

The Church of All Saints



Though Aden has no gods, or at least none that history remembers if they did once receive the worship of its people, religion is still a present force within the modern societies that make up the Known Lands. Of the faiths that dominate the continent in the years since the Darkfall, one of the oldest is the Church of All Saints, its stronghold firmly entrenched within the eastern portion of the Known Lands but which spreads its tenets far and wide.

The Church of All Saints is inextricably tied to the nation of Carraway, the nation founded by its adherents and the single largest bastion of its strength. There are those within the nation that do not subscribe to the faith, but this is usually limited to outsiders making their home within the nation, and admittedly to a very small number of natives who have, for whatever reason, eschewed the faith in favor of another or in favor of none.

STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

The Church of All Saints follows a strict hierarchy that has survived virtually unchained since the faith's creation centuries ago. This allows for remarkably consistent authority across the entire nation of Carraway, which is the seat of the church's power. Those who subscribe to the faith beyond Carraway's borders have little opportunity to interact with any church figure other than perhaps the occasional missionary or an arbiter traveling the Known Lands in the name of justice.

Since its creation, the Church of All Saints has been overseen by a single figure, the Theocrat. The Theocrat, sometimes mistakenly referred to as the High Theocrat due to confusion with the more acces-

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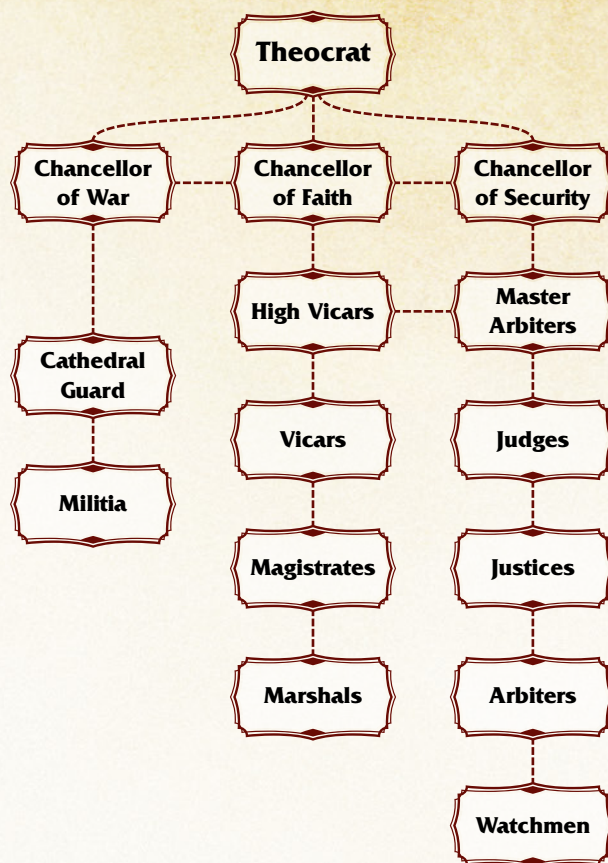
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sible rank of High Vicar, is the ultimate authority on all matters of the Church. This is not a responsibility that those who ascend to the position take lightly, and there has been remarkably little abuse of power by the Theocrats who have ruled since the Church came into existence. When a Theocrat dies or chooses to abdicate their position in order to spend their twilight years in quiet contemplation of the Pax Sanctus, a convocation is held that brings together the three Chancellors, three High Vicars, and three Master Arbiters to determine who shall be the next Theocrat. A simple majority of five is necessary to approve the next Theocrat, although historically in many cases the convocation has chosen to deliberate as long as necessary to reach a unanimous decision. The Theocrat oversees major religious ceremonies at the Cathedral of All Saints in the capital city of St. Chandrey, and this is the only opportunity that most of the common adherents of the faith ever have to see the Theocrat; church business frequently prevents them from excessive contact with the common folk. Some, like the current Theocrat Lara Telos, insist upon more contact with the citizens of Carraway, and often goes upon unscheduled walks on the streets of St. Chandrey, albeit under heavy guard.

Beneath the Theocrat are the three Chancellors, the Chancellor of Faith, Chancellor of War, and Chancellor of Security. It would be impossible to describe all the roles that these powerful individuals serve within the Church and within Carraway, but the most important are tied directly to their office. The Chancellor of Faith oversees the operation of the common clergy who operate the many temples and shrines throughout the land, both within Carraway and beyond. The Chancellor of Security oversees the master arbiters and their various subordinates, ensuring that law and order is maintained at all costs throughout Carraway. And the Chancellor of War oversees the militia, by far the largest group directly monitored by the Church. This includes not only the militia itself, but a division of knights who serve as its officers (unlike other members of the knighthood such as arbiters and judges, who also have the authority to command militia divisions but who do not have permanent assignments in that regard), and those knights specifically tasked with the defense of the Cathedral, the Theocrat herself, and other high-ranking members of the Church. These three Chancellors are incredibly powerful and influential, and as a means of tempering that power, the Pax Sanctus prohibits anyone who holds the office of Chancellor from ever ascending to the position of Theocrat. Those who accept a position as Chancellor must forego any desire for greater power than that which they are being offered.

While the Theocrat and her Chancellors administer to the needs of St. Chandrey specifically as well as the church, other cities that are large enough to warrant a major authority figure do exist in the form of the cities of Karstan, St. Lucca, and Sentinel. Each of these settlements is overseen by a High Vicar, who coordinate all the various church assets within the city as well as the surrounding areas, often including smaller settlements that are not far from the city. The High Vicars directly oversee any number of Vicars, clergymen who maintain individual cathedrals, temples, and shrines. Vicars may be responsible for districts within one of the cities a High Vicar oversees, or a smaller settlement somewhere beyond its borders. However, not all settlements warrant a significant temple, and Vicars in turn can appoint Magistrates to aid



them in their ministrations, if their congregation is a large one, or to supervise these smaller settlements themselves, reporting to the Vicar, who then reports to the High Vicar. Magistrates are the lowest ranking members of the clergy, although they do have the ability to appoint Marshalls as deputies to assist them; they are not considered ranking members of the clergy, however.

Outside of the Chancellors and High Vicars, the most powerful individuals within the Church are those who lead its militant arm, known as knights or clerics depending upon their expertise in martial or arcane matters. There are three Master Arbiters who oversee matters of law and order as well as serve as a police force that can adjudicate any disciplinary matters within the vast militia that protects Carraway. Beneath these three Master Arbiters are an increasing number of subordinates, beginning with the most powerful, Judges, and proceeding downward to include the ranks of Justices, Arbiters, and Watchmen. Watchmen are essentially militia members chosen by Arbiters to assist in the adjudication of law rather than concerning themselves with the military defense of the nation.

Player Characters

The opportunities for a player character to play a role within the Church of All Saint's power structure are numerous, depending upon what role the Church is intended to play within the overall campaign. If the campaign is taking place outside of Carraway, the most sensible option is for the character or characters in question to serve as arbiters or watchmen, agents of the Church's law enforcement branch. Although any class could serve in this capacity, the most appropriate choices would include cleric, paladin, inquisitor, and of course the aptly named arbiter class.

If a campaign is taking place largely within Carraway, there are more options. Characters could also play the role of marshals or magistrates in service to a Vicar. If the GM was so inclined and if the campaign was centered around an individual city district or small settlement, one of the players could even play the Vicar in question. Literally any class would be suitable for the former, and while a Vicar could also be played by any class, a spellcasting class would be best, with cleric as the ideal option.

COMMON TENETS

Although it is not an oppressive faith, the Church of All Saints does have a rather extensive dogma that can, if interpreted strictly, be extremely limiting with the behavior of its members. The Pax Sanctus is an extensive tome, including several volumes that are added to with the retirement of each surviving Theocrat, whose writings on the Pax are added into its length. The core book itself, however, is a single tome that is filled more with a reverence for the spirits that have passed on and compassion for one's fellow man than anything else. There is some degree of division within the church based upon whether an individual member subscribes to the original text or the expanded text, and while this has not been much of an issue since the Darkfall, in centuries past there have been clashes between the two factions from time to time.

There are a great many who subscribe to the belief that the original writings of the Pax Sanctus, those put down by the first Theocrat, Chandrey, are the core beliefs which all must follow in order to truly find the path to virtue. These individuals have, over the centuries, become known as Virtuists. Virtuists revere the entire pantheon of Saints, and while many may choose one Saint in particular to whom they pray more often than others, they are very much polytheistic in their beliefs. Virtuists also subscribe to the belief that compassion for one's fellow man is the central tenet of the Church, something for which they can cite ample evidence from the tone and words of Chandrey's original manuscripts. Although no formal census has ever been taken, it is estimated that in the modern era, roughly two fifths of Carraway's population are devout Virtuists.

The other sect within the Church are a much more stringent, stark sort. Most are merely dour, but there are those within the sect who border on zealotry. These individuals take the Pax Sanctus in its voluminous, expanded form as sacred. In accordance with the fifth Theocrat's teachings, they believe that each individual must choose a single Saint and revere them above all others, almost to the exclusion of the others within the pantheon (though not quite that far, because doing so would constitute a minor act of sacrilege according to the writings of the eighth Theocrat). This sect is referred to as the Orthodox branch of the Church, and comprises roughly three fifths of Carraway's population. The average member of this sect is a dour person, stern in appearance and in dealings with others, and interprets the teachings of the Pax Sanctus extremely literally. Literacy is extremely high among this division of the Church because study of the sacred texts is considered a necessity, and the majority of Orthodox members within its ranks has ensured that the Church maintains schools for young parishioners in every major city within Carraway.

Essentially, there is very little middle ground within the ranks of the Church of All Saints. The overwhelming majority of all members fall firmly into the ranks of one of the two sects, and as such members tend to adhere to the primary emphases those sects place on behavior as a means of achieving the end goals of the religion's dogma, which is to ascend and take a place among the honored ancestor spirits called Saints. Virtuists do this by living good lives and being compassionate to their fellow man, taking whatever opportunities present themselves in order to do good in the world, particularly in the wake of the Darkfall, and revering a large number of Saints as exemplifying the various good qualities that all people should possess. The Orthodox sect, on the other hand, believes that adherence to the strictures put into place by various Theocrats over the centuries is absolutely necessary in order to prepare the soul for its transition into the next world, and that this preparation takes place over an entire lifetime. That are not an uncompassionate sect, but that is not their primary motivation. Since the Darkfall has plagued Aden, the Orthodox sect has become somewhat more stern, and there is a popular line of thought that the world's failure to live in accordance with the strictures that they value so highly is at least partially responsible for the dire circumstances in which the world now finds itself.

HOLIDAYS

The Church, and therefore Carraway as a whole, recognizes the existing inter-season holidays that are described in the pages of *Thunderscape: the World of Aden*. There are numerous other holidays that are sacred to members of this faith in particular, however. The first day of each of Aden's ten months is a day of veneration for all the Saints who were born during that month. In the initial texts of the Pax Sanctus it mentions a day of reverence for each Saint, but so many have been canonized over the centuries that doing so would result in more days of celebration than there would be normal days of the year, thus the eighth Theocrat, one of the most prolific writers of all Theocrats, chose to interpret these passages as intending for all Saints to be revered on a specific day, and chose the first day of each month as a suitable means to accomplish that. This has satisfied even the most stringent of the Orthodox sect, and both Virtuists and Orthodox alike make these days particularly prominent with numerous services held throughout the day, both before and after the work day and well into the evening.

In the fall, the last two days of the month of the Drake are a two-day holiday observed throughout Carraway and by Church followers throughout the Known Lands. This holiday is called Mournmas, and is both a somber and festive occasion when worshippers mourn the memory of all those Saints who perished too soon, often in the course of the actions that would earn them Sainthood, and give simple gifts to their loved ones. These gifts are intended to serve as a reminder of the bonds that unite worshipers in the Church as well as a potential reminder of the need for every member to be vigilant in the face of temptation to stray from the path. A member considered to have gluttonous tendencies, for example, might be given a high-quality leather belt by his loved ones to encourage him to tighten it and resist the urge to exercise such hedonistic behavior in the future.

In the springtime, the Church recognizes the fifteenth day of the month of the Wolf as the Day of Service. This very popular holiday serves double duty to most worshippers, as it is both an opportunity to engage in public service projects, a practice followed almost without exception with the various schools operating within Carraway, and to recognize the contributions of those who serve the Church and its members directly. Although this extends all the way down to members of the militia as well as simple Marshals and Watchmen, it is most often focused on Arbiters and other members of the knighthood, who tend to be idealized by younger members of the Church, particularly children. Criminals tend to keep an even lower profile than usual on these days because a common belief, however inaccurate, is that any citizen who manages to discover and expose criminal mischief on the Day of Service is destined to stand among the ranks of the Arbiters, which is something many actively desire.

MAJOR FIGURES

There are many important figures that play an essential role in the Church of All Saints, including but not limited to the Theocrat, Chancellors, High Vicars, and Master Arbiters. Although most members of the Church will go their entire lives without a close encounter with these individuals, adventurers are hardly typical, and may have occasion to encounter them in the course of their hectic and highly improbable careers.

Lara Telos has been the Theocrat since shortly after the Darkfall, when the Cathedral of All Saints was besieged by nocturnals and the previous Theocrat abdicated after being mortally wounded by an insidious creature killed in the process. Lara was one of the clergy present during the siege and was tireless in her efforts of healing the wounded defenders and keeping morale up until the siege was finally broken.

When the conclave of Church leaders was convened to determine the next Theocrat was held, Lara's name was put forward by Estable Rewn, the High Vicar of Karstan and a woman that many had, until that point, assumed would become the next Theocrat. Rewn spoke passionately and at length about Telos's virtues and, in the end, Telos was the first unanimously elected Theocrat in three generations. Telos is a feline-ferran, and the first ferran to hold the position of Theocrat. Her leadership has brought many of her race, normally agnostics, into the Church's ranks, and her love of the common people has been a tremendous asset to the Church since the Darkfall. She and Estable have become close friends, and the newest Theocrat has been inspired by Estable's humility and scholarly pursuits, tempering her own passions and formerly adventurous lifestyle to become a truly balanced and benevolent leader.

With regard to the High Vicars, Estable Rewn is unquestionably first among equals and holds both the respect and loyalty of her two fellow leaders. Many outside observers believe that her friendship with the Theocrat grants her increased influence within the Church, perhaps on par with the Chancellors, but Rewn rarely capitalizes upon this if so. The people of Karstan adore her and many have remained within the city only after having been inspired by her example. For her part, Rewn's overwhelming desire is to find a way to break the curse of the Swamp Lord that continues to curse her beloved city a decade after his failed siege. Rewn does have a strained relationship with the administrators of the Perth Trading House, a mercantile combine that operates extensively within the city. She regards them as avarice-motivated outsiders, but recognizes that they have aided her people tremendously even if doing so has lined their pockets.

The High Vicar of Sentinel is as different from Estable Rewn as possible. Although he is not an unpleasant or dour being, the goreaux Verabus rose to the rank of High Vicar through the knighthood rather than the clergy, and is a former judge who became High Vicar rather than Master Arbiter, as much to his surprise as anyone else's. However, since Sentinel stands guard over Carraway and protects the rest of the nation from the aggressive raiders from the neighboring High Steppes, Verabus's militant mindset and keen eye for deduction and detail made him an ideal choice for the position when the Chancellors needed to fill it. Verabus spent some time in his youth as an adventurer in the lands beyond Carraway and is positively predisposed toward fellow adventurers as a result, but he is not gullible or naïve about the motivations such groups can have. Nevertheless, Sentinel remains a very welcoming city for adventurers as long as they're willing to help repel any aggressive overtures from High Steppes raiders.

Rak Lucca, the High Vicar of St. Lucca, is a descendant from the city's namesake and a very frustrated jurak. The city he administrates is essential to the ongoing prosperity of Carraway due to the tracts of arable land surrounding it, but the difficulty in protecting these fields and those who work them is taxing to say the least. The nocturnals target the region with great gusto, as if they can sense that their destruction would weaken the entire nation, something Lucca suspects they do, somehow, understand very well. The constant loss of men defending the fields is a source of great aggravation to Lucca, who is desperate to find a better solution that will save the lives of those under his supervision. His friend Verabus has repeatedly encouraged him to patronize adven-

turers to aid in the fields' defense, but Lucca is more of a traditionalist than his old friend, and prefers to depend upon the ranks of the Church's militant arm instead.

Perhaps the greatest heroes of Carraway are the Master Arbiters, the champions of justice who see crimes punished and wrongs righted, at least in theory. Much of this idealized view of the position is a direct result of Harkus Wren, an older human man who is the longest-serving Master Arbiter in several generations. Wren is an impressive figure, tall, broad, and exceptionally fit, and rarely seen outside of his immaculately maintained full plate armor. His face is weathered and criss-crossed by scars obtained in the execution of his duties. His mastery of numerous weapons is well-known, but his skill with the twinshot crossbow is a thing of legend, and he is feared by criminals throughout Carraway and well beyond its borders. Although his jagged features are quite severe, he has a love of children and they always manage to bring a smile to his face. Criminals whose actions cause harm or suffering to children are his single most hated enemy, and he has single handedly eradicated numerous organizations exploiting the young for profit during his decades of service to the Church.

Major Figures & Character Classes

Individual GMs are always strongly encouraged to take the ideas presented in Thunderscape products and adapt them for their own use. Toward that end, we suggest that if any of these major Church figures appeal to you for use in your campaign, use them in any way you see fit. However, for those who prefer at least a modicum of guidance in the use of official NPCs, we would suggest the following character classes for these figures:

- ♦ **THEOCRAT LARA TELOS** – Paladin
- ♦ **HIGH VICAR ESTABLE REWN** – Cleric
- ♦ **HIGH VICAR VERABUS** – Inquisitor
- ♦ **HIGH VICAR RAK LUCCA** – Fighter/Cleric
- ♦ **MASTER ARBITER HARKEN WREN** – Arbiter (of course!)

But What About...

Obviously, there are some very significant omissions in the description of major Church officials in this document. This is a deliberate choice on our part, and leaves some blank canvas, so to speak, for individual GMs to help design their campaigns. The three Chancellors are not named so that you can make use of them as necessary in your games, whether in the manner of a benevolent Pope-like figure or a villainous Cardinal Richelieu stand-in to serve as a nemesis for an intrepid party of adventurers. Likewise, not all the Master Arbiters have been described, as some of you may have ideas concerning an authoritarian law enforcement official of one sort or another, hidebound or corrupt being only two options, for a home game.

Don't be afraid to make your mark on the World of Aden!



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