

The Church of the Ancestor

In many ways, The Church is a parallel government that operates along side The Empire. While the two systems generally cooperate and support each other, The Church has its own laws, courts, and methods of enforcement. Emperor Crucical is officially the Church, but for practical purposes, the Church is run by High Priest Jacob.

The Clergy

The leadership of the Church is made up of monks and nuns. For the most part, Monks are trained and housed in monasteries and nuns in convents, but there are two abbeys within the empire which house a mixed congregation. When a monk or nun takes their vows, they choose one of four paths depending on their interests and training. The majority of the institutions in the empire are limited to training and confirmation of people to the holy path. Only initiates in the Sweet Mercy Convent and the Saint Olaf Monastery are authorized to train in the three martial paths.

The Holy Path

The most common path in the church, and the only option for many initiates. Holy brothers and holy sisters are recognizable for the black robes and habits and they dedicate themselves to study, prayer, and service of those around them. Many who have completed the training for one of the three martial paths still elect to take their vows in the holy path if they feel it reflects their devotion to the Ancestor.

The Blade Path

Adherents to the blade path typically wear red. They are some of the most highly skilled combatants in the entire empire because they dedicate their entire life to the study and practice of martial arts. Red brothers and red sisters are responsible for the physical security of the Church. They act as guards, escorts, soldiers, and enforcers depending on the needs of the Church. Many red robes or red habits all in the same place almost always means trouble.

The Mystic Path

Respectfully called mystic brothers and sisters (and disrespectfully called holy witches), followers of the mystic path are distinguished by their blue robes or habits. They dedicate their time to the study of magic and the service of the Church through the use of magic. Citizens tend to associate the blue robes with magical healing because that's the only time they encounter mystic clerics, but the majority of those who follow the mystic path don't have any particular talent for healing.

Taking vows to follow the mystic path is only an option for those who demonstrate magical ability, but it's not required that any clerics who can do magic must become a mystic cleric. There are individuals who wield magic on all four paths.

The Shadow Path

These are members of the clergy who have dedicated themselves to clandestine arts. They are the spies and assassins of the Church. Even though they are called grey brothers and grey sisters, they don't really wear grey robes and habits, and so no one really knows how many of them there are. This path is a popular choice among mages who have talents in shadow and illusion magics.

The Inquisition

The inquisition is not a permanent organization of the Church. Instead, when something suspicious happens members of the clergy are appointed to perform an inquisition. It's basically a committee that investigates wrong doing, recommends punishments, and carries them out once the presiding authority gives approval. They are mostly concerned with activities that threaten the stability of the Church, and only really near large population centers. For example, the church of the Hope continues to spread in small communities, but an inquisition is formed anytime it looks like they might be congregating in too large a number. Actively spreading information that disparages the Emperor or that contradicts the Church's doctrine are other common ways to attract the attention of an inquisition.

The inquisition is only used to prosecute heresy among the lay population. Members of the clergy are held to a higher standard and would stand trial before a tribunal of archons.

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