



**PENITENT  
CRUSADE**



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# JOURNAL of the WORLD'S ENDING

Entry 1,678 - On Repentance and Sin.

*One fundamental tenet of the Azerai Church is that of repentance, that at its core, mankind is a sinful breed and must make recompense for the evil in their hearts. It is only through repentance that the realm overcomes its rot.*

*Life in Doaden is not conducive to the tender soul.*

*One must be quietly complicit in a whole litany of sins to have the luxury to believe with any confidence that they have not directly committed some evil or another.*

*While I do not share the Church's belief that it is repentance that will deliver mankind from this wasting sickness, I can see the hope it offers to the common folk. Misguided though it may be, the Azerai Church at least offers the poor folk of the realm a reason for their suffering, and most importantly, a means of personal deliverance.*

*The Penitent Crusade is the sum distillation of this sad credo. Those so broken and trapped by the inexorable grind of life in Doaden join the ranks expecting a simpler, more transactional relationship with their eternal souls.*

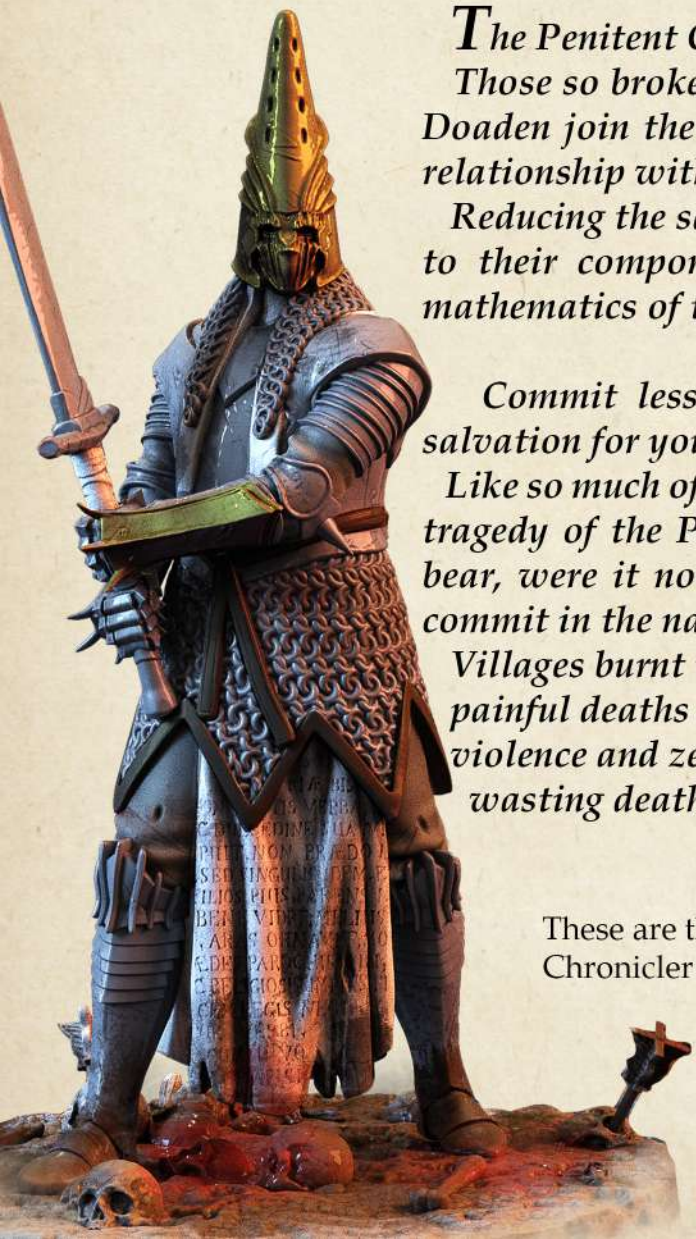
*Reducing the sacred texts and sermons of the Order of Atoners to their component parts, you can see the cold and simple mathematics of the Penitent Crusade's Path of Redemption.*

*Commit less evil deeds than good, and therein you find salvation for your eternal soul.*

*Like so much of what I witness in mankind's twilight, the sheer tragedy of the Penitent Crusade would be too much for me to bear, were it not for the terrible deeds I have witnessed them commit in the name of 'Salvation'.*

*Villages burnt to cinders, innocent folk sentenced to slow, painful deaths and perhaps worst of all, the belief that brute violence and zealous adherence will save Doaden from its wasting death.*

These are the words of Dreyen Solius,  
Chronicler of the Realm's Ending.



# The PENITENT CRUSADE

## Faction overview

Sinner, criminal or brigand, a time for retribution comes for all. Pity those who find theirs in the ranks of the Penitent Crusade.

The Penitent Crusade is an ever-growing body, comprised of both those found guilty of some heinous crime and those whose burdens of past sin have become too much to bear.

No matter their motivation, or willingness, the Crusade holds that they must all walk the Path of Redemption.

The **Path of Redemption** is the central credo of the Penitent Crusade, and it holds that forgiveness can only be found by expunging the corruption from the realm, and thereby, one's own soul.

As such, the Crusade travels the length and breadth of the realm, rooting out signs of corruption wherever they might be found.

True to the nature of Doaden though, the Path of Redemption has no ending, for along the way the ranks of the Crusade are required to commit deeds for the 'greater good' of the Church that would be an unbearable burden on any soul.

The Weight of Sin is never ending, and it is oft to drag one backward on the Path.

While the Church concerns itself more directly with matters of the spirit, the Penitent Crusade is better suited to deal with more practical threats, they are, after all, soldiers at their core.

Any Beasts, Monsters or Horrors that the land might throw at the few remaining bastions of faith left will face a staunch foe in the ranks of the Penitent.



Though, to the misfortune of many a Peasant Village, they are not well equipped to deal with the more subtle manifestations of the Realm's corruption and are as likely to put an entire community to the pyre rather than root out individual evil.

Deadly and vicious warriors who are equipped with rare and exotic armaments, bought from the deep coffers of the Azerai Church itself, those of the Penitent Crusade live only to slay the evils that beset the realm.

Each Crusader bears a metal mask, a symbol of their penitence and elevated station.

Wearers of such masks are due a duty of care by the residents of whatever locale they visit.

Food and lodging is expected and readily taken by the Penitent Crusade.

As such, they are quietly maligned by the common folk who have little to spare already, but there are still those who would argue the Crusade is a sad necessity in these dark times.



## THE IRREDEEMED

The Irredeemed serve as the rank and file of the Penitent Crusade, petty criminals, blasphemers and the simply unlucky, the Irredeemed are drafted into the ranks of the Crusade from the stockades of whichever town it passes through.

The Irredeemed are charged to fight and sacrifice themselves to achieve forgiveness for their misdeeds.

It is rare for the Irredeemed to last long on the path of redemption. In the complex and meticulous plans of the Primus, they often serve as chaff or distractions; drawing a beast's ire and providing the more skilled warriors an opportunity to strike a killing blow.



## SUPPLICATORS

Should an Irredeemed show a remarkable degree of skill, or survivability, they will rise in the ranks of the Penitent Crusade.

Bequeathed with better armour and more ornate weaponry, they are granted the rank of Supplicator.

While the great lie of the Penitent Crusade is that none may find salvation in its ranks, the Atoner nonetheless shall offer some forgiveness during the Supplicators elevation, their long list of sins is read aloud and forgiven, only to be followed by the Atoner reading a yet longer list of misdeeds committed by the individual during their time in the Irredeemed.

It is through this ritual that the Supplicator truly understands they shall never be freed from their Holy Duty, and shall remain in the ranks til their ultimate demise.





## DELIVERERS

The Deliverers are consummately skilled in the arts of the subtle strike.

Carrying intricate crossbows and blades they dispense the Church's Will with graceful poise.

Their fighting-order is often drawn from captured Cutthroats or Assassins who would otherwise languish and starve within the dungeons of whatever petty noble they had failed to slay.

Instead, they walk with the Penitent Crusade, in search of death or redemption for their failures.

When the hunt is engaged, they operate on the flanks of the main force, seeking opportunistic strikes with their cruel blades, or making carefully placed shots at weak points within a beast's hide with their exotic and complex crossbows.

## REPENTANT

The Repentant are deadly warriors, armed with mighty two handed blades. Considered the pinnacle of the Penitent Crusade's fighting orders, each is easily worth ten men.

Forming the core of the Crusade's offensive strike, the Repentant break forth from behind the Bulwarks, into their own loose fighting formation.

Each warrior fights near alone, allowing space for their blades to cleave great arcs in the ranks of the foe.

To have served so long within the ranks of the Penitent Crusade is to accrue a great burden of guilt and shame for deeds done in service of the Church.

These Warriors know with certainty their redemption shall never be claimed, and with this knowledge they fight with reckless abandon, knowing that only in death will they find peace.



## PENITENT BULWARKS

The Penitent Bulwarks are the mobile fortification of the Crusade. Warriors of prodigious size and strength, each has sworn an oath to never drop their great pavise-shields.

Standing ever-ready, it is the Penitent Bulwarks who must weather the brunt of the blows laden up on the Crusade. They take these strikes with stoicism, knowing that only by remaining firm will they find solace.

So great is their commitment to the oath, the ranks of the Bulwark sleep standing, leaning against their shields to catch a few moments of rest within their never ending defensive vigil.



## REPENTOR PRIMUS

Commanding the Penitent Crusade is the Repentor Primus, the martial leader of the host.

Cold and ruthless, he is the backhanded slap that drives the soldiery ever forwards, should their conviction show signs of waning.

The Repentor Primus can be elevated from any of the Crusade's fighting orders, but they are most often from the Repentors, for their resolute and fatalistic nature makes them a good character fit for the role of Primus, given that they must commit many of the Crusade's ranks to death the maelstrom of battle.

Serving at the behest of the Church, the Repentor Primus is afforded some degree of autonomy in the application of the Church's orders, a sure sign of the trust placed in these Warriors holy conviction.

By nature of their roles, the Repentor Primus is placed at odds with the Crusade's resident Atoner, whose more lofty, spiritual concerns often run contrary to tactical wisdom.

## ATONER

The Atoner leads the Penitent Crusade in service of the Azerai Church, they stand as the Church's direct representatives, close but separate from the ranks of the Crusade's fighting orders. It is theirs to ensure that the Crusade continues on the most correct and righteous heading, and to keep tally of the Path to Redemption.

The Atoner holds record of all the sins committed by the ranks of the Crusade, long past and more recent.

They mark well each Crusaders progress on the path to redemption, which all soon understand is without end.

It is telling of the dogmatic charisma possessed by the Atoners that the ranks of the Penitent Crusade do not break and turn upon themselves or flee before the horrors they face on the Path.

Even as one of the Cloth, the Atoner is still a formidable warrior in their own right.

Riding atop a great War Steed, they join the ranks of the Crusade in battle, marking bone-breaking blows with their warstaff while channelling Azerai Rites to endow the soldiery with an unbecoming degree of confidence and vigour.





## 'THE DURAND' BALLISTA WAGON

To support the Penitent Crusade the Azerai Church procures all manner of exotic and esoteric weapons from Smith and Machinist, but none are more capable of such precise destruction than the Great Ballistae.

Mounted atop a great carriage pulled by four enormous shire horses, a Ballista is a surprisingly mobile threat, though none would call it agile.

Lashing the horses into a frenzied momentum, the drivers will take the wagon in wide sweeping arcs around their quarry, while the Ballista operators carefully pick their fatal shot.

The Ballista Wagon was developed by Xephan Durand, the Allsteiner Exile, during his tenure at the Holy Smithy.

Though he lacked the exotic reagents to provide the motive force common to Allstein's most wondrous inventions, his intricate skill with gear and cog still mark the war machine out as a singular marvel.







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