); Pious (Major); Ability Block (Athletic), Ability Block (Martial), Disfigured (birthmark on face), Small Frame, Visions

**Personality Traits:** Pious +6, Scholarly +2, Spontaneous +2

**Reputations:** Mystic (home diocese) 2

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init -1, Atk n/a, Def -1, Dam n/a

**Soak:** +2

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

**Abilities:** [Area 1] Lore 3 (people), [Area 2] Lore 2 (people), Artes Liberales 3 (composition), Awareness 2 (birds), Church Lore 2 (people), Concentration 4 (meditation), Etiquette 3 (nobility), Folk Ken 2 (women), German 5 (poetry), Latin 5 (lives of the saints), Meditation 3 (adoration of the Blessed Sacrament), Music 2 (church music), Profession: Scribe 2 (legibility), Understanding 3 (visions of Heaven)

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

The nun entered the nunnery at the age of 11, and, as a novice, was taught Latin and Artes Liberales. When she reached puberty, she was frightened and spent a night praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament. In the early hours of that morning, she had her first mystical experience. She described it as a perfect white dove surrounded by a golden glow, which flew down to hover over her head. She has no idea how long it stayed, or whether anyone else could have seen it. She fainted, but when she came around she was immediately inspired to write a verse about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This verse was proclaimed by the abbess as a true insight into the nature of God, when she showed it to the bishop, he agreed. Since then, this nun has had half a dozen more significant mystical experiences that inspired her to write verses that

theologians have studied, plus numerous other minor experiences and visions.

The nun is also starting to earn a reputation as a correspondent, and exchanges letters with clergymen and with people she knows from her early days as the younger daughter of a noble family.

This character can be developed with up to 2 more points of both Flaws and Virtues.

## ANNE, A HOLY HERMIT

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +1, Str -1, Sta +2, Dex -1, Qik 0

**Size:** -1

**Age:** 28 (28)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Guardian Angel (Soak: +5, Magic Resistance: 15), Strong-Willed; Missing Eye, Poor Eyesight, Small Frame, Visions, Vow (Poverty)

**Personality Traits:** Compassionate +1, Disciplined +2, Reclusive +3

**Reputations:** Dedicated (Christians) 1

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init +0, Atk n/a, Def -3, Dam n/a

**Soak:** +2

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

**Abilities:** Awareness 4 (people), Breton 5 (peasant chatter), Brittany Lore 4 (home village), Charm 2 (fisherfolk), Concentration 5 (prayer), Craft: Seaweed Preparation 2 (for food), Church Lore 1, Etiquette 1 (fisherfolk), Folk Ken 4 (fisherfolk), Leadership 3 (children), Survival 4 (woodlands), Swim 2 (seawater), Stealth 3 (in woodlands)

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

Nolwenn grew up on the far western coast of Finistere, a village where most made their livelihood from fishing and harvesting the copious seaweed, which was dried for use as fuel, fertilizer, and food for animals and people. Her Guardian Angel began to talk with her one day while she was out alone gathering sea-

weed from the rock pools; she was only nine years old at the time. Her piety developed strongly under the angel's care. When she was 12 years of age, Nolwenn announced to her family that she wanted to be known as Anne, in honor of the mother of the mother of God, a saint much revered in that part of the country. She knew that she lacked the wealth and status needed to enter a nunnery so, under her angel's guidance, she left her parents' home at the age of 19 to take up the contemplative life in a woodland cave not far from her home village. The villagers still bring food for her regularly, and she prays for them.

Anne has taken no formal religious vows, and only one personal vow to God that she will live in poverty, owning nothing she does not truly need. The angel reminds her if she is ever tempted to take or keep something superfluous. In keeping with her inclinations, she lives chastely and spends most of her time in prayer or contemplation of the lives of Jesus and the saints.

Although she lives as a recluse, she is not Reclusive according to the Flaw. She is pleased to receive the occasional visitor, unless they appear to be wasting her time. Her help usually takes the form of a sympathetic ear and the promise to pray for anyone she feels needs it. Sometimes she finds that she has discovered something of help to one of her callers in a recent dream.

This character can be developed with up to 5 more points of Flaws and Virtues.

## IMPOSTER

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per 0, Pre +3, Com +2, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik -1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 22 (22)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Affinity with Charm, Gender Shift, Improved Characteristics, Privileged Upbringing; Ability Block (Martial), Impious Friend, Incomprehensible, Motion Sickness, Reckless

**Personality Traits:** Reckless +3, Selfish +2, Lecherous +1



## Grog Templates

### Combat:

*Dodge:* Init -1, Atk n/a, Def +2, Dam n/a

*Fist:* Init -1, Atk +3, Def +2, Dam -1

*Kick:* Init -1, Atk +3, Def +1, Dam +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (20+)

**Abilities:** Artes Liberales 3 (reading), Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 3 (women), Benedictines Lore 1 (nuns), Bargain 2 (for favors), Carouse 2 (jokes), Charm 5 (seduction), Brawl 2 (wrestling), Etiquette 2 (nobility), Folk Ken 2 (girls), Guile 3 (lies), Intrigue 2 (plotting), Latin 2 (impudence), Music 1 (chant), Nunnery Lore 3 (weaknesses), Original Home Area Lore 2 (women), Provençal 5 (lies), Ride 1 (staying on), Stealth 2 (move silently)

Born into a minor noble family, the Imposter was never much interested in study as a boy, but picked up a bit of reading and writing. He was far more interested in exploring alone and became very familiar with the surrounding area. Once in his teens, he became interested in girls to the exclusion of almost everything else. A demon noticed this and sent a minor demon to become a special friend who always encouraged any sinful thoughts. Through this demon, the lad was given the ability to change gender. The demon friend has persuaded the young man to spend most of his time as a female, and has helped him obtain a place as a novice in a sizable nunnery. There he bides his time, ready to spread corruption. The Imposter has so far done well enough as a novice to avoid detection. He is often in trouble for breaking the rules in minor ways, but so far charm and lies have gotten him out of trouble. With the help of his demon friend, he is accumulating quite a bit of knowledge about the novices and nuns most likely to succumb to temptation. He also knows the times and places to hide in the nunnery, and the less-obvious ways in and out.

See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 85 and 89 for details on the tainted Virtues and Flaws. This character can be developed with up to 5 more points of Flaws and Virtues.

Female grogs such as these may also fit well into your saga.

### ANCHORESS

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +1, Pre -1, Com +3, Str -1, Sta +2, Dex -1, Qik -1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 32 (32)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Gossip, Premotions; Busybody, Lame, Palsied Hands

**Personality Traits:** Meddlesome +2, Sociable +2, Pious +1

**Reputations:** Dedicated (Christians) 2, Meddler (young people) 1, Gossip (local townswomen) 3

**Devotions:** Blessed Virgin Mary (Mother of Mercy) 0 (1 dp)

**Soak:** +2

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** [Area 1] Lore 3 (people), [Area 2] Lore 4 (family histories), Awareness 4 (secrets), Charm 2 (women), Church Lore 2 (calendar), Concentration 1 (conversation), Craft: Spinning 3 (working while talking), Etiquette 2 (townsfolk), Folk Ken 5 (women), Francien 5 (conversation), Guile 3 (lies), Intrigue 4 (gossip), Premotions 2 (visitors)

The anchoress spends far more time at her window that she ought, and chats with anyone who is passing by. She has one female servant, who she sends out for gossip and information more often than for food or firewood. She tries to play matchmaker among the young people, which they generally resent. She is very knowledgeable about the Church's year and always knows when she should fast and abstain from meat, which saint is being celebrated on which day, and which prayers and Bible readings are appropriate. She tries to pray accordingly, but is easily

distracted if someone passes close by. She sometimes uses lies to persuade people to tell her gossip, especially secrets, and then is filled with remorse and does penance.

This character could be used in occasional stories, and could be run by a player who is not always available.

### BEGUINE

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str -1, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik +1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 23 (23)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Social Contacts (noble women in town), Social Contacts (merchants' wives in town); Continenence, Fragile Constitution, Weak Characteristics

**Personality Traits:** Careful +1, Dependable +1, Generous +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** [Area] Lore 3 (home town), Artes Liberales 2 (reading aloud), Awareness 2 (textiles), Bargain 1 (for food), Beguines Lore 2 (in home town), Carouse 1 (anecdotes), Craft: Seamstress 2 (linen), Craft: Lacemaking 3 (borders), Charm 2 (clergy), Church Lore 2 (saints), Concentration 3 (prayer), Etiquette 1 (nobility), Folk Ken 2 (merchants), Flemish 5 (conversation), Latin 3 (prayer)

The beguine lives in one of the Flemish towns that thrives on trade in textiles. She was befriended by the head of the local beguines when, at the age of 15, she sought refuge with the pious ladies to avoid an unwelcome arranged marriage. While she is pious, she is also sociable and spends rather more time than she ought to in conversation with the younger well-to-do women of the town; she has many contacts among the merchants' wives and the minor nobility. She works within her beguine household on lace-making and sewing.

She does not have any particular long-term plans, but is unlikely to spend the rest of her life in the beguine community. If the right opportunity, perhaps a suitable husband, comes along, she will leave as long as her mentor approves.

While with the beguines, she is a player character with useful contacts in town, who can go places and obtain information that could be helpful to a covenant. If she leaves, her relationship with her mentor might change sufficiently to make it sensible to substitute an alternate Flaw. If circumstances are right, she will abandon her temporary vow of chastity, and so that too should be replaced. Her Social Status will change as well.

### PRIEST'S WIFE

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +2, Pre +2, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik -1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 28 (28)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Craftswoman, Strong-Willed, Clear Thinker, Offensive to Animals, Soft-Hearted

**Personality Traits:** Careful +2, Cheerful +1, Practical +1

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init -1, Atk n/a, Def +2, Dam n/a

*Fist:* Init -1, Atk +3, Def +1, Dam +0

*Kick:* Init -2, Atk +3, Def +0, Dam +3

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -3, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** [Home area] Lore 4 (people), Athletics 3 (long walks), Awareness 3 (people with worries), Bargain 2 (food), Brawl 2 (dodge), Carouse 1 (singing), Charm 2 (authority figures), Church Lore 2 (festivals), Craft: Alewife 2 (taste), Craft: Baking 2 (bread), Craft: Cookery 3 (potage), Etiquette 2 (clergy), Folk Ken 3 (women), Guile 2 (fast-talk), Housewife 5 (comfort),

Irish 5 (giving advice), Stealth 1 (villages), Swim 2 (very cold water)

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

This character is suitable for use in an area where the rules preventing a priest from having any family and marrying have not yet been applied. She is designed to be a practical housewife and useful to her husband in tending his parishioners, which should allow her to be drawn into most stories concerning him and the people living round about. Many local women see her as the ideal confidante, and she is their first port of call if in any trouble.

This character can have another Minor Flaw and with it, another Minor Virtue.

If this character lives in an area where her status as the wife of a priest is scandalous, then she needs to take the Dark Secret Flaw (and consequently be Companion level and play a significant part in stories). Her role in the parish, under these circumstances, may be similar but must remain clandestine.



# The Corrupt

"Not long after, Saint Guthlac being awake in his cell between his hours of prayer, he discerned all his cell to be full of black troops of unclean spirits. They crept in under the door, also through chinks and holes, and coming both through the earth and from the sky filled the air, as it were, with dark clouds ..."

— *Life of Saint Guthlac*

Where does the devil try hardest to spread corruption? Nowhere is the spiritual battle stronger than amid the nuns and monks of Mythic Europe, whose righteousness and piety prevail against the lures of this world. There the agents of the Infernal prowl constantly, seeking a way to enter in and to lead these servants of God to damnation. The role of the religious in education, preaching, and support to communities makes them powerful soldiers of God, yet they are just as powerful a force for damnation, if turned from the love of God and allowed to bring destruction to the souls they tend. Monks and nuns in Mythic Europe face a constant spiritual battle against temptation — temptation that often takes on a tangible form, for many demons prize the corruption of a holy soul above all else. Heresy, the lure of the cardinal sins, and false spirituality are the weapons of the Infernal in this battle.

Corruption can take many forms. Human vice and profligacy are by far the most common; most monastic orders and Church institutions unknowingly harbor individuals prone to vice and human error. Heresy and ignorance are not uncommon, either; folk beliefs exist that the Church authorities look askance at, though many practices founded in popular piety and local custom are simply accepted without much theological scrutiny. Corruption in

this chapter, however, means something far more insidious — the wiles of Satan, and the Infernal realm's attempt to tarnish the bride of Christ, the Church, by seducing her to sin. A corrupt order is one that has become institutionally corrupted, and rather than serving the armies of God now fights alongside the forces of hell in the great war for the souls of Mythic Europe.

## Storyguiding Corruption

Telling stories about corruption in the Church is a chance to bring suspense, creeping horror, and shocking revelations in to your saga. Mythic Europe is filled with



monasteries and nunneries; who knows what secrets lurk behind their walls? Such stories can contain much interest, but unfortunately have the potential to lead to real world upset among players who may have strongly held religious beliefs. Some players may hold strong opinions about the medieval Church, or the contemporary Catholic Church, and it is important to avoid allowing such feelings to cause bad feeling at the gaming table. Common sense, tact, and sensitivity are called for, and above all a willingness to actually check one's personal prejudices, and rise above them. A useful tip is to cut off any discussion of real religion at the gaming table, and agree to discuss it later, rather than allow a game to be sidetracked and feelings hurt. This is a fantasy game, and the Church of Mythic Europe is not the real Church of our own history.

So why tell stories about corrupt monks? The idea of a corrupt order was a common one in 13th-century folklore, where stories of monkish vice are common. Some notions that today are popu-

larly associated with monastic corruption — such as abuse of children, sexual abuse, nunneries as brothels, and monks torturing innocents in secret crypts — are not actually in keeping with the 13th century; many of these are modern or 19th century anti-clericalist motifs. By avoiding these anachronistic themes, and instead drawing upon older folklore, much potential upset may be avoided. The story of a monk and nun eloping and being pursued by Church officials, or a lax and gluttonous abbot who oppresses his peasants and monks, are favorites of the era. Another intriguing motif is monasteries that are not what they appear to be, but hide which holy or magical secrets. Some monasteries, like Cunfin in the Normandy Tribunal, even conceal covenants of the Order of Hermes (*The Lion and the Lily*, page 106).

When it comes to the corruption, again it is wise to avoid modern clichés drawn from horror movies and novels. The pentagram is a symbol of the five wounds of Christ, though certainly used in magical practices. Animal and human sac-

rifice in particular are not common motifs in this context, and many of our modern ideas of Satanism are equally inappropriate as deeply anachronistic. A great deal of valuable insight into medieval concepts of the demonic can be found in the invaluable *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, but if one recalls that demons are concerned with corrupting souls, not with drinking blood and slaying indiscriminately, it is easy to think of strategies that might create conflict, deprave the innocent, and magnify human vices.

Stories about corruption should be ultimately stories about moral choices that present opportunities for temptation, and the lure of worldly gain, at the expense of a character's soul. Evil can be explicit, but the story will be stronger if the evil can appear sympathetic or appealing, and if the characters are forced to make choices, and to resist temptation, until they see the hand of the Infernal behind the events. Ultimately evil in Mythic Europe is never attractive — *Ars Magica* is not film noir, and when the situation is fully understood, evil should be shocking, disgusting, and offensive.

## Heresy and Corruption

One particular area of difficulty for storyguides is heresy, something that lies at the heart of many medieval Infernal plots. Given that the major monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all contain Divine truth in Mythic Europe, even where to human reason they appear to be in conflict (see *Realms of Power: The Dominion* for a discussion of this), it may seem strange that certain ideas are deeply wrong and spiritually damaging. Again, storyguides should be sensitive here, and must decide which ideas are so wrong that they actually endanger a character's soul and cross the line in to Infernalism.

The important concept is "where there is truth, there is error." Demons work in two ways. Firstly, they lead people to commit sin by making them resigned to the prospect of hell, or by making them deny the possibility of hell. Secondly, demons try to subtly pervert the truth, and





lead people into beliefs that are mistaken, and hence into wrong behavior that will eventually corrupt them into the service of hell — heresy is an important part of that process. Exactly which heresies are Infernally inspired, however, is hard to judge; some pious people can hold erroneous ideas that are not severe enough in their ramifications to lead those who accept them to hell. A wrong teaching only becomes Infernal when it leads people directly to sinful behavior, and hence to damnation. Being wrong about a religious precept in itself is not enough — it must lead to actual evil actions, and lead others to the same.

There are many heresies in Mythic Europe, some ancient and some quite recent. Most heretics are simply theologians who have made errors, postulating ideas that are incorrect for their religion, or who have been found by their faith to be in error following a ruling on a particular matter. The Christian Church does not execute heretics; those guilty of heresy, however, are frequently handed over by the Church to the state, which does often execute heretics in accordance with the laws of that land. This subtle distinction may prove little comfort to those who refuse to recant their errors and who are sentenced to be burned.

Most heretics are quite unaware they are heretics. Ignorance is the problem, not deliberate refusal of Divine truth. Some are absolutely certain the Church is incorrect on a given matter, and seek to reform the Church. Others merely think for themselves, and through weak understanding of a doctrine have drawn the wrong conclusions. The vast majority of medieval heretics are faithful members of the Church who have strayed into error, or who wish to reform the Church or dispute a particular matter of doctrine. The only large-scale alternative Church to arise through heresy is the religious institutions of Catharism. Once again, it is important to stress that by no means are all heretics allied with the Infernal; indeed, the majority probably serve the Dominion, and a person with True Faith may quite often be guilty of heresy. Heresy is a disagreement with the Church on earth, not necessarily with the Divine.

Where heresy is genuinely Infernal,

though, sacrilege and blasphemy usually follow. The desecration or abuse of the holy generally causes strong reactions in Mythic Europe, and is a way in which the Infernal swiftly gains in power.

## Three Holy Orders

In this section three of the religious orders of Mythic Europe are briefly presented in more detail, with details of how the observance of the rule and the culture of their monasteries varies from the Benedictine norms presented in Chapter 4: The Rule. Each of the groups is provided as an example of a potentially corrupt order, with information on the nature of the corruption, the demonic influences underlying the order's corruption, and suggestions for using this order as corrupt in your saga. Even if the order is not corrupt in your saga, this material will allow you to represent them. Other orders are discussed in Chapter 4: The Rule and Chapter 8: The Franciscans. The military orders of warrior monks are discussed in Chapter 7: The Templars.

## The Order of Cluny

The order of Cluny began as a movement within the Benedictine Order in the 10th century. The Burgundian monastery of Cluny imposed a strict interpretation of the Rule of Saint Benedict, at a time of widespread popular perception of monks as lax, venal, and corrupt. Cluny's founder, the Duke of Aquitaine, chose not to exercise the usual influence that nobles who established religious houses expected to maintain, instead making the new monastery free from secular authority and subject only to the pope. The pope approved this arrangement, and the monastery therefore

stands completely independent of the diocese and local church.

Freed from both local Ecclesiastical and temporal authority, the monastery looked inwards, becoming a powerful force for spiritual rebirth and the purity of the ascetic ideal. Perhaps such freedom from normal channels of authority is dangerous, and tempted the new order to pride, but for the next two centuries the abbey of Cluny stood as a light to the world, sending out monks filled with reforming zeal and determined to cleanse monasteries of corruption, moral laxity, and violations of the austerity of the Benedictine Rule.

By its example, Cluny was to touch almost every religious house in western Mythic Europe, making others examine the fidelity of their community's adherence to the rule they espoused. The papacy, seeing the achievements of Cluny, sent monks from this model house out to other monasteries, and it is a tribute to the zeal of those early "missionary reformers" that they often succeeded in bringing high ideals and reforming zeal to their new homes.

Because of this perceived purity, Cluny was popular with the Church authorities and lay folk, and therefore received a great deal of support and many financial bequests and endowments. The fashionable nature of the Cluniac order provided the seeds of its downfall, though, for by the mid-12th century Cluniac houses were often as rich if not richer than Benedictine houses, and newer reforming movements dedicated to poverty and ascetic rigor (such as the Cistercians) had developed, and become more popular. The Cluniacs, long seen as expressing the best of the reforming movement in monasticism, are in 1220 perceived by many as decadent and lax, perhaps with some justification.

## What Makes the Cluniacs Different?

As the austerity and rigor of the early Cluniac communities have softened with years and wealth, Cluny has developed a strong tradition, or feel, of its own. In several ways it varies from its Benedictine parent, and the rule has been modified.

## Was There a Cluniac Order?

Technically, the answer is no, there is no such thing as the Cluniac order. All Cluny houses follow the Rule of Saint Benedict, and wear the same black robes as are worn by many Benedictines, though reputedly of better cloth. Cluny is a movement within the Benedictines, not a separate order, but in the 13th

century it has developed so far from its Benedictine roots as to be popularly regarded as, and in real terms effectively be, an independent order. Answering only through its own feudal-like structure to the Abbot of Cluny, 13th-century characters will speak of the "Cluniacs" or "Order of Cluny" quite naturally.

## Mortuary Masses

The term mortuary Mass can mean any Mass for the remembrance of the dead, that is a requiem Mass, but the term is also used in a far more sinister way in Mythic Europe. It is widely believed that if a funeral Mass is celebrated

for a man or woman still living, he will die. Such an activity is classified therefore as murder, but some corrupt priests are known to perform the Infernal rite (as a blasphemous perversion of a holy rite is Infernal) in exchange for money.

## GOVERNMENT

The Cluniacs are governed in a manner reminiscent of the feudal system. At the top is the Abbot of Cluny, who holds supreme power. In each Cluniac monastery the abbot (or prior) has a very strong control and imposes his authority more than in many Benedictine houses.

Cluny is the mother house of the entire order, but monks from Cluny departed and either reformed existing monasteries, or founded new houses, and those houses then swore "vassalage" to Cluny, becoming daughter houses and adopting the Cluniac culture. They in turn sent out monks (often in small groups of four) who founded new cells, which in time grew into priories or abbeys, which in turn founded their own daughter houses. An annual payment is made from each daughter house to the mother house, and the mother house supports and assists the daughter, often by sending more monks to expand the community.

It is an oddity of the Cluniacs that the abbots of many of the smaller houses, including all the Cluniac houses in England, take the title prior rather than abbot. This is a show of modesty, abbot being reserved for the Abbot of Cluny and the largest houses. The prior also, by combining the

usual duties of abbot and prior in one person, reduces the possibility of factionalism or disobedience and maintains his absolute authority over the monks.

Abbots (or priors) of Cluniac houses are not elected as in Benedictine monasteries, but are appointed either by Cluny itself, or in some cases by the mother house.

## INDEPENDENCE

Whereas religious houses are subject to the Ecclesiastical oversight of and visitation by the bishop of the diocese in which they are located, the Cluniac houses are an exception. The right of Cluny to answer to the papacy was later conferred upon the daughter houses, and so the Cluniacs stand outside of the Ecclesiastical structure, with very limited supervision. Even papal legates are by a bull of 1098 forbidden to intervene in or examine a Cluniac House without direct papal instruction.

Secular authority is weak as well. Claims of patrons of monastic houses beyond prayers and spiritual blessings, especially claims to privilege or influence, are fiercely resisted, as is any attempt to tax the monks. Cluniac houses stand apart from local temporal politics. As such, they are in an extremely privileged position,

owing fealty only to their parent house and Cluny itself. Visitations are conducted by the Abbot of Cluny, or his appointed delegate, but they are extremely infrequent, and decades may pass between any kind of formal visit from Cluny.

## FREQUENT MASS

The frequent, indeed often several times daily, celebration of the Mass is one of the most noted features of the Cluniacs, and the Masses are celebrated in settings, that is liturgical frameworks, with an opulence unknown almost anywhere outside of the order. The Mass is as different from Mass at a local church as a cathedral choir is from workers singing in the fields, and the setting (words, music, and format of the holy rite) is designed to evoke wonder and awe, not aid comprehension. With the priest elevating the host behind a rood screen, it is possible that terrible profanation of the body and blood of Christ is occurring, and that the Mass celebrated daily is actually a black Mass, a perversion of the holiest Sacrament. Unlike Benedictine monasteries, almost all Cluniac monks are encouraged to be ordained as priests so they can celebrate Mass, perhaps so the corruption can be more widespread. Another possibility is that the deliberate corruption of the Mass is very subtle, concealed within the unusual setting and ornate ritual that marks the order, and that the heretical elements would only be apparent to someone with a high score in the Theology Ability, studying the rite. However, given the length of time the corruption has existed, if the Cluniacs are the corrupt order, then such perversions must be very subtle and effectively hidden from visitors most of the time.

## THE LITURGICAL HOURS

The liturgical hours are also celebrated with a great deal more liturgical complexity and splendor than is normal in Benedictine communities. An atmosphere of devotion and ritual wonder is evoked, and it is entirely possible, again, that these services could be corrupted subtly, to denigrate what they are properly



intended to exalt; take as example some of the parodies of the Mass performed by the clerical students called the Goliards, to protest the failure of the crusades and financial abuses by the Church. Visitors with excellent Ecclesiastical Latin and a good knowledge of Church Lore might well spot strange features of these services, if such exist. Whereas Benedictine services are usually thirty minutes, the Cluniac version takes a full hour, pushing back other duties. Manual labor is performed by hired servants so as to allow the monks the time to dedicate to prayer, the offices, and celebrating Masses.

### CHANTRIES AND MASSES FOR THE DEAD

If there is one thing Cluny in the 13th century is most associated with in the popular mind, it is the dead. From early in the order's history, Cluny has been associated with prayer for souls in purgatory, even, it is believed, plucking some from the very verge of being consigned to hellfire through timely intervention. The daily Masses are almost always requiem Masses, said in memory of the departed, and Cluniac monks ordained (as a majority are) as priests often officiate at funerals. In most Cluniac abbeys books of *miracula* — ghost stories and miracles of saints — are to be found, recounting local proofs of the eternal world. Another type of work, the *mirabilia*, contains stories of faeries, magical and unusual natural phenomena, signs and wonders; Cluniac abbeys in particular are associated with these miracles, which happen here more often than in most places in Mythic Europe, presumably because of the spiritual strength of the order. Ghosts are seen in dreams and visions, or appear before the monks at night to plead for prayer, and many a harrowing tale is told by the monks of how a ghost came before them to tell of the pains of purgatory, or worse still, the relentless torment of hellfire.

The Cluniac wealth accumulates through the practice of saying Mass and prayers and distributing alms on behalf of the departed. Widows, widowers, bereaved families, and the deceased themselves through their wills make generous financial provision for the three things

that Cluniacs suggest might speed their progress through purgatory, or help them when facing judgment. Firstly prayers should be said for their souls, and secondly Mass must be celebrated for them as frequently as possible. Finally, alms should be given in their name to the poor. As more and more Masses for the dead need to be said, special chapels called chantries are constructed where the monks can celebrate the Masses, and an endless stream of devotions on behalf of the departed are offered up.

The Cluniac emphasis on the dead resulted in the order sponsoring the Festival of All Souls on November 2nd, when the dead are remembered and prayers said for souls in purgatory. Introduced around 1030, it is part of the liturgical calendar across western Mythic Europe.

### ECCLESIASTICAL INFLUENCE

A large number of Abbots of Cluny were later to become bishops, and yet re-

tained an affection for and sympathy towards the Cluniac order. The order is also popular with the papacy, and as a result Cluniac abbots can wield additional influence when petitioning the Church. Gaining the favor of a Cluniac prior or abbot gives a +1 bonus to totals for Petitioning the Church (see Chapter 3: The Diocese) over and above the usual bonuses.

### FADING WEALTH

The abbeys and priories of the Cluniacs were in the past extremely wealthy, and that wealth is displayed in their magnificent buildings, ceremonial vestments, and altar goods. The Cluniac houses are often decorated with somber memorials of the dead, scenes of judgment, even the three corpse kings who remind worshippers that even the greatest must come to the equality of the grave — but they are beautifully decorated. The early chest tombs that in some cases have the artistic innovation of the dead depicted upon

### The Hermit and the Devils

A Sicilian hermit was high on the slopes of Mount Etna one day when he heard voices from within the fiery volcano. Climbing up he peered over the top, to see a group of demons lounging around below, moaning and complaining. The hermit heard the demons' explanation for their discomfiture; so many souls were being snatched from them and purgatory by prayers, alms, and Masses, leaving them with too few to torment for their tastes. The hermit rushed to tell Odilo, fifth Abbot of Clu-

ny, who in response created the Feast of All Souls on the 2nd of November to save even more souls from the pains of purgatory. Shortly thereafter the ghost of Pope Benedict, saved from purgatory himself by the intervention of Cluny, appeared at the abbey to grant his blessing and authority to the festival. The festival is a Christian one, but perversely this day the Dominion is weaker than usual; Infernal auras increase in strength by one, and some of the dead walk once more.

### Story Seed: Fleeing the Mob

A Jewish friend of the covenant is forced to flee after his house is attacked by an angry mob. Not knowing even the accusations against him, he flees to the covenant, but his persecutors are not far behind. His family failed to escape, and he has been forced to

leave them hiding in the crypt of a town church. Many powerful men are heavily in debt to him, but the abbot of the local monastery has been making threats recently, and he is more in debt than anyone. Can the characters save their friend?

their lids, not as they were in life but as a skeleton or shroud-wrapped corpse, are finely sculpted and bedecked with funereal flowers. Exotic incenses, fine stained glass, and jeweled books in large, well-stocked libraries may surprise even visitors used to the riches of many Benedictine houses. The difference is that in Cluniac monasteries the fixtures and fittings are lavish, not the monks' lifestyles — though they are definitely more comfortable than strict Benedictine houses or Cistercian establishments. Yet in 1220 the Cluniacs are in economic disorder, with costs higher than those of other orders

owing to their habit of hiring servants to perform many duties, and building large churches and chapels that they then have to maintain. There has been a reduction in the number of Masses said for the dead, not the least because the declining number of monks makes it hard to meet their existing obligations. Other monastic orders like the Cistercians, and more recently mendicant friars of the Franciscan, Dominican, and Carmelite orders, are attracting much of the money that used to come to the Cluniacs. A large number of houses are heavily in debt, in particular to Jewish moneylenders.

For a novice to be accepted into a Cluniac house, he is expected to journey to Cluny, and there spend a year to absorb the Cluniac culture and explore his vocation. All Cluniacs are expected to journey to Cluny before taking their vows, or as has been the case for over a century owing to the historically large number of postulants, to journey to Cluny after their vows have been taken to affirm them. Not all Cluniac monks manage to achieve even this lesser goal, but it remains the ideal. The novices are not allowed to fully

## The Demon BaalBaruth, Corrupter of Monks

**Order:** Spirits of Deceit

**Infernal Might:** 25

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +3, Str +3, Sta +4, Dex +3, Qik +2

**Size:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Personality Traits:** Trustworthy -5, Deceitful +6

**Reputations:** Creator of Heresies 7

**Hierarchy:** 7

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +6, Damage n/a

*Fist:* Init +2, Attack +6, Defense +5, Damage +3

**Soak:** +4

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Brawl 3 (dodge), Charm 4 (flatter monks), Civil & Canon Law 6 (heresy), Ceremony 5 (leading), Church Lore 5 (politics), Guile 9 (heresy), Organization Lore: Cluniacs 8 (personalities), Teaching 5 (false doctrine)

**Powers:**

*Change Form*, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: Can take on the form of a human between Size -2 and Size +2. Through long familiarity can adopt the form of the Abbot of Cluny almost perfectly.

*Trust of the Innocent*, 1 point, Init -1, Mentem: The target of this effect loses

all judgment and believes a specific lie (as long as it is passable) until presented with evidence to the contrary. An Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is allowed to resist the effect.

*Obsession*, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: Blasphemy, Sacrilege.

*Coagulation*, 3 points, Init -1, Corpus: BaalBaruth may take on a physical body in 25 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.

*Forked Tongue of the Serpent*, 3 points, Init -1, Mentem: The target believes any lie, no matter how preposterous, until he relates that lie to someone else. At this point he realizes how ridiculous the falsehood sounds, and the demonic Power is broken. An Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 9 also reveals the lie to be false, with the first roll allowed an hour after the effect was used, and further rolls permitted every subsequent hour.

*The Serpent's Oracle*, 2 points, Init -3, Vim: The demon can duplicate the effect of any non-ritual Intellego spell for the cost of 2 Might Points. It may also gain a morsel of future knowledge, understanding the most immediate consequences of any one future action.

*Confound the Truth*, 5 points, Init 0, Mentem: This power allows the demon to create a perfectly convincing theo-

logical and scriptural argument for whatever point he is trying to prove. After reasoned consideration, a successful Intelligence + Theology roll against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals the doctrine to be false, with the first roll allowed a day after the effect was used, and further rolls permitted every subsequent month. It is also possible for someone else to explain the error to the victim, effectively making the roll on the victim's behalf.

**Weakness:** (Vulnerability) A cross causes a light wound by being presented towards this demon, or a medium wound if he is struck with it, so powerful is BaalBaruth's hatred of the symbol. A relic of the True Cross could banish him back to hell for centuries.

**Vis:** 5 pawns Mentem

**Appearance:** In his natural form, and if perceived by Second Sight, BaalBaruth appears as a great black serpent. If he manifests physically he always takes another form, though — a creature with the legs and wings of a very scruffy blackbird, the torso of a muscular man, and the head of a beautiful woman with long flowing black hair, but with a crocodile-like snout. Needless to say, BaalBaruth rarely manifests in this particular form unless he intends to destroy his enemies.



participate, being barred from chapter meetings and often eating separately and performing menial tasks and manual labor until they have taken their full vows, at which time they are welcomed fully in to the life of the community.

## The Corrupt Cluniacs

If Cluny is the corrupt order in your saga, then the downfall of one of the holiest orders of the religious is complete, and a major victory has been achieved for the Infernal. Because of the order's standing outside of local diocesan and noble sponsors' control, and the distance of papal authority from the many Cluniac houses, they are able to run their own affairs; once supernatural evil became established it would have been very hard for them to be discovered and purified. The authoritarian structure of Cluny adds to this risk; if the Cluniacs have fallen to the Infernal, the Infernal has powerful strongholds across western Mythic Europe.

If the Cluniacs are corrupt the problem is deeply rooted, and goes back to the development of the cult of the dead and emphasis on purgatory, damnation, and decomposition that marked the order from the time of Odilo, the fifth Abbot of Cluny. At that time the vision of purgatory granted to a hermit is said to have led to the increasing emphasis on celebrating the office for the dead daily, and the construction of chantries. With their eyes so firmly fixed on the agonies of the next life, and the strong likelihood of damnation or at best centuries of torment in purgatory before final acceptance into heaven, a small number of monks began to wonder if there might be a better option.

As apparitions increased in number, and the dead were seen more and more, both as apparitions and rending the flesh of the living, many monks suffered a crisis of faith. At the end of the 12th century the chronicler William of Newburgh was able to write, "The cadavers of the dead, borne by I know not what spirit, leave their tombs to wander among the living, terrorizing them and destroying them, before returning to their tombs that open for them. This fact would be difficult to



accept if it was not for the fact that accounts and examples abound." This rise in the number of the living dead causes the rise in the Order of Hermes of the Ex Miscellanea tradition known as the *Donatores Requietis Aeternae*. The Cluniacs, masters of the rites of the dead, are frequently called upon to say Mass to keep the dead content, and speed unhappy souls towards their final destination; but if they are corrupt they were partly responsible for this sudden rise in the horrors of the tomb walking the night.

One of the oldest heresies is the belief it is better to be a prince in hell than a peasant in heaven, and this is the promise that has corrupted the Cluniacs. Seeing the endless vistas of the cruelty and horror of death before them every day, a group of Cluniacs began to question right doctrine. In the 12th century a defrocked priest named Peter of Bruyes preached a heretical doctrine, claiming that baptism should be for adults only, that only the New Testament gospels were Divinely inspired and the rest of the Bible was the work of men alone, and that the true Church consisted of the body of believers. He derided church buildings, and, most sensationally, held bonfires where

he openly burned crosses, which Peter preached were nothing but a cruel instrument of torture and a bizarre way to commemorate the Christ slain upon one. Denying the value of the Sacraments and the physical nature of Jesus Christ, Peter gathered both popular support and Ecclesiastical condemnation.

The great reforming Cluniac abbot, the head of the order Peter the Venerable, led the Cluniacs in the counter-offensive, preaching orthodoxy to counter the heresy; but in the process many Cluniacs were exposed to the corrupting beliefs. Peter the Venerable recorded Peter of Bruyes' beliefs: "The good deeds of the living cannot profit the dead, because translated from this life their merits cannot be increased or diminished, for beyond this life there is no longer place for merits, only for retribution." The challenge to the Cluniacs and their endless round of requiem Masses was plain, and some Cluniacs felt there was truth in the heretical doctrine. How could one know if the prayers of the living actually helped the dead?

Henry of Lausanne was one of the doubters. He was a Cluniac monk who was expelled from the order for teaching Peter of Bruyes' heretical views — the

Petrobrusian heresy. And yet his own beliefs — known as the Henrician heresy — were to flourish for some time, spreading among Cluniac houses despite the best efforts of Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable. Little is known of the actual content of those beliefs, but if in your saga the Cluniacs are corrupt, then the Henricianism of the 1140s marks the moment when corruption overwhelmed the order; after Peter the Venerable the whole order fell as the head rotted. Cluny, Henry's original home, was the first monastery corrupted.

Faced with the challenge of proving the fates of the dead were affected by the prayers of the living, there were just two options. One was to physically enter purgatory, and this was the first option at-

tempted. Two parties of Cluniacs, with a few brave and devout noble supporters, secretly set out for the two places where a physical transition to the realm of purgatory was known to be possible. One, already mentioned, was the volcano Mount Etna, and the other was the place known as Saint Patrick's Purgatory, in Ireland. Both parties successfully discovered the entrance to the regions and physically entered purgatory, or so they believed, and while none of the Mount Etna party returned to the lands of the living, two of the party who went to Ireland did return.

The two, a knight and a monk, had been separated soon after their entry to purgatory. The knight Owein told his tale to Henry of Satlrey, and he in turn told Marie of France, who versified it. The sto-

ry is now well known in Mythic Europe — including the horrors the knight encountered, and his final escape from purgatory after piously resisting all temptations and crying out to God and the saints.

The monk, Gobert of Eze, had a different experience. Having escaped purgatory driven mad by what he had seen, tortured and confused by evil spirits he lacked the will or faith to resist, he sought out a necromancer who taught him sorcerous arts. His hope was to control the dead who followed him, crying out to him to save them. On his return a few years later to Cluny, he called together the monks who had expressed doubts and told them Henricianism was false, but he also told them of the horrors he had seen, and that the necromantic arts would demonstrate

## The Demon Patarus

**Order:** Accusers

**Infernal Might:** 15

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +2, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1

**Size:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Personality Traits:** Cruel +6, Cowardly +3, Rebellious +2

**Reputations:** Servant of BaalBaruth 1

**Hierarchy:** 1

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init +5, Attack n/a, Defense +9, Damage n/a

**Soak:** +5

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Brawl 3 (dodge), Church Lore 2 (politics), Guile 4 (gossip), Intrigue (Church) 2

**Powers:**

**To Sin in Dreams,** 1 point, Init -1, Mentem: Changes the victim's memories of a period of up to two hours, always in a destructive and unpleasant way, to lead the victim to believe he committed a mortal sin or similar. The effect disappears at daybreak or sunset, revealing the memory as false, but may

leave the victim wondering if he is going mad.

**Obsession,** 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: Obedience, Masochism.

**Betrayal of the Heart,** 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: Patarus can see into the hearts of mankind and draw forth their most secret thoughts — people's fears and sins. Each use of this Power reveals to the demon one fact about the target that the target would never admit. Truly holy people may be immune to this power if they have no secrets, no matter how petty.

**Whispers Behind the Back,** 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: Just as the spell *Pains of the Perpetual Worry*, this power gives the victim a nagging, painful emotion linked to his secret sins — a recurrent sense of anxiety that his secret will be uncovered and a suspicion that everyone already knows it, and is talking about the target behind his back. This Power lasts for a month.

**Coagulation,** 3 points, Init -1, Corpus: May take on a physical body in 25 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.

**Your One True Friend,** 3 points, Init -1, Mentem: Causes the victim to trust one authority figure and everything he says, regarding him as a true and

sincere friend, for the duration of one month. An Intelligence stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9 is allowed if the friend asks the target to act against his best interests, or commit a mortal sin, and this breaks the Power's effect if successful, though the victim may still not realize he was under a Power's influence before.

**Weakness:** Protected Group: those personally dedicated to Saint Benedict of Nursia, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, or Saint Basil the Great, with a positive score in Devotion, are immune to all Patarus' powers.

**Vis:** 3 pawns Mentem

**Appearance:** If materialized, he appears as a thin monk dressed in Cluniac garb, with pale features drawn tight as if consumed by a secret guilt. Two lumps on his head mark his small goat-like horns, and his tongue is that of a serpent, his voice a whining wail. Patarus, like all of BaalBaruth's servants, hates his master and plots to replace him at the first opportunity, but his fear of his demonic master is too great at the moment. He serves his abbot unwillingly, and only through fear of punishment from BaalBaruth.



the truth of his assertion. When an impious noble died and was brought to Cluny, he and his followers deliberately corrupted the funeral rites to deny the man Christian burial. This terrible sin attracted demonic attention, and their necromantic rite worked, for that night the shade of the count stood before them and swore to serve them, as the very devils would serve them after their deaths.

It was thus that the houses of God were turned into houses of the worm, and the Cluniacs came to begin to corrupt the liturgy and to adore Satan in the hope of rewards and power in the world to come. As the Cistercian order was growing in popularity and the money supply of the Cluniacs dwindled, there was a strong feeling that God had turned his back on the Cluniacs; now more and more of the monks of Cluny were corrupted by false teaching (for Ability Corruption see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 91).

The strong hierarchical nature of the Cluniacs has allowed monks to move to monasteries and corrupt them in sequence, with those who resist or show horror being quietly eliminated. This would still prove impossible, were it not for the strong demonic support provided by BaalBaruth, a duke of hell, who supervises the plan and whose particular delight is the corruption of monks. He has assigned a great army of deceivers to work for and control the monks of Cluny, and furthermore has even supplied the True Names of some of his rivals in hell to allow the demon-evoking Goetia of the monks to more effectively control them, or so he claims. The truth may be rather different, but the demons come when bidden, and cringe and fawn before the sorcerous monks.

The corrupt Cluniacs have Favored Abilities of the Goetic Arts of Ablating, Binding, Commanding, and Summoning. A few also possess the Supernatural Ability: Corruption, which they use to good effect to spread their evil. (See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 114–120 for information on Goetia.)

The usual methods of the Cluniacs are to persuade certain sinners of wealth or worldly influence that their only chance of salvation lies in supporting the Cluniacs financially and politically; they produce ghostly apparitions if need be to prove

their point. Also, the Cluniacs have an uncanny ability to see unconfessed sins; this is in fact the *Whispers Behind the Back* power of their Infernal allies of the Order of Accusers. The aim of the Cluniac order is to strengthen its own position, and by inculcating a terrible fear of death, terror of judgment, and feeling of despair, not to evoke piety but rather a false reliance upon indulgences and support of the Church militant (in the form of the Cluniacs) rather than genuine repentance and turning to God and his holy Sacraments. A common trick is for a Cluniac confessor to claim no confession is needed, as he can see the secrets of the sinner's heart. Subtly perverting Christian doctrine and encouraging wrong belief, the ultimate betrayal is the provision of perverted Sacraments, for while the correct Sacrament performed by even a totally corrupt priest would still be efficacious and of the Divine, the Cluniacs deliberately use sacrilegious rites. Those administered last rites by one of the corrupt Cluniacs often walk the earth as ghosts, and are bound by their treacherous confessor to serve him in the afterlife, or delivered to the awaiting demons who turn around.

The Cluniacs have subtly altered a number of rites, including the Mass, into blasphemous inversions that count as Profaning the Holy, and create Infernal vis. (See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 96 for details.) While a relatively small number of Cluniacs is directly involved in the sorcerous binding of demons and necromantic horrors, the ghosts and demons they control have given them power over the whole order, and almost all abbots are now members of the conspiracy. The rest of the monks — the majority — are corrupted by the Infernal auras that increasingly are growing up within the houses, and are giving in to minor vices, sins of the flesh, and especially impiety. The abbots usually keep the auras tarnished as Debauched Auras (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 14) to allow the maximum ease in corrupting those who might offer resistance if they understood the horrific truth. As most abbots have a demon of the Order of Accusers ready to use *Whispers Behind the Back* to discover those who might resist dark secrets, not many can hold out for long.

Another practice is that of binding into objects the ghosts of those who have made the mistake of trusting the order, which are then used in a number of ways. One thing that the prior of Thetford, England is experimenting with is binding the spirits of those who have annoyed him into murals that depict their lives. This allows the painting to occasionally display a certain eerie quality of animation, with the spirit's torment pleasingly visible, and also allows the mural to watch over a certain area. (See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 117.) In other cases the effigies on tombs have been enchanted by binding the spirits of the husband and wife depicted, and their metal or stone effigies can magically be animated to deal with intruders. (This effect uses a particularly unpleasant variant of Virgil's magic, an ancient tradition described in *Rival Magic* on pages 47 – 74, combined with Spirit Binding in a black and horrible experiment.) Others are less fortunate, their spirits bound into keys, rings, or even doors, to serve the whims of the monks. The monks are not driven by mindless sadism, but by a desire to enhance their status in hell by clearly showing their "demonic" qualities in life. They are also extremely careful to never allow any attempt to corrupt the burial of any person who might be in any way holy, or have died with their sins shriven, lest God visit his vengeance upon them.

A small number of monks remain who are completely innocent, pious, and struggling to reform the order, fully aware that something is terribly wrong, but isolated and frightened. With the absolute authority of the abbot guaranteed by the rule, very few manage any kind of trouble, and bishops and even papal legates have no way of investigating claims, even terrible ones of black Masses, demon worship, and the walking dead. Those who are obviously incorruptible and dangerous are either sent to Cluny, and vanish or die there, or are sent into exile in one of the small cells where three or four monks live far from the rest of the order in some unhealthy backwater.

Discovering the nature of the Cluniac corruption, if it exists in your saga, may be easier than convincing the papacy of the terrible truth.

# The Cistercians

The Cistercians were, like the Cluniacs, born out of a reforming zeal and a wish to return to the original Rule of Saint Benedict, strictly enforced. At the end of the 11th century, a group of French monks from various abbeys left their houses. All had been involved in reform, and all had found that the Cluniac order was too lax and decadent, and filled with sinful behavior. These monks of good birth and education formed a community of their own at Cîteaux, dedicating it on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1098 — the Feast of Saint Benedict.

The Cistercians took off at an incredible rate, and by 1220 have 400 monasteries across Europe. Preferring to build, where

possible, in wilderness areas, and working manually while observing the Rule of Saint Benedict strictly, the order is widely seen as exemplary in its piety and the devotion of its monks. Ironically, this support has led to the donation of considerable wealth, and the inevitable reproaches from the laity; they often now regard the new orders of mendicant friars as the reforming, pious, and genuinely spiritual groups, complaining about fat and avaricious Cistercian monks.

The Cistercians enjoy excellent relations with the Knights Templar, and a number of other military orders. This influence and friendship comes about partly through the efforts of one very important Cistercian, Bernard of Clairvaux, because of his and the order's efforts in preaching the Second Crusade.

## What Makes the Cistercians Different?

The Cistercians split off from the reforming Cluniacs when they became too lax and lost their reforming zeal. Unless noted, the Cistercians are closer to the Benedictine ideal, following the rule as closely as possible and not adopting the unique features of the Cluniac order despite their origins in that movement. A small point, but one worth noting, is that the Cistercians wear white and are known as the "White Monks," whereas the Benedictines and Cluniacs are called the "Black Monks."

### SOLITUDE AND RETREAT

Cistercian houses are often built in beautiful wilderness settings, far from human habitation and away from the bustle of the towns. Moorland, isolated valleys, and forest clearings all have Cistercian houses, and a traveler lost in some bleak place might suddenly stumble upon a paradise of ordered fields, well-tended flocks, irrigation, and verdant vineyards, and then the reassuring sight of the great walls and tower of a Cistercian abbey. The Cistercians do not run schools or provide the welfare services that are associated with other orders, being instead focused on their own spiritual retreat from the world. Some whisper they hide secrets in their isolation.

### MANUAL LABOR

Many Cistercians are illiterate, and formal study and learning are not stressed as much as in other orders. Instead, hard physical manual labor takes up most of a Cistercian's day, whether it is working in the fields or on one of the huge but simple abbey churches that they build with their own hands. The Cistercians are very interested in new methods in agriculture, and particularly in rearing sheep. The monks work in the fields of the abbey farms, though they are beginning to employ lay workers to help out, giving rise to monastery villages that are growing into towns.

## Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153)

Saint Bernard, the founding abbot of Clairvaux Abbey in Burgundy, was one of the greatest Church leaders, dominating Mythic Europe in the first half of the 12th century. He was born in 1090 and entered the abbey of Cîteaux in 1112, bringing thirty young nobles with him, including four of his brothers. Another brother and his father joined him later. Bernard's Mythic Presence and astonishing writing ability drew many to Clairvaux and the other Cistercian monasteries. He defended the Cistercians against the Cluniac order (showing little of the diplomacy for which he

was later known), he was involved in ending a papal schism, and he acted as a negotiator between England and France. His strong will, pugnacious nature, and towering intellect allowed him to dominate those around him. He preached the Second Crusade, worked hard for the military orders, and raised vast armies. In his last years, he rose from his sickbed and went into the Rhineland to defend the Jews against a savage persecution. He finally died in 1154, though he was physically frail for most of his life. He was canonized in 1173, and his feast day is August 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Story Seed: The Ring of Saint Bernard

Many stories circulate about how the Templars gave Bernard the personal seal ring of Solomon, which they had found under the temple in Jerusalem. Some rumours claim that one of his assistants stole the ring, and used it to raise monasteries and great abbey churches all over Europe on behalf of the order by commanding demons, but Bernard rebuked him and the devil claimed the unfortunate man. Such romances have nothing to do with history, or do they?

The knowledgeable might wonder if the ring of Solomon refers to *Ars Notoria* (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 97), or even if the ring allowed the summoning of Architechus (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 66). There are legends attached to a number of Cistercian houses claiming they were built for a noble using sorcery to bind demons, but afterwards he repented and gave the building over to the order to save his soul. Sometimes folk tales contain much truth.



Adopting the principle "to work is to pray," Cistercians focus their devotion through these efforts. Stories about demons raising their monasteries overnight are probably a tribute to their ingenuity and hard work, and the magnificent abbey churches they have constructed.

### GOVERNANCE

Like the Cluniac houses, the Cistercians stand independent of the local diocesan structure, owing allegiance to the papacy. A strong system of visitation is, however, in place, with each daughter house being visited annually and thoroughly inspected by the abbot of the motherhouse. Unlike the Cluniac order, the government of the Cistercians is not hierarchical. Instead, the abbots gather at Cîteaux every autumn for the annual chapter meeting, where policy decisions are made and conduct and disciplinary hearings are held. Presided over by the abbot of Cîteaux, in many ways this resembles a Hermetic Tribunal, being an almost democratic occasion with opinions freely offered. There is even a sort of "Peripheral Code," in the statutes agreed to by the chapter, which are written up in the *Institutiones Capituli Generalis* of 1203. The chapter meeting in recent years has become fractious, with factions developing over how certain aspects of the rule and the statutes should be interpreted; the unity of purpose that marked the early Cistercians has been lost.

### WEALTH

Ironically, given the criticisms of luxury brought against the other orders by the Cistercians in their initial reforming zeal, the sheer hard work and agricultural prowess of the order has brought them huge wealth. The English Cistercians' large flocks of sheep are proving highly profitable as a source of prized woolen cloth, but with economic success have come accusations of luxury and corruption. The order shows few outwards signs of the wealth, for Cistercian abbeys are magnificent yet extremely austere, often being whitewashed and almost devoid of



decoration. They have a simple elegance, though, far from the decoration favored by the Cluniacs.

### ECCLESIASTICAL INFLUENCE

As well as Saint Bernard, Saint Malachy of Armagh, Saint Almeric, and Saint Stephen the founder (all canonized saints), the Cistercians have produced two popes and a score of bishops and archbishops by 1220. They are currently in favor with the papacy, such that they have a considerable influence when petitioning the Church, gaining the favor of a Cistercian abbot gives a +3 bonus to totals for Petitioning the Church (See Chapter 3: The Diocese) over and above the usual bonuses.

### OPPOSING HERESY

While the Dominican friars are gaining dominance in this field, the Cistercian monks have always been important in the fight against heresy, leaving their monasteries to preach to the laity about error and heresy. They play a vital role in opposing the Cathar heresy in the Languedoc, and continue to collect and read questionable books in order to root out heresies.

### The Corrupt Cistercians

The Cistercians, with their retreat from the world, rapidly increasing wealth, and powerful friends in the military orders,

## The Three Ages of the World

Joachim of Flora taught that God dealt with the world in three dispensations, or ages. The first age was that of God the Father, and was marked by the Jewish Law and the covenant with Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. That age passed with the coming of Jesus Christ, which ushered in the age of the Son when the Gospel and the Church ruled over man. Now, however, the end of that age is almost upon the world, and in these end times the birth pangs of the new age can be discerned. The next age will be the Age of the Spirit, where spiritual illumination will fall upon men and women who have no need of the Church, for they will be guided by the

Divine light and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The Church has become degenerate and corrupt, and the age to come will sweep it away and be ruled by a spiritual order of the just, who appear to be monastic.

It is hardly surprising that the Church viewed Joachim with suspicion, but given his immense charisma and clear devotion, he gained an immense following among the educated and uneducated alike of Mythic Europe. For more on his theology, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 133, though note that only certain Trinitarian teachings were condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council, not all of his teachings as implied there.

Europe reads holy scripture on a number of levels, including the literal, spiritual, typological (foreshadowing later events), and allegorical, Joachim's conclusions may be contentious but his method of Biblical interpretation is not necessarily so.

Joachim's fame goes far beyond those who have read his three books. Richard the Lionheart was fascinated by him, and before setting out on the Third Crusade planned to consult him about the end times. According to Roger of Howden, Richard was informed that Saladin was not the Antichrist, but the sixth of seven great persecutors of the Church, and it was Richard's destiny to drive Saladin from the Holy Land and retake Jerusalem. If so, it was a failed prophecy.

## THE JOACHIMITES

In the twenty years since Joachim's death, his followers have become known as Joachimites, and many have adopted even stranger beliefs, such as those of the infamous Brethren of the Free Spirit. Many believe that a future pope will come from their own ranks, though some believed he would be from the Franciscans, and this pope's death would bring in the age of the final Antichrist. Others see the Emperor Frederick II as clearly the final Antichrist, while yet others regard Saladin as the one prophesied. The most dangerous group are those who believe that a pope will be the actual Antichrist, and the Church the whore of Babylon, which is clearly Rome. Some of these claim to have received obscure prophecies attributed to the great Irish Cistercian Saint Malachy, but no such prophecies are officially recognized or known, even in the writings of his close friend Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

All of the interpretations of these "prophecies" agree on two things: that Joachim was in receipt of Divine illumination (his followers are often called illuminated ones, or *illuminati*), and that the end of the age will come about in 1260. Many expect the Biblical prophecies of the Revelation of Saint John the Divine to play out in the last days, and information on running a saga where the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse roam Mythic Europe can be found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 128.

are perhaps ideal candidates for the corrupt order of monks, not the least because they are known for their role in fighting heresy and Infernal influence. Who better to corrupt than the Church's watchdog? If in your saga it is the Cistercian order that is corrupt, it is likely recent, the indirect result of the Blessed Joachim of Flora.

## JOACHIM OF FLORA

Joachim was a young man from Norman Sicily whose father held high office in the royal court there. As a young man he chose to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and while there was caught up in a terrible tragedy, the nature of which he never revealed. Fortunate to escape with his life, he retreated to Mount Tabor, site of the transfiguration of Christ, where he meditated for forty days and forty nights during the Lent season. During that time a Divine light came upon him, and he felt he could clearly understand the secrets of the scriptures. Convinced of his authority he returned to Italy where he began to preach, drawing crowds. When the Church intervened to stop his unauthorized preaching, he immediately entered the abbey of Corazzo in Calabria, taking the Cistercian habit, and he was ordained a priest in 1168. Though he rose to the position of abbot, some say that the Cis-

tercians refused to accept Joachim and his monks; while his admirers say the rejection was due to the poverty of the abbey, his denigrators claim it was owing to his ideas that were, even then, heretical. The truth appears to be that the Cistercians did receive Joachim, but have since attempted to distance themselves from him.

After petitioning the pope to be relieved of his duties, Joachim set about writing the three books that were to make him famous. The Church was hesitant to endorse Joachim's teachings until the books had been fully studied, but good relations with Popes Urban III and Clement III allowed him to complete his work largely unsupervised. In 1200 he completed his task, dying before his books could be formally read for orthodoxy by Pope Innocent III. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 was to condemn certain of his Trinitarian formulations, including his famous idea of the three ages of the world, but most of his theology is still considered perfectly orthodox. (If your saga follows history, more will be condemned in 1255, largely as a result of fervent disciples laying claim to his name but not his actual beliefs.)

Joachim has come to be popularly regarded as a prophet, though in fact he always denied that calling, claiming the nature of his divine illumination was actually a clear understanding of the mysteries of scripture. As the Church in Mythic



### THE CISTERCIAN CONNECTION

Given their strong involvement in opposing heresy, the Cistercians from the beginning took a great deal of interest in the writings of Joachim of Flora. It was a Cistercian abbot, Tino of Gradara, who first became fascinated. As he read the books for the papal inquiry in 1200, Tino became illuminated, suddenly seeing clearly the truth of the words, and receiving the gift of prophecy. As a boy, Tino had been rescued from a group of Infernal heretics, but in his sudden revelation of Divine truth Tino came to see that in fact the heretics had been truly free, fully participating in the Divine grace of the Age of the Spirit to come. It was not sin that bound mankind, but fear of sin, for grace abounds and therefore the more one sins, the more grace there can be, and the more of God's spirit infuses the world. Furthermore, he realized that he was of God, and God dwelt in him, and that the distinction between God and himself was a false one. This realization of his own Godhood led to a series of explosive mystical experiences, in the course of which he came to realize the Divine within everything.

Far from rejecting the world as corrupt, Tino teaches that one should celebrate it and recognize the Divine immanence — the presence of God in everything, even base things. He set up a chamber pot on the altar and praised it, and when that provoked no negative reaction from God, but rather another set of Divine revelations, he realized he must find more converts to bring about the realization of the eschaton — the end of the age — by bring God more fully into the world of matter — the process of immanentization.

So this is Tino's goal, to immanentize the eschaton and bring about the end times, along with a new utopian age of love and peace ruled over by his order of spiritual mystics, the Illuminati, which is hidden within the Cistercian order. In the twenty years since he began he has made astonishing progress, far more than even he could have predicted, in converting abbots and hence houses all over the Cistercian order to his beliefs. Hundreds of monks are now loyal to his ideals, and many are receiving confirmatory secret visions and revelations of their own.

There are three degrees of initiation into the group, though these are not formal ranks as in a mystery cult. The lowest group is those monks who have been exposed to the teachings of Joachim, accept the idea of the coming end of the age, and believe that the institutional Church is corrupt. Many are fervent disciples of the second group, who comprise those who have had a mystical illumination, and who have experienced visions and prophecies of events to come. This group has already cast off the shackles of the Church's teaching, and feels liberated enough to break their vows, scorn the symbols of Ecclesiastical office, and work towards the end of the age and ushering in of the Age of the Spirit. They secretly commit venial sins to demonstrate their freedom and state of grace.

Finally there is the inner circle, who meet in the castle of a sympathetic noble at Saint Croix in the Dordogne each year before general chapter in the autumn. Here they celebrate the most obscene rites, deliberately indulging in horrific orgies of mortal sin to demonstrate their complete liberation from sin and eternal state of grace brought about by gnosis — secret wisdom. They receive "spiritual gifts" — the Maleficia taught by their Unholy Tradition. The inner circle alone celebrate Lucifer as light bringer, and believe that the Antichrist will be a Divine figure who will liberate the world by ushering away the decadent and stagnant era of the Church. Their belief is that disobedience was man's original virtue; this inner circle of some twenty abbots and a few nobles are a genuinely dangerous group, willing worshippers of the devil, believing him to be a servant of God. They do not, however, regard themselves as Infernalists or demon worshippers in any sense; they see their liberation from morality and embrace of sin as a sign of their own spiritual liberation and godliness.

A few of them have noted the similarity in name between Joachim's first monastery, Corrazo, and Chorazon, the city where it is traditionally held the Antichrist will be born. It was this fact that first alerted Tino to the realization that Joachim was an Antichrist, in a manner typical of the man, he immediately took the idea on board and adjusted his theology to fit. Some of his disciples have now performed the black pilgrimage to the ruins of Chorazon in the Holy Land, seeking spiritual visions, and have received further revelations supporting their new beliefs. Recently they have been instructed that the disciples of Saint Francis, the Franciscan Friars, should be recruited subtly into the plan, and some tentative connections have been made.

### Sample Characters

The following character stats are provided to help storyguides integrate a corrupt Cistercian order in their saga.

#### FATHER TINO OF GRADARA

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per -2 (1), Pre 0, Com +2, Str -3 (2), Sta -3 (2), Dex -2 (1), Qik -4 (3)

**Age:** 86

**Decrepitude:** 3 (6)

**Warping Score:** 5 (2)

**Confidence Score:** 4 (8)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Diabolist, Senior Clergy, Ceremony, Debauchery, Diablerie, Educated, Enticer of Multitudes, Great Communication x 2, Improved Characteristics, Incantation, Inspirational, Psychomachia, Corrupted Abilities, Diabolic Past, Dark Secret (Infernalist), (False) Visions, Palsied Hands, Plagued by Supernatural Entity,

### A Note on the Illuminati

The term illuminati historically derives from the followers of Joachim of Flora. If players in your saga are likely to link it with later connotations and uses, such as modern conspiracy theory,

Adam Weishaupt's Bavarian Illuminati, or Nesta Webster's paranoid writings, it is probably better to use the term Joachimite, or the slightly anachronistic term Brethren of the Free Spirit.

## The Demon Jaevert

**Order:** Duke of the Deluders (Watchers)  
**Infernal Might:** 40  
**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +5, Sta +5, Dex +5, Qik +5  
**Size:** +3  
**Confidence Score:** 2 (6)  
**Personality Traits:** Credible +3, Sly +2  
**Reputations:** Duke of False Millenniums 7  
**Hierarchy:** 7  
**Virtues and Flaws:** Corruption, Good Teacher, Noncombatant, Puissant Guile, Puissant Church Lore.  
**Combat:**  
*Dodge:* Init +5, Attack n/a, Defense +9, Damage n/a  
**Soak:** +5  
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious  
**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-8), -3 (9-13), -5 (14-18), Incapacitated (19-23), Dead (24+)  
**Abilities:** Brawl 3 (dodge), Church Lore (eschatology) 8 +2, Ceremony 6, Debauchery 8, Guile 7+2 (prophecies), Incantation 7, Infernal Lore 6 (politics), Intrigue 4 (Church), Magic Lore 4 (prophecy), Psychomachia 6, Theology (end times) 8, Teaching, (corrupt abilities) 6  
**Powers:**  
*Angel of Light*, 2 points, Init 0, Imaginem: Jaevert may appear as a shining angel

of light, radiating peace and goodwill. He often appears in this form to impart false prophecies.

*The Wordless Conversation*, 0 points, Init 0, Mentem: Jaevert may speak directly in to the mind of any creature who he can see (assuming Magic Resistance is penetrated), and may choose to hear any verbal or mental response that the target may make.

*Coagulation*, 3 points, Init -1, Corpus: Jaevert may take on a physical body in 25 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.

*Duplicate the Magi's Transmutation*, variable points, Init +1, variable Form: Jaevert can duplicate any Hermetic Muto spell, at the cost of one point of Might per Magnitude, up to level 40. He may not duplicate Ritual effects.

*Duplicate the Magi's Control*, variable points, Init +1, variable Form: Jaevert can duplicate any Hermetic Rego spell, at the cost of one point of Might per Magnitude, up to level 40. He may not duplicate Ritual effects.

*Duplicate the Magi's Perception*, variable points, Init +1, variable Form: Jaevert can duplicate any Hermetic Intellego spell, at the cost of one point of Might per Magnitude, up to level 40. He may not duplicate Ritual effects.

*Obsession*, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: Spiritual Pride, Enthusiasm

*Delusion* 1 or 5 points, Init +3, Imaginem: Jaevert can create elaborate illusions. A minor illusion that affects an Individual amount of material (such as the demon himself) costs 1 point, a larger illusion that fills a room costs 5 points. These visions always have a flaw, however (they smell wrong, can only be seen by one target, etc.).

*Corrupted Knowledge*, 2 points, Init -3, Mentem: When Jaevert spends a season teaching an Ability (of any kind, including Supernatural), he uses this Power to corrupt the knowledge he teaches so he grants the Flaw Corrupted. The Power only inflicts the Flaw if the character being schooled acquires an increase in an Ability score because of the teaching of the demon. Those affected by this Power soon learn they get greater rewards if they use their Ability for selfish or sinful purposes.

**Weakness:** Protected Group (those who can actually see the future, such as those with premonitions).

**Vis:** 8 pawns Imaginem

**Appearance:** Jaevert, if somehow perceived, appears as a featureless black giant torn out of space, the darkness pierced only by hundreds of burning eyes staring out from the eerie silhouette.

Witch Marks.  
**Personality Traits:** Inspiring +3, Spiritual +2, Charming +1  
**Reputations:** Saint to be (Church) 3  
**Soak:** -3  
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious  
**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)  
**Abilities:** Awareness (strangers) 1, Artes Liberales 5 (grammar), Charm 2 (persuade), Civil & Canon Law 2 (heresy), Ceremony 5 (debauchery), Debauchery 9, Diablerie 6, Church Lore 5 (politics), Corrupted Dominion Lore 3 (angels), Incantation 6, Infernal Lore 4

(eschatology), Latin 5 (Rituals), Living Language: Italian 5 (preaching), Organization Lore: Cistercians 8 (personalities), Penetration 4, Psychomachia 6, Teaching 5 (Infernal Abilities)

**Vituperation Scars:** When preaching, Tino's face takes on a soft, bland look, and his visage dimly radiates a light not unlike that of the moon. When he's sitting still his robes move about as if vermin were creeping around under them. He has a sweet odor associated with him, but to those with True Faith it smells sickly sweet, like decaying meat. His demonic advisor tries to ensure no one that holy gets close enough to notice, though.

Tino's greatest method of recruitment of brothers into his secret group within the Cistercians has been Corruption, an Ability described in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 91. His books are *A Commentary on Isaiah and Jeremiah*, a corrupt tractatus on Theology, and *Expositio Sybillae et Merlini*, a work that claims to discuss the ancient prophecies of the sibyls and Merlin, but which is actually a corrupt summa on Church Lore, designed to subtly influence the reader towards Tino's position. These books are widely copied and distributed within the order, though the author remains anonymous.

The demon behind this elaborate deception is Jaevert, Duke of the False



Millennium. Jaevert does not create these heresies, but for centuries wherever a false prophet has announced the end, Jaevert has gained influence and meddled to ensure false doctrines are taught, false hopes are raised, and then they're dashed resulting in cynicism and loss of faith. He often appears to prophets and visionaries in the guise of an angel of light, leading them into corruption and ultimate despair and damnation.

## The Vallumbrosans

One of the smaller orders in Mythic Europe, the Vallumbrosans can be found in the Tribunals of Rome, Iberia, Provençal, Normandy, Rhine and the Greater Alps, but the majority of their monasteries are on the Italian peninsula. Founded in the early 11th century, the name derives from "shadowy valley," Vallombrosa, the motherhouse that is located in the mountains twenty miles from Florence.

Saint John Gualbert was the founder, and his story is well known. When one of his relatives was murdered, he set out to avenge the death by slaying the killer, and came across the man in an alleyway. Even as he raised his sword to strike, the murderer flung himself in to the dirt in the form of a cross, and pleaded for mercy in the name of Christ. Saint John put his sword down, and let the man go. He walked home troubled, and on the way stopped in to a church to pray. As he prayed, the crucifix bowed its head and he realized he had done the correct thing. From that moment on his life was changed, and he chose to enter a monastery.

As with most successful new monastic orders, the Vallumbrosans were reacting against the laxity of Benedictine life, and were far more austere and strict in their application of the rule. So much so, in fact, that they failed to attract many novices, and it was only after the original severity was slightly tempered that the Vallumbrosans began to found new monasteries and spread. The order appeals to the ex-

tremely ascetic, some would say masochistic. This has given them a tremendous reputation as spiritual supermen, though from the beginning there has also been controversy and rumors of something wrong with the order.

### What Makes the Vallumbrosans Different?

The Vallumbrosan order is quite distinct in many ways, but like the other orders discussed in this chapter, it is based upon the Rule of Saint Benedict. The differences and unique points are briefly outlined here. The most visible aspects are their tawny brown habits and that Vallumbrosans are never encountered outside their monasteries, apart from abbots who are found occasionally wherever the pope is.

#### PAPAL INFLUENCE

Whereas Cluniacs and Cistercians have Ecclesiastical Influence, which adds to totals when Petitioning the Church (See Chapter 3: The Diocese), the Vallumbrosan order has always had a strong influence on the papacy. If the papacy or

curia are the recipients of a petition, add +5 to the total in addition to the normal bonus for the support of an abbot. This popularity with the papacy may go a long way towards explaining the unpopularity of the order and suspicions voiced about them by other religious and clergy.

#### EXTREME ASCETICISM AND SILENCE

Vallumbrosans may own no property at all; their poverty is total, apart from their clothing and sandals that are, of course, the property of the order. Silence is enforced at all times, and even sign language kept to the minimum. Those who break the harsh disciplinary code can expect flogging, and self-flagellation is practiced as an ascetic mortification of the flesh. The monks survive on the minimum of food and sleep, and only the hardest can last for long under this regime.

#### NO MANUAL WORK

The monks are completely dedicated to prayer and devotions, and are forbidden to perform any manual work. A class of lay brothers who perform the farming and other required labor are needed, and they live alongside the monastery but do



not take the vows. There are a few Vallumbrosan nuns, but they live in a dwelling outside the monastery, and their primary duties are to cook and do other work for the monks of the adjacent monastery.

### TOTAL RETREAT FROM THE WORLD

Vallumbrosans are a rigorously enclosed order, who never leave their monasteries under any circumstances. The only exception is that the abbots travel about on monastic business, and often can be found around the papal court. Even the lay brothers are excluded from the chapter and chapel of the full monks, who live lives of almost total seclusion. Visitors are discouraged and no guest quarters are provided, though the lay

brothers will put up guests on the monks' behalf, outside the monastery walls. Communication with friends and families is severely discouraged.

## If the Vallumbrosans are Corrupt

It may be tempting to have the Vallumbrosans as the corrupt order, simply because they are a small group whose secretive ways do attract controversy, and who are unpopular in some clerical circles. This is rooted in events in the second half of the 11th century, which are probably little known 150 years later, unless the characters research the history of the order. In the middle of the 11th century a scandal erupted in Florence when it became clear

that certain prominent Churchmen were buying and selling Ecclesiastical positions — the sin of simony. An anti-corruption party formed, and the monks of Vallombrosa headed it, led by one monk named Peter. Fighting broke out between the two factions, and the Vallumbrosan monastery of San Silvi was burned down. Since that time fires have been a common problem for houses of this order, and some suspect a curse, yet in fact such fires are usually started by novices breaking under the strain.

When the Bishop Peter Mezzobarbo demanded his accusers face trial, Saint Robert — the founder of the order — ordered the monk Peter to face trial by ordeal. Peter passed completely unscathed through a huge bonfire, and the case was decided in the monks' favor. From that day forward, Peter became known as Peter

## The Demon Varriar

**Order:** Lord of the Avengers of Evil  
**Infernal Might:** 35  
**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +3, Str +3, Sta +5, Dex +3, Qik +2  
**Size:** +4  
**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)  
**Personality Traits:** Merciful -3, Relentless +5, Passionless +4  
**Reputations:** Torturer of Monks 5, Pact Signer 4  
**Hierarchy:** 6  
**Virtues and Flaws:** Piercing Gaze, Tough.  
**Combat:**  
*Whip:* Init +5, Attack +10 Defense +9, Damage +4  
**Soak:** +8  
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious  
**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (19-27), Incapacitated (28-36), Dead (37+)  
**Abilities:** Awareness 4 (guilt), Brawl 5 (whip), Civil & Canon Law 5 (The Rule of Saint Benedict), Infernal Lore 6 (politics), Philosophiae 4 (ethics), Theology 6 (sin)  
**Powers:**  
*Obsession,* 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim:

Obedience, Masochism  
*Coagulation,* 3 points, Init -1, Corpus: Varriar may take on a physical body in 25 rounds of manifestation, or may dissolve with a round of concentration.  
*Stealing the Cowl,* 3 points, Init 0, Corpus: May take on the appearance, once physical (see Coagulation earlier), of a person whom Varriar has authority over, such as a monk or abbot. Note that Varriar never directly lies, so he will never claim to be this person outright. Being a demon, Varriar lies all the time — it is just that his lies are subtle and indirect, not blatant. The corrupt Vallumbrosan abbots have all sworn fealty to Varriar, so he has authority over their monks for the purposes of this Power.  
*Punish the Sinner,* 5 points, Init +3, Corpus: Varriar can inflict wounds upon a target that are commensurate with the victim's level of sin. If the target has committed a mortal sin for which he has not atoned, then he suffers a Heavy wound. If he has an unrepented venal sin on his conscience, then he suffers a Medium wound. A victim with no outstanding sin on his conscience suffers a

number of points of damage equal to a simple die plus the sum total of all his sinful Personality Traits, ignoring negative signs as necessary. The Soak Total for this damage is a stress die + Stamina. The physical manifestation of this power is a lash from the demon's whip, and he must be materialized to perform this, but no Combat Total is required.

**Weakness:** The demon suffers from the Weakness: Compulsive; he must count objects scattered in his path. More than one monk has been saved by a broken string of prayer beads forcing Varriar to collect each and every fallen bead, while the monk made good his escape.

**Vim:** 7 pawns of Mentem, in whip.

**Appearance:** Varriar appears in his true form as a huge angel fifteen feet tall, made of burning blue flame and red-hot chains, with immense fiery wings and piercing black eyes. He carries a whip and is accompanied by an overpowering smell of strong church incense, but tinged with an exotic scent that somehow brings up associations of guilty scenes from the past.



Igneus, and the bishop was ashamed and confessed to his sin.

If the Vallumbrosans are corrupt, they are a group of diabolists — individuals who have signed pacts with the devil in exchange for worldly power. Such individuals are not given to extreme asceticism — quite the opposite — but investigations of the inside of a Vallumbrosan monastery will find them to be just as austere and terrifyingly disciplined and devout as rumor claims.

The reality is that the lay brothers and nuns who serve the monastery are the real diabolists, and the monks within the confines of the monastery are genuinely pious monks — with the single exception of the abbot, who is actually a diabolist working for the demons. Once incarcerated in the monastery the monks undergo terrible privations, meaningless tasks, and dreadful

hunger, cold, and fatigue, until their will finally snaps. Then and only then are they offered the chance to sign a pact with the devil, and become diabolists. Those who do are granted a new Virtue or loss of a Flaw, sometimes several depending on how well they bargain, and join the happy life of the community of lay brothers. Within a few months they are free to leave if they wish, and seek their fortune in the wider world, but most stay in the debauched community that serves the monastery. If they leave, they have seven years to find someone else to sign the pact, or they die, their soul claimed by hell. If they succeed, they earn another seven years' grace, and more Virtues representing Infernal favor. (Rules for generating diabolist characters and diabolic pacts can be found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 94.)

The demon behind this elaborate

deception is Varriar, Lord of Discipline. When passing in human form he dresses as a Vallumbrosan abbot and uses the name Abbot Curtaigne.

Abbot Curtaigne moves freely among the order's houses, but his influence extends far beyond. Wherever he can promote masochism and false pride in suffering in monks, and in every monastery where just spiritual authority is replaced with sadism and brutality, Varriar can be found, often in human form as a visiting guest, subtly encouraging these horrors. Note that Varriar is determined that none should die as a result of privation and the torturous penances inflicted, as that would make them martyrs to the faith. Rather, Varriar always aims to break the monks' spirit, and cause them to curse God and rebel.

## Chapter Seven

# The Knights Templar

The Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon are a group of warrior monks whose pledge to defend Christendom has led them to become one of the most powerful orders in Mythic Europe. In the 13th century, the Order of the Temple

has over 7,000 knights, brother-sergeants, officials, and priests, and more than 800 castles, preceptories, and chapterhouses. They stand above lay and clerical authority alike, answering to the pope alone. In Mythic Europe, the Knights Templar are

pious monks, bankers, builders of temples and fortresses, diplomats and advisors, merchants and land-owners, and defenders of the Holy Land.

This chapter details the history and organization of the Poor Knights, and advice on how to play a Templar character. It also provides some guidelines on adapting the information to play members of other military orders.



## The Poor Knights

The story of the Templars begins in Jerusalem, following the Holy City's bloody capture. Nine knights led by Hugh of Payns and Godfrey of St-Omer proposed a community of knights to protect the pilgrims traveling to the Christian sites in the Latin kingdoms.

In 1119, the nine knights took their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience before the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The King of Jerusalem granted them living quarters on the southern edge of Temple Mount — the site known as “Templum Salomonis,” or the Temple of Solomon. From this they derived their name: the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon.

The Poor Knights came under powerful patronage. In 1125 the order was the recipient of boons and gifts from many European magnates, and four years later at the Council of Troyes they officially received their rule. Many present at Troyes saw the order as a means to revitalize Christendom, while others saw the Poor Knights as the defenders of the Holy



Land. The influential Bernard of Clairvaux was instrumental in gaining the Templar's acceptance by laity and Churchmen alike.

Pope Innocent II issued a papal bull of privileges in 1136, which declared the Templars be "regarded especially as part of God's knighthood." This bull, known as the *Omne datum optimum*, established the new Knights Templar as exempt from all authority except that of the papacy itself, as well as giving them the right to have their own priesthood.

## The Fifth Crusade

The Fifth Crusade began in 1217 and ends 1221. Its main target is Egypt, the seat of Muslim power in the Middle East.

It was not until after Innocent III's death in 1216 that his constant planning for this crusade was realized. Honorius III directed the two grand masters of the Templars and Hospitallers to meet with the crusade leaders, Andrew of Hungary and Leopold of Austria.

In 1218, the assembled armies sailed from Acre to Damietta. A year later, after the death of the Templar Grand Master, the

## Templars and Scandal

The Templars are unique among the monastic orders in being free of scandal. The strict discipline and rule of the Templars means that most infractions and complaints are heard and dealt with internally. They are relatively free of rumors of womanizing, gambling, and

drinking, especially when compared with the scandals that beset other orders, such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, Teutons, and Hospitallers. Similarly, there are no scandals regarding homosexuality, as there were with the Hospitallers and other monastic orders.

## The Order Ends

If your saga follows history, the Templars continue to grow in power, influence, prestige, and wealth throughout the 13th century and very early 14th, until 1307. In that year, the French king arrests all Templars in his domain, and subsequently many Templars con-

fess to heresy and blasphemy. In 1312, the pope dissolves the Knights Templar, most brothers join other crusading orders or become monks.

Of course, Mythic Europe's future is not written in stone, and the fate of the Knights Templar is by no means certain.

crusaders captured the city, ignoring the sultan's offer to give up Jerusalem in return for peace. The offer was refused on the advice of the Templars, who stated that Jerusalem could not be held without possession of the lands south of the Holy City.

By 1220, the crusade is in danger of fall-

ing apart, and the few remaining crusader strongholds in Palestine are under increased pressure. Money is running low and German forces have not yet arrived. In July 1220, a delegation of Templars and Hospitallers carries Pope Honorius III's financial contribution to the Fifth Crusade from Rome.

## The Templars and the Crusades

The Templars were one of three major standing crusading armies, which came to the aid of the Christian rulers of the Holy Land, and later aided Christian kings' efforts to recapture Jerusalem.

### THE SECOND AND THIRD CRUSADES

In the Second and Third Crusades, the Templars took leading roles. The Second Crusade (1147 – 1149) saw the Poor Knights granted the right by Pope Eugenius to wear the red crusading cross over their hearts. The crusade leaders relied heavily on their advice, and by the time King Louis of France reached Antioch they had effectively taken over command of the crusade altogether.

The Third Crusade (1187 – 1192)

also saw the Templars work closely with the crusade leaders. After the humiliating loss at the Battle of Hattin and the subsequent loss of Jerusalem, the Templars and Hospitallers augmented the crusader kings' troops. Grand Master Robert of Sabloel was raised to that position by King Richard of England, after which the Templars purchased the recently conquered island of Cyprus from the king (they sold the island a few years later to Guy of Lusignan, the erstwhile King of Jerusalem and vassal of King Richard).

### THE FOURTH CRUSADE

The Templars were only marginally involved in the notorious Fourth Crusade (1202 – 1204); a few senior Templars and

Hospitallers advised the crusade leaders, and even supported the subjugation of the Byzantine Empire. After the capture of Constantinople, the Templars took part in the subjugation of Greece that ended in 1210.

### THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

The Templars have not been actively involved in the Albigensian Crusade (1209 – 1229); throughout the conflict they have maintained effective neutrality. Fighting heretics is not a duty of the Templars. In fact, both Cathars and crusaders at times were aided and shielded in Templar houses. Neither the pope nor Simon of Montfort, the crusade leader, petitioned the Poor Knights for assistance against the Cathars.

## Papal Privileges

In 1139, Pope Innocent II issued the bull *Omne datum optimum*:

- The order may keep the booty it captures from Muslims.
- The order's rule of life under the master is confirmed.
- The brothers may elect their master without interference from anyone else.
- The customs and observances of the order cannot be infringed upon or changed except by the master and with the consent of the wiser part of the chapter of brothers.
- The brothers should not give oaths of loyalty or homage or any oaths to anyone outside the order.
- They need not pay tithes on the produce of their own lands.
- Those priests who stay a year and are approved of by the brothers may take the profession of the order, swearing to obey the master, and remain in the order. They will have the same support and clothes as the brothers except for their priestly vestments. They are only responsible for "care of souls" as far as the order requests. They are not to be subject to anyone outside the order.
- The order can have its clergy or-

daind by any bishop.

- The pope lays down the procedure for the admittance of priests to the Templar order.
- The brothers may build oratories wherever they live, and they can hear Divine Office there; those who die as brothers of the order can be buried there.
- These papal privileges and protection extend to cover their household and servants.

In 1144, Pope Celestine II proclaimed the *Milites Templi*, describing the Templars as defenders of pilgrims and comparing them to the Maccabees. He granted remission of one seventh of the penance of anyone who joins the order, and urged bishops and archbishops to collect money for the Poor Knights. Celestine also granted the Templars the authority to collect donations from churches, villages, or cities under interdict.

Pope Eugenius III built upon this, with *Milites Dei* in 1145, clarifying the rights granted to the Templars relating to the authority of Templar clergy. This papal ruling states that brother-priests must be properly ordained and have permission from their bishop to join the Templars.

also a common practice in other religious orders). The Templars then receive some or all of his property, bury the lord in their church, and have their brother-priests say prayers for his soul.

Donations are made by all kinds of people from all walks of life — from a few coins, small parcels of land, a horse, or armor, to tracts of land, holdings, farms, and even villages, as well as tax exemptions.

## Templars in England

Since the first visit by Hugh of Payns to London in 1128, the Templars have had a chapterhouse in London. The order received the patronage of powerful and influential lords. They were entrusted with maintaining several castles for Henry II during marriage negotiations, and successfully persuaded Thomas Becket to accept the Constitutions of Clarendon. Under King John, the Templar Commander Aymeric of St. Maur was personal envoy for the king. Aymeric advised King John during his dispute with the pope, and advised him to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede.

In 1220, the Templars continue to hold a prominent position in the court of King Henry III. While the kingdom is effectively ruled by regents, the Templars continue to maintain the king's treasury, oversee his navy, and act as the king's almoner (official responsible for distributing charitable donations to the poor). They have also recently lent the crown a great deal of money, to help stabilize the rule of the young king. The influential Aymeric has been replaced by Alan Marcell, who is one of the king's chief military and

## Templar Endowments

The Templars have a grand history of endowments from the lords of Mythic Europe, and rapidly became one of the wealthiest organizations in the West. From the mid-1100s, the Templars developed an extensive network of property.

Since the Council of Troyes, kings, dukes, and barons have donated vast sums of money, large tracts of land, and precious goods to the Knights Templar. Those who join the ranks of the Poor Knights are required to swear an oath of poverty and hand over all their worldly possessions to the order. Confreres and consœurs (associate brothers and sisters of the order) also hand over significant portions of their es-

tates, both upon gaining membership and upon their deaths.

Indeed, it is common in Mythic Europe for a dying noble to "give" himself to the order in the last few days of his life, so as to do penance for his sins (this was

## Grand Masters of the Temple of Solomon

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Hugh of Payns (1119-1136)               | Arnold of Torroja (1180-1184)   |
| Robert of Craon (1136-1149)             | Gérard of Ridefort (1185-1189)  |
| Everard of Barres (1149-1152) – retired | Robert of Sabloel (1191-1193)   |
| Bernard of Trémélay (1152-1153)         | Gilbert Erail (1194-1200)       |
| Andrew of Montbard (1153-1156)          | Philip of Plessiez (1201-1209)  |
| Bertrand of Blanquefort (1156-1169)     | William of Chartres (1210-1219) |
| Philip of Nablus (1169-1171) – retired  | Peter of Montaigu (1219-1232)   |
| Odo of Saint-Amand (1171-1179)          |                                 |



## English Templar Commanders

Richard of Hastings (1160-1171)  
 Richard Mallebeench (1172-1180)  
 Geoffrey Fitz Stephen (1180-1185)  
 William of Newenham (1185-1200)

Thomas Beard (1200-1200)  
 Aymeric of St. Maur (1200-1220)  
 Alan Marcell (1220-1229)

diplomatic advisors. Aymeric continues in a senior role with the Templars elsewhere in Europe.

The English province of the order holds land throughout England — in Essex, Kent, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Oxfordshire, Cornwall, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire — and in most cases the landholdings are extensive. In England, the Templars divide their holdings into revenue districts called *baillia*, with each governed by its own local commander. The English Master is based in London at the New Temple.

In the future (if your saga follows history), the Templars gradually fall out of favor with King Henry III, and by the 1250s they are replaced in most of their positions by Hospitallers, who are generally seen as more educated and better administrators.

## Templars in France

The Templars in France are at the centers of power, and own and administer huge swathes of land and garrison enormous castles. In Paris, the Temple acts as the official treasury of King Philip II, taking in receipts of taxation and organizing payments to officials, soldiers, and so on, as well as storing important documents, such as treaties and wills. When he is in Paris, the king and his family often prefer to stay in rooms at the Paris Temple. For more information about the Paris Temple, see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 80.

One of the most senior advisors to King Philip is Brother Haimard, the treasurer of the French Templars, and treasurer to the French Crown. The Templars relay news and information to the King from the brother-knights across France. Brother Haimard, if your saga follows the course of history, will execute the wills of both King Philip and Queen Ingebourg in 1222, and

will act as treasurer to the French Crown until his death in 1227.

Many of the most senior Templars are personal friends of the king and other lords, and were vassals prior to joining the

order; King Philip thus likewise has significant influence over the French Templars and is effectively able to appoint Templars to senior posts across his domain. The Templars act as treasurers to other great nobles across France.

The Templars, particularly the many brother-sergeants, are a part of the growing class of literati taking over the administration of the royal government. The Templars are seen as loyal, godly, honest, and lacking in self-interest, not to mention possessing marvelous military skills. In France, they act almost as an arm of the royal government.

## Story Seeds

### THE TEMPLARS' HELPER

The Templar delegation sent from Pope Honorius believes there to be no way they can win the Fifth Crusade without gaining a significant advantage over their Muslim enemies. They know that the sultan of Egypt commands the services of supernatural beings and the mysterious sorcerors who bind them. Acting on the orders of Brother Haimard, treasurer of the Paris Temple, the Templar delegation is authorized to seek out magical aid and bring it to Egypt to assist the crusaders.

The Templar commander in charge of the delegation, Brother Oliver of Paderborn, approaches the players' covenant for assistance, offering great rewards for cooperation and magic that will defeat the sultan. Will the characters assist the Templars, either personally or with magical items, and what of the Code?

### THE HERMETIC CONFRATER

A once-powerful archmage of the Order of Hermes, approaching Final Twilight, decides to become a Templar confrater. In doing so he hands over his enormous Hermetic wealth to the Poor Knights, including his vast magical library, enchanted items, and land.

The covenant (which could be the player's covenant) is less than happy

about this, and once the Quaesitors discover his plans, they worry that secrets of the Order of Hermes could end up with the Templars. His former covenant-mates, so as to avoid sanction for interfering with mundanes, seek out the assistance of the players' characters to retrieve the magical items they see as rightfully theirs.

Does the Code of Hermes recognize the archmage's decision? As a confrater, is he now a mundane? Under the Code, do his magical belongings still belong to him, or are they now the property of the Templars?

### THE ENCHANTED MILL

Before he retired, the former English Commander Aymeric of St. Maur ordered the construction of a new, massive mill in London. Now it is nearing completion in record time, and when constructed will be one of the largest sources of wealth for the Poor Knights. For the past year, Templars and their servants have been seen trekking around England's mythic sites, many of which are seasonal vis sources, and many seem to have been harvested, possibly by the Templars. Have the Templars discovered a way to sense and use vis to help in the construction of their mill, or are they being assisted? Rumor has it that one covenant's vis sources have remained untouched.

## Templars and Demonic Wealth of Nations

The great stores of wealth protected by the Templars are an ideal source of stolen wealth for the demonic False Gods (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 37). While Templar storehouses are often targets of the False Gods, they receive

some protection thanks to the Dominion that shrouds their preceptories, as well as intervention by patron saints and guardian angels. The relics that are often stored alongside mundane treasurers also ward against greedy demons.

They administer many castles on behalf of the king and other great nobles, typically in trust or when a fort is disputed between heirs or rivals, and periodically act as intermediaries between warring nobles in France, with the authority of the king.

### Templars in Iberia

The Templars have been involved in the Christian Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula since the Second Crusade, when Christians in Iberia used the opportunity to attack and depose their Muslim rivals, and begin repopulating the area under Christian rule. In addition to supporting the Reconquista with direct military aid, the Templars aid the local Iberian nobles by colonizing marginal lands too dangerous or risky to be developed by the lords themselves. The Templars build or expand fortifications in these areas, and attract settlers and farmers into areas under great risk of attack by Muslim raiders and other bandits. Despite their many domains, the Templars are not present in the Iberian Peninsula in great numbers. Their real strength is their ability to mobilize at a moment's notice and remain in the field for a long time, unlike the secular nobles in the region, who struggle to field an army for more than forty days or during harvest time.

Iberia is notable for having a large number of sisters and consœurs (female associate members) housed in Catalonia, where they enjoy extensive property rights.

### TEMPLARS IN PORTUGAL

The earliest donation in Iberia of land and castles to the Templars was in Portu-

gal. The Templars were actively involved in military operations, assisting in assaults on Muslim-held towns. The Portuguese Templars established their main chapterhouse in the castle Cera above the town Tomar, which they themselves founded. In 1170, the Templars received the right to keep one-third of all land they could acquire and settle.

In 1220, the Templars remain very close to the Christian rulers of Portugal, with many of the lords considering themselves "brothers," and some even possessing associate membership of the order. This, of course, means that the

Templars continue to receive many gifts of land and other resources. There are major Templar fortresses in Soure, Pombal, and Tomar.

If your saga follows history, in the near future there will be an attempt by Afonso, Count of Boulogne, to overthrow King Sancho II (1223-1245). The Templar commander of Portugal, Brother Martim Martins, a childhood friend of Sancho, will support the king. This support will cost the order dearly, as Afonso's rebellion is successful, and by 1301 they lose their rights over Idanha and Salvaterra.

### TEMPLARS IN ARAGON

In Aragon, the Templars have been present since 1130, supporting Ramon Berenguer II, Count of Barcelona and Marquis of Provence. Ramon himself became a confrere of the Templars, and gave the Poor Knights the castle of Granyena. Other lords in the area made donations,

## Story Seeds

### STOLEN WEALTH

After an Infernalist makes a deal with a powerful False God for untold wealth, a Templar priory near the troupe's covenant finds that all of its treasures have been stolen. Unsurprisingly, the local commander suspects that he has been robbed by the covenant. Can the characters convince the commander that they are innocent, and can they assist him in locating the true villain?

### THE GREED OF HAIMARD

Brother Hairmard is well aware of the existence of the Order of Hermes (although not of its inner workings) and knows that Hermetic magic is capable of producing enormous quantities of material wealth. He is also familiar with the concept of devaluing gold and other precious metal. However, he

plots to create other forms of wealth — grain and cloth — to sell at the fairs of France. All he needs is a Hermetic supplier of magically created crops, cotton, and wool. He is unlikely to regard the Code as a good excuse for not helping him.

### AIDING THE RECONQUISTA

The Templars in Iberia are on a near-constant war footing, and are slowly building a fleet to combat the presence of pirates. Stephen of Belmonte hears that Hermetic magic could be greatly advantageous in his crusade effort, and sends out a team of brother-knights and sergeants to find Hermetic magi. He wants magical weapons and ships. If your troupe's characters refuse to help, they may soon find their less-scrupulous Hermetic rivals assisted by the political clout and wealth of Templars.



including the castle of Barberà. These donations were made primarily to convince the Templars to actively support the lords militarily and to enforce the law in dangerous border areas. After the death of King Alfonso I, the Templars received great swathes of land and resources — enough for them to afford to be militarily involved in Barcelona-Aragon.

The Templars in Aragon are entitled to a tenth of all rents, a fifth of the booty from every expedition, a fifth of the land captured from Muslims, and numerous castles including Monzón and Montjoy. They also play a prominent role in advising the king, and nominally form a part of the king's army. The various Templar commanders are typically related to the great lords of the area, and Templars sit on most noble advisory councils.

If your saga follows history, under King James I of Aragon (1213–1276), the Poor Knights, Hospitallers, and native military orders play a vital role in the attempts to capture the Balearic Islands of Majorca and Minorca, and in Valencia. Although the Templar and Hospitaller masters sit on James' private advisory council, the Templar commander, Stephen of Belmonte, is far less close to King James than the Hospitaller commander, Hugh of Forcalquier.

## Templars in Germany and Eastern Europe

The Templars' role in Germany and the pagan lands of Eastern Europe is at its formative stage. The order has only just acquired its first significant holdings in Germany, in Thuringia and Austria, due to the patronage of those lords who participated in the crusades. The Templars also received some donations from the emperor, Frederick II Hohenstaufen, although not enough for the order to establish itself in the emperor's territories.

Relations with Frederick are generally cordial, despite the emperor's deteriorating relations with the pope. Nevertheless, there is conflict in the Emperor's lands in Sicily, where he is attempting to reclaim royal lands possessed by the Poor Knights

(and other religious orders). The Templars have long received exemption from paying royal dues, denying Frederick II a great deal of income.

Many Christian lords in areas such as Lower Silesia, Poland, and Eastern Germany also give donations to the Templars, but they have no real military



presence in these areas in 1220. In the next few decades, should your saga follow history, the Templars follow the Teutons into Eastern Europe, establishing preceptories and fortresses in Bohemia and Moravia at Templeštejn and Čejkovice, Prussia at Tempelburg and Łuków, as well as Hungary at Esztergom and Egyházaskalu. Their main role will be to protect Christian colonizers, who start to settle the great primeval forests of Hungary, Poland and Russia. Over these years, the Teutons are both allies and rivals.

## Templars in Italy

In central Italy, the Templars are particularly well established, possessing over twenty churches and preceptories in the

area. Some of the Templar chapels are starting to become sites visited by pilgrims, and most of the Templar chapter-houses in Italy are attractively decorated with frescos depicting victories in the crusades, aspects of Templar daily life, or images from saints' lives. Additionally, many of the churches throughout Italy receive funding from the Templars for renovations and repairs. These great Templar churches possess vast agricultural estates. If your saga follows history, by the 1250s and 1260s the Templars start to become prominent in the flagellant movement (a movement of pious Christians who believed that the Last Judgement was nigh and purged themselves of sin by publicly weeping and flagellating themselves), led by papal chamberlain and Templar Brother Bonvicino.

Most of the major naval cities in Italy house a Templar commandery, where they — like the other crusading orders — assist pilgrims, recruit soldiers, and funnel supplies to the Holy Land. In cities such as Venice, Messina, Bari, Taranto, and Genoa, the Templars own mercantile interests and provide loans to merchant families. In the past they have done deals with merchant princes who have relationships with Muslim traders, especially those in Egypt. Since the start of the Fifth Crusade such trades have ceased.

The Templar commanders in Italy often become embroiled in local disputes, especially those involving the pope. They are very prominent in the papal court, advising the pope on a range of military, financial, and diplomatic matters. Senior Templar commanders in Italy are starting to intervene in Ecclesiastical politics, undermining hostile or critical bishops and cardinals in favor of their own supporters.

A Templar representative is stationed at the papal curia in Rome semi-permanently, and he actively intervenes with the pope in the interests of the order. Debate is occurring at the general chapter as to whether the Templars should station a permanent ambassador with the pope.

## Templars in the Holy Land

Since the recapture of Jerusalem by Saladin, the Poor Knights have lost most of their holdings in the Holy Land. Nevertheless, they have chapterhouses in all major towns in the crusader states, and occupy many fortresses. Many of the castles that they control in the Holy Land were given or sold to them because the Christian lord did not have the resources to garrison it himself.

In the Holy Land the Poor Knights work closely with the area's Christian rulers — especially the King of Jerusalem and the new Prince of Antioch. The

Poor Knights are key military advisors to the King of Jerusalem and the other Latin lords of the Holy Land.

They regularly engage in their own military actions and raids. Most of the Templar raids are offensive in nature, rather than defensive, their object being to capture animals, people, and other booty that can be turned into wealth (such as ransom).

Apart from Acre and Antioch, the other significant Templar property in the Holy Land is Cyprus, where the Templars have owned large parts of the island since it was captured by King Richard.

The Templars are embroiled in the dispute between the Angevin and Lusignan families, both of whom claim the

throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Templars' closeness to the Angevins puts them in conflict with the Lusignan family, which rules Cyprus. They also regularly interfere in succession disputes with crusader lords and other Christian kingdoms, especially Armenia.

### TEMPLARS IN ACRE

The port of Acre, on the bay of Haifa, is the center of Templar power and the location of their central chapterhouse. The Templars have forts and properties in the lands surrounding Acre, as well as many interests within the city, including at the shipyards. Acre became the home of the Templars after the loss of Jerusalem and the city's capture by King Richard. Acre is also the base of most of the other crusading orders, including the Hospitallers and the Order of Saint Lazarus. The bishop of Acre, James of Vitry (1216-1228), is a close ally.

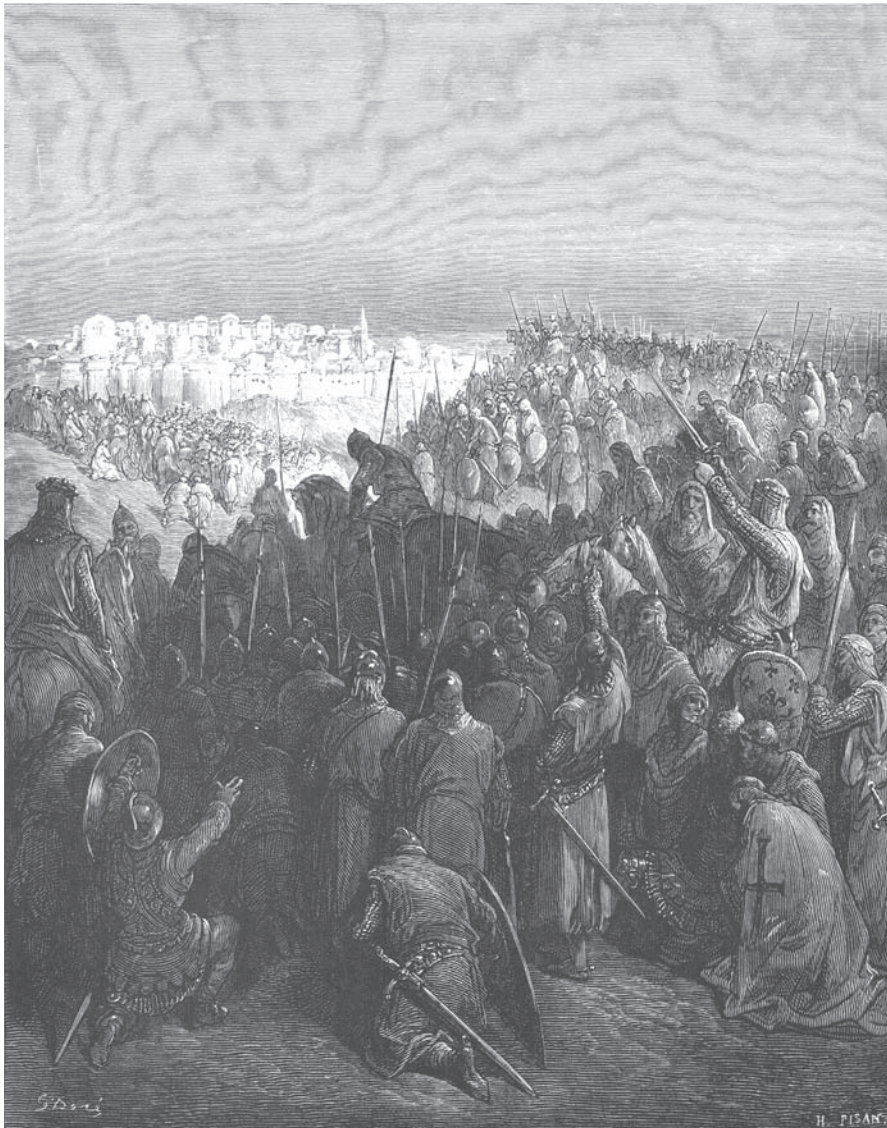
The Templar castle in Acre is home to the grand master, the commander of the land of Jerusalem and the other great officers of the order. All of the order's records, as well as its many grand relics, are stored here. For more information on Acre, see *City and Guild*, page 34.

### TEMPLARS IN ANTIOCH

In 1219 Bohemond, Count of Tripoli, reclaimed the city of Antioch after a protracted dispute with Leon of Armenia. Leon had in 1211 declared war on the Templars, after a decades-long succession conflict between the Poor Knights and the kingdom of Armenia. The war continued for two years, as the Templars tried to capture and recapture castles along the coast. The Templars currently support Bohemond, who is still in dispute with the Armenians. The Armenians are themselves supported by the Hospitallers.

### TEMPLARS IN GREECE

The Templars have only recently arrived in the Latin kingdoms of Greece, and although they nominally defend





the Latin rulers of Greece, they largely act as free agents. There are only a few Templar preceptories in Greece, with provinces in each of the Latin kingdoms. Their presence is largely due to the new Latin lords of Greece granting them great estates and benefits; they have sent representatives to these places to defend their interests.

Overall, the area is not one of great concern for the Templars, and they have little time for Latin Christian disputes with Greek Christians. The local commander is seriously giving thought to selling back a lot of the land to local Greeks, rather than incur ill will over their occupation.

## Other Military Orders

Mythic Europe has myriad military orders of crusading monks. While they all have a unique history and culture, most are similar to the Templars in organization and mission. Only the Hospitallers come close to rivalling the Templars in size, power, influence, and wealth. The smaller military orders play a supporting role to the Templars in the Holy Land, and are minor rivals for donations in Europe.

The Templar Virtues and Flaws (see later in this chapter) can easily be adapted for the other military orders.

### HOSPITALLERS

The Order of the Knights of Saint John — known as the Hospitallers — began as a charitable hospital that cared for pilgrims in Jerusalem before the First Crusade. Their involvement in the military protection of the crusader kingdoms started in the 12th century, around 1144 when the King of Jerusalem granted the order the fortress Krak de Chevaliers. Their focus on helping the sick and poor in the kingdoms of Europe and the Holy Land ensures that they enjoy enormous good will, but also diverts enormous resources from the efforts to recapture Jerusalem.

The Hospitallers are mostly drawn from Spanish and Italian knights, whereas the Templars draw most of their recruits

## Story Seed: The Tomb Raiders

Troupes whose sagas are located in the Tribunal of Thebes may find that characters who seek out long-lost treasures in ruined Hellenic temples are racing not only against rival Seekers, but also a team of tomb-raiding Templars. The commander of the Latin

Kingdoms has a special team lead by Stephan of Tusculum, a ruthless Templar brother-sergeant on the lookout for any and all mystic and Divine relics. Stephan is an expert on the occult, and has many contacts across Greece and the Levant.

from France and French-speaking England. However, their renown is growing in France, and by 1220 they are starting to rival the Templars in recruitment and donations. The Hospitallers' activities closely resemble the Templars' — they participated in the crusades, protected the Holy Land, and have the same papal and other privileges as the Poor Knights.

The Templars and Hospitallers are rivals and allies. They engage in fierce competition over the limited resources in the Holy Land, with the disputes often requiring papal intervention. Another cause of tension in financial matters is the Hospitallers' support for the Genoese; the Templars support the Venetians.

Unlike the Templars, however, the Hospitallers have succumbed to scandal, with cases of Hospitaller brothers keeping concubines, living extravagantly, and regularly interfering in secular and Ecclesiastical affairs. When criticism and outrage grows too great for local Hospitallers, they retreat to their hospitals and increase their charitable activities.

For more information about how Hospitallers can be used in your saga, see "The Hospital's Due," Chapter 5 in *Tales of Mythic Europe*.

### TEUTONS

Formed after the Third Crusade in around 1198, the Teutonic Knights are primarily a German order dedicated to protecting German pilgrims. They originated in the German hospital of Saint Mary, from whence their name derives — the Order of the Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary. The Teutons are famed for their strict military discipline, which rivals that of the Templars.

Most Teutons come from the ministeriales class — the unfree knights bound to the German king. Although many of these people are wealthy and influential, they lack many freedoms and are not considered to be of noble birth. Joining the Teutons is seen as a way to gain de facto noble status. By the 13th century, the Teutons have become a staple of the crusading movement. Their focus is increasingly turning away from the recapture of Jerusalem, to instead spreading the Christian faith in the pagan lands of Eastern Europe — Prussia, Lithuania and Estonia, and Hungary.

In 1211, they were granted holdings in the Transylvanian Alps by the Hungarian King Andrew II. Their relationship with the king has rapidly worsened, though. If your saga follows history, they will be expelled in 1225. Their friendship with the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was more fruitful, and they have been given charge of Culmerland and any territory they can capture in Prussia. They have also started to absorb other German crusading orders — the Swordbrethren and the Order of Dobrin. The Teutons retain a small charitable function, and maintain some hospitals.

There is more information about the Teutonic Knights in *Ancient Magic*, page 35.

### THE ORDER OF CALATRAVA AND OTHER IBERIAN ORDERS

Founded in Castile, the Order of Calatrava started its existence as the military branch of an order of Cistercian monks at the fortress of Calatrava in 1158. They received early support from King Sancho. Because of their relationship to the Cistercians, they were not subject to local Ecclesiastical authority, which quickly put them in conflict with local bishops, but also

ensured a sizable income. The Knights of Calatrava were actively involved in the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula, assisting the Templars and Hospitallers.

The Calatravans supported the formation of smaller Iberian orders in Leon and Portugal, including the Order of Saint Julian del Pereiro, and the Order of Avis. Castile-Leon was also home of the Order of Santiago and the Knights of Alcantara. The Calatravans and most other Iberian orders follow a modified version of the Benedictine Rule, whereas the Order of Santiago followed the rule of Saint Augustine.

The native crusading orders generally receive more support and patronage from kings and powerful nobles, compared to the pan-European Hospitallers and Templars. The Iberian crusading orders have no presence outside of Iberia and focus solely on the Reconquista.

### THE ORDER OF SAINT LAZARUS

The Order of Saint Lazarus was, at its beginning, composed entirely of lepers. Originating from the leper-hospitals in Jerusalem, the order formed in 1130 around a Burgundian knight named Wido of Cornelly, who upon contracting leprosy vowed to go to the Holy Land and serve the Templars. When his illness became debilitating, he left the Templars — who could not adequately care for him — and joined Jerusalem's leper hospital. The Templars and Jerusalem's Christian king supported the hospital, and by 1153 the hospital became a focus for crusading knights who had contracted leprosy but were still well enough to fight.

By 1155, the order had been granted its own house by the king. The pope gave the order privileges similar to other

orders in 1187, and early in the 13th century the other mainstream military orders added clauses to their rules that required leprosy brothers join the Order of Saint Lazarus.

In the 13th century, the Order of Saint Lazarus has its own chapterhouse and hospital in Acre, as well as a house for sisters of the order. By this time, the number of seriously ill brothers is starting to decline, as the Order of Saint Lazarus gains prestige and wealth. The order has some holdings in England and France, and on Cyprus.

### THE ORDER OF SAINT THOMAS AT ACRE

Formed in Acre to care for the poor and sick and bury the dead after the Third Crusade, the Order of Saint Thomas attracts mainly English pilgrims who do not speak French. By 1220, they are a relatively minor order, with few — if any — military functions, and no real monetary resources. Their priests do not live communally. The Templars own the hospital and other houses used by the Order of Saint Thomas in Acre.

If your saga follows history, the order will be reformed in 1228 by the Bishop of Winchester, Peter of Roches, who turns them into a crusading order based on the Teutons. They gain papal privileges in 1258 and are granted holdings in England, where the king is their patron. Even after 1228, their role as a military order is never prominent, although knights do join and fight in the Holy Land.

## Story Seeds

### OVERTURNING THE WILL

A dying crusader-lord leaves his vast holdings to the Knights of Calatrava, changing his former will that left most of his lands to the Templars. The Templars want to overturn the new will, thus depriving the Knights of Calatrava of much-needed wealth. Similarly, the crusader-lord's son-in-law (who is married to his only daughter) also wants to overturn the will and get the lands for himself.

### LAZARUS AND TYTALUS

Magi of House Tytalus may have a special interest in the Order of Saint Lazarus due to the order's association with leprosy. Stories told in the Order of Hermes tell of a young magus from House Tytalus who converted to Christianity and joined the Second Crusade.

While in the Holy Land, the magus, called either Rothelin or Rochelin, contracted leprosy. Believing it to be a curse because of his use of magic, Rothelin renounced his status as a Hermetic magus and joined the Order of Saint Laza-

rus. He died, depending on the version of the story, either in battle during the Third Crusade, or in his bed from his illness. In each of the stories, Rothelin is said to have possessed a powerful Hermetic heirloom, the sword of Tytalus, which he disposed of when he joined the Order of Saint Lazarus.

Whether Rothelin — or the sword of Tytalus — ever actually existed is still a matter of debate among Hermetic historians, which is strange in itself; his whole career is said to have taken place within living Hermetic memory. If he did exist, it is certain that Rothelin was not his real name, but it is hardly unusual for magi of House Tytalus to adopt new identities, nor for them to spin elaborate deceptions.

### THE ROTTING HULK

A Genoese ship commissioned by the Order of Saint Thomas to ferry the preserved bodies of dead pilgrims back to England for burial goes missing. Several months later, sailors tell of a dark pirate vessel that is crewed by rotting corpses.

## Templar Organization

The Knights Templar are organized according to a monastic rule, making their structure similar to other monastic orders. At the top of the hierarchy sits the grand master based in Acre, the Templar headquarters since 1191.



## Chapters and Provinces

At a regional level the Templars organize into provinces, as a part of which all full members meet in chapter meetings.

### THE PROVINCES

In the order's Western holdings the Knights Templar are divided into provinces, each governed by a commander who likewise has subordinate officials underneath him who govern individual Templar preceptories. An officer called the "Master on This Side of the Sea" is sometimes appointed by the general chapter meeting to oversee all of the Western provinces.

The provinces were created as the Templars acquired more lands, and are fluid, changing as needed. Each province has a main chapterhouse that serves as the administrative center. There are three Western commanderies of great significance, in London, Paris, and Miravet in Aragon, which are well staffed and have great wealth.

### THE GENERAL CHAPTER

General chapters — decision-making meetings — meet periodically, as often as each year or as infrequently as once every five, and there appointments are made and strategic directions determined. These general chapter meetings meet only in the Templar headquarters in Acre (although some were held elsewhere during emergencies, and they were originally held in Jerusalem).

All general chapter meetings are held in the strictest secrecy, and it is at these meetings that military direction and strategies are determined for years ahead. General chapters are convened and run by the grand master, and also consider matters such as legal or religious issues that need rulings. They are opened with prayers from the presiding chaplain, with special veneration of the Virgin Mary. Important decisions and rulings are recorded and kept in the Templar headquarters in Acre.

Outsiders are sometimes permitted to address the general chapter meetings, although typically these would be only the

most prominent of diplomats or representatives, such as papal representatives or the spokesmen of kings; or alternatively, specialists brought in to give advice.

### PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL CHAPTERS

Templars in a particular province occasionally come together in local chapter meetings. These are strictly ad hoc, and are generally held when a prominent officer, such as the grand master or marshal, visits the province. Like the general chapters, local chapter meetings are held in strictest secrecy. They deal with outstanding disputes or matters requiring a decision from a senior Templar. Chapters are also called if there is a need to discipline or even expel an errant Templar.

Local chapters are presided over by the ranking Templar — either the most senior of the great officials, or the provincial commander. These meet much more regularly, generally once a week or monthly.

### RUNNING A CHAPTER MEETING

If one or more of the characters in a troupe are Templars, then it is likely they will attend and participate in a chapter meeting. Their enormous secrecy and the suppression of the Templars in 1312 means that there is no historical evidence of how general chapter meetings were held, or what they discussed. Storyguides thus have flexibility to conduct chapter meetings in their games.

There are broadly three options, and elements from each can be combined. Additionally, chapters in different provinces or areas of Mythic Europe could vary from one another. The chapter in Constantinople, for example, could be a hotbed of Infernal rites, while the brothers in the chapter of Paris could sit through boring meetings discussing the detailed financial arrangements of France.

**The Mundane Chapter:** Chapter meetings are similar to the courts of lords and bishops, in that they consider complaints and pleas from applicants from across the Templars' holdings. They run similarly to board meetings in

## Designing a Templar Priory

The Diocese chapter in this book and the *Covenants* supplement have guidelines for describing churches using the covenant rules. The rules there are more than adequate for describing a Templar priory or chapterhouse.

modern businesses; brothers sit around great tables, servants report from the great officers of the order, and statements of direction are received from the grand master.

**The Mystic Chapter:** Chapter meetings could involve a great deal of ritual, initiations of new Templars, and solemn and mysterious rites and prayers. Those troupes who want to give their Templars a more modern conspiracy tone could also include elements cobbled together from Masonic sources.

**The Dark Chapter:** The Templars are Infernally corrupted and their chapter meetings see dark rituals and worship of diabolical idols, severed heads, and other devilish figures. Prominent Templar officers desecrate the cross and the eucharist.

## Ranks and Titles

The bureaucracy of the Templars is large and expanding rapidly. Although the rule sets out a number of ranks and titles, many more are created and discarded as the need arises. Local areas can have unique ranks not present in other provinces, while special titles can be created for specific missions and tasks, only to be abolished once the job is complete.

### THE GRAND MASTER

Elected for life, the grand master is the supreme military and spiritual leader of the Knights Templar. Grand masters lead from the front and are willing to personally enter into battle rather than stand

on the sidelines. This willingness to take personal risks and fight on the front line is one of the reasons that the Templars do not experience the vicious quarrels over the leadership that beset the other military orders.

The office of grand master is an exalted position, with a great many servants and staff. With the grand master lies the power to make war and agree to peace. The decision to acquire or sell land and castles, appoint persons to command, and spend from the famed Templar treasury all rest with the grand master. The grand master also represents the order in diplomatic missions to kings, lords, bishops, and the pope. Despite these powers, the grand master is required to take counsel from the other great officials, and to take heed of tradition, custom, and precedent.

The grand master has spiritual as well as temporal authority and powers. He may exercise Holy Influence over the order as if he were a priest.

### GRAND MASTER PETER OF MONTAIGU

Elected at an emergency meeting of the college of 13 (see insert, "Divine Elections") in Damietta after the death of William of Chartres, Peter comes from a prestigious crusading family. Born in the Auvergne region in France, he was previously the commander of the Templars in Provence and Spain. It was here that he distinguished himself, from 1206 until the start of the Fifth Crusade.

Peter wields enormous influence in the Fifth Crusade, as his brother Guerin

is Grand Master of the Hospitallers, while one uncle, Eustorage, is Archbishop of Nicosia and his other uncle, Bernard, is Bishop of Puy in France. He is also a close ally of Alan Marcell, Commander of the English Templars.

The grand master is involved in a major dispute with Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor, over the emperor's falling out with the pope. Peter supports the pope in the dispute.

### THE GREAT OFFICIALS

A great proliferation of offices exists within the Knights Templar. Directly beneath the grand master are four great officials: the **grand commander** (formerly known as the seneschal), the **marshal**

## The Grand Master

### THE GRAND MASTER'S COMMANDING AURA

Such is the spiritual significance afforded to the rank of Grand Master of the Knights Templar that it bestows the Commanding Aura upon whoever is elected to it. The grand master, as a position appointed by God, is the spiritual equivalent to an Archbishop, with a Magic Resistance of 10. (See Chapter 3: The Diocese for more information on this Virtue.)

### DIVINE ELECTIONS

Electing a grand master is an elaborate procedure laid out in the Templar Rule, and follows the funeral of the previous incumbent. Most funerals of grand masters are attended by a great number of dignitaries and leaders; most great nobles and clergy in the Holy Land attend. After the funeral, a grand commander (different than the office of grand commander) is elected by the Eastern provincial Templar commanders. The grand commander governs the Poor Knights until a new grand master is chosen. Although technically any

ranking Templar official can participate, in practice due to time constraints only those officials present in the Holy Land are involved.

The officers present then elect a college of 13, consisting of eight brother-knights, four brother-sergeants, and the chaplain in Acre. These 13 represent Christ and his twelve apostles — with the chaplain standing for Christ himself. When the name is announced, the new grand master is acclaimed by all present, and carried to the chapel and deposited at the altar.

According to the rule, the grand master is chosen by the will of God, through the elected representatives. A consensus decision is preferable, although a majority vote is allowed. In practice, appointment to the position of grand master is very political, with a great number of grand masters ascending to that exalted position through the intervention of a supportive and powerful secular ruler.

### THE GRAND MASTER'S SEAL

The seal of the Templar grand master is double sided, around four inches in diameter. On one side it shows the cir-

cular dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and on the other the Poor Knights' symbol — two knights riding a single horse.

The grand master's seal is a Divine relic, conferring great spiritual authority upon the grand master. The seal has a Faith Score of 1, granting it a Divine Might of 10. In addition to the protection afforded by the Might, the grand master's Magic Resistance is doubled against supernatural effects that would cause him to think or perform acts that are associated with the sin of gluttony. The Magic Resistance afforded by this relic is in addition to that afforded to the grand master by dint of his rank.

### OTHER SEALS

Each commander and great officer has his own seal. Some are unique to the individuals who hold them, while others are associated with the office. For example, the seal of the Templar Master of England has the image of the *Angus Dei* (the Lamb of God). Some seals may possess supernatural powers or contain relics, although only the grand master's seal is a holy relic by its own nature.



## Story Seed: Independence

Rumors abound among those who keep tabs on papal politics that Grand Master Peter has little regard for Pope Honorius III. Long independent of episcopal and secular authority, the Templars' leader and his close confidants are rumored to dream of true independence from all earthly authority, including that of the pope himself.

According to whispers in cloistered

corridors, the grand master feels that the Templars should declare themselves a supra-national state with their own worldly and spiritual hierarchy, with a single ruler — Peter himself. If these rumors are true, it could explain why Peter's envoys are starting to make contact with the Order of Hermes and have even asked to appear at the next Grand Tribunal.

tice, he is the Templar treasurer, responsible for the great storehouse in Acre (and formerly the Temple in Jerusalem itself). Any great expense that the Templars incur — such as the purchase of castles or other land — requires the permission of the commander of the land of Jerusalem. The commander is also responsible for the many non-military assets possessed by the Templars, such as ships, animals, houses, villages, and mills.

### COMMANDERS

(chief military commander), the **draper** (responsible for clothing and household equipment), and the **commander of the land of Jerusalem** (who acts as treasurer).

The grand commander is second only to the grand master, carrying the sacred Templar banner (known as the *beauseant*). Like the grand master he has his own staff, personal guard, and horses. The grand commander is in command in the East when the grand master travels to the West.

As the military commander of the Poor Knights, the marshal is responsible for the subordinate commanders (such as the commander of the knights). His chief responsibility is the logistics of war — ensuring that troops, horses, equipment, arms, and armor are delivered when and where they are needed. Within the order, the marshal can commandeer any supply possessed by the Templars for the purpose of aiding the crusade effort. In the instance of a disagreement between grand master and marshal, the grand master's decision is final; these disagreements are a rare occurrence. The grand master only commands when he is present; it is the marshal who is most often involved in battles.

The draper holds the responsibility for the clothes and linens of the order — a seemingly minor role, but one that comes with great power and authority. The draper has the power to remove any possession from any member of the order, including full brother-knights, if he believes that the person has more than is proper or if the possession is ostentatious. The draper ensures that all Templars are dressed appropriately — “decently” as the Templar Rule deems it.

The commander of the land of Jerusalem holds a unique position almost rival to the grand master in authority. In prac-

The Templars have a preference for calling most officials “commanders” (preceptors) of what they are responsible





## Arabic-Speaking Templars

It is not uncommon to find Templars who speak Arabic or Syrian, or other Muslim tongues. Nothing in the Templar Rule forbids it, but it is far from the norm. Templar commanders — most noticeably the grand master — more

regularly employ translators, many of whom may be Muslims themselves. This is a frequent practice in the Holy Land, and few crusader lords would raise an eyebrow at this, although it is rather outlandish in the West.

for, such as commander of the knights or Commander of Tripoli and so on. With only a few exceptions, all the offices of the Templars are held by brother-knights.

There are some commanders who have standing responsibilities and carry considerable responsibility and respect. The **commander of the knights** is the brother who is charged with authority over the brother-knights, under the marshal; he also commands associate members who are knights. The **turcopolier** is responsible for the mercenary cavalry recruited in the East, and also the brother-sergeants; he answers to the marshal. The **gonfanier** (banner-bearer) is the official charged with carrying the Templar standard into battle and is under the responsibility of the grand commander. In war time the banner is given a ten-knight guard, and the gonfanier carries a second banner, folded away, in case the first is lost. The **infirmarer** is the chief surgeon and doctor of the order, running the infirmary in the central chapterhouse in Acre, and is a brother-sergeant. The Templars do not run hospitals, instead requiring medical aid on the battle field. The **under-marshal** is a brother-sergeant who supports the marshal in his duties.

At a regional and local level, the structures laid out here are replicated as much as possible. Each province chapterhouse has a master and one or more various commanders, although the names and responsibilities are dictated by local needs and culture. Provincial commanders and masters of chapterhouses and preceptories are effectively lords of the manor, with similar responsibilities to their tenants: law and justice, and keeping the peace. These commanders preside over Templar holdings in Eastern cities such as Antioch, or Western towns such as La Rochelle.

### BROTHER-KNIGHTS

The brother-knights are the core of the Templars, and are granted the great privilege of wearing white mantles emblazoned with a red cross. Those of noble birth who enter the order give up their clothes and goods to the draper, and are issued a standard set of clothes and armor. By 1220, the Templars require a brother-knight to be of noble birth, the son of a secular knight, or the son of the daughter of a knight to be admitted to this rank.

In theory, all brother-knights are equal, but those who were prominent or of high station before their admission to the order are typically promoted to a senior position within the Templar hierarchy or are at least treated with more respect. Despite this, only the great officers or commanders live in comfort or luxury. Most brother-knights live austere lives.

Brother-knights are expected to have military or combat experience prior to becoming a Templar, by participating in secular conflicts. Upon joining the Templars, brother-knights are given shock-training in the art of disciplined and sustained communal warfare — in game terms, however, this is regular practice and exposure, rather than formal training (it provides no additional experience points, but does allow Templars to fight as trained groups, see the insert "Trained Group Combat").

Brother-knights, their squires, and brother-sergeants are organized into squadrons that train in the art of pitching and dismantling camps, controlling cavalry charges, responding to alarms, and assembling at fixed points. Of course, they still need to perform all their other duties and prayers.

Brother-knights have to unlearn their many vices and ostentatious sins; they are forbidden tourneys, jousting, hunt-

ing, hawking, and wearing fur or leather gloves. They are also forbidden to shave their beards, although their hair is kept short or even shaved off altogether. They cannot wear jewelry, rings, or any ornamentation, and may not wear pointy shoes or shoelaces. Brother-knights also may not have private letters, own locks, or have ornate bridles for their horses. Disobedience on this matter sees the undue finery confiscated and the brother-knight given penances.

### BROTHER-SERGEANTS

Brother-sergeants play a subordinate role to brother-knights, although they make the same vows and are under the same rule. Brother-sergeants are from common backgrounds and social statuses, and are recruited from a wider area. Brother-sergeants include Syrians, Greeks, and Armenians, as well as men from the West. The brother-sergeants serve as foot soldiers and support the cavalry role that the brother-knights play.

There is great variation in status among brother-sergeants, who also fill the roles of administrators, artisans, and craftsmen. Brother-sergeants with special skills, or who are too old to take active military service, are given non-combat roles. The rule refers to craftsmen, brothers of the stables, artisans, scribes, notaries, blacksmiths, and cooks, as well as mason-brothers. These non-military brother-sergeants are not required to fight, although they live according to the rule, and so are often referred to as "brother-servants."

### BROTHER-PRIESTS

The 1139 papal bull *Omne datum optimum* granted the Templars the right to have their own priests. Prior to this, the Templars were served by priests from other orders, or from outside churches, but the bull meant that the order quickly developed its own clergy. In the East, the brother-priests are not required to fight, although when attacked they are permitted to defend themselves.

To become a chaplain of the order, one must have already been properly ordained



### CONFRERES AND CONSOEURS

as a priest. As most priests are responsible to a bishop, they must receive permission to join the Templars. Brother-priests retain their rank when they join the Templars, although very few senior clergy would seek membership in the order. Many brother-priests only join the Order of the Temple temporarily, for a few years. The oath sworn by Templar chaplains permits them to leave the order.

In Acre the head chaplain sits next to the grand master, and all brother-priests are served first at meals. The brother-priests are given moderated penances for offenses to the rule, such as saying prayers instead of menial labor. They are also permitted to shave and wear high-quality robes.

Brother-knights and sergeants are expected to make confession to the Templar chaplains, although if circumstances preclude that, they are permitted to seek absolution from outside clergy. Templar chaplains are second in spiritual authority only to the pope.

They can give services, celebrate Mass, hear confessions, give absolution for most offenses (except grievous sins such as murder, simony, or heresy) and bury the dead. This authority transcends the spiritual authority of local clerics, including bishops and archbishops, and brother-priests are known to give communion to, and even bury, excommunicates.

### SISTERS

Unlike other crusader orders — notably the Hospitallers — there are no female houses in the Templars. Wives of men who join the Templars are expected to become nuns — although of other orders — or consoeurs.

Despite the religious prohibition on contact with women, the Templars regularly make exceptions when needs arise. Templar commanders are generally accommodating for the needs of a particularly wealthy new member or donor.

This position, which is still supported by most of the leadership of the order, costs the Templars a great deal, as women often bring money, influence, and other valuables when they join a religious order.

A great number of lay-folk join the order as associate members, taking the vows but not making a full profession of them. These associates often reside in the chapterhouse, but can also keep their own homes, and dress differently from the brothers. Confreres and consoeurs cannot vote in chapter meetings but otherwise interact daily with full members, and can be quite influential within their specialty. They are often the servants or specialists who allow preceptories and castles to function (although servants of Templars are not required to be associate members).

Other associates are men who take temporary vows for the duration of a pilgrimage, or women whose husbands are

full Templars. Finally, the order also houses other religious people, such as hermits and anchoresses living in separate cells in the commandery, but who are cut off from other residents.

## The Templar Faith

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the Glory.*

— Psalm 115, the Templar Motto

Although the Templars take monastic vows, strictly speaking they are not monks. Unlike monks who live in an enclosed house and fight spiritual battles, the Templars actively live in the world,

### Templar Chaplains and Petitioning

This book introduces new activities for clergy, including petitioning (see the Chapter 5: The Diocese). Rather than petitioning bishops or other priests, Templar clergy petition their commanders, the Templar grand master, or the pope. They can also petition local bishops, but this is not necessary. Brother-priests may, without reference to any outside authority, perform any action with an Ease Factor of 18 or less, although such actions may only refer to the members of the order, its lands, or its servants.

For example, a brother-priest could authorize the exhumation of the body of a dead Templar, or anybody buried on Templar lands, but could not exhume a body buried in a non-Templar church. Similarly, a brother-priest could refuse communion to anyone in the Templars' own chapels, or grant it, but could not forbid communion given by a non-Templar priest in a non-Templar church. Templar chaplains must petition the pope or bishops for the consecration of a saint.

### Story Seed: The Miser

In a remote area of Mythic Europe, perhaps not far from the character's covenant, a retired Templar called Nicholas has lived for many years on a pension provided by his order. He is entitled to receive a small amount of food, a servant, clothes, and a small annual stipend. Food and clothes are provided by local farmers, who are paid each year by the Templars. Rather than spend any of his stipend on himself, he saves up every penny to give back to the Templars. Every few years, Nicholas travels to the nearest Templar chap-

terhouse, which may be many days' travel, to make his donation.

One day, the character's covenant is visited by Nicholas' servant, who reports that the old Templar is deathly ill. By the time the characters reach his small house, Nicholas is dead. Should the characters search the house, they find over eight thousand Mythic Pennies hidden by Nicholas. If they do not make any search, they may instead receive a visit by an inquisitive Templar asking for assistance in finding Nicholas' servant, who appears to have stolen the money.



physically fighting and shedding blood for Christendom. This distinction is lost on many inhabitants of Mythic Europe, who consider Templars to be monks of war.

The Templars are widely known to be extremely pious. There are no differences between the beliefs of members of the Templars and those of other Western Christians. Like the monastic orders, the Templars venerate saints, attend church services, and pray daily. Despite these similarities, the Templars are not an enclosed order. This means that they can come and go into the secular world from their priories and chapterhouses.

Theology is not a high priority for the Templars. Their devotion to Saint Euphemia, who condemned heresy and pagan-

ism, underscores their fanatical orthodoxy. Similarly, their closeness to the papacy, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and their good relationships with many bishops indicates that few, if any, Templars knowingly hold heretical or unorthodox views.

Despite the Templars' disdain for education, there have some attempts at translating religious works, including parts of the Bible and the Templar Rule, into Anglo-Norman French and other "common tongues." The Church has yet to crack down on these translations (it does not until 1230), so many Templar preceptories contain translated copies of religious books, including the Old Testament Book of Judges.

The Templar Rule sets out a great deal of the religious life of the order, noting all

of the saints venerated by the Templars, as well as listing feast days. Held in special regard is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven. The Blessed Virgin is considered the patron of the order, and a Templar tradition holds that this was because the Annunciation occurred at the Temple in Jerusalem. Newly inducted members swear their oaths in the name of the Virgin, and the chapter meetings and daily prayers start with devotions to Mary.

The Templars venerate several other prominent female saints, including the martyr Saint Euphemia of Chalcedon, who was martyred by pagans after refusing to recant her Christianity. The examples set by these female saints is seen as very valuable to the Templars, reminding them of the need to be humble, to remember human frailty and sin, to be courteous, chaste, honorable in word and deed, and to do works that please God.

### TEMPLAR RELICS

The Templars claim to possess a great number of relics. In both the Levant and the West they build great chapels and churches to house them. In Outremer, the Templars possess such marvels as the crown of thorns, which is displayed flowering in the grand master's hands every Holy Thursday in their temple (first in Jerusalem and later in Acre). At the well-known Castle Pilgrim (Athlit, see *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 11), the Templars keep the heart and body of the martyr Saint Euphemia of Chalcedon. A great many healing miracles draw large numbers of pilgrims to Athlit.

The Templars display relics during periods of crisis. During droughts, the Temple in Acre carries out one of their most precious relics and parades it through the streets: a bronze cross made from the bathtub in which Christ bathed. This cross possesses powerful healing qualities and often makes it rain. Many of the Templars' other powerful relics are stored in Acre, including reliquary heads of saints — the preserved skulls of prominent saints, stored in gold, silver, and jewel-encrusted casings. Another relic is a cross made from the bronze bowl used by Christ to wash the feet of the apostles.





### Trained Group Combat

Templar brother-knights and brother-sergeants who train together for a season are considered a trained group for the purpose of combat (see *ArM5*, page 173). Although the military training that Templar brothers receive is similar across Mythic Europe, without a season of training together, they cannot form trained groups

### Story Seed: The Unfailing Banner

A sahir traveling with a contingent of Muslim warriors stumbles across a small band of Templars flying the *beauseant*. Knowing that the Templars will flee in the face of a much larger force, but wanting to take the opportunity to kill as many of them as he can, the sahir orders one of the *jinn* in his command to hold the Templar banner aloft, so that the Templars fight to their deaths.

Kept within a crystal phial, the Templars possess a small portion of Christ's blood, shed on the cross, which has been authenticated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other prelates of the Holy Land. The Templars also possess several fragments of the True Cross.

In the West, the Templars also possess a bewildering array of relics. In the Paris Temple, the Poor Knights keep the silver-covered skull of Saint Ursula of Cologne, and many of the relics of the 11,000 virgins martyred with Saint Ursula. Many lords store their relics with the Templars while on pilgrimage or crusade. They also allow borrowers to use relics as pledges for loans.

### Daily Life

The Templar's day differs little from that of a Benedictine monk, although the rule allows for the fact that Templars need to be kept in fighting readiness. They follow the strict Templar Rule and owe absolute obedience to the orders of the grand master or their local commander. Their fortresses are designed internally as monasteries. Every aspect of the life of the knight is regulated and regimented. Particular emphasis is placed on conduct on the battlefield.

Although the Templar Rule is strict, and their reputation for discipline is well deserved, the Templars are notably pragmatic. They regularly make exceptions and concessions for brother-knights and sergeants, especially for those Templars

on missions, diplomatic envoys, or with important jobs where regular prayer, communal life, or other restrictions would cause undue hindrance.

The requirements of functioning day-to-day mean that Templars regularly interact with outsiders, have friendships and relationships with non-Templars, and have conflicting loyalties — especially since all Templars, whether knight, sergeant, or priest, had a life before they joined the order. The observances most likely to be relaxed are those regimenting the day — the vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty are never relaxed, and Templar brothers on a mission would still be expected to observe as much of the rule as possible.

Templars spend all their spare time preparing for war, mending or tending to arms and armor or horses, or if all of that is done, they are to whittle tent-posts or pegs or anything else that would be useful for war.

### Calling on God's Aid

The Templars regularly call upon God's aid when going into battle. This is typically done by brother-priests in the chapel or commander's tent (if in the field). The Templar commander (or ranking Templar) may also call on God's aid if there is no brother-priest. See *Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 41-42 for information.

### Templar Prisons

The Poor Knights keep secret prisons across Mythic Europe. Mostly, these prisons are used to house brothers who are being punished, but they can also keep hostages and other prisoners who local lords may want to disappear. Those condemned to a secret Templar prison are never seen again.

In the Holy Land or Iberia, when Templars are at war, their daily routine changes, and religious observances are more relaxed. Prayers are said in the saddle or while marching (often as pater-nosters rather than full prayers), brothers who are doing penance are permitted to fight, and an attack means the brothers are permitted to leave their meals without permission.

### MILITARY TACTICS

The Templars have established military tactics, which are recorded in their rule. Everything centers upon the cavalry charge. The charge, when carried out correctly and in the right circumstances, can be decisive in battle. The role of foot soldiers and archers — most of whom are mercenaries — is not recorded in the rule, but these troops are under the command of various senior Templar brother-knights, who command them as they see fit. The squires of brother-knights are not expected to fight, but are instead required to assist the knights. The Templars rely upon the cavalry charge, but also fight on foot or in other formations as the situation requires.

Another key part of the Templar's warfare is the famous black and white banner. This has both tactical and symbolic importance. While the banner is raised, no Templar is permitted to retreat. It also represents the center of the order's troops, and is the place to which the troops withdraw to regroup and charge again. Its loss is a symbolic disaster —

## Templar Saints and Festivals

The Templars celebrate an array of saints and feasts, which are laid out in the rule and often see the Poor Knights and their senior officers performing menial and humbling tasks, such as washing the feet of the poor and homeless, distributing food and money, or fasting. Major feasts and festivals include Easter,

the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Exaltation of the Cross, the Epiphany, All Saints, the Assumption of Our Lady, the Nativity of Our Lady, and the Finding of the Holy Cross. They also commemorate many saints' days. These feasts and fasts are observed even during war-time.

though spares are kept by the gonfancier — and the brothers prefer to die rather than let it be captured.

The Templars are also very familiar with siege warfare, and possess impressive siege engines, artillery, and other machinery aimed at tearing down or overcoming fortifications. During the Fifth Crusade, they have three great trebuchets as well as siege-towers on their ships outside Damietta.

## Joining the Order of the Temple

In 1220, there is no written procedure for becoming a member of the order, although there is an established tradition (by 1260, this tradition will be formalized in the rule).

### THE MEMBERSHIP RITUAL

Upon applying to join, the prospective brother must explain truthfully his status and give witness to his serious intent to live by the discipline of the order. The ritual that follows takes place in the local commandery, and places great emphasis on the gravity and seriousness of the process. Strictly speaking, no outsiders such as relatives are allowed. However, the local commander can make exceptions as needed, especially if the new member is particularly prestigious.

The local commander or highest-ranking officer assembles the brothers in the chapel or hall — only full members are permitted. All present are asked if they know any reason for the applicant to be

denied admittance. If there are no objections, the applicant is taken into another room by two senior brothers, where the hardships of membership are explained. He is asked if he is willing to suffer for God, and wishes to be a slave to the order for all his life. He is also asked if he owes any other allegiance, either to a wife or secular lord, or owes a debt, or has any illness. The applicant, upon answering all these questions, is returned to the chapter, and all those present acknowledge him. If the new member is a commoner, he is then required to carry out a menial task (such as cleaning the pig-sty or washing dishes), whereas a noble is kept alone in a side room, while the brothers again are asked by the commander for any objections. After the applicant completes the task, he is questioned again in great solemnity, with emphasis on the consequences of lying, and is required to swear upon the gospels. Then he then swears the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, and promises to conquer and defend Jerusalem. The commander gives the new member his mantle while the chaplain recites prayers, and the assembled brothers recite the paternoster. Finally, after being received with a kiss on the mouth by the commander and chaplain, the new Templar is taught the more-detailed offenses for which he can be expelled or given penances.

### JOINING AS A CHILD

Children — called novices — are often welcomed by the Templars, who need a steady supply of recruits to fight in the Holy Land or in the Reconquista, although they generally insist that children

be brought up by their parents until they are old enough to bear arms. Ages of admission of children range from 11 to 14. It is up to each local commander to determine whether a child is of acceptable physical fitness and stature to be considered able to fight.

The Templars also very occasionally take in orphans or children suffering from great poverty in the expectation that they will join the order when they became adults. However, they prefer to direct such children to monastic orders, or to the Hospitallers.

## The Templar Rule

The Templar Rule is one of the most important documents owned by the order. A copy of the rule, in French and translated into Latin, exists in most Templar chapterhouses. The rule lays out in intricate detail the organization, holdings, hierarchy, faith, feast days, and penances of the order.

There are seven major sections to the rule: the Primitive Rule, Hierarchical Statutes, Penances, Conventual Life, the Holdings of Ordinary Chapters, Further Details on Penances, and Reception into the Order. The Templar Rule is subject to change and reform, and over time many regulations and clarifications are added by general chapter meetings, adding additional punishments and military tactics. There are, for example, sections in the rule on "How the brothers should make camp," "How the brothers should form the line of march," "How the brothers should go in a squadron," and "How the brothers should charge."

The rule prescribes strict punishments for a range of infractions. Major punishments include the stripping of a Templar's mantle for a year and a day — a symbol of great shame that entails losing all the Templar arms, armor, and the prestigious white mantle. A Templar given this punishment is required to eat sitting on the floor and perform the most menial of tasks. This punishment can be given for the crime of losing a horse through neglect, loaning Templar property without permission, or the killing of a Christian. The most ex-



treme punishment for a Templar is expulsion. Expelled Templars are required to join a monastery.

Other great crimes include committing an act of heresy, committing theft, plotting against a fellow Templar, or telling any outsider what took place during a chapter meeting. It is also a serious crime for any brother to harm a horse in the order's care, embezzle money or waste resources, give away any property without permission, or otherwise bring the order into disrepute.

The Templar Rule is an extremely austere set of regulations, and is generally considered harsher than the rule of the Hospitallers or Teutons.

### SECRET RITES

The secrecy of the Templars is legendary, and most of their communal activities take place in private, behind closed doors. Templar brothers take part in religious and other ceremonies every day. Many do not know the exact purpose of the activities they are participating in, as most of the ceremonies are conducted in Latin.

## Relations with Outsiders

The Poor Knights fight for Christendom, and therefore necessarily have many and complex relations with individuals and groups outside the order.

### TEMPLARS AND THE CHURCH

The Third Lateran Council in 1179 saw bishops — even the Patriarch of Jerusalem — accuse Templars (and Hospitallers) of not paying tithes, of holding church services in towns under interdict so as to collect their offerings, and of allowing murderers, money lenders, and other criminals to join their order so as to escape from justice. They were also accused of allowing criminals and excommunicates to be buried on their properties with a Christian burial, and generally of flouting the authority of bishops.

Local conditions determine the Templars' relation with senior clergy. In Rome, the Templars have an intimate relationship with the pope, as they have had with most popes since their formation. A semi-permanent representative stays with the pope, and generally receives great honor. Templars have routinely acted as the pope's almoner, as well as papal messengers, treasurers, and marshals and porters in the papal court.

In many areas, the local clerics work closely with and support the Templars, granting them land, tax exemptions, or other benefits. Many monasteries also have good relationships with local Templars. In areas where the goals of the Templars clash with those of the local bishop or abbot, relationships can be tempestuous. In these cases, the Templars are more than willing to use their exemption from episcopal authority, and may even physically intimidate prelates, standing in their churches and denouncing the bishop.

### TEMPLARS AND THE MILITARY ORDERS

During peace time, the Templars and the other military orders often see each other as rivals. In particular, the Hospitallers compete with the Poor Knights for resources and donations. The rivalry can be quite bitter, but it is unusual for brothers from both orders to come to blows during heated arguments. For example, in Acre, the two orders both own massive mills on the River Belus that are great sources of money, but which can struggle for enough water, and are constant causes

of disputes (this is such a big dispute that by 1235 the pope intervenes to negotiate a truce).

At a strategic level, and during times of war, the Templars and the other orders work closely. During a battle, if the Templar banner goes down, the Templars rally first to the Hospitallers, then the Teutons, and then any other Christian banner.

### TEMPLARS AND NOBILITY

Most of the great nobles of Mythic Europe have excellent relations with the Templars, particularly in France, England, Italy and Iberia, and the Holy Land. Many kings, dukes, and barons have Templars as advisors, either permanently stationed in their court or as someone they regularly consult with on major issues. Many of these lords have been on crusade, or one of their relatives has, so they have a personal and direct relationship with the Templars.

The Templars see lords, knights, and nobles as their key sources of donations, lands, and recruits, so most commanders try to keep good relationships with local lords. Similarly, the great wealth and power, and the lending capacity, of the Templars means that most lords want to keep the Poor Knights onside. Despite this good will, the Templars often create problems for local lords through their unilateral commercial activities. In London, for instance, the Templars have caused a lot of trouble for local fishermen and traders near the New Temple on the Thames by causing a blockage on the river to power their mill.

### Woolen Cords

Most Templars wear woolen cords around their waist in place of a belt, as a sign of chastity. Many of these woolen cords are thought by the Templars to be sacred objects, invested with holiness at the Temple of the Holy Sepulchre. Those Templars who have not travelled to the Holy Land ask pilgrims to touch or wind their woolen cords

around the door posts of the pillars of the church of the Blessed Mary of Nazareth. These cords are believed to invest the wearer with great strength of will to remain chaste. Those cords touched to both the relics of Saint Polycarp and Saint Euphemia are believed to increase the bravery and courage of the pious wearer.





The group of lords with whom the Templars are most likely to come into conflict are the Christian lords of the Holy Land, particularly the King of Jerusalem or leaders of crusades. The Templars largely act as free agents, often without consulting the lords of the Holy Land.

#### TEMPLARS AND MUSLIMS

The Templars are keenly aware that the Muslim leaders in the Holy Land are fractious, yet capable of uniting. Similarly, Muslim leaders are aware that the Templars are ferocious fighters who never surrender, but who are also capable of reason and negotiation. Despite their willingness to make treaties and employ

Muslim servants, the Templars refuse to ever make peace with Muslim leaders, even to the detriment of the local Christian lords.

In the past, various grand masters have made secret side-treaties with one Muslim

leader against another, as well as providing funds or other resources to aid against a common enemy. The Templars cause controversy by allowing Muslim servants and visitors to practice their faith and worship without interruption.

The Templars also frequently try to intervene in internal Islamic affairs. The most notable instance was reported by the notable chronicler William of Tyre in 1173, when the grand master began negotiations with the Ismaili sect — the Assassins — to ensure that the Templars would be safe from attack. Shortly after, this deal became known to the King of Jerusalem, who had received word that the Ismailis wished to convert to Christianity. The Templars arranged for the Ismaili envoy to be killed, thus scuttling the negotiations.

#### TEMPLARS AND THE ORDER OF HERMES

The Templars as an order have little interest in wizards or magic. Individual commanders, and the grand master, may be aware of specific Hermetic magi and covenants, but there is no formal contact or communication between the two orders. A commandery close to the troupe's covenant may be aware of its nature, or instead may simply ignore it. The Templars are, however, starting to encroach into the wilds of Mythic Europe, specifically into areas with Magic auras; this may bring Hermetic covenants in conflict with the Poor Knights.

It is entirely possible that the Templars have made loans to Hermetic covenants, or even possess Hermetic magic devices as payment or securities. Hermetic magi

### How Much Do the Templars Know About Magi?

The attitude of the Templars toward the Order of Hermes is dependent on your saga's assumptions on how open or secretive the two orders are. A highly mythic saga could have mystic Templars working alongside Hermetic magi, or as rivals for Mythic Europe's magical resources. An historically ac-

curate saga would see the Templars as primarily a military organization with no interest in the Order of Hermes. In between these two, individual Hermetic magi would have relationships with individual Templars, with varying levels of communication, cooperation, and conflict.



## Playing a Templar Character

With all the rules and restrictions on Templar conduct, it may seem that they are not really suited to being player characters. There are several solutions to this:

**Loose Discipline:** The rule is an ideal, but the character does not uphold it with great discipline. In this case, Templar characters should take an appropriate Story Flaw if they want to play through stories involving the rule and Templar restrictions. Otherwise, the rule, observances, and daily regimen are simply background color.

**Outside Responsibilities:** The rule has a day-to-day impact on the Templar character's life, but the character has a role or responsibility that gives him or her latitude to interact from time to time with the covenant and other characters in the troupe.

**Lone Templar:** The Templar character is at an outpost, responsible for one of the many far-flung holdings of the order. The character has a great deal of flexibility, and only sees his superior once a year or less. The character still observes the various prayers and other tasks, but must regularly interact with others as part of his duties.

who are prominent in mundane society — especially those with an interest in the crusades — may even seek out the advice and counsel of the Templars.

## Templar Characters and Stories

Templar characters can fit into a wide variety of stories and sagas. Members of the Templars come from a diverse range of social roles, backgrounds, and nations. Nothing in the Templar Rule prevents a Templar character from being associated with a Hermetic covenant, although like any character with outside loyalties there is potential tension.

Additionally, Templar characters could be tasked with a specific mission involving the troupe's covenant — allowing them some latitude with the strict Templar Rule, requirements of communal life, and interaction with outsiders. Although Templars are not allowed to have private correspondence, they can write letters and correspond with outsiders as a part of their official responsibilities.

## Templars as Crusaders

Templar characters involved in stories about the crusades are likely to find themselves at the center of action and intrigue. There are several permanent garrisons of Templars in Acre and other crusader outposts. Templar knight characters could be advisors to crusader lords or even the pope's representatives, or in direct conflict with them over diplomatic and military strategy.

Templar knights and sergeants are likely to find themselves both in battle on the front lines, and involved in the day-to-day running of the crusade effort, when on the march, Templar contingents take up the vulnerable and dangerous positions on the rear or on an exposed flank. Brother-sergeant and priest characters could provide advice to senior Templars, or manage important Templar holdings, including castles or major economic resources (such as mills or fisheries) that would be targets of rival military orders or Muslim raiders.

For sagas set around the events of the Fifth Crusade, Templar characters could be prominent protagonists; trusted envoys and diplomats of the crusade leaders, secretive envoys to the Muslim leaders, or leaders themselves of significant elements of the crusader army itself.

Templar crusaders in Iberia could also find themselves allied to Hermetic magi who see the Reconquista as a just war; likewise in the Holy Land.

## Templars as Bankers and Merchants

Stories and activities laid out in the supplement *City and Guild* are good sources for Templar characters with a mercantile

## Templar Banking, Letters of Credit & Insurance

The Templars have instituted a system of deposits and loans. This allows Christian pilgrims in a particular area to leave their wealth in the care of the local Templars. In exchange, they receive a letter from that priory stating the value of the deposit. The letter is encrypted using a cypher, and there are other features so that the Templars can ensure authenticity.

The pilgrim then travels to his destination, such as the Holy Land, and visits a Templar priory at that location. By presenting the note to the Templars, the pilgrim can then retrieve from the priory the amount he or she deposited at home, minus some expenses. This gives pilgrims and others more security, as they

can travel with a letter of credit rather than carrying physical wealth. Additionally, many wealthy pilgrims leave their assets — such as land, cattle, or water mills — with the Templars. The Templars administer the assets and keep any wealth produced by them until the pilgrim returns. This is seen as more secure than leaving one's lands to a relative, who could try to appropriate them.

Templars also provide a form of physical and spiritual insurance. In exchange for a payment (determined by the person's social station), a person is assured of receiving payments if he falls onto hard times. Indeed, if an insured person is excommunicated, he is assured of communion in a Templar church.

theme. Templars have been financial advisors and bankers to kings and lords; a Templar character could be at the financial centers of Europe in Paris or London. Stories could involve helping powerful lords — even covenants that have taken Templar loans — stave off bankruptcy and financial ruin. Templar characters could be called upon to uphold their rights to tax exemptions against bishops or barons, or collect on defaults.

A Templar character could be an excellent companion character for a covenant that needs a sympathetic mundane lord to officially govern — Templars own lands, farms, mills, and road and river tolls. Covenant lands could be loaned to the Templars and given tax exemptions from all lay and Ecclesiastic authority; the Templar stronghold would also be a safe place to keep covenant valuables, which of course would attract a nominal fee.

Templar characters could also be significant players in the fairs and markets across Mythic Europe. Especially in England and France, Templar characters could be involved in running the fairs, selling their wares, or issuing letters of credit.

### Templars as Advisors and Diplomats

For sagas with a political or diplomatic focus, Templar characters fit in naturally at any mundane court — including Muslim nations. Their vows of loyalty to the grand master and pope mean that they are considered trustworthy and neutral in many situations, so Templars often act as diplomats and negotiators between nobles in conflict. The rich and powerful could seek out the advice of a Templar character with a reputation for giving sage counsel.

Templar characters focusing on being the advisors to the magnates of Mythic Europe would do well to have the Gossip or Social Contacts Virtues, to represent the network of preceptories and chapterhouses across Mythic Europe.

Likewise, sagas focusing on the Church will find Templars in episcopal and papal courts, or even important monasteries.

### Templars as Spies

For favored patrons, the Templars perform discreet services: writing encoded letters, secret orders, and messages, and engaging in espionage. Templar characters could be ordered to infiltrate Muslim cities and noble courts, or carry covert letters of excommunication from the pope — or even spy on Hermetic covenants.

Templars are exceptionally suited to the role of espionage, either in the service of a secular lord or for their order itself. The senior commanders in the West regularly travel from province to province with a retinue. A Templar, appearing as a simple monk, is able to travel largely unnoticed throughout Europe, and seek refuge and safety in the wide-spread lands owned by the order. The brother-knights can also travel innocuously as knights, simply by riding in normal clothes instead of their white mantle.

Across Mythic Europe, Templar characters could be in disguise, act as spy-masters, or even be spies themselves. In this line of work, the Poor Knights spend a great fortune ensuring they get the best intelligence in the Holy Land and Iberia.

### Templars as Priests

The order contains within it a microcosm of the clerical orders, with its own ranks of priests. All brother-priests are ordained priests before they are admitted to the order, and they retain their Ecclesiastical rank, and may even be promoted by bishops or senior clergy within the order. Sagas with a Church focus could see a Templar brother-priest character as a regular visitor to the court of a bishop or abbot. Brother-priest characters could be useful allies to other religious characters, as they are exempt from local canon laws and episcopal authority. Brother-priest characters could fit into most Church-focused sagas.

### Templars as Lords

Sagas that involve the running of estates, or the stories that arise from the

interaction between secular nobles and the Order of Hermes, could see a Templar character take the place of the mundane lord. The Templars own and manage great estates across Europe, many of them on the fringes of civilized lands (where many Hermetic covenants are likely to be founded). Such a Templar would interact with Hermetic covenants and characters in a similar way to other mundane lords.

Templar characters could be either brother-knights or brother-sergeants, and as the owners of lands would possess most of the rights and privileges of a mundane lord: command over any serfs and the ability to mete out justice for minor crimes (major crimes such as murder or serious assault need a higher authority). Such Templar characters may be the only full Templars in the chapterhouse, with the other characters being non-religious or associate members.

### Templars as Sailors

There have been Templar sailors and captains since the Second Crusade. Robert of Sabloel, before joining the order and becoming the grand master, had been King Richard of England's admiral and one of his most trusted vassals. Sagas set at sea or involving trade could include Templar characters as sailors (brother-sergeants or confreres), or as captains and admirals (brother-knights).

In 1220, the Templars are starting to assemble their own fleet; a saga could involve the formation of that navy, as well as the frequent battles between the Templars and Muslim pirates. Hermetic characters with a reputation for nautical knowledge could be sought out by the Templars to aid them in building ships at their shipyards in Acre, navigating the pilgrimage routes between Italy and the Holy Land, or even commanding a ship.

### Templars as Treasure Hunters

The Poor Knights have a voracious appetite for holy relics. Their principle aim in Greece is to acquire relics from



## Templars and the Wealthy Virtue

Templar characters can take the Wealthy Major Virtue, and also the Poor Major Flaw. Instead of reflecting the personal wealth of the character, it instead represents the character's responsibilities, authority, and discretionary time available. All Templars have a regimented day — even

the grand master — but within that tight discipline a Wealthy character has more time to devote to projects of personal interest, or to self-improvement. Likewise, a Poor character has many responsibilities that prevent him from studying, training, or pursuing other activities.

the many churches across the war-torn area. Templar characters tasked with uncovering lost or mysterious relics could find themselves allied with Hermetic Seekers, scouring the Holy Land, Egypt, or Greece. Such Templar characters could travel incognito, and other characters (or even other troupe members) may not even know.

## Creating Templar Characters

Templar characters come from all walks of life, and are recruited to fill areas of need. Craftsmen, veterans, sailors, and mercenary captains from across Mythic Europe and the Holy Land are welcomed into the order. Most brother-knights are from the West — France, England, Italy, or Iberia — or are *poullains* — Syrian-born Westerners. The other brothers are more ethnically diverse, including Syrian, Armenian, and Greek Christians.

## Modified Templar Virtues

The following virtues are modified to be Templar specific versions of the virtues that appear in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 92.

### BROTHER-KNIGHT

*Minor, Social Status*

The character is a brother-knight in the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, and has devoted his life to the reconquest of Jerusalem, to God, and to the

Virgin Mary. He has sworn a lifelong vow of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and to obey the Templar Rule. He is answerable only to his superiors and the pope, and is from a noble family. You may take Academic and Martial Abilities during character generation. You may not take the Knight or Priest Minor Virtue, or the Landed Noble Major Virtue. The character may wear the famous symbol of the Templars, a red cross on pure white robes. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

### BROTHER-PRIEST

*Minor, Social Status*

The character is a chaplain of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon,

## Templar Equipment

### BROTHER-KNIGHTS

Brother-knights all have the same equipment, clothes, weapons, and armor. Armor includes a helmet, mailed hauberk (covering the head and body down to knees), and metal leg and feet armor. This is worn over a padded jacket and hose. Brother-knights also have a sword, a shield, a lance, a dagger, a bread knife, a pocket knife, and a "Turkish" mace (a mace with a fixed metal head with spikes at the end). The Templar uniform consists of two shirts, two pairs of breeches, two pairs of hose, and a length of rope as a belt. Each brother-knight is issued with three horses and a squire, and at the commander's discretion a brother-knight can be given an additional horse and squire. When on campaign, Templar knights also carry portable bedding, blankets, sheets, storage bags, cooking and eating utensils, and drinking flasks and cups.

### BROTHER-SERGEANTS

The equipment and armor for brother-sergeants is less elaborate than for brother-knights. Their mantle is black

with a red cross, or, for junior sergeants, brown. They are issued with an iron cap-helmet, a sleeveless coat of mail, hose with no feet protection, a sword, a shield, a dagger, and other weapons as necessary. Brother-sergeants receive only two horses.

### SQUIRES

Squires provide support and look after a brother-knight's arms armor, equipment, and horses. As they are outsiders, they are not permitted to wear the mantle or red cross of the Templars, instead wearing plain reinforced leather armor or a mail hauberk, and carrying a sword and dagger — most squires have no active combat role other than to support their knight. Templar squires bear no resemblance to chivalric relationships between knight and squire. It is a relationship of master and servant — squires are never members of the order but are outsiders hired for a set period, bound by obligation and often brutal discipline. This includes floggings and being placed in irons if the squire is obstinate or disobedient.





which has the same implications as the Priest Minor Virtue (ArM5, page 47), except the character is answerable only to his superiors within the Templars and to the pope. You may take clerical Virtues to describe the character's rank within the Church hierarchy. The character wears the distinctive red cross of the Templars on his black robes. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

### BROTHER-SERGEANT

*Minor, Social Status*

The character is a member of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, but not a knight or a nobleman. He has

sworn a lifelong vow of obedience, poverty, and chastity, but this may not be enforced as strictly for him as it would be for a brother-knight. He is answerable only to his superiors in the order and the pope. You may also take Martial Abilities during character generation. The character wears the red cross of the Templars on a black tunic. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

## New Templar Virtues

The following are new virtues designed for Templar characters.

### TEMPLAR CONFRERE OR CONSOEUR

*Free, Social Status*

The character is an associate member of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, and has taken one or two of the Templar vows. His membership is generally temporary (although it need not be), and he may possess other Social Status Virtues or Flaws to reflect his true station, such as Clerk, Knight, Landed Noble, Peasant, or even Hermetic Magus. His former outside status affects his treatment in the order — knights and nobles receive more respect than commoners. Women may also become associate members (consoeurs), although they are housed separately from the men. Associates are governed by the same rule as full members, although they have fewer rights. Some associates may hold important positions within a particular Templar commandery, especially if they possess a valuable skill.

### TEMPLAR SERVANT

*Free, Social Status*

The character is a servant working at a commandery of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon. He is supported by the Templars, and probably lives in the commandery itself or close by. He also receives payment as befits his profession. As a servant of the Templars, he is covered by the papal bull exempting him from secular and lay authority, and is generally accorded some respect by non-Templars.

### TEMPLAR SPECIALIST

*Minor, Social Status*

The character works as a skilled employee of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, filling a crucial role for which the Templars have no full or associate member, such as craftsmen, blacksmiths, artisans, notaries, squires, soldiers, scribes, or translators. You may take one restricted group of Abilities during character creation, such as Academic or Martial Abilities. As a servant of the Templars, the character is covered by the papal bull exempting him from secular and lay authori-



ty, and is generally accorded some respect. This Virtue may be taken by Muslim characters, who will typically act as translators (and who should also take the Outsider Flaw or similar).

### TEMPLAR ADMINISTRATOR

#### *Minor, Social Status*

The character is technically a brother-knight or brother-sergeant for the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, but is really an administrator for the order's many holdings and activities. While he has sworn the Templar oath and vows, and lives a monastic life, his many duties means he is likely to never see active combat. He is answerable only to his superiors in the order and to the pope. He may have considerable influence and access to enormous resources, but no additional time. You may take Academic Abilities during character creation. This Virtue can replace the Brother-Knight, Brother-Sergeant, and Brother-Priest Status Virtues. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

### COMMANDER

#### *Major, Social Status*

The character is a commander within the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon and has authority over all aspects of the order in a province or preceptory. This Virtue also grants the Temporal Influence Minor Virtue, as the character has the ear of any important nobles or clergymen in the area. He also has access to the considerable wealth of the Templars, including any funds, lands, and resources, although he has no extra time. He may levy taxes and tithes over the lands he controls as if he were a landed noble or bishop, and charge service fees on monies he lends, and he may even act as a judge for minor lay crimes committed on his lands. Because of his high position, he is a well-known figure and has a Reputation of level 3 in his area. He is expected to support the order's crusading efforts if he is in the West, and if he lives in the East he is expected to participate directly. Should the grand master die and the character lives in the East, he has the right to participate in

choosing a new grand master. This Virtue includes the effects of the Brother-Knight Virtue, and likewise can only be taken by male characters.

### OFFICE HOLDER

#### *Minor, Social Status*

The character holds a position within the local hierarchy of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, such as the deputy commander, marshal, or infirmarer. He may give orders to brothers in his region, is accorded the considerable respect due to his position, and has the power to enforce the rule and its various laws, although he answers to the local commander. Because of his high position, he is a well-known figure and has a Reputation of level 2 in his region. You may take this Virtue with any of the Templar Status Virtues, as your character may be a senior brother-sergeant or senior Templar chaplain. This Virtue is compatible with the Temporal Influence Minor Virtue. If you take this virtue with the Commander Major Virtue, then your character holds one of the few exalted ranks within the Templars, such as grand commander or grand marshal, or a rank that has author-

ity over the Eastern or Western region of the order, in which case you likely reside in Acre, Paris, or London.

### TEMPLAR PRESTIGE

#### *Minor, General*

A member of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, the character enjoys great respect and admiration among his fellow brothers. This may be because of a great act of heroism or piety, or because of the rank or station he possessed before he joined the order. He starts with a Reputation of level 3 within the Templars.

### New Ability

The Templars have their own Organization Lore, as follows.

#### ORGANIZATION LORE: KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

This Ability reflects knowledge and experience of the rule and regulations of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon,

### Templar Ciphers

The Templars have a system of encryptions and ciphers to protect their communications. Access to the ciphers is granted by the Organization Lore: Knights Templar Ability. Using the ciphers allows a Templar to write letters or messages that can only be read by someone with the cipher. If someone wants to decrypt the code without the

cipher, the player must succeed in an Intelligence + Artes Liberales (Arithmetic) roll against an Ease Factor of 21.

A Templar with an Organization Lore: Knights Templar Ability of 5 or more can attempt to decrypt the message, with an Intelligence + Organization Lore: Knights Templar roll against an Ease Factor of 12.

### Story Seed: Stolen Cipher

The Templar ciphers are kept in special ledgers in most provincial commandries. Their existence is treated with the greatest of secrecy. The Templars would stop at nothing to maintain the secrecy of these ledgers or reclaim

them if stolen. Possessing a ledger would allow its owner to forge Templar communications and letters of credit. There are many in Mythic Europe who would go to great lengths to possess one of these ledgers.

## Templar Sign Language

While eating and carrying out numerous other tasks, the Templars are required to maintain absolute silence. As a result, the Templars have adapted the sign language used by the monastic orders such as the Cistercians and Benedictines to

hand signals that can also be useful on the battlefield. However, the Templar sign language is very limited — only simple commands and requests are possible, such as asking for bread or salt at the dinner table, or signaling a charge.

familiarity with important members of the order, information about its provinces, military strategy, and current activities, and insight into the ongoing goals and concerns of the Templars. This Ability also gives the character knowledge of the Templar sign language, allowing him to communicate simple messages in silence to other Templars. Finally, this Lore grants knowledge of the Templar's encryption ciphers. This Ability is normally available only to characters possessing a Virtue that grants membership of the Templars, although outsiders may possess it with the troupe's permission. **Specialties:** personalities, history, politics, tactics, sign language, a particular region. (General)

## Sample Characters

Storyguides may use the following character stats to bring the Knights Templar into their sagas.

### BROTHER-KNIGHT

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per -1, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1 (1), Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +1  
**Size:** 0  
**Age:** 44 (44)  
**Decrepitude:** 0  
**Warping Score:** 0  
**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)  
**Virtues and Flaws:** Brother-Knight; Commander, Wealthy; Temporal Influence\*; Difficult Underlings, Greedy  
 \* Free with Commander  
**Personality Traits:** Wrathful +3, Envious +2, Gluttonous +2  
**Reputations:** Influential +4 (Templars), Veteran +3 (Church and Military Orders)

#### Combat:

*Mace and Shield:* Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +8, Damage +9

*Dagger:* Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +4

**Soak:** +2 (+11 when armored)

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Area Lore: Local 5 (politics), Area Lore: Holy Land 3 (Crusader holdings), Animal Handling 3 (horses), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 3 (hills), Brawl 4 (with shield), Concentration 3 (sentry), Latin 2 (Church administration), Etiquette 3 (the Church), Folk Ken 3 (Templars), Intrigue 3 (military), Leadership 5 (Templars), (Living) Language 5 (during battle), Native Language 5 (large organizations), Organization Lore: Knights Templar 5 (tactics), Ride 6 (charging), Single Weapon 6 (mace and shield), Survival 3 (hills), Teaching 3 (riding)

**Equipment:** "Turkish" mace and round-shield, dagger, Templar mantle, robes of office, ornate golden crucifix necklace, commander's seal.

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

**Appearance:** Once a handsome man, this brother-knight is now aging, with a large bald, domed head, jutting broken nose, and craggy brows. He is still well built and muscular, which shows through his white Templar robes. He rarely wears a sword these days, but still cuts an imposing figure when fully armed. He has several horses stabled in the chapterhouse.

This character is a former Templar brother-knight veteran from the Holy Land, who has climbed the ranks of the

Templar hierarchy to become commander over an influential chapterhouse in Mythic Europe. In addition to governing the order's holdings, he advises powerful nobles. His difficult underlings are ambitious Templars who seek their own aggrandizement.

### BROTHER-SERGEANT

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per -1, Pre 0, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 19

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Brother-Sergeant; Templar Prestige, Warrior; Fear (of fire, minor), Mentor

**Personality Traits:** Honest +3, Honorable +2, Brave +1

**Reputations:** Heroic (Templars) +3

#### Combat:

*Long Sword and Shield:* Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +7

*Dagger:* Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +4

**Soak:** +2 (+6 with armor)

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Area Lore: Local 3 (farming), Animal Handling 2 (horses), Athletics 3 (in armor), Awareness 1 (battles), Bargain 2 (merchants), Brawl 4 (fists), Carouse 3 (villages), Concentration 1 (while traveling), Etiquette 1 (Templars), Folk Ken 2 (Templars), Great Weapon 3 (spear), (Native) Language 5 (compliments), Organization Lore: Knights Templar 2 (hierarchy), Ride 1 (long distance), Single Weapon 4 (long sword and shield), Stealth 1 (urban areas)

**Equipment:** Black mantle, sword and round shield, dagger, reinforced leather armor.

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

**Appearance:** A young man who cuts a dashing figure in the black mantle and red cross of the brother-sergeants. He carries a sword, shield, and dagger.



## The Church

These are the traits of a young Templar brother-sergeant who has gained significant notoriety within the order after performing a heroic deed in battle. Although he has seen combat, he is still fairly "green" and inexperienced. His Mentor is probably an older Templar, who has been impressed by his actions.

### BROTHER-PRIEST

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per -2, Pre +2, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 30 (30)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (4)

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Brother-Priest; Magic

Sensitivity, Student of the Divine; Proud, Raised from the Dead;\* Lecherous (minor)

\* From *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 36.

**Personality Traits:** Loyal +3, Proud +3

**Reputations:** None

**Combat:**

*Fist:* Init +1, Attack +1, Defense 0, Damage +1

**Soak:** +0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Area Lore: Local 4 (Templar holdings), Artes Liberales 2 (rhetoric), Awareness 2 (noticing disorder), Brawl 2 (escape), Charm 3 (nuns), Church Lore 3 (local diocese), Concentration

3 (prayer), Dominion Lore 2 (miracles), Etiquette 3 (Templar officials), Folk Ken 3 (Templars), Latin 3 (reading), Leadership 4 (religious), Magic Sensitivity 3 (auras), Ride 4 (long distance), Native Language 5 (reading aloud), Theology 2 (the Gospels)

**Equipment:** Copy of the *Book of Matthew*, black robes.

**Appearance:** Prematurely greying, with aristocratic features and piercing blue eyes, this brother-priest has a birthmark on his jaw shaped like a Greek cross.

Raised from the dead by the grace of a saint, this brother-priest joined the Templars after this miracle (which is the source of his Warping).

## Chapter Eight

# The Franciscans

Early in the 13th century, the Holy Spirit sent a challenge to the world through one particular individual — Francis, a merchant's son living in Assisi, Italy. Francis' response to God's call is making people in all walks of life, from the pope down, reconsider their relationship with God. His followers, and those of his cousin Clare, share the life of the poorest, supporting themselves by manual labor when possible, begging when it is not. They call themselves the Little Brothers (Friars Minor) and Poor Sisters, and live in humility, charity, and sympathy with nature, urging everyone, by their example, to re-examine

their motives and actions in the light of the Gospels.

Through the example of Francis and his followers, God seeks to remind people of the example set by the early Church, and so reduce selfishness and improve faith, hope, and charity, with the intention of saving souls. Anyone who wishes to live a truly Christian life must accept these challenges, or reconcile their conscience if they do not. Those who do not truly aspire to the Christian ideal, but like to appear to be doing so, must also decide how to approach these challenges.

## Franciscans in the Saga

News of the new Friars Minor movement has spread very rapidly, so characters in sagas set anywhere in Mythic Europe have a good chance of encountering someone who has heard one of the Friars Minor preach. Characters may meet, or even be, friends or relations of one of the members of the new group. The friars themselves are keen travelers, so it is

### The Challenges of Francis

#### CHALLENGE TO THE MERCHANTS

Francis is from a rich merchant family, yet rids himself of all his riches and not only rejects the life of trading and spending, but refuses to handle coins at all. This is a challenge to the rising merchant classes.

#### CHALLENGE TO THE NOBILITY

He recruits followers from the nobility, bidding them give their wealth to the poor and take on the role of humble servants to lepers, the sick, and the impoverished. This is a challenge to their status and traditional way of life.

#### CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES

He sends preachers out on foot, ignoring the rule on enclosure and stability

of abode, and they preach to peasants in the vernacular. This is a challenge to the complacent, long-standing Benedictine monasteries, and to the authority and control exercised by the Church itself.

#### CHALLENGE TO SOCIETY

He encourages women to do the same as himself; this is a challenge to the traditional place of women in society. Also, he preaches outdoors to anyone, even the birds and animals. This is a challenge to everyone who exploits these creatures.

#### CHALLENGE TO THE THEOLOGIAN

He advocates deeply spiritual, non-intellectual prayer. This is a challenge to the scholars of the Church.

#### CHALLENGE TO THE MONASTERIES

While individual monks and nuns take vows of poverty, the abbeys, nunneries, and monasteries where they live have accumulated possessions. Many are now very rich indeed. Francis challenges them to review their situation in the light of the gospel. Can the rich and powerful abbots give their institution's wealth to the poor? If they do not, can they still claim to be true followers of Jesus?

#### CHALLENGE TO THE LAITY

The many poor among the laity have very little of their own in the way of possessions, and already live a fairly precarious existence. For them, there is still a challenge set by Francis, because he would have his followers give up any selfish desires as well as all possessions.



not unusual for characters in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Morocco, Syria, or the Holy Land to have met a friar. Friars are less likely to have turned up in other countries, but it is undoubtedly possible. Perhaps a player character is one of the early followers, who has traveled to spread the word. In 1220, it is possible for characters to meet Francis himself, some of his earliest followers, and perhaps even his parents. The outline presented here of the life of Francis himself, his followers, and the early history of his movement provides background for such encounters.

Characters who hear the preaching of a charismatic, inspirational friar — even Francis himself — may well have an emotional response. This might induce them to change their habits, so as to become more charitable and pious. Such characters might be inspired to give away property, either their own or some belonging to the covenant, or to follow the preacher when he moves on, so as to hear more of his stirring words. In contrast, a character antagonistic to the Church might be roused to act against the preacher and stir up trouble.

## Joining the Franciscans

Men and women join the Franciscans as Little Brothers or Poor Sisters as an alternative to the more-established religious orders. While the Virtue Mendicant Friar covers male Franciscan characters, it is not appropriate for female Franciscan characters. They should take the Social Status Religious, described in Chapter 3: The Diocese, and any combination of suitable Virtues and Flaws to highlight those aspects of the character's life and beliefs that the troupe wants to use in stories. Note that, conventionally, Mendicant Friar requires that the character also take Monastic Vows. However, if the stories to be told using this character do not center on his vows, alternatives may be taken (see Chapter 3: The Diocese, Virtues and Flaws).



### Mendicants

The mendicants are distinguished from other religious in that they do not have possessions, either personally or as a group. They are allowed, by Church law, to beg and live on the charity of others. They are linked to others in their tradition without being tied to a specific place, although the women are usually required to live in a settled community. They are not

under control of the local bishop, answering to their own leaders and the pope. They serve the poor and preach the gospel, particularly in urban communities. Friars and nuns belong to the Franciscans, Dominicans, or Carmelites. Friars often travel, and may come into conflict with local clergy over preaching and administering the Sacraments to their parishioners.

## The Dominicans

The Order of Preachers — also known as the Dominican friars — was founded to save souls by preaching the gospel and combating heresy. The founder, an ordained Augustinian canon from Spain named Dominic, was inspired by witnessing the popularity of the Albigensian (Cathar) movement in southern France, and set out to use its best aspects within an orthodox Catholic setting. The Dominican emphasis is on learning, apostolic simplicity, virtue, and contemplation.

While the Franciscans eschew academic theology, the followers of Dominic embrace it, placing great importance on education. They are much involved with universities, where they study and gather recruits. Their vow of poverty allows them to own books, but nothing else. The Preachers live on char-

ity, mainly donations from the urban population. Characters may find them preaching to people in their own language in any town or city in mainland Western Europe, and perhaps further afield. They wear a white robe with a black cloak and hood.

Approval for the new movement came from Pope Honorius III in 1216. By 1219, there were hundreds of people following Dominic's ideals, so he called for representatives from all the priories to meet together in Bologna on Sunday May 17th, 1220, the feast of Pentecost. If your saga follows history, the structure and laws of the order are discussed and agreed upon at this meeting, appointing Dominic as the first master general. The movement continues to grow rapidly, with the Preachers reaching Oxford, England in 1221. Dominic

himself dies in Italy very soon after. The speed with which the new movement is spreading confirms the truth of the dream that Dominic's mother had while carrying him, of a black and white dog carrying a lighted torch in its mouth, which set fire to the earth wherever it ran.

A character wishing to be a member of the Order of Preachers will have the Educated Virtue and, if male and he does not already have Magister in Artibus, he will be sent to a university to study theology and will almost certainly be ordained. Such a character may be part of a community of similar people, living in a small priory or nunnery in a university city or, if male, may be part of a small group traveling to extend the reach of the order, preaching as they go.

## Preaching

While sermons in the vernacular are an important part of the church experience, popular preaching tends to occur outside, in barns, churchyards, or wherever a crowd can gather. Preachers are treated as stars, with people traveling many miles, sometimes days, to see them. Reputation is everything, and preachers are perhaps best treated as performers using the *Art & Academe* rules, pages 125–129, to describe their personal development in terms of increases in the Ability Profession: Preacher and their reputation.

Only ordained priests can hope to preach without any concerns from the Church, and even monks are viewed with suspicion if they preach outside of the immediate environs of their religious house. So dangerous is the potential of preaching wrong doctrine and this resulting in social unrest, that even friars are sometimes viewed with suspicion. Lay preachers and non-ordained clerks who wish to preach would do well to restrict their preaching to matters of

morality, or the lives of the saints, rather than straying into matters of doctrine. (In game terms, using Ceremonial Influence to change Personality Traits, or teaching Dominion Lore and possibly allowing listeners to gain a Devotion Point to a relevant saint.)

Popular preaching uses a number of common motifs and stories, and varies mainly in the delivery. It can be bawdy, is often funny, and is filled with parodies of popular songs with new religious lyrics, and old jokes with new religious punchlines. The preacher can preach on any of a wide range of subjects, typically including Theology (unwise, unless the bishop has granted license to preach), Dominion Lore, Church Lore, any of the (Realm) Lores, and any other subject that forms the basis of the preacher's message. See *Art & Academe* pages 13–14 for rules on preaching.

Casual attendance at a preacher's meetings can act as a source for exposure experience points for that season for interested parties, so a peasant

might learn a little Infernal Lore by listening to the weekly admonitions of the preacher. This gain of an experience point occurs even if the peasant previously had no knowledge of that Ability at all, where normally placing exposure in such an Ability would not be allowed.

If a character dedicates a season of free time to following a preacher, the study source is equal to the Aesthetic Quality of the preacher's performance in the relevant Ability. The Ability must be known by the preacher, and the study total can not raise it to a score equal to the preacher's ability. It is always possible to learn Profession: Preacher by listening to a preacher, instead of the intended subject, if the listener so desires. The preacher may also try to inculcate temporary Personality Traits in the audience, as noted in Chapter 3: The Diocese, Care of Souls and *Art & Academe*, page 13.



# Francis' Life & Growth of the Franciscans

Francis was born in 1181 into the family of a prosperous cloth-merchant, who christened him Giovanni. His mother came from Provence and his father, Pietro Bernadone, often traveled that way for trading opportunities and happened to be in France when his son was born, so the boy was nick-named Francesco, "the Frenchman," or in English, Francis. He had a little education, acquiring the basics of reading and writing in Latin. As soon as he was old enough, he started to help in the family business. He led an active social life and became a leader among the affluent youth of Assisi.

In 1202, Francis went to fight in a war between Assisi and Perugia, dreaming of a life of chivalry, but he was taken captive and held in prison for many months. During this time, he became very ill with ague (malaria). His father paid the ransom and Francis returned home, where he worked in the family business, dealing in luxurious fabrics, when his poor health permitted.

In 1206, while praying in the small, semi-derelict church of San Damian, just outside the wall of Assisi, a voice spoke to Francis from a Byzantine-style crucifix on the wall. It instructed him to "Go and repair my house, which you can see is falling down." Initially, Francis interpreted the call literally, but later it dawned on him that more was required and he realized his life must change; he described it as a fire that burned inside him. He gave away his possessions to the poor, vowed his devotion to the crucified Christ, and set out to copy the lifestyle of the apostles as closely as he could. For two years he tried to find a way of living a satisfying religious life by adopting poverty, serving a community of lepers, working to repair dilapidated churches that he often used for temporary shelter, and preaching. Seven others joined him.

In 1209, Francis realized that he was called to greater poverty and, on the

spot, he abandoned coins, staff, belt, and shoes and his followers did the same, giving everything they owned to the poor. They withdrew to a quiet place to pray and fast where, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Francis began to formulate his rules for the brothers. It was during this period that Francis, through his True Faith, obtained the Abilities of Meditation and Understanding.

When he reached Rome in 1209, Francis had eleven followers with him, all barefoot and as scruffy as himself. He presented himself at the Vatican and re-

quested an audience with Pope Innocent III. The pope was expecting them, as the Holy Spirit had sent him a prophetic dream the previous night in which he saw the Lateran Basilica about to collapse, but held firm by a small man dressed in rags, who propped the walls up with his own back. So, when Francis asked for approval of his new way of living the gospel message, the pope gave his blessing, although he gave permission only for preaching on morality, leaving theology to the ordained clergy.

Francis and his followers returned to

## Francis of Assisi

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per 0, Pre +4, Com +2, Str 0, Sta -1 (1), Dex -1, Qik -1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 39 (39)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 1 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Mendicant Friar; True Faith (Faith Score 5; Faith Points: 8); Animal Ken, Great Presence, Inspirational, Premonitions; Driven (Live like the apostles), Monastic Vows; Ability Block: logic, Compassionate, Fragile Constitution, Social Handicap (Unworldliness)

**Personality Traits:** Compassionate +3, Humble +3, Pious +3

**Reputations:** Saintly (most of Western Europe and parts of Arab lands) 3

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init: -1, Atk n/a, Def -1, Dam n/a

**Soak:** -1

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**True Faith Magic Resistance:** 50

**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (birds), Animal Ken 3 (birds), Area Lore: Northern and Central Italy 3 (towns), Area Lore: Holy Land 1 (towns), Artes Liberales 2 (Bible), Awareness 2 (the sick), Bargain 2 (cloth), Carouse 2 (entertaining), Charm 3 (preaching), Church

Lore 3 (monks), Concentration 4 (praying), Folk Ken 4 (the poor), Intervention 1 (healing), Italian 6 (preaching), Latin 2 (Bible), Leadership 3 (inspiration), Meditation 3 (silent prayer), Organization Lore: Franciscans 4 (Initiations), Premonitions 1 (danger), Profession: Cloth merchant 2 (selling), Profession: Preacher 2 (impromptu speaking), Purity 1 (fasting), Teaching 3 (religious), Theology 2 (life of Christ), Understanding 3 (when kneeling)

**Encumbrance:** 0 (0)

See the main text for details of Francis' life. His supernatural Abilities Intervention, Meditation, Purity, and Understanding derive from experience of Divine Ascension (Divine Unity) (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, pages 63-65). As a result of Divine Unity, Francis personifies holy charity. The Premonitions Virtue represents Devotion obtained with True Faith 2 (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 61). With True Faith of 5, Francis also has the advantages of Hope (add 6 when using Faith Points like Confidence) and Charity (he radiates a tangible Divine Empyrean aura of level 1 to Voice range, see *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 62). His Fragile Constitution results from Divine Warping; if your saga follows history, further Warping gives him stigmata in 1224 during a visitation by an angel.



the valley close to Assisi, where their life of prayer, fasting, and good works continued. Further mystical experiences awoke the Supernatural Abilities of Purity and Intervention in Francis, and he began to teach some of the brothers.

Player characters may meet one or more of the founder members, such as Sylvester of Assisi or Bernard of Quintavalle, Rufino — both priests and cousins of Clare (see this chapter, Clare of Assisi). There is also Leo, another priest; he is known to some as Brother Lamb of God, and is Francis' confessor and scribe. Among the early followers are also Giles of Assisi (a farmer's son, noted for his fervent

prayer and mysticism), Masseo (known for his eloquence and courtesy), Anthony of Padova, Simon of Assisi, Christopher of Romagna, Peter Catanio, Sabbatinus, Moricus the short, John of Capella, Philip the tall, John of San Costanzo, Juniper, Barbarus, Bernard Vigilante de Vida, and Angelo Tancredi from Rieti (a noble knight before joining).

### Spreading the Movement

In 1212, Francis set out for the Holy Land, but God had other ideas and the

ship was wrecked on the Dalmatian coast. Francis recognized and accepted the correction and walked back to Italy. In 1214, Francis felt again a call to preach to the Saracens so set off walking through Spain towards Morocco, but his health failed and he was obliged to return to Italy. During the following year, Francis went to Rome where he met a man named Dominic, who was there to ask papal approval for a new religious order of preachers. Pope Honorius gave his approval and support, perceiving the Little Brothers and Dominic's preachers as a valuable means of countering heretical ideas. The pope urged Francis himself to remain close to Rome, under papal protection. Cardinal Ugolino was appointed protector of the followers of Francis.

By 1217, Francis had around 5,000 followers ready to take their message of poverty and penance across Europe. The Franciscans' first general chapter meeting was held at the Portinuncula, Assisi, where certain brothers were nominated as provincials to lead the spread of the message. The earliest missions were to France, Spain, Portugal, and Morocco. Some of the friars met with opposition from fellow Christians, so those who set out in 1219 and after were supplied with documents to prove that they had papal approval.

In 1219, Francis and a dozen companions set sail for the Holy Land to join up with crusaders. In Syria, Francis was shocked to find how different the behavior of the rough soldiers was to his dreams of chivalry and fighting for God. Accompanied by Brother Illuminato, Francis went to meet the Sultan of Egypt in his encampment. Respecting the role of the preacher, the sultan treated the men with courtesy, offered gifts that Francis refused, and eventually sent them back to the Christian camp. It is believed by some that Francis became ill as a direct result of this visit. Did a Sufi afflict him with illness as a punishment for preaching the Christian faith, or for insulting the sultan by refusing his gifts? The small group remained a while in the Holy Land until disturbing news reached them from Italy (see this chapter, Current Crises).





# The Franciscans Today

The crisis at the heart of the movement (see the next section) has not affected most of the followers as yet, who wander through the towns and countryside of central Italy and beyond preaching of peace, love, and repentance. Always, they are careful to respect parish priests and never preach without their permission. They are clearly loyal to the institution and hierarchy of the established Church.

As the interest in Francis' message has grown, more time is spent on preaching, leaving less for work, so the group has become entirely dependent on what food they beg for. They refuse to use coins, taking only the food and drink that they are offered, and going hungry if they must. The only semi-permanent buildings they have for themselves are simple wattle and daub huts where they sleep on the ground, owning no furniture. They have very few books and no other possessions.

## Letter of Approval: Cum Delicti

Honorius, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the venerable brother archbishops and bishops, and to the beloved sons, the abbots, deans, archdeacons and other prelates of the Church, greetings and apostolic blessings.

Since our beloved sons, brother Francis and his companions in the life and religion of the Little Brothers, have rejected the vanities of this world and have chosen a way of life deservedly approved by the Roman Church,

and they spread through the various parts of the world, after the example of the Apostles, sowing the seed of the word of God, we beseech and exhort all of you in the Lord, and by these apostolic letters command you. When members of the aforesaid brotherhood present themselves to you bearing these letters, receive them as Catholic faithful, showing yourselves favorable and kind to them out of reverence for God and us.

## Current Crises

The success of the new movement was so sudden and so great that new groups of followers set themselves up in Italy and elsewhere, with no organization, no novitiate system, and only the basic initial rules to live by. With some 5,000 members now claiming to be followers of the absent Francis, Cardinal Ugolino took control,

desiring that the Church as a whole might benefit from the example of the friars. The cardinal tried to make the friars live more like Benedictines, and went so far as to propose that a friar become a bishop. These views were not acceptable to Francis, and as soon as he heard what was going on, he set out for Assisi. On his return to Italy, he started trying to return the movement to his own ideals, but he did not have the necessary organizational abilities and

## Brother Elias Bonibarone, Minister General of the Little Brothers

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per -1, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 40 (40)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Mendicant Friar; Strong-Willed, Enduring Constitution; Monastic Vows

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init: 0, Atk n/a, Def 0, Dam n/a

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, -2, -4, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Abilities:** Arabic 3 (preaching), Area Lore: Central Italy 2 (towns), Area Lore: Holy Land 2 (towns), Area Lore: Northern Italy 4 (towns), Area

Lore: Southern Italy 2 (towns), Area Lore: Syria 1 (towns), Artes Liberales 4 (grammar), Awareness 3 (those troubled in mind), Bargain 2 (selling), Charm 2 (peasants), Chirurgy 2 (cleaning wounds), Church Lore 3 (monasticism), Civil and Canon Law 4 (monasticism), Concentration 3 (preaching), Craft: Mattress-making 2 (softness), Etiquette 2 (senior clergy), Folk Ken 4 (friars), Guile 2 (excuses), Intrigue 1 (negotiating), Italian 5 (preaching), Latin 4 (legal terms), Leadership 3 (friars), Organization Lore: Franciscans 3 (membership), Philosophiae 1 (moral philosophy), Profession: Scribe 2 (legal documents), Theology 2 (history)

Elias Bonibarone was born in 1180 at Belvilta, near Assisi, into the family of a

mattress-maker. He followed the family trade at first but gained some education and went to Bologna, his father's hometown, to study. He supported himself there by working as a scribe. He was among the earliest followers of Francis. In 1217, Francis sent Elias to the Holy Land, leading a small group of friars with the intention of settling and preaching there. In 1219, Elias was put in charge of the activities of the Friars Minor in Syria, but he returned to Italy in 1220, when Francis did. If your saga follows history, Elias remains at the head of the movement until May 1227. By then, he has upset many who adhere to the original rule of absolute poverty by his methods for acquiring land and money to erect what he believes to be a suitable resting place and memorial to Francis. Giovanni Parenti, provincial of Spain, succeeds him.

## Story Seeds

### WHO IS TO BLAME?

While preaching at a fair or market, or in some other place where mixed crowds gather, a friar notices a nobleman nearby. Using Meditation and Intervention, he causes the man to be beset by disturbing images that reflect his worst unconfessed sins. The blame falls on any magi present, unless they have the Gentle Gift. If there are none near enough, then it falls on any character who stands out, whether because of a Magical Air, or a physical Flaw that people tend to find disturbing. The innocent victim of the cruel lord's wrath may be a player character or may appeal to one for help.

### NEW ARRIVALS

One or more player characters (if a Quaesitor is among them, so much the better) are traveling through a rural region in one of the many areas where friars are still unknown. The talk everywhere among the peasants is of great signs and wonders worked by a couple of foreigners who recently arrived. Some say they spoke at length in an unknown language, which they believe was Latin. Descriptions given by the peasantry are enough to suggest to the player characters that it might be a magus who is taking no care to keep his spells concealed from mundanes. If the characters find a priest to talk with, they learn that two friars from Italy passed through on their way to the nearest town, and one of the pair was working miracles. If they do not think of consulting the parish priest, or

cannot locate him, they may have a more interesting time dealing with the apparent violation of the Hermetic Code.

### INFLUENCE

A priest not far from the covenant denies a friar permission to preach in his parish. As he walks away, disappointed, the friar meets what appears to be a peasant who engages him in conversation and offers sympathy and advice. Acting on this, the friar visits the covenant (believing it to be the home of the local lord) in hopes of obtaining support there to persuade the priest to change his mind. Does he get the support he requests? Does anyone try to identify the "peasant" and seek him out? What the friar finds at the covenant makes him want to stay for a while to preach to the people there; do they let him?

### NEW IN TOWN

Three Franciscan brothers arrive at the town nearest the covenant and plan to stay a while to preach, after obtaining permission from the parish priest. They erect very flimsy, temporary shelters against the town wall. Every time anyone from the covenant visits the town, at least one of the three is preaching in the marketplace or in front of the church. An urban covenant finds that the favored spot for preaching is very close by them, and crowds gather often; how do they deal with this?

There also is always at least one of

the Franciscan friars begging for food somewhere in town. If player characters have contacts in town, they find beggars asking for help to move or remove this new competition.

### TRICKY MISSION

An archmage, who long ago lost touch with the day-to-day world outside his library and laboratory, hears muddled reports of Francis, and recruits the player characters to investigate on his behalf. Use any of the suggestions in the sections Birds and Animals or Brothers and Sisters that fit the archmage's interests as the excuse. Depending on his obsessions, the characters are under instructions to discover Francis' secrets or to find out about his use of supernatural abilities, and if need be, challenge him to "Join or die." What evidence can they obtain to convince the exacting archmage of their findings?

### VIS UNDER THREAT

A friar who is an ordained priest comes across a place where the vegetation is particularly vibrant and the animals plentiful, healthy, and unusually interested in him. He has entered a place with a Magical aura that is a significant vis source for the covenant. Inspired by the environment, the friar stays there, celebrating Mass every day and preaching to the animals. If the magi do not act quickly, the aura changes and the vis source is lost, at least temporarily.

struggled. When he found a group of friars in Bologna living in a house of stone and deep into plans with the university to open a school, Francis realized that his creation had grown beyond his control. Unless your saga changes things, in 1220, at a meeting of the general chapter of the Friars Minor, Francis attempts to resign his position as leader. With Francis' health failing, much of the active leadership is handled by Brother Elias (see his stats for details).

## Brothers and Sisters

In his preaching, it is clear that Francis calls the earth his mother, and believes that the sun, wind, and fire are his brothers, and the moon and stars are his sisters. He has even been heard to talk of his sister

Bodily Death. Most of his followers accept the terms unquestioningly, but magi are likely to look for very particular meanings in such statements. Francis has not yet explained to anyone why he professes these beliefs. During the period soon after he took up the religious life, while spending many hours meditating and praying in a cave in a small valley just outside Assisi, he glimpsed something of the nature of God's creation, which he expresses in these



family terms. A more-educated character might eventually be able to understand the insight Francis received and be able to express it in more academic, philosophical terms, if he could ever find the opportunity to discuss it at sufficient length.

Meanwhile, those who care about such things speculate on what it might mean, and the notions likely to be of most interest to magi are presented here. It is thought by some that Francis is familiar with certain spirits; much of the background information on this topic is in *Realms of Power: Magic*, Chapter 7.

One interpretation of Francis' relationship with the sun and moon is that he is in touch with two of the Astra Planeta, Named Spirits, Selene and Helios. The interests ruled over by Helios include healing, which may have impelled Francis' early interest in helping lepers. Selene rules commoners, which might explain Francis' enthusiasm for preaching to the common people. She also rules witchcraft, which might cause struggles between the spirit and the man of God. The spheres of these two are opposed in rainfall and drought, and in feminine energy and masculine energy, which might provoke periodic conflicts, perhaps with Francis at the center, mediating.

Francis may be on familiar terms with several spirits of the Elements, one tied

to the Art of Terram that he names Earth, one tied to Ignem that he names Fire, and a third tied to Auram that he names Wind. If these are what he claims as relations, they are relatively low-powered spirits and restricted to a specific location, perhaps in or around the cave in the valley near Assisi where Francis first went to pray and began his life as a friar. It may be that he has encountered specific elementals of earth, air, and fire, and found some way to pacify them and establish communication with them, although there is no report of any of his mysterious brothers or sisters being seen in any physical form. If this is the case, elemental characters (*Hedge Magic*, page 17) may wish to talk to him. It is unlikely that Mother Earth is the Primal Spirit that governs the whole earth, but some might believe this possible given that these spirits are thought by some to be the echoes of the words of creation; Francis is, after all, close to God, perhaps closer than any other living human being.

It is possible that Francis has some understanding of one or more of the Leti, or spirits of death. Which one it is that he might know well enough to call his sister is a matter for speculation and, perhaps, investigation by characters with an interest in necromancy and spirits. It may be one of the Thanatoi, or spirits of a peaceful death,

but the early martyrdom of some of his followers may indicate acquaintance with the Keres, spirits of violent death. Francis' own long experience of poor health suggests that it may well be one of the Moroi, a spirit of disease that he feels close to. Perhaps when Francis goes off alone to pray in isolated locations, sometimes he is talking with one of these spirits.

Magi with an interest in Theurgy (*The Mysteries: Revised Edition*, Chapter 9) may be keen to investigate the possibility that Francis has found a way to work with spirits that is compatible with Church teaching. If they can learn his secret, and so overcome the belief that the practices of the cults involved in theurgy are pagan, they will be able to be much more open about their knowledge and abilities. This is seen by some as an advantage but, with the long tradition of great secrecy, there are many who would oppose it.

Magi with an interest in Planetary Magic (*The Mysteries: Revised Edition*, page 30) may wish to question Francis about his understanding of the moon and stars, because they know how to invoke the influence of planets when instilling effects into enchanted devices. Perhaps he can teach them something new and valuable to improve their knowledge and understanding. A Mystery Cult built around this skill may

## Miracles of the Little Brothers

God's interest in the Friars Minor is made evident by the number of miracles he performs for them. Here are examples witnessed since the founding of the movement, to suggest what might occur in a saga.

- One day, the friary at Alemquer had no food left other than two loaves. But, while the brothers were seated at table, an angel came to the main door in the guise of a young man, bringing enough bread for them to have a loaf each.
- Miramolin, King of Morocco, had several friars thrown into prison without food or drink for twenty days. When frightened by severe storms, the king decided to release

them and found them to be perfectly well.

- Later, when the king had the friars killed and their bodies thrown into a fire, the flames drew back and would not touch their remains.
- Francis visited a man named Bartholomew, who had a madman living with him who was possessed by a demon. For some hours before Francis arrived, and all the three days that he was there, God silenced the demon.

He also sends prophetic dreams to further the spread of the group. Examples include the following:

- For three nights running, Sylvester had the same dream in which he saw

a dragon prowling round the walls of Assisi, and then beheld a large bright shining cross emerge from the mouth of Francis, which put the dragon to flight.

- In the late 1230s, Jean de Brienne, Emperor of Constantinople, was nearing the end of his life and praying that he might be received into heaven. A friar came to him in a dream and told the emperor that he would die clad in the same habit. The next night he saw two friars with the same message, and the following night there were three. The frightened man revealed his dreams to a friar. Soon he gave up his throne and adopted the life of a friar until his death.

need to investigate whether he was ever a member. Perhaps he is able to initiate new members into the cult? Theurgists with an interest in Interplanetary Magic (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 108) might be interested in finding out what Francis means by claiming celestial relations, too.

Magi may suspect that, if Francis does communicate with spirits of any sort, he probably has the Virtue Second Sight and strong views concerning those who seek to command and exploit spirits. Magi may expect that this will bring him into conflict with members of the Order of Hermes who have dealings with spirits in any way.

## Birds and Animals

It has been noted by many that, as well as preaching to people, Francis occasionally preaches to animals and birds. It appears that he believes that, since they are all creatures created by God, they deserve care and to hear his words. There is no doubt that birds fall silent to listen, and normally shy animals approach closer to

hear and see him better. What is unknown, unless Francis himself knows the answer, is why they do so.

No one has yet investigated to find out if there is anything special about the particular creatures that attend his sermons. Perhaps only those with some link to the Divine pay attention, although, if this is so, there are considerably larger numbers of creatures with Divine connections than previously suspected. It is possible that creatures touched by the supernatural in other ways might show an interest. If an animal with Infernal Might was in the audience, Francis might find it disruptive. Similarly, an animal or apparent animal of the Faerie Realm might be drawn to his preaching if Francis is using parables. A member of House Bjornaer might attend one of these sermons in the wild and learn something about the other creatures there, and about Francis himself.

## Clare of Assisi

Clare (or Chiara) was born into the well-off noble family of Favarone di Ofreduccio and his wife, Ortolana, in the Italian town of Assisi in 1194. She first heard Francis preach in 1210 and was inspired by his preaching and way of life. She felt drawn to follow his example, but her family expected her to make an advantageous marriage. So she made a secret assignation with Francis and his followers, where she dedicated herself to following Francis' way of life. Francis recognized that it was entirely inappropriate for females to wander the roads preaching and begging, but his ideal of absolute poverty was something they could follow. He sent her to live with the Benedictine nuns at Saint Paul's nunnery near Bastia, Umbra. Francis knew she would be safe there because the penalty was automatic excommunication for a person who attacked anyone taking refuge there.

When her family disowned her a few days later, and she no longer had to stay under the protection of Saint Paul's nunnery, she moved from there to join a small group of penitential women close to Assisi and near to Francis' favorite church of

Saint Damian. Her sister, Catherine, came there to join her the following week. Only Clare's prayers and a miracle saved Catherine from the men who came to drag her back home. Clare welcomed her sister into the penitential community and gave her a new name, Agnes.

## The Poor Sisters

Seeing that other women wished to adopt his teachings, Francis arranged for Clare to be the leader of a community of women at the church of Saint Damian, whence they acquired the name "Damianites," although they call themselves the Poor Sisters. Clare was appointed as abbess here in 1215, although she was very reluctant and only agreed because Francis insisted and she had promised obedience to him. It was against the original pattern of the community to have any distinctions between the sisters but, with pressure from the rulings at the Fourth Lateran Council, Francis saw that the sisters would only be permitted to keep their way of life if they adopted some of the aspects of a traditional nunnery. Clare responded by making sure she did more than her share of the menial and unpleasant tasks.

From the earliest days, the poor and sick visited the community at the church of Saint Damian, and caring for them fills much of the nuns' time. By making themselves dependent on their own manual labor or freely given donations of food, and living a communal life of humility and charity, the women share the suffering of the poorest. They pray simply but with a fervent intensity, in contrast with the intellectual approach typical of traditional religious communities. It seems that God had been preparing the way for this new group, as women from towns and cities across the region greeted the new movement as offering something they had long been yearning for in their hearts, and flocked to join. Although the first recruits were from the most affluent and powerful families of Assisi and neighboring urban settlements, now members are recruited from all stations in life, so it is quite common that a nun cannot read. Those who cannot are allowed to repeat





the Lord's Prayer multiple times, while those who can read the Divine Office. Francis is in the habit of sending women to join Clare without properly testing their vocation so, naturally, some unsuitable recruits turn up.

From the start, the women lived according to a "form of life," a set of guidelines composed for them by Francis, which was expanded and modified in line with experience, and on the basis of letters sent by Francis to Clare as he traveled. Clare petitioned Pope Innocent III to allow her community to remain in poverty and he agreed. In 1216, Cardinal Ugolino wrote to Pope Honorius III about the many small communities of holy women living in poverty and charity on the outskirts of Italian towns and cities, and the pressures upon them from pious people who sought to make their financial standing more secure, and those bishops who wanted to impose control over them.

In 1219, Cardinal Ugolino, wishing to see the community of Poor Sisters following a more structured rule, presented the community at Monticelli with a document based on the conventional Benedictine Rule. Clare rejected the clause that permitted the nuns to own property in common, as contrary to the determination to remain utterly poor. She chose to modify it as seemed right to her, so she devised her own version of the rule — the first to be written by a woman — using Francis' ideas for the Little Brothers as the core. It governs their life of spiritual poverty and works of charity. The main difference between this rule and those followed by other nuns is that total enclosure is not required, so a nun may go out for an approved reason. The nuns are required to fast every day except Christmas, if they can and are not serving outside the nunnery. Those who are allowed outside must not stay out longer than necessary, must act with discretion so as to avoid scandal, must be careful what they repeat outside about anything said or done inside the nunnery, and must not speak gossip from the outside world once they are inside again. Many other rules adopted by this order come from the traditional list, reinforcing regulations that are being forgotten in many communities. The completed, written rule will be

### Clare of Assisi

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|---|---|
| <p><b>Characteristics:</b> Int +1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0</p> <p><b>Size:</b> -1</p> <p><b>Age:</b> 26 (26)</p> <p><b>Decrepitude:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Warping Score:</b> 0 (0)</p> <p><b>Confidence:</b> 1 (3)</p> <p><b>Virtues and Flaws:</b> Senior Clergy; True Faith (Faith Score 2; Faith Points 6); Inspirational, Intuition, Premonitions, Privileged Upbringing; Compassionate, Monastic Vows; Ability Block (athletic), Small Frame, Motion Sickness</p> <p><b>Personality Traits:</b> Compassionate +3, Humble +3, Passionate +2</p> <p><b>Reputations:</b> Sainly (throughout Italy, France, Spain) 3</p> <p><b>Combat:</b><br/> <i>Dodge:</i> Init: +0, Atk n/a, Def +0, Dam n/a</p> | <p><b>Soak:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Fatigue Levels:</b> OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious</p> <p><b>Wound Penalties:</b> -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16)</p> <p><b>True Faith Magic Resistance:</b> 20</p> <p><b>Abilities:</b> Area Lore : Assisi 4 (people), Area Lore: Italy 2 (towns), Awareness 5 (the needy), Chirurgy 2 (10) (binding wounds), Church Lore 2 (monasticism), Concentration 3 (prayer), Craft: Needlework 2 (mending), Dominion Lore 2 (saints), Etiquette 3 (nuns and friars), Folk Ken 4 (the needy), Housewife 2 (cleaning), Italian 5 (comforting), Leadership 3 (nuns), Music 1 (local folk songs), Premonitions 2 (sickness), Teaching 2 (nuns)</p> <p><b>Encumbrance:</b> 0 (0)</p> |
|---|---|

presented to Pope Innocent IV in 1253, if your saga follows history.

Francis is determined that the links between the brothers and sisters must never turn into an obligation that might tie any of the brothers to one locality. Just as Clare looks to Francis for guidance and spiritual support, calling herself his "little plant," he views her as living a perfect example of the life of the gospel, and turns to her when he is uncertain about what to do.

As the friars travel widely to preach, the sisters travel to found new religious communities. In 1214, Clare's niece Balvina, moved from her home at the monastery of Arezzo to become abbess of Vallegloria, Spello in Umbria. In 1217, two of Clare's companions, Marsebilia and Cristiana, started a new group in Foligno, with Marsebilia as abbess. Clare's sister Agnes established a community at Monticelli, near Florence, in 1219.

Unless something in your saga changes things, Clare becomes unwell in 1224 but continues to inspire her sisters until her death in 1253, by which time there are at least 150 communities of Poor Sisters across the continent, from Poland and Slovakia to France. In 1228, Pope Gregory IX authorizes the Poor Sisters' way of life with a new "privilege

of poverty" which confirms their right to refuse any endowment of land or any other gifts.

## Holy Tradition: Franciscans

**Favored Abilities:** Intervention, Meditation, Purity, Understanding.

For a minority of Franciscans, their lives as religious allow them to develop supernatural Abilities when under the spiritual guidance of more-experienced fellow Franciscans. Although no Franciscan or other member of the Church would consider it as such, certain outsiders may recognize elements that make the Franciscans look like a Mystery Cult or Holy Tradition, and it is convenient to treat it as such. This Holy Tradition is only open to a character who adopts the life of a Franciscan friar, or joins the Poor Sisters. See *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 47 for more information on Holy Traditions.

## Joining the Tradition

A character may be designed as a member of the Holy Tradition during character creation. In these circumstances, the Supernatural Virtues that bestow the favored Abilities must be balanced by Flaws in the conventional manner, and Monastic Vows is compulsory. Players are encouraged to select Flaws that result from following one or more of the Initiation Scripts given here. The character has been Initiated by a charismatic member of the Little Brothers or Poor Sisters, who may continue to act as spiritual guide and counselor.

A character may also join the followers of Francis during character generation or in play, and subsequently meet someone who invites him or her to study and pray in order to find a deeper devotion to the calling, which equates to an invitation to discover the deeper Mysteries. The invitation may come from a character qualified to act as Mystagogue herself, or from a character who introduces the new potential recruit to a more senior, charismatic, or intelligent person who will be the Mystagogue.

### INITIATION SCRIPTS

The deeper mysteries within the Franciscan movement are very new, and the only Initiation Scripts available are those recorded in the last few years by those who have observed Francis and his earliest recruits working with new candidates. The standard Initiation Scripts take the candidate through several of the most significant formative experiences in the life of Francis himself. All require that the Mystagogue knows the Virtue to be gained.

Note that two Scripts require the Initiate to live for a season in a particular place — Francis' cave near Assisi. If the player character is based somewhere close by, so that there is no significant journey to make to reach the place, then she is highly likely to find that Francis' cave is already occupied or being reserved for someone who is expected (but may never arrive), and so be obliged to wait — perhaps living with

the nearest community of friars or nuns, and serving them and the poor and sick of the locality.

### INITIATION: MEDITATION

The Initiate spends a season in the cave where Francis himself lived, high on the side of the valley close to Assisi. During the first week, the Mystagogue visits frequently to instruct him and act as a spiritual guide. The pair engage in discussions of the scriptures, emphasizing the effect they have on the feelings of the Initiate and the implications of the word of God on the Franciscan's life of service and preaching. Matters of academic theology are hardly ever dwelt upon.

For the rest of the season, the Initiate's time is spent in solitary prayer and meditation on the matters discussed with the Mystagogue. Sufficient food and water is brought every day by either one of the friars from the original Franciscan settlement close to the little chapel of Saint Mary of the Angels, which is situated in Francis' valley, by another potential candidate waiting for the cave to be available, or by a close friend of the Initiate; this person should not disturb the Initiate.

The situations that the Initiate reflects upon may be acted out with the player character by members of the troupe. Such stories should test the commitment of the Initiate to a lifetime of selfless service lived in total poverty and simplicity, and be complex enough to represent a Quest. See *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 59 on the use of Psychodrama.

At the end of the season, the successful Initiate obtains the Major Supernatural Virtue Meditation, with the associated Ability 1, plus the Major Flaw: Driven that makes him strive always to live in apostolic poverty and simplicity.

[Initiation Total 21, Script Bonus 15: Major Ordeal (9) + Quest (3) + Sympathy bonus: Path of the Founder (3). The Script requires a Presence + Franciscan Lore total of 6.]

Note: The location and experience of prayer and meditation closely match a pe-

riod in the life of Francis, so the Sympathy bonus is 3.

### INITIATION: UNDERSTANDING

After finding a suitable Mystagogue and spending at least a few days with him in prayer and spiritual guidance, the Initiate must undertake a Quest, alone or with others, to obtain a suitable crucifix. This must be of Byzantine style and at least 200 years old. It must be obtained without committing any sin. Since the Initiate must own nothing, she cannot exchange something she owns or pay money for it, and must find a way of acquiring it that allows her to use it in any way she wishes, without it being her own property.

Having obtained it, she must travel to the chapel of Saint Damien and arrange with the nuns there, through the Mystagogue, to have the chapel of Saint Damien to herself for several days at least. There she must watch and pray on her knees before the crucifix, and endure at least one intense and confusing vision. Members of the troupe may be invited to contribute to this, which counts as a minor Ordeal.

If the Initiate has confessed all her sins and done penance for them, and has fulfilled the demands of the Quest, she is rewarded by a mystical vision during which the crucifix is consumed in a blaze of light radiating from the figure on the cross. The most blessed may also hear a voice, as Francis did. This vision happens in one to ten days.

If successful, the Initiate gains the Major Supernatural Virtue of Understanding, and its associated Ability 1, along with the Minor Flaw Visions. A person who attempts this ceremony while unworthy fails to gain the Virtue and instead is likely to attract the attention of an angel intent on improving her or a demon determined to win her soul for hell; she gains the Flaw Plagued by Supernatural Entity.

[Initiation Total 12 (21 - 9 for previous Major Ordeal), Script Bonus 7: Minor Ordeal (3) + Quest (3) + Sympathy bonus: Path of the Founder (1). The Script requires a Presence + Franciscan Lore total of 5.]



Note: The location matches that where Francis had his vision, but he did not have to go on a Quest and there is no guarantee that the vision the Initiate receives will be the same so the Sympathy bonus is 1. Since the Franciscan character may not own the item, loss of the crucifix does not count as a Sacrifice; it is simply the object obtained in the Quest.

### INITIATION: INTERVENTION

The Initiate lives with the Mystagogue from the autumn equinox until mid-winter, during which time the pair discuss and meditate upon the miracles Jesus worked during his life on earth, as recorded in the gospels. At the end of the season, just after the winter solstice, the Initiate travels to the mountainous country around Assisi. In imitation of Francis, during the coldest days of winter the Initiate journeys alone, on foot and in rags, through the snows to a suitable monastery or nunnery where he or she must work as a scullion until the spring equinox. At the end of this period, clad again as a friar or nun, the Initiate must travel to Rome. There the Initiate must obtain a papal blessing while remaining at all times too humble to actually request one.

If successful, the Initiate gains the Major Supernatural Virtue of Intervention, and its associated Ability at a score of 1.

[Initiation Total 15 (21 - 6 for previous Major Ordeal; Script Bonus 9: Time and place (1) + Initiate's time (1) + Mystagogue's time (3) + Quest (3) + Sympathy bonus: Path of the Founder (1). The Script requires a Presence + Franciscan Lore total of 6.]

Note: Unlike Francis, the Initiate is not set upon by robbers, beaten, and stripped naked before crawling through the snow, so the Sympathy bonus is only 1.

### INITIATION: PURITY

For this Initiation, the character must return to the small cave in the valley close to Assisi, where Francis spent his time meditating, fasting, and praying in the

early days of his vocation. The Initiate must live there wearing only coarse rags fit for a beggar, and go without all but the smallest quantity of simple food and water for a season. This must be considerably less than the friars nearby have to live on, and barely enough to keep the character alive. One small meal each day of bread with gruel or porridge is allowed, except on Friday when only water may be taken, and on Sunday when a little of some other foodstuff is permitted. If the local friars are wanting, the character gets only water. This counts as an Ordeal that damages the character's constitution permanently.

Members of the troupe may act out the temptations that the Initiate is subjected to with the player character. Such stories should test the commitment of the Initiate to self-discipline, and be complex enough to represent a Quest.

If successful, the Initiate gains the Major Supernatural Virtue Purity, and its associated Ability 1, along with the Minor Flaw Fragile Constitution.

[Initiation Total 18 (21 - 3 for previous Major Ordeal), Script Bonus 9: Quest (3) + Minor Ordeal (3) + Sympathy bonus: Path of the Founder (3). The script requires a Presence + Franciscan Lore total of 9.]

Note: The location and experience of fasting closely match a period in the life of Francis, so the Sympathy bonus is 3.

### SCRIPT VARIATIONS

Francis is guided by angelic advice to suit the Initiation Script to the spiritual needs of each individual candidate. Thus some of the original followers have two or more of these Virtues through Initiation by Francis himself as Mystagogue, but may have different Flaws. There are one or two who have alternate Powers and Methods, too. Once Francis has died, this advice will no longer be available, and it is never available to other Mystagogues unless a suitable story is played out to acquire such an advisor. Other Mystagogues may unknowingly use an unsuitable Script (one that varies from the standards set out here but in a way that does not suit the Initiate). This bends the rules set out

in *The Mysteries: Revised Edition* in order to prevent all Franciscan Initiates having the same Flaws as each other, and to explain how it is that there are numerous Initiates among the earliest Franciscans but far fewer later on.

## The Order of Hermes & the Franciscans

There are no generally known or documented interactions between members of the Order of Hermes and the Friars Minor as yet. There are, however, stories told here and there, and probably some private correspondence that may come to light. It is said by some that the Franciscans' rejection of many of the ways of thinking that are currently so widespread in the Church is a strong indication that they may well be far more sympathetic towards magi and those who serve them.

## Franciscans in the Future

If things progress in your saga as in history, the followers of Francis take his new way of religious life to Germany in 1221, England in 1224, and Hungary in 1228. If things take their historical course, Francis works on new rules for his followers and produces, in 1221, a new rule for the friars (approved by Pope Honorius in 1223 as the *Regula Bullata*), and a rule for laymen, called Tertiaries, who follow the lifestyle except that they do not take clerical vows and remain living with their families.

If your saga follows history, Francis' health continues to deteriorate. He retires from the road to live more like a hermit, although with a few close companions. His piety is marked by the gift of stigmata from God in 1224, and Francis dies in 1226.

Something in your saga might change any of this. How differently will things turn out if an Hermetic magus cures Francis of the lingering marsh fever, for example?

### LEADERS

Leadership remains a difficult issue in 1220 and beyond. Player characters may play a part in the appointment of the Franciscan minister-general — the title given to the person who takes over the leadership after Francis' death. They might take a role directly through a friar character, or indirectly. House Jerbiton is most likely to take an active interest. How does the movement develop with a follower of Jerbiton at the head, or someone controlled by House Jerbiton?

### SCHISM

While Francis was away, one of his followers, John of Capella, was inspired with enthusiasm for the care of lepers and,

having gathered a large group of afflicted men and women, began to develop a new religious order for them. How will the Franciscan movement and the Church at large deal with this, bearing in mind that the papacy has spoken against the founding of yet more religious orders?

### APPROVAL

While displaying all the usual attributes of a religious order, the Franciscans do not, in 1220, have official papal approval. If your saga follows history, this happens in 1223, but something in your stories may alter the date, or stop it happening at all. Either way, there must be consequences.

### MARTYRDOM

The group of Franciscan brothers in Morocco preaches despite repeated periods of imprisonment and constant surveillance. Their activities stir up dissent

between the Christians and Saracens in Morocco. According to historical reports, they're martyred on January 16th, 1220. It is possible that something in your saga may prevent this, of course.

### ACADEMIC THEOLOGY

While Francis avoids academic theology, the currents run in that direction, propelled by the enthusiastic, erudite teaching of the well-educated Dominican friars and a number of influential educated Franciscans. As the academic theologians take over the movement, this may stir up conflict either with the papacy that expressly forbade Francis from preaching theology, with the Dominicans who consider that turf allocated to them by the pope, or within the Franciscan order with those of the Little Brothers who adhere to their founder's original ideals. Any side in such a dispute might call on the player characters for help.

### HERESY

Academic theologians are apt to question and analyze, which can lead towards accusations of heresy. A leading Franciscan with close links to academically inclined members of the Order of Hermes may well develop some unconventional interpretations. If a Franciscan has made enemies, he might be accused of heresy unjustly. Can characters save a friend from condemnation?

### POVERTY

Right from its earliest days, it has been hard for the friars to retain absolute poverty. Already they have a few substantial buildings to use, even if they do not own them all. Would a covenant agree to nominate one of these buildings as covenant property so that friars might use it but not own it?

Would a covenant or player character agree to hold funds on behalf of a friar such that they could be used later for purchase of necessities? What if a friar wanted money retained for use later on things that were not essential but just useful? There could

## Story Seeds

### THE UNWELCOME FRIAR

A pious maga is rumored to have made successful efforts to entice a friar to her covenant, in the hope that he would pray with her and preach. Her sodales have not yet taken any action against the friar, although he inspires many of the covenfolk and some hang on his every word, to the detriment of their duties. The increasing religious fervor may soon cause problems. The maga herself is disappointed that the friar is not ordained, so cannot celebrate Mass or hear confessions, and would like to replace him with one who is. If her ambition becomes known, the covenfolk will fight to keep the man they have come to love and depend on. The other magi will fear the inevitable rise of a Dominion aura at the covenant should a priest settle there, and the attention a priest would draw to them from the local bishop.

### TALES TEACHERS TELL

One story, circulating in the Normandy tribunal, tells of a friar who lived with a spring covenant for several years. He worked as a teacher of Artes Liberales and Norman French, helping the disparate group of grogs accompanying the magi, who had come from different places, to find a common language. He used stories and parables from the Bible for all his tuition, and so brought religious education to his pupils at the same time. It is not clear whether he ever knew anything of the real work of the scholars, who never attended the lessons. One day he left without any explanation, and it may be that this was when he found out about them, or that they found out about his personal agenda and feared an upsurge in religious fervor that might threaten the covenant. If the former is true, he may well pass on what he learned about the magi to other friars.





be trouble with the leading Franciscans in such a case, or perhaps it is the leaders who want to circumvent the poverty rule and it is the ordinary followers, clergy, or other supporters who create trouble when they find out what has been going on.

The many temptations of the world that they have rejected are an ever-present danger for followers of Francis. Probably the most common is the temptation to consider something as belonging to oneself. Sometimes the temptation is more subtly disguised, such as that which threatens to overtake Brother Elias (see his stats for details). A Franciscan player character may be able to save Elias from making this error. Demons are ever alert to the opportunities such temptations offer them. If the forces of the Infernal can keep a plan together for long enough, they should find it easy to corrupt or destroy the nascent movement.

### MINISTRATION

Francis repeatedly declined certain concessions offered for his followers, but

after his death, these may be accepted. One is a relaxation of the instruction that a friar must always obtain the permission of the parish priest before preaching. If the papacy removes the right of priests or bishops to stop friars from preaching, there is bound to be friction and the player characters may become involved, especially any player characters who are members of the clergy. Similarly, the original Little Brothers were rarely ordained, but several pressures are growing to encourage more among them to be priests, which may bring them into conflict with the traditional clergy when they are active in their ministry.

### PERSECUTION

Something may happen to change the Church's view of the Franciscans. Perhaps a change of pope to one with very conservative views who sees them all as a threat, or even as heretical. Maybe some supernatural accident has very unfortunate consequences and the movement is seen as too dangerous, in which case, the

fall from favor might affect only one part of Mythic Europe. Under such circumstances, some of the Franciscan friars and nuns who have supernatural Virtues might go into hiding and their Holy Tradition develop as a secret within the Church. The story of how they find suitable teachers and develop the new secret tradition could form a saga theme.

## Sample Characters

There is a character sheet for a Franciscan teacher character as a Companion in *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 96. That character is designed as someone who will enthusiastically set about the conversion of any characters in a covenant who are not pious Christians.

## Story Seed: Forbidden Property

A Franciscan friar found a brooch in a thicket near a road in a valley through a mountainous area. He picked it up and took it with him, intending to dispose of it suitably when he reached the next town. He was undecided on whether to hand it to the local priest for safe-keeping until the owner came to claim it, to hand it to the local nobleman as the person most suitable to have such a thing, or to sell it and distribute the proceeds to the poor. As he continued on his journey, he found that the road seemed much easier than it had been. By the time he arrived at the next town, he had worked out that the brooch was making travel easier for him and felt he could not give it up.

He made the excuse to himself that he had not yet decided which course of action was right, and that he would pray about it until the right choice became clear. In his conscience, he knows that he wants the brooch for himself. His belief that he must have no possessions is at war with his belief that it will help him travel to spread the good news of God's forgiving love.

Of course, what he has is a Hermetic enchanted item, lost by a Redcap. When someone comes looking for it, they find the friar before long. If he has shown it to anyone who understands these things before the Redcaps catch up with him, it may be harder to retrieve.

## Grog Templates

The following characters are suitable as Franciscan additions to a saga.

### FRANCISCAN NUN

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +3, Pre 0, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 20 (20)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Religious; Improved Characteristics, Lesser Purifying Touch (Quotidian Fever); Weakness (Babies), Continnence, Lame

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init: -1, Atk n/a, Def -3, Dam n/a  
*Soak:* 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Abilities:** Area Lore: Central Italy 3 (hospitals and leper colonies), Awareness 3 (babies), Charm 2 (children), Chirurgy 2 (sores), Church Lore 1 (5) (Franciscans), Concentration 3 (prayer), Etiquette 2 (urban poor), Folk Ken 4 (poor townswomen), Organization Lore: Franciscans 2 (Poor Sisters), Profession: Herbwife 2 (Sleep), Profession: Washerwoman 2 (woolen cloth); Housewife 2 (cooking), Italian 5 (consolation), Stealth 2 (urban)

### FRANCISCAN FRIAR

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik -1

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 18 (18)

**Decrepitude:** 0

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Mendicant Friar; Well-Traveled, Animal Ken; Ability Block (Martial), Pious, Temperate

**Personality Traits:** Forgiving +1, Gregarious +2, Practical +1

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init: -1, Atk n/a, Def -1, Dam n/a

*Fist:* Init: -1, Atk +0, Def -1, Dam +0

*Kick:* Init: -2, Atk +0, Def -2, Dam +3

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (wild mammals), Animal Ken 3 (wild mammals), Area Lore: Italy 3 (towns), Area Lore: Provence 3 (towns), Artes Liberales 2 (reading aloud), Awareness 2 (poor people), Charm 2 (children), Chirurgy 1 (broken bones), Church Lore 2 (monasticism), Concentration 1 (preaching), Folk Ken 2 (the poor), Italian 5 (preaching), Latin 4 (preaching), Franciscans Lore 2, Provençal 3 (preaching), Teaching 1 (children), Theology 2 (heaven)



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