

Setting saintly standards

Friends of the gods deserve special powers

by Scott Bennie (Dragon Magazine #79)

The Dungeon Masters Guide mentions “saints” in several places, but no system is given for defining sainthood or classifying the precise abilities or capabilities of a saint. Looking at the real world and at saint-like characters in mythology and modern epic fantasy, we might make the following statements about saints in AD&D gaming:

Saints are the most powerful servants of a deity on earth, the absolute embodiment of their religion, and as such are given abilities that far surpass those of ordinary mortals. Saints are almost always clerics, since that character class provides the most service to the gods, but occasionally a fighter, particularly a paladin, will be elevated to sainthood. Saints are usually of good alignments (the word “saint” is derived from the Latin *sanctus*, meaning holy, as in “sanctuary”), but there have been occasions when the vilest deities or the vilest kings of the netherworld have awarded their dark champions with saint-like power, resulting in a “dark saint” or “anti-saint”.

It has been said that becoming a saint is the most difficult goal to which a mortal may aspire. It requires that the saint serve his (or her) deity faithfully in every action he performs, and that he follow all the rules of the religion unquestioningly. In addition, the saint must constantly quest for and smite the enemies of the religion, and be willing to die at any moment for the sake of the religion’s goals without hope of rebirth; the saint must also do deeds of great valor against great odds, and be universally recognized as a champion of the religion.

A saint should be far above ordinary mortals in power, with characteristics much greater than normal and levels of ability close to the peak of human attainment (e.g., at least 16th level for fighters and clerics). The saint may be on very close terms with the gods, and will be well versed in divine politics so he can deal with other divinities and their servants to best advantage.

If a mortal fulfills these criteria, then his deity or a group of sponsor deities, *provided that they need a champion*, will empower the saint with a spark of divine essence so that he is no longer truly mortal, his power being on par with a quasi-deity (see DRAGON® issue #71). As a non-mortal, the saint *must* be a non-player character. If a player character somehow manages the near-impossible and is truly worthy of becoming a saint, then the player should be satisfied with his character’s achievement, and must let the character pass into the capable hands of the DM, to be used forever more as an NPC.

While the abilities of a saint are as varied as the gods themselves, each saint being a unique individual, there seem to be some abilities, listed hereafter, common to all saints. The number in parentheses after a listing indicates the number of times per day each of these spell-like powers may be used. Powers followed by an asterisk (*)

are those that are used in reversed form by an evil saint (for instance, *continual darkness* instead of *continual light*).

Command, 1 round effect, no saving throw (1)

*Continual light** (3)

*Cure disease/cure blindness** (6 each)

*Dispel evil** (1)

*Heal** (1)

Immunity to death magic spells and powers

Know alignment (at will)

Protection from evil, 10’ radius* (at will)

*Raise dead** (1)

*Remove curse** (3)

Tongues/Comprehend languages (at will)

True seeing (1)

The saint will have 5 to 10 times the lifespan of an ordinary mortal, in addition to being able to use life-prolonging aids available in the AD&D universe (such as a *potion of longevity*). Upon his death, a saint will go to reside upon an Outer Plane appropriate to his alignment and religion.

A saint can *summon* one creature of the same alignment of not more than 12 hit dice. This power is usable once per week.

In addition to these powers, a saint has the ability to inspire *awe* in creatures of 1 hit die/level or less, as if the saint were a divine being with a charisma of 19. This awe ability is not dependent on the actual charisma of the saint, and he may activate this power at will. This power also allows high-level characters/creatures to be aware that the saint is a being of more-than-human power.

As a demi-deity, a saint has a saving throw of 3 in all categories. A saint is likely to have magic items of a unique nature (minor artifacts) or ordinary magic items of the greatest power.

Not all religions have saints, while some religions have a large number of “patron saints” who serve as intermediaries between the deity and the deity’s worshippers on a number of matters. A patron saint is the most powerful variety of saint, and actually receives worship through shrines located in the major temples of the patron deity. Those saints who generate enough interest that cults are eventually formed to honor them may become demi-gods.

Saints, being of such great power, should be relatively few in number on any one world; a saintly encounter is rare for even the most travelled party. Saints make interesting acquaintances – or deadly enemies – for player characters. As examples, following are four descriptions of saints from my own campaign: St. Ceril, who is of about average power for a saint; St. Bane, a patron saint who approaches demi-god status; St. Kargoth, a paladin

gone wrong; and St. Eleador, who achieved sainthood extremely early in his mortal existence.

ST. CERIL the Relentless

ARMOR CLASS: -7

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 98

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (+2)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: *M (7 feet tall)*

ALIGNMENT *Lawful neutral*

SYMBOL: *Three upward-pointing arrows*

CLERIC/DRUID: *19th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *7th level fighter*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

S 18 (+1, +2), I 16, W 19, D 18

C 16, CH 19, CO 20

Ceril was an altar boy for his religion in a village where the entire population, including his parents, was slaughtered by toadlike creatures. Ceril, the lone survivor, vowed to avenge their deaths. He spent fifty years trying to accomplish this, consuming little food or water, hardly sleeping, sustaining himself only by an unceasing fury. Finally he found the murderers, a group of renegade Slaadi. After a great battle, Ceril singlehandedly slew their leader, a very powerful Death Slaad. Impressed by his devotion and perseverance, Ceril's deity awarded him with sainthood.

Ceril has several special weapons, the greatest being Chaosbreaker, a +5 long sword that does double damage against any creature of a chaotic alignment. His +3 plate mail cannot be destroyed or rusted, and has the combined abilities of a ring of swimming, a ring of free action, a necklace of adaptation, and a helm of underwater action. His +2 shield will, on command, reflect a spell as does a ring of spell turning, seven times daily, one spell per melee round. He also has a plethora of minor magical items.

Ceril appears to be a man of about 40 years of age, despite the fact that he has lived for more than 250 years. He has golden hair, a short beard, and grey eyes. He is highly charismatic, and can cast a suggestion spell (once per round) on any creature of up to 6 hit dice/levels merely by speaking with the creature. He is often found questing against chaos, and wandering from place to place preaching the importance of strict devotion to order and the need to battle chaos, a cause for which he will occasionally employ (and willingly sacrifice) mortals as pawns.

ST. BANE the Scourger

(Patron saint of those who hunt undead)

ARMOR CLASS: -5

MOVE: 18"

HIT POINTS: 143

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *3-12 (+9)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: *M (6 feet tall)*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*

SYMBOL: *Flaming black trident*

CLERIC/DRUID: *22nd level cleric*

FIGHTER: *10th level fighter*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S 18/22 (+1, +3), I 20, W 21, D 18

C 17, CH 19, CO 16

Saint Bane was the high priest of a religion (*Pelor*) whose main precept is the extermination of the undead. As a first level cleric, Bane incredibly managed to slay three vampires, and as he rose in power he battled deadlier foes. Finally, Bane was responsible for the death of the witch-ghoul Khuul, one of Orcus' greatest servants, and he attacked and nearly slew Orcus on his home plane. For his valor, Bane was rewarded with sainthood.

Bane has the standard abilities of a saint, and a lifespan ten times longer than an ordinary mortal; he appears to be about 70 years of age. Any undead of low intelligence or less that even glances at Bane must save vs. death magic at -4 or crumble into dust; undead of higher intelligence must make the same saving throw or flee in terror. Bane is immune to aging, fear, charms, paralysis, or life-level loss.

In battle, Bane wields a +6 *flaming trident* that does a base of 3-12 points of damage (+9) and triple damage against undead. His +2 *plate mail* makes him immune to fire, cold, and lightning attacks, slow spells, and magic missiles; his +1 *shield* will deflect any normal missile fire hurled at him, including boulders thrown by giants, and it has a 35% chance of deflecting missiles with a magical bonus. He has a few other magic items of minor power. Bane's armor, shield, and trident are *transdimensional*; they do not vary in power or ability on different planes.

Bane has a fairly widespread cult, particularly in places heavily infested with undead. While he only has a small and rather weak priesthood (maximum 4th level clerics), his clerics and those who serve Bane's patron god that gain Bane's personal blessing before questing against undead have a 75% chance of gaining +1 to all undead-turning rolls, while those who pray at Bane's shrine have a 15% chance to gain a +1 to turn undead. This blessing lasts for the duration of the quest.

Bane is a wanderer of the planes, and often makes sorties into the Abyss. His plans are subtle and far-reaching, and he will often use mortals in his schemes. He appears as a man with wild white hair, who often rides a white beast with the specifications of a nightmare of maximum hit points but which is neutral good in alignment. Bane has made a vast number of powerful, evil enemies; those who ally with his cause are asking for a lot of trouble.

ST. KARGOTH (King of the Death Knights)

ARMOR CLASS: -5

MOVE: 15"

HIT POINTS: 136

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (+8)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90% (*see below*)
SIZE: *M (7 feet tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*
SYMBOL: *Glowing green skull*
CLERIC/DRUID: *12th level cleric*
FIGHTER: *16th level fighter*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
S 20 (+3, +8), I 18, W 15, D 18
C 18, CH -1, CO -6

Kargoth was a great paladin, until he unleashed a demonic terror on the Prime Material Plane in a mad bargain for personal power. The grateful demon prince transformed Kargoth into the first and most powerful Death Knight. When the forces of good rallied and drove away the horror, Kargoth exalted in his newly won power and performed many deeds of great malevolence and harm to the forces of good. Finally the scale of his atrocities grew to a point where the gods of chaotic evil alignment could not help but recognize his achievements; needing an agent to counter the saintly agents of good (such as St. Bane), they endowed Kargoth with saintlike abilities.

Kargoth's powers are many and terrible. He automatically commands any undead he encounters except those directly serving Orcus, and can summon two Death Knights (see FIEND FOLIO™ Tome) at will once per week, in addition to his saintly summoning ability. He has 90% magic resistance, and there is a 65% chance that any spell successfully cast at him will be reflected back upon the spell caster.

Kargoth wears +4 *plate mail* and wields a variety of magical swords of great power, though he lusts for even more powerful weaponry. The only sword in his long career that came close to satisfying him was *Gorgorin the Shatterer*, which does 2-20 (plus strength bonus) hit points damage; each victim it strikes must save vs. death magic or be disintegrated. Fortunately, the *Shatterer* was lost when Kargoth battled the legendary Hainard of the Whiteguard. Kargoth has never stopped looking for the sword since, and dark shall be the day that Kargoth and his beloved sword are at last one again.

Kargoth rides a glowing green chariot driven by six nightmares, each of maximum hit points. While in the chariot, Kargoth generates *fear* in a 120' radius; outside the chariot, Kargoth generates *fear* in a 30' radius, continuously. He is capable of the following additional powers, usable one at a time and one per round: *wall of ice*, *dispel magic*, *darkness 20' radius*. Thrice per day, Kargoth can do each of the following: *gate* in a Type III (50%), Type IV (35%), or Type VI (15%) demon, with a 100% chance of the *gate* opening; use any of the *power word* spells, a *symbol* of pain or fear, and toss a 20-dice *fireball*. These are in addition to his other saintly abilities.

Kargoth's physical body was driven from the Prime Material plane centuries ago, but in his undead form he is still able to venture to the Prime Material plane to wreak havoc. While he serves Demogorgon willingly, his power is believed to approach that of his master's, and his actions in the complex rivalries of the Abyss require close scrutiny.

Kargoth appears to be a Death Knight of massive size and build, except that his skeletal features are a baleful, glowing emerald color.

ST. ELEADOR the Survivor

ARMOR CLASS: -4
MOVE: 12''
HIT POINTS: 88
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (+1)*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (6 feet tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
SYMBOL: *Golden chimera*
CLERIC/DRUID: *17th level cleric*
PSIONIC ABILITY: VI
S 16 (+0,+1), I 18, W 20, D 16
C 16, CH 16, CO 15

Eleador was a young priest who was thrust into circumstances far beyond his control, where he and a small band of adventurers were the only ones who could prevent the unleashing of a monstrous evil. Overcoming unbelievable odds, he managed to thwart the evil, and several deities gratefully rewarded him with sainthood.

Eleador does not enjoy combat, preferring peaceful resolution of conflicts to bloody violence. This makes him all the more dangerous when aroused, and he will not hesitate to attack the most evil of foes. Under no circumstances will Eleador surrender or submit to blackmail; he is willing to see those he loves die before he compromises his principles. In a battle, Eleador wields the *Mace of Auru*, a +3 *mace of disruption* which *dispels* evil on a natural "to hit" roll of 18 or better; he also owns a *talisman of pure good* with double the usual number of charges. Like St. Bane, Eleador is a powerful foe of the undead, gaining a +3 to his die roll to turn undead creatures.

Eleador's greatest power, however, is his gift of *timesight*. When Eleador sleeps, he is able to gaze into the past and the future in his dreams. The source of this power is *not* psionic; it has been speculated by some sages that a link exists between St. Eleador and the Plane of Time. It is possible that because of this link the gods have taken a great interest in his affairs, which resulted in his elevation to the sainthood at a comparatively low level of experience and with a relatively weak reputation.

Eleador often wanders from plane to plane, but rarely uses disguises. He appears to be a man of about 30 years of age, with blond hair and blue eyes; he wears deep blue robes over his chain mail with the insignia of a golden chimera on his chest. He has been known to ride an extremely powerful Pegasus (AC 3, MV 12''/48'', HD 6+6, HP 54, #AT 3, D 2-12/2-12/1-4, SD 10% magic resistance, immune to petrification) which he befriended on a particularly harrowing adventure.