

The Church of Cove



Handbook

Second Edition
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Table of Contents

- 1 What is the Church?
 - 1.1. History
 - 1.2. Lore
 - 1.3. Religion
- 2 What does the Church believe?
 - 2.1. Overview
 - 2.2. Prologue
 - 2.3. The Story of Creation
 - 2.4. Mariah, Avatar & Mondain
 - 2.5 The Ankh & The Red Cross (In Hoc Signe Vinces)
- 3 Who is the Church?
 - 3.1. The Magistrates
 - 3.2. The Clergy
 - 3.2.1. Second-Class Citizens & Redemption
 - 3.2.2. The Light
 - 3.2.3. Mass
 - 3.2.4. Baptism & Conversion
 - 3.2.5. Crusades (Cleric Specific)
 - 3.2.6. Uniform & Skills
 - 3.2.7. Traits
 - 3.3. The Order of the Knights Templar
 - 3.3.1. Battle-Priests
 - 3.3.2. Hierarchy
 - 3.3.3. Uniform & Skills
 - 3.3.4. Traits
 - 3.4. The Wytch Hunters
 - 3.4.1 Uniform & Skills
 - 3.4.2 Traits
 - 3.4.3 Becoming a Wytch Hunter
- 4 Pilgrimage
 - 4.1. Inventory
 - 4.2. Undertaking a Pilgrimage
- 5 The Virtues
- 6 Joining The Church
 - 6.1. Application Process
 - 6.2. The Templi Squire & Disciple
 - 6.3. Creating a Character
 - 6.4. Character Conduct
 - 6.5. Miscellaneous Characters
- 7 Final Words
- 8 Disclaimers

1 What is the Church?

The Church is the collective term used when referring to the religious element of The Baronship of Cove (or [BoC]) role-playing guild. The term is used in two ways, as a noun, and an abstract noun:

- ❖ *Noun*: Referring to the building in which Mass and other religious events are held.
- ❖ *Abstract Noun*: Referring to all personnel who form the spiritual collectiveness of the Church, both clergy and congregation.

Combining real-life history and in-game lore the Church was created to provide [BoC] and other role-playing guilds with a concept that is fun, challenging, and controversial to interact with.

1.1 History

The history that forms the basis of the hierarchy, uniform, and play-style of the Church is mostly drawn from The Order of the Knights Templar, a handful of knights who initially pledged to protect Christian pilgrims on their journey from the shores of Palestine to the holy lands from bandits and Muslims. They soon gained acknowledgement and approval from the Pope, rapidly becoming one of the worlds largest holy military Orders alongside The Order of the Knights Hospitaller.

1.2 Lore

The lore that surrounds the Church is largely taken from the previous games of the Ultima™ series, concerning Avatar, the saviour of Britannia, Guardian, the scourge of Britannia, the eight Virtues, and the four titans/archangels; Stratos (Wind), Hydros (Water), Lithos (Earth), Pyros (Fire).

1.3 Religion

From an out-of-character perspective, the Avatarian religion draws heavily on Judeo-Christian beliefs – with a singular deity (Higher Being), a saviour (Avatar), a corrupter (Guardian), and concepts of holy war and inquisition.

In the lore, Avatar sacrifices himself to save mankind from sin, defeating Guardian and ascending into the heavens; much in the same way that it is written Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice in order to save mankind by abolishing original sin. He was crucified at the hands of the Romans and his own people and is said to have ascended into heaven three days later.

Various stories, such as the story of creation, and the birth of Avatar are similar to their related counterparts in the Bible.

2 What does the Church believe?

2.1 Overview

The Church believes that the religion of the Avatar, known as the 'Avatari' is universal and absolute. They will not accept or tolerate the existence of any other religion, and fight heresy wherever it lies in order to unite all of Higher Being's children under the banner of the Avatari, the sign of the Ankh. Much like the medieval ages, the Church is ruthless in its application of what they believe to be the true religion, created out of recovered fragments of literature and text of generations passed. They enforce it upon the masses regardless of people's own beliefs, and meet opposition and heresy with threats of execution by hanging, beheading, and ritual cleansing by fire.

They believe that Higher Being is the one true god, and that Avatar is both His son, and Himself in flesh and blood. They believe that the seven true Virtues must be upheld in order for mankind to stand a chance at defeating Guardian, and his army of darkness. They truly believe in the philosophical sayings of 'with us or against us', and 'the end justifies the means', in that all non-believers must be sacrificed for the greater good. Finally, like all rational beings, they fear what they do not understand; magic. Referred to as wytchcraft, they believe it is yet another tool of Guardian that will seal the demise of Higher Being's creation, and seek to put all who use it to the sword.



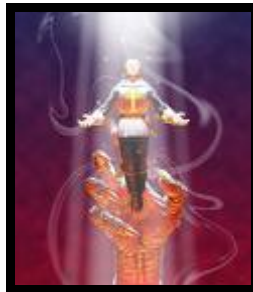
An orc is slain where it stands by the Templi

2.2 Prologue

Following Avatar's Ascension, the people of Britannia lived peacefully for a while, but as generations passed the teachings were forgotten, the Virtues neglected, providing Guardian with the perfect opportunity to return once more and enslave the population. With Avatar no longer around to protect them, the people ran helpless from the legions of Guardian spawn, and were slaughtered as they fled.

In a final attempt to rally the remnants of mankind, the Magistrates of Yew's Court of Justice hired warriors to stand united as one and beat back the waves of oppression and death. The fight was hard, but the forces of Good eventually stood victorious, and under charge of the Magistrates became known as The Order of the Knights Templar; tasked to protect the clergy, Virtues and teachings. With Guardian spawn on the forefront, and traitors,

betrayers, heretics, and wytches everywhere else, the Templi Order was truly surrounded, and as a result began to zealously enforce the teachings that had been forgotten, mercilessly executing all who opposed across all of Britannia from their various Chapter Houses and Preceptories throughout the lands. Surrounded on all sides, amidst the chaos and confusion, only one thing is for certain; no one is safe from the noose!



A portrait of Avatar's Ascension

2.3 The Story of Creation

Literature states that Higher Being, Lord and creator of all, created the universe with the help of the archangels, titans of each of the four elements. Stratos (Wind), Hydros (Water), Lithos (Earth), Pyros (Fire). He created the moons, Trammel and Felucca. He created the land and the trees. He created the birds and the animals. He created the sky and the sea, and finally He created the first man, Zog, in His own likeness from the dirt. From Zog's rib He created the first woman, Evah, joined them in marriage and told them to go forth and multiply. He gave them one simple command in order for them to show their love and devotion to Him; to worship only the seven true Virtues.

There was however, a fifth archangel; Guardian, the titan of Ether who saw all that Higher Being had created and became jealous. Turning his back on Higher Being, Guardian schemed in secrecy and created the first Elf, Awindar, in his own unholy image, and commanded him to go and tell Evah of the eighth Virtue, Compassion. Evah, prepared to face only good, believed Awindar and told Zog. They both began to worship the eighth Virtue and were unable to slay Awindar despite his inherent evil because of the compassion they felt for him. Thus, compassion is the bane of vigilance.

This angered Higher Being and He commanded Zog to cast the spell of Armageddon, so that Sosaria may start afresh, pure, and free of sin. Zog and Evah died both physically and spiritually, but Higher Being, in His wisdom, saved two of their many children so that they may grow and multiply. Unbeknown to Higher Being, Guardian also saved two of his own children, and thus the new world was no less corrupt than the old, as the sin inherited in Zog and Evah's children passed down through each generation, plagued also by the presence of the elves they were condemned at death to live an eternal life of suffering and damnation in the fiery chasm of hell.

2.4 Mariah, Avatar & Mondain

While the wages of sin is death, the gift of Higher Being is eternal life in Lord Avatar. Higher Being in His mercy provided the humans a saviour from Guardian, sin, death, and hell – Avatar. Immediately after Zog and Evah's fall into sin, Higher Being promised this saviour. Higher Being said the saviour would be their descendant. He told Guardian in their hearing, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy offspring and hers; he will crush thy head, and thou wilt strike his heel". The archangel of the west, Hydros, announced Avatar's coming birth to Mariah, "Thou wilt be with child and give birth to a son, and thou art to give him the name Avatar. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Holy Spectre will come upon thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee; so the holy one to be born will be called the Son of Higher Being". Guardian heard Hydros' words, and sent a personal incarnation to Sosaria to battle Avatar. His name was Mondain. The personal incarnation of Guardian reshaped many of Guardian's elves, and thus drows, orcs, trolls, ratmen and other creatures were born. On the final day, Mondain was slain by Avatar, his unholy diamond, the Gem of Immortality, scattered and Britannia as we know it today, was founded out of one of the diamond shards.

The saviour, Avatar, was born to redeem all humans from the guilt of their sins and to free them from the punishment of hell. Avatar was born under Higher Being's law to fulfil it perfectly for the humans as their substitute. This He did as He, throughout His life remained without sin. Higher Being credits His perfect righteousness to all that believe in Him.

Higher Being charged the many sins of the humans against the sinless Avatar, who gave His innocent life as the one perfect sacrifice to pay for their sins. On the third day Higher Being raised Avatar from the dead. His resurrection assured humans their sins were forgiven. They had been saved from hell and will rise to live forever in heaven.

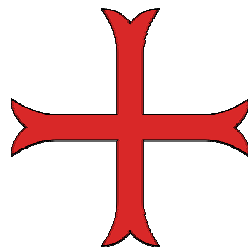


The Tapestry of Ages

2.5 The Ankh & The Red Cross (In Hoc Signe Vinces)

Amongst the various religious texts that can be found throughout Britannia, one tome known as 'In Hoc Signe Vinces', or translated, 'The Sign of the Cross' provides explanation as towards why the Templi Order goes to battle under a red cross, and not the Ankh itself.

Simply put, the Ankh is too sacred to be taken into battle itself, and to do so would be a sin of great vanity; comparing oneself to the purity of Avatar Himself. As a result, they march under the red cross; symbolising the blood on Avatar's sword when He slew Mondain.



Red Cross of the Templi Order

3 Who is the Church?

The Church as an entity is comprised of elements and Orders of devout followers of the Avatari. Together, they work to cleanse all heretics, and unite Higher Being's children under the Ankh.

3.1 The Magistrates

The Magistrates is the collective term used to refer to the Inquisitors and judges of Yew's Court of Justice, where most criminals and heathens are sentenced. Though their influence does not reach as far as Cove, except in the event of a trial, it would be an insult to not give mention to the most scrupulous religious group that has given birth to so much of what the Avatari has become. Traditionally wearing black robes and floppy hats, the magistrates sneak around in the shadows, and pry in on conversations whilst participants are unsuspecting, waiting for tongues to get loose. Fathers of the lore, these men are the eyes and ears of the Church, and are subject to no one but Higher Being; they are the brain of the Avatari, and the Templi they created, the fist.

3.2 The Clergy

The Clergy are the priestesses of the Church. They are the ones to hold masses and ceremonies in the Church, and also lead crusades to far away land and continents. A Disciple has been granted special powers known as "The Light" by Higher Being, which she uses to aid faithful servants of Avatar. She is not only a skilled enchanter, but can also be an excellent arms woman, healer, and craftswoman. A Disciple is the most holy person of the Church, as she is directly tuned to Higher Being, and as such is incapable of casting any spells of evil or offensive nature, other than calling down lightning upon the Church's enemies. Disciples who prove themselves as servants of Avatar may elevate to the position of Cleric.



Clergywoman

3.2.1 Second-Class Citizens & Redemption

Due to the mistakes made by Evah during the story of creation, her sins have been inherited by every female descendent since then, and as such women are believed to be inferior to men in the sense that they are untrustworthy, treacherous, and quite possibly bound by spirit to serve as one of Guardian's servants. As a direct result, women are considered second-class Citizens, and even members of the Templi Order will not look them in the eye, or refer to them as anything other than 'female', or 'woman'.

Disciples, however, have given up their lives in order to serve Higher Being until their dying day, and most certainly beyond the grave. This is believed to be the only way in which females may seek redemption.

3.2.2 The Light

Unlike wytchcraft, Disciples are believed to have been granted a special ability known as 'The Light' from Higher Being in exchange for their sacrifice. This bizarre form of spiritual magic is capable of augmenting and healing Higher Being's children, as well as striking down His foes with lightning. Disciples believed to be casting any other harmful spells; curses, venoms, flames, are branded as wytches, and swiftly executed.

3.2.3 Mass

Traditionally, every Sunday at 14:00 (GMT) the Church bells are tolled and all individuals in the area are 'encouraged' by the Templi Order to remove their weapons and headgear, and enter the Church where they should approach a pew and kneel, making the sign of the ankh before sitting down. The congregation should emote rising to their feet when the Clergy enter the Church, rather than physically moving and cluttering the central aisle.

It is usually the Disciples, who conduct Mass, but it is not uncommon for members of the Templi to do so from time to time; usually however, they position themselves within the Church, keeping an eye out for people whispering or trying to nap. They also collect the tithe when instructed, but most importantly protect the Clergy from harm.

A Mass is usually conducted in the format of an opening, a brief lecture, a related reading, reinforced application of the reading, tithe collection, communion, ending, with optional post-mass confession. The correct responsorial when appropriate is 'Aumen'; the rest should be self-explanatory.

3.2.4 Baptism & Conversion

From time to time, Disciples may identify towns or entire regions that have fallen to the hands of heresy, and declare that the Templi Order and army escort them to such places whilst they attempt to convert and baptise the heathens, welcoming them to Higher Being's Church. Those who do not come

of their own accord are dragged before the Disciples by force, and those who attempt to flee are run down and slaughtered.

Certain races of Guardian spawn are eligible for redemption through baptism; those who understand they are merely a tool of Guardian's plan and do not wish to be a part of it. Elves and Drows, most commonly can seek baptism and become welcomed within the Church as any other child, though still looked down upon as second-class citizens. Most races however cannot be converted; lizardmen, ratmen, orcs and undead etc. They are mindless and depraved, incapable of civility, and as such must be hunted down immediately on sight like the murderous beasts they are.



The Bujin'Kai of Nihon prepare to be baptised

3.2.5 Crusades (Cleric Specific)

When baptism fails within a region, or a region is incapable of conversion, a Cleric may call a crusade (Disciples are **not** permitted to do so), in which all of Higher Being's children, regardless of location, race, or gender are called upon to take up arms and defend the faith through holy battle. Crusades are not common place, and as a result are quite epic. Only a fraction of those who answer the call to arms return home alive, as most die on the battlefield and ascend into the heavens in acknowledgement of their selfless sacrifice. Crusades can last for lengthy real-life periods.

Crusades differ to normal scenarios in that all guilds faithful to Avatar are called upon by the Church to cease any fighting amongst themselves and band together to form an insurmountable military force against the heretics.

"Let those who once fought against brothers and relatives now rightfully fight against barbarians." – Pope Urban II

3.2.6 Uniform & Skills

Clergy wear the following uniform (unless otherwise stated, all equipment must be unmarked and uncoloured):

- ❖ Leather Tunic
- ❖ Leather Leggings
- ❖ Leather Arms
- ❖ Floppy Hat
- ❖ Plain Dress
- ❖ Fancy Shirt – Light Blue Hue
- ❖ Sandals
- ❖ Quarter Staff



Clergy Inventory

Common skills of a clergywoman are (required skills are in bold):

- ❖ **Magery**
- ❖ **Evaluating Intelligence**
- ❖ **Meditation**
- ❖ Resisting Spells
- ❖ Mace Fighting/Wrestling
- ❖ Melee related skills
- ❖ Craft skills

3.2.7 Traits

- ❖ Clergy are female.
- ❖ Clergy have short or tied-back hair.
- ❖ Clergy have names drawn from Christian decent.
- ❖ Clergy don't give orders, as they take it for granted that people understand their requests.
- ❖ Clergy don't show aggression.
- ❖ Clergy often chose to interact with emotes only, saving their voices for Church and combat.
- ❖ Clergy hold masses and ceremonies in the Church, often each Sunday at 14:00 (GMT).
- ❖ Clergy may choose to assist their spiritual knowledge with the aid the quarter staff which they also use to assist their walking; they never wield the "Tome of Light".
- ❖ Clergy rarely run.
- ❖ Clergy refer to their own conjuring as The Light or Divine Intervention.
- ❖ Clergy refer to people as 'Chyld'.

- ❖ Clergy say 'ye' rather than 'thou', 'thee', or 'you'.
- ❖ Clergy are referred to by all as Sister.

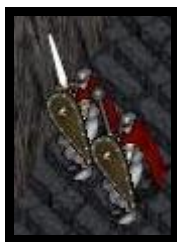
3.3 The Order of the Knights Templar

The Order of the Knights Templar, commonly referred to as the Templi Order, started off as a band of mercenaries who took up arms by order of the Magistrates to fight back the onslaught of Guardian spawn, heathens and wytches in Avatar's absence. In the aftermath, the Order became more structured and uniform, setting up various Chapter Houses and Preceptories around Britannia, each lead by a Templar Preceptor by charge of the Grand Master of the Order in Britain. Their duty became to defend the Clergy with their lives, and combat heresy wherever it spread; essentially working as the much needed muscle of the Church. These days, only warriors of good character can request to become Squires, and the Order is no longer the mercenary free-for-all it was at the time of its creation.

3.3.1 Battle-Priests

As mentioned above, the Templi Order works as the muscle of the Church, enforcing its beliefs with brute force. Those who refuse to submit to Avatar are executed without hesitation. Their various Chapter Houses and Preceptories are linked with local towns, and the Chapter of the Order that resides there works closely with the local military power to ensure all soldiers and citizens are stout believers of the Avatari. They attend regular patrols and hunts to watch over the men, pray for them, and see that Avatar's will is done.

From time to time they may take up arms against other towns alongside the military force, if what they're fighting for is beneficial to the progression of the Church. These battles however are few and far between, and as such it is not a common sight to see any member of the Church in regular battles.



Templi form a shield wall to guard the army's retreat

3.3.2 Hierarchy

The Order of the Knights Templar is governed by a Grand Master in Britain, who oversees the entire Order providing the Chapters with orders and missions. Each Chapter is lead by a Templar Preceptor, or in his absence an eligible Templar may become temporarily elevated to Templar Seneschal to over-see the Chapter, returning to Templar once the Preceptor returns, or elevate to Preceptor should the Chapter receive word of the current Preceptor's disappearance. Regular mounted Templar form the core of the

Chapters, and are charged with educating their dismounted brethren, the Templi Initiates, who have risen from the entry position of Templi Squire and are working towards becoming a fully initiated Templar, and earning their platemail arms and warhorse (note that mounts are not permitted in PvP combat).



Templi Squire



Templi Initiate



Templar

3.3.3 Uniform & Skills

Templi wear the following uniform (unless otherwise stated, all equipment must be unmarked and uncoloured):

- ❖ Platemail Helmet
- ❖ Platemail Gorget
- ❖ Platemail Arms (Ringmail Sleeves for Templi Initiates)
- ❖ Platemail Gloves
- ❖ Chainmail Tunic
- ❖ Chainmail Leggings
- ❖ Surcoat
- ❖ Cloak – Red Hue
- ❖ Shoes
- ❖ Wooden Tear Kite Shield
- ❖ Weapons – Mace/Warhammer, Longsword/Battleaxe, Crossbow



Templi Initiate Inventory



Templar Inventory

Squires wear the following uniform (unless otherwise stated, all equipment must be unmarked and uncoloured):

- ❖ Bascinet – Agapite Hue
- ❖ Ringmail Tunic

- ❖ Ringmail Legs
- ❖ Ringmail Sleeves
- ❖ Ringmail Gloves
- ❖ Kilt
- ❖ Sash – Red Hue
- ❖ Boots
- ❖ Wooden Round Shield
- ❖ Weapons – Mace, Longsword, Crossbow



Templi Squire Inventory

Common skills of a Templi are (required skills are in bold):

- ❖ **One Melee Skill** (Mace Fighting/Swordsmanship)
- ❖ **Tactics**
- ❖ **Anatomy**
- ❖ **Healing**
- ❖ **Parrying**
- ❖ Focus
- ❖ Resisting Spells
- ❖ Archery
- ❖ Additional Melee Skill
- ❖ Craft Skills

3.3.4 Traits

- ❖ Templi are male.
- ❖ Templi have short or tied-back hair and only short facial hair if any (Short beard/Short beard with moustache only).
- ❖ Templi are cold and ruthless, and don't let even a minor rule breach go unpunished; the law is black and white; no matter how pretty or privileged the perpetrator. Their movements are akin to those of automatons, such as *Turns head mechanically*.
- ❖ Templi believe that women can only find salvation through becoming Clergy.
- ❖ Templi don't look women in the eyes, nor do they touch them.
- ❖ Templi don't flee the battlefield unless they are outnumbered three to one.
- ❖ Templi have names from English, French or German origin.
- ❖ Templi know all rules and laws of Cove and the Church inside out.
- ❖ Templi may choose to pick Archery as an additional weapon skill.
- ❖ Templi obey tactical orders of the highest ranked soldier when in battle.

- ❖ Templi protect the Clergy.
- ❖ Templi rarely disarm their weapons, as they are constantly on guard from assault. Nor do they remove their helmets unless necessary; including in Church.
- ❖ Templi boost the morale of the men in combat by shouting Latinate battle cries.
- ❖ Templi seek to bring forth every wytch, heretic and taint before the Church.
- ❖ Templi do not appreciate having spells cast upon them by anyone but Clergy.
- ❖ Templi do not allow non-clergy members to stand within arms reach of them.
- ❖ Templi speak in archaic; replacing phrases with 'thee', 'thou', and 'thy' etc.
- ❖ The Templar Preceptor/Seneschal is referred to as Father by all.
- ❖ Templar refer to each other, and are referred to as Brother by other Church characters. To all else, they are referred to as Father.
- ❖ Templi Squires & Initiates are referred to as Friar by all.

3.4 The Wytch Hunters

The Templi Order are the soldiers of the Church, acting to defend Church property and dignitaries from attack, while at the same time also sallying forth to lead the charge in Avatar's crusades; suppressing opposition both at home and abroad. However, perils to the Church and its congregation come in a host of forms, and sometimes brute force isn't the best thing to employ. In matters of the sensitive and the covert, it is the Wytch Hunter who is the weapon of choice.

The Wytch Hunter is first and foremost a hybrid of a spy and assassin. The easiest comparison to draw is that the Wytch Hunter is the Church's answer to the Light Company. However, unlike the Light Company the Wytch Hunter more often than not is a solitary figure, completing his tasks without help; trusting none, even regarding clergy with suspicion. When not on Church sanctioned business, the Wytch Hunter travels to both internal and external locations in search of those who threaten the Church. Dealing with those "threatening the Church" encompasses everything from noting and spying on a Watchman who states his dislike of a particular Church member too loudly in the tavern, to rooting out and eliminating Guardian spawn such as drow, undead, and orcs.

However, the Wytch Hunter is not simply an assassin. While assassination is one of the primary tools in the armoury of the Wytch Hunter, many more subtle methods may be employed. If a prominent official is found to be harbouring anti-Church sentiment, the Wytch Hunter may sabotage the businesses of, and spread malicious rumours about the individual in question, safely removing them from power. Another less eloquent (but often employed) method of the Wytch Hunter is to openly denounce someone, whipping up mob-hysteria against them. More noteworthy individuals will be handed over

to the Magistrates for trial, while simple peasants will most likely be executed on the spot by means of summary judgement.



A Celt is burned by the hands of a Wytch Hunter

3.4.1 Uniform & Skills

Due to the nature of their jobs, Wytch Hunters rarely wear a uniform. Doing so would alert enemies to their role and render undercover missions impossible. However, when wishing to be noticed it is likely that a Wytch Hunter will employ a standard uniform, consisting of (unless otherwise stated, all equipment must be unmarked and uncoloured):

- ❖ Ringmail Tunic – Shadow Hue
- ❖ Ringmail Gloves – Shadow Hue
- ❖ Fancy Shirt – Red Hue
- ❖ Long Pants – Red Hue
- ❖ Surcoat – Black Hue
- ❖ Feathered Hat – Black Hue
- ❖ Boots – Black Hue
- ❖ Buckler
- ❖ Weapons – Any permitted by BoC rules

Common skills of a Wytch Hunter are (required skills are in bold):

- ❖ **One Melee Skill** (Swordsmanship/Fencing)
- ❖ **Tactics**
- ❖ **Anatomy**
- ❖ **Healing**
- ❖ Focus
- ❖ Parrying
- ❖ Resisting Spells
- ❖ Poisoning
- ❖ Archery
- ❖ Hiding
- ❖ Stealth
- ❖ Snooping

3.4.2 Traits

- ❖ Wytch Hunters are commonly male, but female Wytch Hunters have been known to exist.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters are human.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters are zealous individuals, and their overwhelming plight to find and burn every wytch does not expel members of the Church from their private investigations.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters are answerable to fully initiated Templars, and all members of the non-Templi clergy.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters may ride a horse for transportation purposes **only**, due to the vast distances they travel, and extreme lengths they go to root out wyitches.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters are not members of the clergy; they are purely a profession in service of the Church, in theory they are ordinary citizens.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters may choose to pick Archery as an additional weapon skill.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters use whatever tools they have at their disposal, and are not unknown for the use of dirty tricks, such as hidden blades and dust-kicking.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters can read and write, and speak in plain Britannian.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters are well versed in the scriptures.
- ❖ Wytch Hunters never reveal their real name, but operate under a number of permanent or throw-away aliases.

3.4.3 Becoming a Wytch Hunter

The Wytch Hunters are currently an organised unit of Special Characters within the Church of Cove; they are not considered clergymen themselves, but their formation is considered to be a sub-element of the Church. If you wish to apply to become a Wytch Hunter, review the thread 'The Wytch Hunter's Handbook' on the Church board. Note that Wytch Hunters are subject to the same anonymity clauses and codes of conduct as the rest of the Church. These can be found towards the end of the handbook.

4 Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages are an unquestionable display of faith, and consist of an individual braving the journey to the seven true shrines and back, alone with the bare minimal of tools and clothing at hand. On reaching each shrine, a pilgrim must say the sacred mantra in order to seek purity in mind, body, and soul. Their safe return signifies that Avatar watches over them, and that their pilgrimage is complete.

Once all requirements for elevation within the Templi Order have been completed by an individual, they will be tasked to go on a pilgrimage. However, individuals singled out by the Church may also be made to undertake a pilgrimage for whatever reason.

Before heading out, pilgrims must leave everything they possess behind, and only take with them what is provided by the Church.



Pilgrim

4.1 Inventory

A pilgrim's inventory consists of:

- ❖ Pilgrim's Robe
- ❖ Skinning Knife
- ❖ Club
- ❖ Bedroll
- ❖ Torch
- ❖ Notebook
- ❖ Skillet
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ Sextant
- ❖ Spyglass
- ❖ Location of a Raft
- ❖ Map of the World

In this bag lie the bare necessities required to successfully undertake a pilgrimage. Bandages can be obtained through shearing sheep, food through hunting animals, kindling through carving trees etc.



Pilgrim Inventory

4.2 Undertaking a Pilgrimage

During a pilgrimage, a pilgrim may seek the aid of no one but Higher Being; rely on their survival instincts rather than the hospitality of civilisation, the natural armour of prayer, and the ferocity of their bare hands and basic tools. For the duration of the pilgrimage, a character's title will be changed to 'Pilgrim', and they are temporarily stripped of any and all authority they hold in their regular lives.

Reports of each journey including pictures must be presented on the notice boards in order to have the pilgrimage considered a success.

5 The Virtues

The cult of the Virtues plays a significant part in the Avatarian creed, and differs little from its traditional form. It is because of this connection that followers of Virtue are often seen in the eyes of Avatarians as kindred, simply untouched by the Avatar's light. The Avatar is known to have built the shrines of Virtue with His own hands following the defeat of Mondain. Things become complicated, however, when the question of 'Compassion', the eighth Virtue is raised.

Compassion is deemed the False Virtue, a trick of the Guardian, integral to the tale of the corruption of Zog and Evah, the first humans. Evah's compassion for the Elf, Awindar, the Guardian's first son, resulted in a sickly affair, and the ruin of all she and her husband Zog had sought to build. Seeing the seeds of taint thus sewn, the Higher Being bid Zog cast the spell of Armageddon, so that the world might be born anew. This tale is also integral to the faith-spanning view of women as weak-willed and servile beings, not to be trusted by righteous men. Compassion, it is said, is the bane of vigilance. Though not seen as a sin, it is most certainly not considered holy and exists only to test the will and piety of true Avatarians. It is unclear whether this belief is in keeping with the original doctrine, or has emerged in later years.

6 Joining The Church

Whilst the Church is directly linked and influenced by the rest of the guild, it is essentially a mini-guild in its own right. Whilst it is not essential to already have a character in [BoC] to become a member of the Church, it is imperative that all Church members know any and all rules affiliated with the guild and community to the best of their ability. The Church works as an internal affairs body enforcing rules amongst its various other roles and responsibilities; as a result, it is important that all members of the Church know the guild and its regulations inside out.

Anyone is welcome to apply to become a member of the Church, whether they are a member of another guild or completely new to role-play (so long as they understand the fundamentals of role-play, or are at least willing to learn). With that said however, please note that the Church reserves the right to refuse applications at their discretion, at anytime, with or without warning or explanation.

6.1 Application Process

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Church, send a private message to 'Siegfried' on the forums with the following information in full (short-hand applications are often rejected immediately):

Pigeon (ICQ) Number:

Player Age:

Player Country:

Current/Previous Characters & their guilds:

Time served with the CoRE Community:

Position applied for:

Why do you wish to apply for this position?

What could you bring to the church?

After sending your application, you may receive a reply containing various questions regarding the community, the guild, and the Church to ensure you're prepared to join us; so be sure to retain what you read in preparation for your application.

Players who are successful in their initial application to join the Church may be extended an invitation to create a character for the position to which they have applied; Disciple for the Clergy, or Templi Squire for the Tempi Order.

Advancement within the Church is extremely slow due to the minimalist structure in place. The purpose of which is to ensure Church members are constantly striving to reach achievements and requirements, giving the Church as much exposure to the rest of the community as possible.

6.2 The Templi Squire & Disciple

As mentioned above, successful applicants may be invited to create a character of the Templi Squire or Disciple position, based upon what branch of the Church they have applied for. This role is purely trial-based and exists to further assess a player's eligibility for appointment; it should be viewed as a training period rather than an examination.

The Templi Squire is the lowest position available within the Church and holds very little power, other than being a member of the Church; in such terms, they are the equivalent of a Guardsman Recruit, but command the same respect and authority of any other Church member.

Disciples, as with all clergywomen, are held in the highest regard within the Church and their word is taken as directive from Avatar Himself. Though they are not fully-fledged clergy, they are to be as well respected as their elder Sisters.

As a Squire, players should watch and learn from the Initiates and Templars how to act, whilst also getting stuck into the thick of things with the army to promote a Church presence, and to put their training into practice. Squires are expected to learn life-skills during their time as a Squire alongside how to fight, such as how to repair their armour, smelt the metal they scavenge, and other general skills such as cooking and basic craftsmanship. Generally, a Squire has the same traits as other Templi, but may be a little less zealous and experienced than their Brothers whilst they're learning.



Squires learning the basics of maintaining their armour

Likewise, Disciples should watch the Clerics and learn to how act; they should heavily read into the lore surrounding the Church and apply their new-found knowledge during Mass.

6.3 Creating a Character

If you are invited to create a Templi Squire you must follow the guidelines below with regards to character creation:

Squires are more often than not young faithful warriors from well-off families. Whilst this does not have to be the case with every Squire, use common sense when deciding a background and history for your character, and contact a senior member of the Church if you have any doubts regarding the acceptability of what you have written.

Squires have names of English, French, and German decent.

Squires are male. They have short or tied-back hair and only short facial hair if any (Short beard/Short beard with moustache only).

If you have applied to become a Disciple, you must follow the appropriate guidelines as listed in their traits. Clergywomen have the most humble backgrounds; whether an orphan growing up with the Church, or a young woman leaving her family, they shed all family ties, and as such have no known surname, often taking up an appropriate first name upon joining the Church – The Church is their family now.

Confirm all details with a senior member of the Church before creating your character to avoid disappointment, as characters who fail to meet these criteria will not be invited to join the guild until they have been rectified. The Church will not fund name change tokens, hair deeds etc.

Once your character has been invited to the guild, create a new forum account under the name of your Church character as soon as possible, hiding as many private details as possible (See below).

6.4 Character Conduct

It has been mentioned above that Church members must know all rules and regulations concerning [BoC] and its affiliates inside and out in order to ensure the best possible ability and understanding of their position.

Further to this, the Church is a specialised sector of the role-playing community and is only suitable for individuals who are deemed experienced and mature enough to take on such a role of responsibility within the community. Players who fail to display the necessary levels of maturity, or an inability to play their characters accordingly will be asked to leave the Church, regardless of position, at any time with or without giving reason. In special circumstances, individuals may be asked to stay on and improve their conduct. Squires who are not eligible to become an Initiate immediately once the promotional requirements have been met, but are also not a threat to the integrity of the Church may be asked to stay on until they are eligible, extending the period they remain a Templi Squire.

Church characters should be role-played in a serious manner; whilst playing them should be enjoyable, it should be so within the realms of reality. Church characters should not be seen as humorous or novel. It is important that they are taken seriously. As such, the players of Church characters are expected to have an exceptional grasp of the English language, and applicants can be turned down purely based upon their language skills.

Whilst the attitude of Church members is one of 'high and mighty', players must understand that behind every character is another player just like them, and should take great care not to act above their station in terms of gross disrespect and draconic conduct.

Finally, the players of Church characters should remain anonymous on all levels in order to avoid conflicts of interest when dealing with individuals, and maintain an air of authority when dealing with individuals known to the player. Forum accounts should not disclose any personal information. Players should create a new ICQ account for their Church characters if they intend to be immediately contactable, and primarily use it for receiving messages only, not sending messages except in response, or with regards to events or player complaints and concerns. Players should maintain a neutral demeanour with individuals and avoid creating a rapport or friendship with other individuals whilst under the guise of their Church identity. Church members should not engage in idle chat in-game, only using guild chat and party functions to enforce rules and remind players of events; where possible, Church characters should avoid joining parties during events. The only exception to the anonymity rule is informing the BoC Command team who you are; other than the Church member who recruits you (who will likely inform Command on your behalf), no one else within the Church should know who your regular characters (if any) are.

With regards to the above, regular players within the community should not assume that all Church characters are "alts", and in any case should in no way, shape, or form badger or pester anyone in order to obtain the identities of any Church member. Both regular members and Church members believed to be disclosing Church identities without good reason will face disciplinary action.

6.5 Miscellaneous Characters

Other positions are available within the Church on an individual basis at the request of players, and are subject to approval from the Church and BoC Command team. Characters such as Pilgrims, Fanatics, Zealots, Heretics, Heathens, Wytches, Executioners, Wytch Hunters, Pages, Monks, Hound masters, and Stable Boys etc are possibilities, provided such characters are well thought through and agree to abide by a set code of conduct concerning rules and regulations.

As above, the Church reserves the right to discontinue any character at any time, without warning, with or without explanation.

7 Final Words

Below is some miscellaneous information not categorised above:

When not referring to Higher Being or Avatar by name, either in speech or literature it is customary to capitalise references such as “He”, “His”, and “Him”. Whilst it is important to acknowledge and believe in the four Archangels, it is heresy to praise them above or on-level with Higher Being and Avatar; as such, it is not customary to capitalise references to them.

Baphomets, i.e. cougars, panther and other black cats are believed to be Guardian in his most deceptive form, creeping into slumbering homesteads during the night and weaving ill-notions of heresy and corruption through the heads of weary and defenceless individuals in their sleep. They should be slain on sight. Llamas likewise are deemed to be enemies of the Church, though there is no literature documenting the reasoning for such; it is assumed by some that the exotic nature of these creatures, much like wytchcraft, frightens the Church as they are yet another thing the Church cannot comprehend or explain.

It is customary to say “Aumen” and make the ‘sign of the ankh’ where appropriate, such as saying “Aumen” at the end of a prayer, or making the ‘sign of the ankh’ on greeting a member of the Church.

Whilst Church members may not be military superiors, they are highly respected pillars of the community and as such, expect to receive the respect they deserve from both peasantry and nobility.

8 Disclaimers

The Church of Cove is not, nor does it claim to be a religion in the real-world. All scripture, organisation and lore are purely fictional based for the purposes of the role-playing communities of the Europa shard of Ultima Online™.

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The Church of Cove does not claim to be the originator of the Avatari religion, or any positions or uniforms within it.

The Church of Cove reserves the right to discontinue an individual's characters within the Church at any time, without warning, with or without giving reason.

By applying for a position within the Church you agree to these terms and conditions.