

Religion of Tyarra

There are nine gods in the Tyarran pantheon. They are

Ragmar, god of fire, war, flame, and light

Unlara, goddess of shadow, darkness, and deception

Mielikki, goddess of nature, the woodlands, life

Chauntea, goddess of prosperity, cultivation, ordered life

Hector, god of justice, honour, and courage

Alandra, goddess of magic

Inuren, god of the balance

Gorond, god of necromancy, death, decay

Esten, goddess of skilled crafts, music and luck

History

In the Age of Prosperity, all but Gorond and Unlara were worshipped freely and openly. Nearly everyone - whatever their race or upbringing - was able to follow whichever belief system that spoke most to them. Many halflings worshipped Chauntea, whereas the elves preferred Mielikki. Dwarves - especially smiths - often revered Ragmar. Humans, as always varied even more greatly, and could not be said to have a race religion.

As with everything, the Apocalypse changed the religions of Tyarra forever. The dwarves now worship Unlara, Gorond, and a twisted version of Ragmar's teachings. The elves were changed least. But the humans... In the years after The Blood War ended, it quickly became clear that the Taint would not let any crops or livestock be raised without mutation. Many despaired and took their own lives. Then the priests of the religions were given by their gods new spells that allowed them to temporarily cleanse the land.

Soon, the remnants of the churches sent out priests to every town, village, and pocket of survival they knew of. Heroic clerics risked their lives to travel across vast expanses of wild territory, filled with monsters. Those who survived worked tirelessly for their settlement, healing wounds, alleviating some of the worst of the Taint sickness, and most importantly, every day cleansing and blessing the corrupted soil to allow it to continue to produce crops for the grateful villagers.

Over the next a sixty or seventy years, this state of affair continued. Priests would travel where they were needed, always offering their services for free, and asking for nothing but a simple place to sleep and basic food to live on. Gradually the old church organisations began to rebuild, and soon were able to direct things more efficiently, to make sure that clerics who grew old would be replaced, and to train new novices in their orders.

But as is often the case, power has a way of corrupting, and the promise of power has almost the same effect. The Church of Chauntea, being worshippers of the lady of prosperity and agriculture, realised that they had the most effective spells at restoring the land for farming. They began to try and recruit more and more clerics, and sent missionaries to many villagers that already had a priest to instate their own clerics. Many villagers, seeing the more effective spells, welcomed these new priests.

Then, in the year 81 AA, the Chauntean Church declared that their priests would only help those settlements who converted wholly to worshipping Chauntea. Any who allowed other priests to stay in their homes or to heal their sick were to be excommunicated. Already more than a third of all the villages had a Chauntean priest, and many more converted that year and in those that followed. The other churches were shocked at the Chaunteans monopolistic practices, but refused to compromise their beliefs, continuing to offer their services to all, asking for nothing, and not insisting on any commitment of faith.

By 112 AA, nearly all the humans at least nominally worshipped Chauntea, and knowledge of the other religions began to fade. The other churches dwindled, and their priests found themselves unwelcome, as fearful villagers tried to avoid any association with them. Even today though, after nearly two hundred years of Chauntean rulership, many remain, hidden by the common people from the Church. Some of the Chauntean priests abuse their positions, living lives of luxury, generally equal in status to the feudal Lord, and charge their own tax to continue cleansing the land. Some also charge for healing and other services. So when something goes wrong, the village folk will sometimes seek out a renegade priest and ask them for help.

In 164 AA, the Church created the Holy Order, the first paladins Tyarra had seen since times of myth and legend that even the Elves do not remember. Their creed is to seek out and destroy the evil creatures of the world, the horrors that linger from The Blood War. However, the Church frequently uses them as an army to quell discontent. Many have never actually seen anything more dangerous than a mudroar.

Role-playing

While I may have painted a rather bleak picture of the Church in Tyarra, it is important to note that the entirety of the priesthood is not corrupt. The High Council are mainly power hungry, as are *some* of the clergy who serve in villages. Many others, however, honestly believe that worshipping Chauntea is the right way, that the other religions will only give the people false hope that will never be fulfilled.

Similarly, nearly all members of the Holy Order are sincere in their faith and their dedication to crush evil. They see themselves as the strong right arm of the church, correcting people when they stray from the true way, and ensuring that everyone remains strong in the faith. A paladin character who is adventuring, is likely to be on a Sojourn - a technical name in the Church for when a paladin wishes to take a year or two to quest alone. They seek in right injustice, slay dark monsters, and discover more about their own faith in Chauntea. Then they return to service in the Holy Order.

Regardless of whether your character is a cleric, a paladin or a non-religious class, you should carefully consider how they view the Church. Whilst some are likely to either be cynical, or at least not very interested in the religion, most would believe that the Church of Chauntea is a good institution, and some may even have personal faith.

An elf is likely to be very scornful of the human religious system. Within Ilyana all the gods and goddesses are still worshipped openly, and Chauntea is only one of those. Rebel dwarves similarly do not believe that the human religion is correct, but are less likely to be outspoken as they are small in number and easy pickings for Church authority. Halflings (if any) are likely to be shocked by the perversion of their own Chauntean beliefs.