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The Order of Saint Lucian

By Gareth-Michael Skarka

Introduction

The Order of Saint Lucian is a secret organization run by the Vatican. Depending upon the needs of your campaign, it can either be the Secret Service of the Holy See, a sinister conspiracy of fanatical assassins, or a clandestine organization devoted to combatting the forces of supernatural evil.

This issue of Modern Dispatch details the Order, gives tips on running the order in those various styles, and provides adventure hooks and sample NPCs for Modern D20 Gamemasters to use.

The History of the Order

In the Third Century A.D., there was once a demon-worshipping sorcerer named Lucian. One day, so the story goes, he saw one of his most powerful spells turned aside by a Christian woman, simply by the act of her making the Sign of the Cross. This shook Lucian to his core. He came to see the error of his ways, gave up his idolatrous life and sorcery, and converted to Christianity. He was persecuted by the Romans, and slain as a martyr in 250 A.D. The early

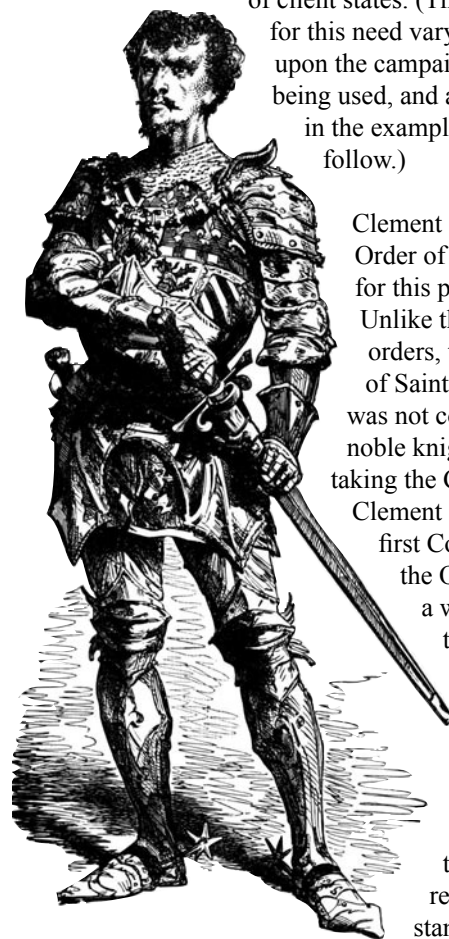


About the Author

Gareth-Michael Skarka has been working in the adventure games industry since 1988. He is the designer of several role-playing games, including *Hong Kong Action Theatre!*, *UnderWorld* and *Skull & Bones*. His design imprint, Adamant Entertainment, ventured into ePubublishing in 2003, and produces support for *Skull & Bones*, the pulp d20 line *Thrilling Tales*, and more.

Church canonized him as Saint Lucian -- the patron saint of converts and of protection against evil spirits. His Feast Day is observed on October 26th, but is little-known, and most modern Catholics have no awareness of the Sorcerer Saint.

In 1189, Pope Clement III, embroiled in the chaos of the Third Crusade, recognized the need for a clandestine organization operating on behalf of the Vatican itself, rather than depending upon the efforts of client states. (The reasons for this need vary depending upon the campaign model being used, and are detailed in the examples which follow.)



Clement created the Order of Saint Lucian for this purpose.

Unlike the other orders, the Order of Saint Lucian was not comprised of noble knights publicly taking the Cross.

Clement charged the first Commander of the Order, a widely-travelled Venetian merchant named Giacomo Griglio, to gather in his travels men, regardless of standing, who

possessed talents that suited them to the secretive work, and who could be trusted with the deepest secrets of the Vatican.

Griglio took 3 years to assemble the first 12 members of the Order, together known as Il Dodici. To this day, the 12 senior members of the Order are referred to by this honorific title, and answer directly to the Commander of the Order.

By this time, a new Pope, Celestine III, was seated in the Vatican. Celestine greatly favored the knightly orders -- the Templars and Hospitallers thrived under his reign, and the Teutonic Knights were created by him as well. The Order of St. Lucian, with its non-knightly Commander and 12 members, was largely ignored and left to fend for itself. Griglio used his own wealth to establish secret Chapterhouses throughout Europe, where members of the Order could stay (and be equipped) while carrying out missions. Unlike the other Orders, it was decided that there should be no central headquarters.

The fortunes of the Order changed drastically with the election of an active young Pope: Innocent III, in 1198. Under Innocent, the Vatican became much more involved in secular political matters, most especially in the matter of crowning a Holy Roman Emperor.

With the death of Henry VI in 1197, two separate emperors had been elected: Philip of Swabia and Otto of Wittelsbach. The 37-year old Pope openly entered politics, supporting first Otto, then Philip, threatening excommunication to supporters of the opposition. When Otto killed Philip, the Pope supported him as Emperor, until Otto violated the agreements made with the Vatican, at which point, Innocent excommunicated him, and declared Frederick II of Sicily the new Emperor.



Such direct involvement in political matters increased the need for trustworthy intelligence operations and other secret efforts; tasks for which the Order of Saint Lucian was ready-made.

Also during this time, Pope Innocent III made heresy a focus of his Papacy, setting out to destroy both the Manichean and Albigensian heresies...another role for which the Order was perfectly suited. This was the beginning of the process that led to the legitimization of the Inquisition in 1233.

During the Inquisition, the Order was a vital tool of the Vatican, and grew considerably. Now, the 12 senior members of Il Dodici directed the efforts of other agents, who reported to them, and they in turn reported to the Commander. The Commander answered directly to the Pope. This formed the organization of the Order that has stood until the present day.

Using the Order

Depending upon the needs of your particular campaign, the Order of Saint Lucian can be used as either a Secret Service, operating as the Vatican's intelligence agency; a cabal of fanatical assassins (perfect villains for a conspiratorial campaign), or a worldwide network of secret agents dedicated to fighting supernatural evil. The following sections detail each option, provide an example NPC, and a couple of adventure hooks for that campaign model.

On His Holiness' Secret Service

Pope Clement realized that the Crusades would entangle the Church in secular politics more directly, and with the stakes as high as they were (the taking of the Holy Land, and the immense wealth that could be gained as well), it was in the best interests of the Vatican to have its own supply of information, as well as operatives to carry out its wishes behind the scenes (to maintain the appearance of being above worldly concerns). Clement named the order after Saint Lucian, patron saint of converts, as he envisioned the ranks being filled by secular experts converted to the Vatican's cause.

Giacomo Griglio was a Venetian spymaster who assembled a core cadre of 12 men, including thieves, language experts, early dabblers in science, and others. These men trained more men, and the Vatican's secret service was born.

Today, the Order of Saint Lucian is a rumor among the world's intelligence community. There have always been whispers of the Vatican having its own Agency, but never any direct proof. It is taken as a given assumption that it exists.

The political power of the Vatican waned considerably during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Holy See is still a wealthy and influential organization, but does not wield anything resembling the secular power that it once did. The Order had fallen into a period of stasis, primarily concerned with the maintenance of their files, the occasional operation to recover items stolen from the Vatican itself, and internal intrigues within Rome--such as the scandal surrounding the alleged conspiracy between the Vatican Bank and the Mafia, which led to the death of Pope John Paul the First.

It was the Order of Saint Lucian that discovered the truth: That the Pope had been assassinated by the conspirators within the Vatican Bank. They undertook secret operations to rid the Bank of Mafia connections, and engaged in reprisal killings among the Sicilian Mafia as well. A sleeping tiger had been awakened.

Under Pope John Paul II, the re-vitalized Order was used, behind the scenes, in his efforts to undermine Communism in Europe. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the release of its hold on Eastern Europe stunned Western analysts, as they were unaware of the actions taken by the Order throughout the 1980s which sped that collapse.

The Order receives a great deal of its intelligence (especially electronic intelligence - satellite data, etc.) via agents that it has placed in almost every major intelligence agency in the world. Often, these agents are not full members of the Order itself, but rather highly dedicated members of Opus Dei, the Catholic equivalent of the Freemasons.

Currently, the Order of Saint Lucian is largely concerned with counter-terrorism efforts. The



Vatican sees the actions of Islamic fundamentalists like Al-Qaeda as a modern continuation of the Crusades...a counter-attack, essentially, in a millenium-long struggle. Agents of the Order are engaged in intelligence gathering operations against Islamists, and more than one secret terrorist training camp has been wiped out by Order assault teams under cover of darkness.

Adventure Hooks:

- The PCs encounter agents of the Order of Saint Lucian while undertaking a mission of their own.
- The PCs, resourceful non-government adventurers, are approached by the Order of Saint Lucian and recruited as agents themselves.
- The Order of Saint Lucian decides to reveal

themselves to the PCs, because the Order has uncovered intelligence indicating an apocalyptic plot and cannot combat the threat alone.

Sample NPC: Mario Orsini is a field agent for the Order of Saint Lucian, and is representative of the skill level of the average agent likely to be encountered by Player Characters in the field.

Mario Orsini

Tough Hero 3/Smart Hero 3/Field Agent 3 CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d10+9 plus 3d6+9 plus 3d6+9 plus 6; HP 72; Mas 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 16, flatfooted 15 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +5 class); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2 telescoping baton), or +5 ranged (2d6, Berretta 93R); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Vatican, Order of Saint Lucian; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; AP 4; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Occupation: Academic (Computer Use, Gather Information, Research)

Skills: Bluff +10, Climb +3, Computer Use +10, Demolitions +6, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +6, Disguise +8, Drive +2, Forgery +6, Gather Information +10, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Investigate +9, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +4, Knowledge (Current Events) +8, Knowledge (Streetwise) +8, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Read/Write Language +1 (Italian, English), Research +8, Search +7, Sense Motive +3, Speak Language +1 (Italian, English), Spot +2, Survival +2

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Deceptive, Dodge, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Toughness

Talents (Tough Hero): Robust, Stamina; **(Smart Hero):** Savant (Investigate), Exploit Weakness; **(Field Agent):** Wetwork +1, Silent kill +1d6

Possessions: Berretta 93R machine pistol, telescoping baton. Wealth +8

The Wolves of Christendom

Pope Clement saw in the Crusades the forces of Christendom opposed by the most powerful weapon he had ever seen deployed: the fanatical followers of “the Old Man of the Mountain”, Hassan i Sabah. These selfless operatives were known as the Hashhashin, which entered Western languages as: Assassin.

Clement set about recruiting his own force of Assassins, to be used in counter-operations against those sent by Hassan i Sabah. This group he named the Order of Saint Lucian, who, like their patron saint, would offer protection against the evil of the unbelievers.

Throughout the centuries, the Order of Saint Lucian was used as a secret weapon against the enemies of the Church. As time passed, however, they became more and more autonomous, undertaking their own operations without prior Papal approval or authority. They became a secret cabal within the halls of the Vatican, moving silently through the years, furthering their own power and their own ends.

In 1595, a document was discovered, detailing the prophecies of Saint Malachy, hidden for centuries in the labyrinthine archives of the Vatican. Saint Malachy detailed the succession of Popes until the Apocalypse. The Church immediately declared the prophecies as fraudulent. However, the Order of Saint Lucian became very interested in this document, and it soon fell into their possession.

Since that time, it has become the overriding goal of the Order of Saint Lucian to bring about the events described in the Malachian Prophecies, so, as they see it, to more quickly bring about the Apocalypse and the Second Coming of Christ.

This single-minded devotion to bringing about the end of the world has led them in recent decades to even attempt to murder the Pope. They successfully assassinated John Paul I in 1978, and unsuccessfully tried to kill his successor, John Paul II in 1981. (In the Malachian Prophecies, there are only two Popes to come after John Paul II.)

Adventure Hooks:

- The PCs discover assassins of the Order of Saint Lucian are behind a string of seemingly unconnected murders.
- The Order of Saint Lucian has put a contract out on one of the PCs, believing the PC to be a figure described in the Malachian Prophecy.

Sample NPC: Antoine DeVillaret is a French member of the Order, and one of their most successful assassins.

Antoine DeVillaret

Fast Hero 4/Gunslinger 5 CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d8+12 plus 5d10+15; HP 73; Mas 17; Init +4; Spd 30 ft; Defense 22, touch 22, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +4 Dex, +8 class); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4, martial arts), or +10 ranged (2d10 (HKPSG1) or 2d6 (Berretta 93R)); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL The Order of Saint Lucian; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +3; AP 4; Rep +2; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 9, Cha 9.

Occupation: Military (Hide, Move Silently)

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +2, Demolitions +5, Drive +10, Escape Artist +12, Gamble +2, Hide +14, Intimidate +0, Knowledge (Current Events) +9, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +5, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Move Silently +13, Pilot +7, Profession +5, Read/Write Language +2 (French, English, Spanish), Sleight of

Hand +13, Speak Language +2 (French, English, Spanish), Spot +3, Survival +1, Tumble +14

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Bull's Eye, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Double Tap, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion, Opportunist; (Gunslinger): Close Combat Shot, Weapon Focus, Defensive Position, Lightning Reflexes

Possessions: HK PSG1, Berretta 93R Wealth +6

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Pope Clement saw the rise of sorcery and mysticism during the Middle Ages, and unlike previous pontiffs, he recognized that the tools of the Enemy could be used in the defense of God's children.

To this end, he charged a Venetian magician, Giacomo Griglio, with assembling a force of outcasts, well-versed in the sorcerous arts, who would be able to combat the forces of evil on their own terms. He named the Order after Saint Lucian, a diabolist who had been turned to the greater glory of God.

Throughout the intervening centuries, the Order has been the front line in the battle against monsters, demons, devils and evil both human and inhuman.



They operate in secret, with the Commander of the Order informing the new Pope personally as to the existence of the tools at his disposal. The Commander then directs the actions of Il Dodici, the 12 main operatives of the Order, each of whom directs a team of agents.

The Order uses the tools of the Enemy against it - among its ranks, you can find sorcerers, lycanthropes, psychics, and more. If you think of the BPRD from the *Hellboy* comics and film, except working for the Vatican instead of the US Government, you're not far from the truth.

This version of the Order works best as a set-up for a group of Player Characters in an Arcana campaign. The PC group can be one of the agent teams, under the direction of one of Il Dodici, who gives them assignments and supplies them with whatever they need for the mission.

Adventure Hooks:

- The Order sends the PCs to destroy a vampire who has been preying upon the residents of New York City.
- The Order has evidence that indicates that the AntiChrist is about to be born again -- this has happened every 50 years or so for the past few centuries, and every time, the Order is there to stop it.
- The PCs are sent to "take down" a rouge agent of the Order -- one of their own who has gone bad.

Sample NPC: Simon Ashenfell is a Mage who works for the Order. He can be used as either a sample PC, or as a resource made available to the PCs by their Il Dodici.

Simon Ashenfell

Smart Hero 6/Mage 3 CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d6+6 plus 3d6+3; HP 23; Mas 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 16, flatfooted 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, sword cane), or +6 ranged (2d6+0, Glock 17); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL The Order of Saint Lucian; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +8; AP 4; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Occupation: Academic (Decipher Script, Gather Information, Knowledge [Arcane Lore])

Skills: Computer Use +8, Concentration +2, Craft (chemical) +11, Craft (pharmaceutical) +5, Craft (structural) +8, Decipher Script +16, Demolitions +8, Disable Device +10, Forgery +4, Gather Information +8, Investigate +5, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +18, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +5, Knowledge (Civics) +6, Knowledge (Current Events) +8, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +7, Knowledge (History) +7, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +4, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Knowledge (Technology) +9, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +8, Navigate +5, Profession +5, Read/Write Language +4 (English, Latin, Aramaic, Arabic, French), Repair +7, Research +14, Search +9, Speak Language +7 (English, Latin, Aramaic, Arabic, French), Spellcraft +6, Use Magic Device +3

Feats: Cautious, Combat Expertise, Educated (Knowledge [History], Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy]), Endurance, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Studious, Vehicle Specialization (civilian aircraft), Vehicle Specialization (civilian cars)

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [Arcane Lore]), Linguist, Trick; (Mage): Arcane Skills, Arcane Spells, Summon Familiar, Scribe Scroll

Possessions: sword cane, Glock 17; Wealth +8

Arcane Spells: 4/3/2 (usually: *Detect Magical Aura, Light, Mage Hand, Read Magic, Sleep, Magic Missile, Shield, Knock, Levitate*)

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