

- A Guide to Righteous Indignation -

Playing a Holy Vindicator



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Written by Zurr

So the Holy Vindicator has caught your eye, huh? That's not terribly surprising, as it's a very nice prestige class with quite a few unique abilities hidden behind that trademark shield. Whether it was the power and versatility behind the Stigmata or the thought of being able to patch up your team between fights while decimating your foes during them, I hope that you find the guide informative.

I'll be writing the guide in a style based off of (unsurprisingly) Treantmonk's guides. Though it will be tough to cover all of the possible options and variety that Prestige Classes offer, I'll do my best. Well, without further delay, let's move onto the guide proper.

A note before we begin: This isn't really an optimization guide, so much as a guide where I point out some good options, some bad options, and leave you to build your character however you want to. Whether you're twinked out to be completely optimal or your build plays second fiddle to your roleplaying, you're welcome to use my guide.

- Class Overview -

All in all, Holy Vindicator is reminiscent of a Red Mage. The class is based around being a tanky mage while maintaining martial prowess, and it does this quite well. Whether you're dipping into the class for the extra AC and empowered healing, or going the distance to shape up your physical abilities, or perhaps you're just a Paladin looking for some extra options, the Holy Vindicator might be the class for you. Here is the color scheme that I'll be using throughout the guide, though I'm sure that if you're reading this guide then you're quite familiar with it.

- Purple** - The best of the best. If you have the option to take this, you probably should.
- Blue** - Not quite on the same level as purple, but you really can't go wrong grabbing this.
- Green** - A solid choice, if you have the room in your character build to support it.
- Orange** - Situational at best. You are probably taking this for either flavor or as a prereq.
- Red** - Avoid if possible. Only take these for flavor purposes, or if out of options otherwise.

Ability scores: There's a number of ways that you can take this, really, but there are two general guidelines that you can follow:

Need Wisdom: Wis=Cha>Str=Con>Dex>Int, or Wis>Cha=Dex>Con>Str>Int

Don't need Wisdom: Cha=Str>Con>Dex>Int=Wis, or Cha=Dex>Str=Con>Wis=Int

With that out of the way, there are two things to consider before you begin building your Holy Vindicator: your in-combat role, and your out-of-combat role. Due to being much easier to cover, we'll tackle the latter first.

- Class Role -

As I'm sure you know, there are many roles that need to be filled in this game. Though it seems a bit mean-spirited, Treantmonk outlined them rather expertly in his guide to the Wizard (names changed somewhat to protect feelings):

The Face: You'll more than likely have a very high Charisma, and if you have nowhere else to allocate your skill points (or if you simply have a high intelligence) then this role might be for you. Unfortunately, you already have one skill that you'll be keeping maxed out for at least five levels, and a majority of the classes that you have the option of leveling in have a base of only 2 skill points per level. You can do this if there's nobody else in the party suited for it, but it's really not for you.

The Sneak: Please don't. You're likely to be heavily armored, and similarly to the problems presented above, you simply don't have the skill points to cover this. You can certainly help whoever this is do their job with buffs and healing when they inevitably fall into a trap, but don't try to take on this role yourself.

The Healer: I'm not saying that you should put all of your resources into healing, but let's face it. You have a strong Channel Energy, and whichever channeling class you take you'll have the option of having a large amount of healing at any given moment, so there's no reason not to do this role. If you really want to save things entirely for yourself, you can at the very least have the rest of the party chip in for a wand of Cure Light Wounds and rely on that between fights. Someone's gotta do it, and if you're playing this class then that someone is probably you.

The Caster: Though arcane casters are typically more suited to this, there's no reason you can't contribute as well, depending on what your class loadout is. True, most of your spells will probably be going to buffs, control or healing, but if you have the right spell for the job, feel free to cast it.

As presented above, your role as a vindicator outside of combat will be to keep your party patched up, and to sometimes act as a secondary face or caster should the opportunity present itself. If nothing else, you can use any buffs that you have prepared/known to assist your other party members in what they do. So, after accepting that at least some of your resources will be going toward healing, let's take a look at what your other role shall be, that of combat. Unlike the former, the Holy Vindicator actually has a few options here, though (at least in my opinion) one option stands above the rest.

Front Line Skirmisher: Certainly the easiest combat style to build and play, this is all about taking your weapon(s) and hitting whatever you can, as hard as you can. With the Vindicator's high BAB and defenses, this is more than possible for you, and I'd be lying if I said that you weren't effective at it. Though it may take you a turn to catch the enemy with your lower movement, you've certainly got power where it counts, and have the option of having not only your Stigmata, but also things such as Smite Evil or Challenge boosting up your attacks. When in doubt, all you need is Power Attack to pull off this combat style effectively.

Rain of Arrows: I'd be wary of doing this due to the sheer amount of feats that it takes, though if you have the room for it then by all means go ahead. Your bulk is wasted on the back line, though at the same time you could play a **switch-hitter**, dropping your bow in favor of a melee weapon when something comes in close in order to protect your casters or other archers. As for being a full archer, I really have to recommend against it, due to the feats needed to be truly effective at it.

The Full Caster: While you certainly CAN do this, this is more a question of why you would be taking this class if that were your intent. Though you do gain heavy armor if nothing else, you also lose casting levels at 1, 5 and 9. Essentially: If you want to do this, just stay in Cleric/Oracle and forget about this class for anything more than a dip.

The Assassin: A very interesting prospect. There are a few ways that you can get the Dimension Door spell, and if you do then you can carry this out quite well, if not by the traditional route. If you take the necessary feats, you're more than capable of teleporting to wherever you need to be to take out a priority target. So the short of it: Don't do it conventionally, for reasons listed above with the Sneak. Do it using teleportation and you have a very viable strategy should the enemy have a squishy or mobile caster in the back.

The Insurmountable: And here's what I personally see as the Vindicator's best combat role. Combining a few of the roles above, your goal is to make your enemy's combat as hard as possible. Use buffs before combat to prepare your team, control spells where you can in order to guide your enemy to where they don't want to be, and then wreak havoc with your weapon wherever you can, if possible moving around with Dimension Door to be wherever you're needed, whenever you're needed. If you have the feats for it, you could also take advantage of your high BAB and things such as trip and a reach weapon for further control. And that's the bottom line of it, really: control and protection to ensure the victory of your party.

- Class Features -

Prerequisites: BAB +5, Channel Energy, **Knowledge (Religion) 5 ranks**, either **Alignment Channel** or **Elemental Channel**, and 1st level Divine Spells

A feat tax if I've ever seen one. Knowledge (Religion) is nice to have, but being forced to take Alignment/Elemental Channel is essentially a wasted feat.

Class Skills and skills/level: Nothing here you won't already have, aside from maybe Climb/Swim. Holy Vindicator is also 2+int for skills, so... you're not a skill monkey, we'll say that.

BAB and saves: You get full BAB and two good saves. It really couldn't be much better here.

Armor and Weapons proficiency: You get heavy armor, as well as all martial weapons if you didn't have them already. Not much commentary needed here, really.

Spells per day: You get $\frac{3}{4}$ spell progression on one of your divine classes. If you take 10 levels of Holy Vindicator, Clerics and Paladins will still see their highest level of spell, though Oracles will max out at 8.

Channel Energy: Levels in Holy Vindicator stack with your other class for channeling energy. Of note is that the class you progress in channel energy does NOT have to be the same as the one you progress with the spells per day.

Vindicator's Shield: A nice between-battles buff that you can slap on to make yourself extra hard to hit. The only drawbacks are that you expend a use of Channel Energy to use this, and that it only lasts until you get hit for the first time. Still, there will be many days when you won't use every use of Channel Energy, and more AC is always welcome.

Stigmata: In terms of both fluff and mechanics, this ability is wonderful. Upon gaining this ability, you scar your body in devotion to your faith, and can cause it to bleed or heal at will (Standard, Move at 6th, Swift at 10th). While bleeding, you gain a bonus that scales with your class level to attack, damage, AC, Caster Level checks, or saves, and you can change it every time you activate the ability. The fact that it stops blood drain and bleed damage from every other source is just icing on the cake. The bonus is either sacred or profane depending on what type of energy you channel, so it will likely stack with everything else you've got on you. Definitely one of the Vindicator's best and most iconic abilities.

Faith Healing: Any and all 'Cure X Wounds' spells that you use on yourself are automatically Empowered, and then Maximized at 8th level, without increasing casting time. Combined with **Combat Healer** from the Life Mystery, this becomes very **blue**.

Divine Wrath: The first of your critical-based abilities. Whenever you crit or get hit with a critical, you can spend a first level spell slot to cast Doom as an immediate action. It's the least threatening of the three, but you also get it the earliest, and making your target Shaken for such a low cost is a fair trade.

Channel Smite: Bonus feats are always nice, but... eh. Goes up to **green** if you channel negative energy.

Bloodfire: As with above, fairly situational if you channel positive energy, much better if you channel negative and can target living creatures with the the Sickened and Bleed.

Versatile Channel: As often as you will be channeling in combat, I find it hard to rate this as anything higher than orange. On the other hand, it gives you more opportunities to position yourself to channel in combat. Take it as you will.

Divine Judgment: Very cool ability. Whenever you reduce something to negative, you can sacrifice a second level spell slot as an immediate action to cast Death Knell on them. The enhancement bonus to strength is negligible, as you'll likely have a belt at this point, but the increase in caster level is very welcome. If you're using a belt for something other than strength, this goes up to **blue**.

Bloodrain: It's Bloodfire, but it affects your entire Channeling and not just the Channel Smite. See that ability for an explanation on the color.

Divine Retribution: Whenever you crit or are crit by something, you can sacrifice a 3rd level spell slot as an immediate action to Bestow Curse on them. By the time you get this ability, those spell slots likely aren't doing anything too beneficial anymore, so having a chance to curse once in every five attacks is astoundingly good, assuming a 19-20 weapon that's been doubled by some source. Very nice, even as far as capstones go.

Unfortunately, Holy Vindicator is one of those Prestige Classes that starts out strong, but has a lot of situational abilities in the middle levels that make you question why you're taking the class. Luckily the Stigmata continues to scale with level all the way through, and if you channel negative energy (or face a lot of undead) then all of those channeling-based abilities will be much more useful.

- Weapon Styles -

As I hinted at briefly earlier on, the Holy Vindicator can get away with using any number of weapons, though as above I think that one option stands above the rest. Before we move onto

that though, I would like to point out one of the Vindicator's abilities, the Vindicator's Shield. As a standard action, you may expend one use of channel energy to add your channeling damage/healing dice to your shield's AC, which then lasts for 24 hours or until an attack beats your AC. However, you *don't need your shield in hand to get this bonus*. This means that you can keep a buckler (or a quick-draw shield) on hand to use this buff as needed, without having it impede you too much when you don't need it.

One Big Weapon: Similarly to what I said in the Skirmisher section, it's really hard to mess it up if you're equipped like this. Buff up your strength and use Power Attack as needed, and you'll contribute just fine. Look to the Greatsword or the Falchion for the higher crit ranges. However, personally I think this is overall inferior to...

One (specific) Medium Weapon: Yes, this is higher than the above, if only for one reason. As listed above, the Vindicator will be carrying a shield on him at all times. A quick-draw shield can be drawn and removed as a free action if the user has Quick Draw, meaning it can be put away or taken out only as needed. "But Zurr," you say, "you can just do that with a two-handed weapon too!" True, you can do that. Do your attacks, then end your turn by pulling out your shield. Put it away on your next turn and repeat. However, that is inferior for two reasons. The first, that's **cheesy and unrealistic**. The second, the Falcata exists. Two of the Vindicator's abilities rely on getting a crit, and then are boosted by having a larger crit modifier. The Falcata is currently the only weapon that has both an increased critical threat range AND an increase in critical damage. For that reason alone, I suggest that every would-be Vindicator considers gaining proficiency in this weapon.

An alternative to this would be the Scimitar, while using the **Dervish Dance** feat. While it would push you into lighter armor, having a higher dexterity is much more useful than having a higher strength.

Reach weapon: As stated earlier in the guide, the Holy Vindicator is all about controlling the battlefield, and what better way to do that than to be able to hit your opponents before they hit you? Though it is likely inferior to the Falcata or even a normal two-handed weapon with the same feats, the reach weapon really comes into its own when used alongside the likes of Combat Reflexes and combat maneuvers, specifically trip. Though this loses some effectiveness when you're fighting things immune to your maneuvers, it's a good way to keep humanoids in check, if nothing else. If you go down this path, the Bardiche is a good choice for the 19-20 crit range and 1d10 damage die.

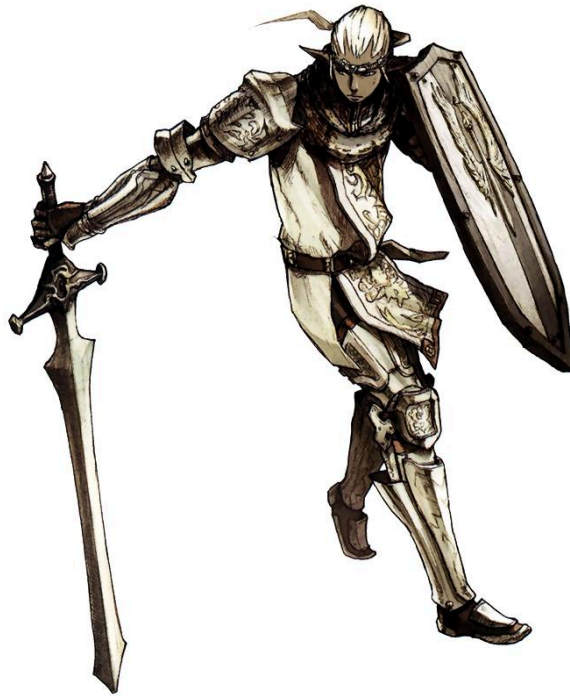
Ranged Weapons: There isn't much to say here that I didn't cover in the roles section above. To rephrase, you simply don't have the feats necessary to make proper use of a bow unless you do something silly (which will naturally be covered later). However, bringing along a bow to get some damage in from afar, then switching over to a melee weapon when the

enemy comes in close is a pretty decent plan.

Two weapons: You do not have the dexterity for this. You do not have the feats for this. Don't do this.

Sword and Board: Ironically, the Holy Vindicator is rather bad at pulling off the classic "sword n' shield" style that you would expect from them. Like the two weapon style, you just don't have the resources that would make this work.

Natural Weapons: If you have them for backup in case of a disarm or sunder, that's great. I wouldn't use them as a primary weapon style, though; you really do want those criticals.



[http://finalfantasy.wikia.com/wiki/Paladin_\(Final_Fantasy_XI\)](http://finalfantasy.wikia.com/wiki/Paladin_(Final_Fantasy_XI))

- Channel Energy: The required -

A note before I start this section: In an attempt to acknowledge what has come before me, I am going to be using [Abraham Spalding's guide to Channeling](#) as a reference during this, and later parts of the guide. While I will not be quoting or pulling directly from it, it is still a very valid

source of information if you want a second opinion on some of the options that I point out.

Now, to enter the Holy Vindicator, you need to be able to channel energy. Per RAW, there are currently four classes that obtain this ability: Clerics get it at level 1, Life Oracles get it by way of a revelation, and Paladins/Antipaladins gain the ability at level 4. Quite simply, if you're going to be playing a Holy Vindicator, you must have levels in one of these classes. Luckily, all four of them are also divine casting classes, which means you meet that prerequisite as well. Let's take a look at these options in more depth.

Cleric: Cleric is a very fine option for entering this Prestige Class, given that they have inarguably the best option for Channel Energy. They also have the fastest progression of divine magic, and are the only of the four classes that will maintain 9th level spells at Cleric 10/HV 10. They also gain domains for some more options, and have a few noteworthy archetypes.

Merciful Healer forces you into channeling positive energy and the Healing domain, though you also never provoke attacks of opportunity for casting healing spells in combat and you give your channeling Paladin Mercies. If you take this archetype, you may consider going up to 8 before entering Holy Vindicator for the ability to reroll any 1s when rolling your channel energy dice.

Separatist takes away your deity's favored weapon in exchange for a second domain which does not have to be in their profile, though it does progress at a slower rate. If there's a domain that you want for the ability or spells, then you might consider this archetype.

Theologian is an interesting choice. If your domain has a buff that you like to have up, getting Extend Spell on it permanently is a solid choice. However, given that you will only be applying this to two spells (and the latter at level 20, should you take ten levels of HV), you may want to consider this option carefully, as it will be more or less useful depending on your domain.

However, Cleric has a few drawbacks as well. Unlike the other two choices, you'll need to prioritize your Wisdom to be able to cast spells, which in addition to charisma, strength, dexterity, and constitution, can make you quite MAD.

What's more, the Cleric has only $\frac{3}{4}$ BAB, which means that you'll be delaying your entry to HV by at least one level, and not until level 8 if you go straight Cleric. Multiclassing with a full BAB class, however, and **Cavalier** in particular, makes this much more bearable.

Life Oracle: Though it's a bit of an unorthodox choice given the fluff, the Life Oracle can make for a strong option for entering Holy Vindicator. Though it has the same $\frac{3}{4}$ BAB progression as Cleric, and is one level behind on spells, Oracle is also completely dependant on its charisma for class abilities, meaning it's much less MAD. The Oracle also has revelations

rather than a domain, some of which are quite powerful.

Channel is mandatory if you want levels of Holy Vindicator, so I'm not even going to give it a rating. Of note, though, is that you only gain it 1+Cha times per day, so you may want to consider **Extra Channeling** more so than the other options.

NOTE: This may not qualify for Holy Vindicator by RAW, but outside of Pathfinder Society you should be fine to do this, so long as your DM doesn't play strictly by the rules with no leeway.

Combat Healer would allow you to use two spells slots to cast a Cure spell as a swift action once per day (**twice** at Oracle 11). Unless you're taking Oracle to 11 or higher, however, I can't recommend this. This is a good candidate for Abundant Revelations if you want more uses.

Delay Affliction makes it take longer for poisons and disease to affect you by one hour per oracle level. Alternately, you can have a potion or two of Remove Poison/Disease laying around.

Energy Body is a nice and flavorful way of getting even more healing, though you likely won't have enough levels in Oracle to make it worth it. It gets greener the more levels you have in the class.

Enhanced Cures is something that you grab at higher levels to boost your lower level spells. You likely will have 16 levels in Oracle at the most, meaning the only spells that will really benefit are Cure Light and Cure Moderate Wounds. If you have an Oracle 12/HV 8, that puts CLW at a fixed 20 points when used on yourself, not bad for a first level spell. For a majority of your character's levels, though, this will be rather useless. Consider it at level 7 or even 11, but it's up against some tough competition.

Healing Hands gives you a boost to Heal checks, and lets you treat two people at once, or provide long-term care for yourself. Definitely an NPC or flavor ability.

Life Link is a very cool ability, and likely the main reason you're taking levels in Life Oracle over one of the other options. It allows you to take the damage of others onto yourself at a rate of five per turn. This combos well with the Vindicator's **Faith Healing**, as you can heal yourself much more easily than you can whoever you're siphoning off the damage from.

Life Sense is Blindsight out to 30 ft, with the 'drawback' that it only affects living creatures. A very strong consideration as your level 11 revelation.

Safe Curing means that you never provoke attacks of opportunity for using a healing spell, though you likely won't be doing terribly much of that in combat anyway.

Spirit Boost means that whenever your healing spells push someone to maximum hit points, the remainder stays as temporary hit points for one round. Once you can start hitting yourself with Maximized cure spells, grabbing this becomes quite appealing and makes healing in combat viable in the right scenario, if only on yourself.

All in all, the idea of a Life Oracle 12/Holy Vindicator 8 is a very scary thought, given the revelations you can pull off. In addition to the revelations, Oracles have options in their archetypes.

Black-Blooded Oracle is an option to be healed by negative energy, though the rest of the archetype's abilities are fairly sub par (and thankfully optional).

Dual-Cursed Oracle depends entirely on what you do with it. The bonus spells are decent, and likely more useful than what you would get otherwise, and the extra revelation at 5th level is quite appealing, as are the Misfortune/Fortune options.

Ancient Lorekeeper lets you grab spells from the Wizard spell list and get them in place of your mystery's normal bonus spells. However, make sure that your DM is on board with this, as by RAW I don't believe that you would keep getting bonus spells when gaining levels in Holy Vindicator. Orange if you can't, but quite blue if you can.

Lastly, we have the **Oracle's Curse**. Honestly, none of them stand out to me as being particularly better or worse than any other for the Holy Vindicator, so just pick what fits your character the best. If you're looking to be **cheesy**, going Dual-Cursed while taking Wolfscarred Face (from Blood of Angels) as your primary curse and Deaf as your secondary curse cancels out the only negative to Wolfscarred Face, and gives you a **bite attack that progresses as you level**. I mean you're deaf, but a point in Linguistics lets you read lips and also teaches you sign language.

Paladin: Let's face it, the Holy Vindicator was made for the Paladin. Full BAB means that they can enter at least one level sooner than Cleric or Oracle, and they're hurt the least by the lost spell progression. The **armor and weapon proficiencies** are redundant, but that's not why you're entering the class. **Smite Evil** stacks with your Stigmata, and even if you only have it once per day by way of the **Hospitaller** archetype, what a glorious battle that will be. **Divine Grace** makes your saves untouchable, especially since (again) it can stack with your Stigmata. **Lay on Hands** is just more healing, though without **Hospitaller** you have to choose between Lay on Hands and Channel Energy, as the latter uses up the former. And well, **Divine Bond** is a once-per-day buff to your weapon. As with the former two classes, there are a number of useful archetypes that you might consider.

Divine Defender allows you to give nearby allies a bonus to AC and CMD, but if you're not

going full Paladin I'm not sure it's worth it. It also allows you to form your Divine Bond with your armor rather than your weapon.

Divine Hunter is an obvious choice for anyone attempting the archery route, though there's another option listed later on that you may like better. If you'd rather stick to one class not to complicate things, however, Divine Hunter is the class for you. Getting Precise Shot as a bonus feat in exchange for losing Heavy Armor (which you then get back with Holy Vindicator) is just a good trade.

Hospitaller halves your uses of Smite Evil, but separates your Lay on Hands and Channel Energy. If you need more healing, this is a pretty good option.

Oath Against Undeath gives you Detect Undead over Detect Evil, but more importantly it gives your armor the Ghost Touch property in exchange for your first (and later on third) Mercy. If you're in a campaign where this will come up often, you may consider this, and even if not. The bonus spells you gain are fairly negligible, though that's not really the point of this.

Oath of Charity means that your Lay on Hands heals yourself less, but your allies more. It's a good way to balance out Faith Healing, I suppose. It also allows you to change which Mercies you have every day, which is always nice. The bonus spells aren't really anything to write home about, however.

Oath of Loyalty replaces Smite Evil with the ability to give an ally a bonus to their AC and saving throws equal to your charisma modifier. I wouldn't recommend it, but if you're going for an all out babysitter then this might be for you. If nothing else, you get **Wrath** as a bonus spell.

Sacred Servant allows you to take a domain and get bonus spell slots for your domain spells. However, it also halves your Smite Evil progression and replaces your Divine Bond with one more casting-oriented. Of notes is that the Divine Bond replacement lets you increase your channeling damage/healing dice, one of the few ways to do so.

Antipaladin: Most of what I said above holds true here, just add on an evil goatee. Unfortunately, some of the Holy Vindicator's class abilities will go to waste. If you plan on being an Antipaladin, I highly recommend finding a way to have yourself healed by negative energy. In addition, you might want to beg your DM to allow your Faith Healing aspect of the Holy Vindicator to apply to Inflict spells on yourself. Other than that, though, there isn't much to say here.

- Other Multiclassing -

Multiclassing is mostly for Cleric and Oracle, to give them ways of entering Holy Vindicator earlier by taking levels in a full BAB class. However, there are two options that stand out before those, as ways to increasing your channeling prowess even while multiclassing.

Cavalier (Order of the Holy Star) allows you to add half of your Cavalier levels to Channel Energy and Lay on Hands. By RAW, this only works for Paladin and Cleric, though by RAI you can probably apply it to Life Oracle as well, with GM permission. You also get an untyped bonus on damage from your challenge, though your Mount will be fairly useless as you likely won't be taking more than two levels. With that in mind, I'd recommend taking the **Standard Bearer** archetype so that you'll at least have some use for the level one ability.

Inquisitor (with the Channeling Scourge feat) allows you to count Inquisitor levels as Cleric (or Paladin, or Oracle) levels for the sake of damage dice, but ONLY when dealing damage. I wouldn't take this option with anything but Cleric, but that mix is quite an interesting option. Cleric 3/Inquisitor 4 keeps one of your domains on a full progression, as well as nabbing you some nice abilities such as Judgment 2/day, Cunning Initiative, and Solo Tactics. However, of note is that Judgment gives you either a Sacred or Profane bonus, so it does not stack with your Stigmata. By RAW, a Neutral character can channel positive energy (and therefore have a sacred bonus from Stigmata) but also gain a profane bonus from Judgment. But that's starting to get a bit **cheesy**, so I wouldn't recommend it. The **Heretic archetype** is very strong, though you won't get as much out of it as someone more focused on wisdom.

If you don't care as much about your channeling progression, there are quite a few more options available. However, unless it's a good option, I will only be listing full BAB classes, as otherwise it will delay your access to Holy Vindicator. Your best choice for a full BAB class will be two levels along with four levels of either Oracle or Cleric, or a one-two level dip with Paladin.

Barbarian (Oracle, Paladin) gets you access to Rage, and with two levels your choice of a rage power. Of note is that as a Paladin or Merciful Healer, you can use your Mercy to remove the Fatigue that you get from raging, and as an Oracle with the Lame curse you'll be immune to Fatigue at level 6, and the movement bonus from Barbarian cancels out the Lame curse's only negative, though if you want heavy armor it will have to be Mithral. **Invulnerable Rager** gets you DR1/- in exchange for Uncanny Dodge, and **Urban Barbarian** gives you arguably a better version of Rage for your purposes, though you do lose Fast Movement.

Fighter is as always a simple dip if you'd like come extra combat feats and early access to heavy armor and martial weapons. **Armor Expert** gives you a +1 bonus to touch AC when using a shield, and **Polearm Master** can be used to shorten a reach weapon to attack adjacent enemies, albeit at a -4 penalty, with both of these abilities replacing Bravery. Alternatively, **Unbreakable** can get you Diehard and Endurance as bonus feats.

Ranger is a simple way to go. d10 Hit Die, a good reflex save and 6 skill points per level will help shore up your weaknesses, you get a flexible bonus on attacks from Favored Enemy (or a Challenge-like ability from the [Guide](#) archetype). You also gain a bonus feat which you do not need the prerequisites for. If you insist on Two Weapon Fighting, this is likely how you'll get it, pumping up your dexterity through your belt or a manual to keep up with it.

Monk is another otherwise unorthodox choice that you can use with Cleric to get more out of that wisdom, though doing so will limit your ability to use armor. Only archers will really give this class a second glance, as the [Zen Archer](#) archetype severely helps out with that build by providing a ton of useful bonus feats as well as making attack rolls with a bow based on wisdom.

Non-Life Oracle is a potential one-three level dip used depending on what mystery you want to pursue. Perhaps the most important ones to note as Lore and Nature, which allow you to use Charisma in place of Dexterity when determining your AC, as well as either your Reflex save or CMD, respectively. However, there are several mysteries that could benefit from this dip. However, just be sure that you focus on revelations that are static, not ones that scale with level.

Living Monolith is potentially a **very cheesy** way to prevent the drawbacks of your Stigmata. The entry requirements are steep, but a two level dip would get you full BAB, a **small bonus on saves against negative levels, death and mind-affecting effects**, [Enlarge Person as a swift action](#) three times per day at seven minutes each, and *immunity to bleed damage*. By RAW this works, though many DMs will likely rule against this for being silly.

- Sample Entry Builds -

Now that we've gone over exactly what the Holy Vindicator does, I'd like to look at some of the different ways that you can enter into the class. For reference, the prerequisites again are:

BAB +5
Channel Energy Class Feature
Knowledge (Religion) 5 ranks
Alignment Channel or Elemental Channel
Ability to cast 1st level Divine Spells

We've covered Channel Energy. Knowledge (Religion) is a simple task, as putting one point in every level will have it covered by the time you have that much BAB anyway. Neither of the channeling feats have a prereq, so they're easy enough to pick up just before you enter Holy

Vindicator, and the 1st level divine spells come with any of the channeling classes. So what's important to note is the the BAB, and what combos get there the fastest. There are three:

Five levels in full BAB classes

Up to four levels in a medium BAB class, with two-five levels in a full BAB class for a total of six

Seven levels in one or two medium BAB classes

Paladin/Antipaladin 5: Incredibly simple and easy to build. You hit all of the prereqs easily, and Knowledge (Religion) is a class skill for both. There really isn't much that I can say here that wasn't covered somewhere above in the Paladin section.

Paladin 4/Oracle 2 or 3: Utilizing the Oracle dip mentioned in the previous section, this nets you the basics from Paladin while getting you Charisma as your AC stat, making you very close to SAD.

Life Oracle 7: Arguably one of the better options, and progressing through 8 levels of Holy Vindicator then finishing out as Oracle lets you reach level 20 with 17 BAB and 9th level spells, along with a lot of the best of both worlds. A very simple, and very strong choice.

Life Oracle 4/Paladin 2: Incredibly basic, but the idea is to save yourself one level by progressing in a full BAB class, while grabbing Lay on Hands and Divine Grace to help yourself out, and Smite Evil for those tough fights.

Antipaladin 5/Oracle 1: Take the Black-Blooded curse so that you can heal yourself with negative energy, otherwise building identical as though you didn't have the Oracle level. As with other oracle dips, you can also get Charisma to AC to help yourself out further.

Cleric 4/Cavalier (or Samurai) 2: Utilizing the Order of the Star, you enter Holy Vindicator one level earlier than full Cleric while losing only one level on Channeling. This means that with ten levels of Vindicator you'll only see 8th level spells, but it's an option.

Cleric 1/Cavalier 2/Inquisitor 4: Though at first glance quite similar to the above, the Inquisitor levels grant you Solo Tactics and another Teamwork Feat. The big draw is that you can treat your allies as though they had the feat, letting you gain the benefit any time you want, in addition to gaining Judgment 2/day. If you don't want the level of Cavalier in there, Cleric 3/Inquisitor 4 works just as well, minus one teamwork feat, and it lets you finish with 7th level cleric spells.

Zen Archer 3/(Fighter or Ranger 2)/Cleric 2: If you want to be an archer, this is a decent base for it, depending on how many feats you want. Using those levels exactly nets you 6th level spells, though taking only one level of Fighter gets you 7th.



<http://darksouls.wikidot.com/solaire-of-astora>

- Races -

So what sort of race is the Holy Vindicator? Several things are considered as criteria, between racial traits, ability score boosts, and favored class bonuses. If something isn't listed, just assume that it's **red** or inferior to something else, as I'm only going over the core races in full.

Core Races

Dwarf (Cleric) - Well, we're off to a good start. Detrimental ability score modifiers and no racial traits that really stick out. The only redeeming factor is the favored class bonuses to Paladin and Oracle, though the penalty to Charisma makes that path completely unappealing.

Elf - A solid yellow choice. The ability scores aren't particularly helpful, though the racial abilities are good for the more magically inclined. Of note is the Oracle favored class bonus, which can progress one specific revelation to 1.5x your Oracle level. Circumstantial, but useful. Also of

note is the Oracle racial archetype, which was covered earlier.

Gnome - The small size and strength penalty hurt a lot, and there's not much to redeem it in the racial traits. The Oracle favored class bonus progresses your curse, which is useful if you wouldn't hit the cap otherwise. If you go with a Gnome, I suggest a Finesse-able weapon.

Half-Elf - Finally, something worth writing about. The floating stat bonus can go to whatever you need, and one of the alternate racial traits nets you proficiency with the Falcatra for free. Clerics can increase the damage dice on their channel energy, and Oracles get more spells known with their favored class bonus, which really shines once you start taking levels in it again after Holy Vindicator. Very blue overall.

Half-Orc - Not quite on the same level as its closely related cousins the Half-Elf or the Human, but still a solid pick. A floating bonus is always nice, and the half-orc can pick up either a bite attack or a luck bonus to all saves. Favored class bonuses are negligible aside from Oracle, which grants more spells known.

Halfling - For our purposes, the Halfling is identical to the Gnome, albeit with somewhat better racial abilities. The bonus to dexterity is really no better or worse than the constitution, but the strength penalty and small size still hurt a lot.

Human - Woah man, I'm sure nobody saw this coming. I can't see any of the "Heart of the" abilities being particularly useful, but you can't go wrong with a bonus feat and an extra skill point every level on top of the floating bonus. Oracle gets more spells known, otherwise go for hp.

Featured Races

Aasimar - The only race to get bonuses to Wis/Cha, though if you're not a Cleric then Str/Cha from the Angelkin variant works just as well. Miscellaneous racial bonuses, though elemental energy resistance is always nice, and the Oracle favored class bonus is great.

Catfolk (Cleric, Oracle) - Noteworthy as one of the two races to have a racial pounce available, though they must make it with their claws. Otherwise just nice racial abilities all around, being able to reroll a reflex save once per day, have a climb speed, and the ever-useful Scent. Dex/Charisma means they make good Paladins and Oracles, especially the latter for the extra spells from the favored class bonus. The wisdom penalty means that Clerics should reconsider.

Dhampir (Antipaladin) - Another race, like Aasimar, that has variable score modifiers, and your best bets are probably the str/wis or str/cha, either way losing out on con. However, the real value to Dhampir is that they have affinity for negative energy. If you want to use Antipaladin or negative energy channeling in general, you should strongly consider this race.

Hobgoblin (Evil Cleric) - Bonuses to dex/con are always a good sign, but there isn't much else in this race worth noting. Clerics that channel negative energy should note the favored class bonus, which adds ½ to negative energy spell damage. It's not going to affect your channeling, but it makes you Inflict spells more potent.

Ifrit (Cleric) - Oh boy, another dex/cha race, with a penalty to wis. The only really noteworthy things about the race is the racial trait that gives a +4 racial bonus to Initiative, and the Enlarge/Reduce Person once per day.

Kobold (Oracle) - They're small, have a -4 to strength, and a -2 to con. So why am I listing them? If you take the racial feat Scaled Disciple, you can use levels in Oracle or Inquisitor to qualify for Dragon Disciple. The strength bonus that you get from it will only ever make you even, but it's still an option.

Tengu (Cleric) - A bonus to dex/wis and a penalty to con aren't that great, but they're automatically proficient in all sword weapons (which includes Falcatas). In addition, they also get some decent racial feats, and you could do worse than the racial archetype for Oracle.

Tiefling - The third of the races with flexible ability scores, this time giving either str/wis or str/cha with a penalty to int, which is the best you'll get. You'll also get either two claws or a bite, a prehensile tail to grab things from your person while leaving your hands free, and get to roll on a large table of bonuses. Also of note is the Paladin's favored class ability, which adds 1 to the amount of damage you heal with Lay on Hands, but only when used on yourself.

Uncommon Races

Gillman - I'm only listing this to point out that you have to choose between dying without water, vulnerability to fire, or getting no bonus at all. The con/cha bonuses make this **green** in an aquatic campaign, but the race is quite **red** if you're not.

Kitsune (Oracle) - This is the second race with access to pounce, though theirs is generally only effective once per combat. In addition to this, the penalty to strength rather than wisdom makes them a bit of a niche choice. However, one redeeming factor is their racial traits and feats, and the other is the Oracle favored class bonus, which can save you a feat on the falcata.

Grippli - While there are options for having bonuses to dexterity and wisdom that don't have a strength penalty, Grippli are small, which some might prefer for one reason or another. They also have a climb speed, which is a +8 to the skill, can gain +2 to Diplomacy and Intimidate, and can take a racial feat to deliver touch spells with their tongue. Limited, but workable.

Merfolk - There are two ways to make Merfolk capable. The first is to take the Strongtail trait and dip into Barbarian for a level or two, giving you a 20 ft move speed with medium armor. The latter is to play in an aquatic campaign, where this becomes arguably higher than purple. Either way, you get huge ability boosts and natural armor, as well as immunity to trip.

Samsaran (Oracle, Paladin) - A bonus to Int and Wis means this is mostly for Clerics, though the main appeal of this race is the Mystic Past Life trait. It lets you add some spells from another class onto your class's spell list, but it's limited to those of the same type. So for a Cleric that starts with 18 or 20 wisdom, they could add 5 or 6 spells from the Druid, Ranger, Inquisitor, or Paladin spell list onto their own, of any level. For the Oracle, they get the spells added to their spell list favored class bonus, and that's always a welcome addition.

Wayang (Oracle) - It gets to increase the DC on spells of the Shadow subschool and gets Vanish as a spell-like ability, and can even treat itself as undead for the purposes of negative energy once per day. But the reason for taking this over something else is the favored class bonus, which allows you to get skills from the Wizard's Illusion school onto the Oracle spell list

with an increased spell level. Though this is somewhat restricting, there are definitely some nice Illusion spells that it may be worth playing a Wayang for.



<http://brotherarcheus.deviantart.com/art/Pathfinder-Oracle-Sketch-Finished-328341558>

- Skills -

A skill monkey you aren't. Paladin, Cleric and Holy Vindicator are all 2+int, and Oracle is barely any better at 4+int. Given that most of the other classes you'll be leveling in are 2 or 4, with only Ranger and Inquisitor making 6, you probably won't have many skill points to spare.

Knowledge (Religion) is sort of required, and if you don't have any other use for the skill points you may as well keep it maxed until it hits close to +20. The Vindicator's other class skills are:

Climb is a one point wonder, especially given that your highest attribute is likely to be your strength. Nobody wants to be the guy that died because he fell off of a cliff face, and just one point should be enough to ensure that you can just take 10 and be safe in the early levels.

Heal is fairly redundant for you, especially if you're a Cleric or Paladin. If you're an Oracle, however, being able to treat poison and disease may be of marginal use, if you don't have a potion of Cure Poison/Disease laying around.

Intimidate is a good use for any extra skill points you might have laying around. It won't make you many friends, but even if you only have a few points in this, the class skill bonus and your high charisma should be enough to make it somewhat useful.

Knowledge (Planes) is one of the more common knowledge checks when made to identify enemies, but you should probably leave it low and let your party bard or Wizard take care of the other knowledge skills.

Ride may be useful if you kept your mount from dipping in Cavalier, but for most Vindicators you should be fine with one point and taking 10.

Sense Motive is orange if you dumped wisdom, green if you didn't. Another social skill, so it's about the same as Intimidate. It can take up extra skill points if you have them, otherwise put a point or two in and try to remember it if it comes up.

Spellcraft is one of those skills that someone has to have. It's probably not you. If it is though, max it. You probably won't be doing too much counterspelling or crafting, so its uses are much more limited.

Swim is like Climb. Put a point into it and forget about it, as it shouldn't come up often enough to warrant worrying about. If in an aquatic campaign, this shoots up to **purple**.

As for other skills, the only things that I feel are worth mentioning are **Diplomacy** should you find yourself in the Face role, as you'll have it as a class skill from your channeling class, as well as **Perception** and **Use Magic Device**. The former is quite simply the most rolled skill in the average campaign, and the latter takes advantage of your high charisma to give you access to wands, staves and the like for spells that aren't on your class's spell list. A point in **Linguistics** will be all but mandatory for any Oracles that took the Deaf curse, but probably useless to those that didn't.

- Feats -

As I've mentioned occasionally through the guide, you likely aren't going to have a lot of options for your feats. Aside from maybe Fighter or Ranger you won't be seeing any bonus combat feats, and other than those you'll only get teamwork feats from Cavalier or Inquisitor. That, along with the required feat for entering Holy Vindicator, you simply don't have much flexibility. However, luckily there's quite a few nice feats that have basic prerequisites that you can grab as needed.

Fey Foundling is quite possibly the best thing that you can ever do for yourself, so much so that I gave it a color unique to itself even higher than purple. This applies to not only spells, but also Lay on Hands and Channeling. Really, any time you roll dice in order to heal, this probably applies.

Alignment Channel or Elemental Channel is required for entry. Both are fairly negligible, though depending on your campaign then one or the other might be more useful than usual. If you want to be safe, Alignment Channel (Evil) will probably come up the most often in your average game.

Additional Traits can get you a few additional traits, if there's more than two that you'd like to have.

Combat Casting is useful if you plan to be doing a lot of casting during combat. Losing spells because you fail a concentration check always sucks.

Critical Feats could be a useful investment later on. You've got decent BAB, so you may as well make use of it. Improved Critical in particular is great for getting more crits if you don't want to throw Keen onto your weapon.

Dimension Door feats are highly recommended if you're taking full levels in Cleric or Oracle. The mobility and offensive options they provide are quite appealing. If you have a dip in either Cavalier or Inquisitor, the flanking-based teamwork feats become quite useful, as you're able to flank with yourself after enough investment here.

After a bit of searching on the SRD, I've found a few ways that you can obtain Dimension Door as a Vindicator. Clerics can obtain the spell through the Travel Domain and gain it at level 7. Oracles of any Mystery may gain the spell through the Ancient Lorekeeper archetype, which is available to Elves, Half-Elves and Humans with the Racial Heritage feat, and would obtain it as a fifth level spell at level 10. Paladins obtain it through Unsanctioned Knowledge, and gain it at level 13. Any caster may get it through Eldritch Heritage with the Arcane bloodline at character level 11, so long as you can cast fourth level spells by that time.

Dodge is one of those "1 AC for one feat" feats. If you want some AC and don't have anything else to get, feel free to grab it.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Falcata) is very borderline purple, because the weapon just synergizes that well with Divine Wrath/Retribution. However, as a very feat-starved class, you'll have to consider this carefully against other options.

Expanded Arcana is an option for higher-leveled Oracles (or Inquisitors, if you go that route) to add more spells to their list of spells known. Obviously red (and not even obtainable) for Clerics or Paladins.

Extra Channel/Lay on Hands/Mercy/Rage/Revelation are always useful for multiclassers. Extra Channeling is more useful to Life Oracles, due to having innately two less, so this evens the gap. Extra Revelations is very blue to purple depending on your mystery, as many revelations are far better than a feat. The rest are to help with what's lost from multiclassing. Of note is that for the non-Hospitaler Paladin, Extra Lay on Hands is effectively also giving you uses of Channel.

Fleet is that feat that nobody actually ever wants to take, but you sometimes do at level 19 because there's nothing else you really want. Of potential use to small races and Merfolk, but not enough to warrant anything higher than orange.

Great Fortitude/Iron Will/Lightning Reflexes are of varying use depending on your ability layout. Fortitude saves and Will saves are generally more important, but luckily the classes you'll be taking have one or both of those as good saves. If you feel you're lacking, pump it up.

Improved Channel can be of some use if you're using your channeling offensively a lot and want to ensure that you do the most damage possible.

Improved Initiative is great for putting down control spells before your opponents get to move. Remember, though, that there are some perks to being able to position yourself after the opponent takes their first turn.

Leadership is infamously either broken or banned. Consider it as your level 7 feat if it's allowed, as you've definitely got the Charisma to make use of it.

Martial Weapon Proficiency is a possibility for those going straight Cleric or Oracle, and you'd be able to retrain it into something else after a level in Holy Vindicator.

Power Attack is more damage. Given that you'll likely be two-handing most of the time in battle, it's even more damage for you. You've got pretty decent BAB progression, so you should take this when you can.

Cleave is as good as your DM lets it be. If you're commonly surrounded by hordes of enemies, taking this feat tree can pay off very well.

Furious Focus is a great way to make your first attack much harder to dodge. Consider retraining it later on, but this is especially good early on when you'll likely only have one attack on your turn anyway.

Quick Channel is pretty awesome. Expend two uses of Channel Energy to do it as a swift action. This is a very good way to make channeling in combat viable, or to simply use it more often in combat.

Quick Draw is of varying use. If you only use one weapon, then you can probably skip on it, as once you have 1 BAB you can draw your weapon as part of movement. If you're a switch-hitter or use a Quick-Draw Shield, however, this becomes very blue and should be picked up. The benefits for switch hitting should be obvious, but a Quick-Draw Shield can be drawn or put away as a free action if you have the Quick Draw feat, the uses of which I covered earlier.

Saving Shield is an immediate action to give an ally that you're standing next to 2 AC. If you've got a less armored party member that you're constantly protecting, you might consider this.

Selective Channeling is pretty much mandatory if you're going to be channeling in combat. If not, though, then you can safely ignore it.

Shield Focus is another feat that gives you 1 AC. I'd go with Dodge over this, however, as that at least helps your touch AC.

Skill Focus is sort of like getting the selected skill as a class skill. Much more useful if you progress it into...

Eldritch Heritage (Improved and Greater) is a marvelous feat tree that gives you several abilities of a Sorcerer bloodline, so the color varies based on what bloodline you pick. One that I can definitely recommend would be the Abyssal bloodline. For three feats, you would gain claws for around 10 rounds per day, and a scaling strength bonus, up to +6 at 19th level.

Step Up is for the sort of person who wants to be a dick to any archer or caster that would otherwise be able to take 5 foot steps away from them.

Toughness is more hp. You like having hp.

Unsanctioned Knowledge is very much worth consideration for any Paladins (and assumably Antipaladins, with DM approval) to get Bard, Cleric or Inquisitor spells. There are quite a few very nice options here. Even if you get them late, being able to buff yourself with things such as Haste or Invisibility takes some of the load off of your other party members.

Vital Strike is a noteworthy tree if you don't trust the penalties on iterative attacks. It's especially nice if you're a Barbarian, because you can take...

Furious Finish is almost a must-have if you're a Barbarian. Perhaps it's just wishful thinking,

but the idea of this combined with a Channel Smite is just crazy.

Warrior Priest is a hybrid between Improved Initiative and Combat Casting. Personally I think the Initiative bonus should be +2 to match the other feats better, so see if your DM agrees before taking this. If not, then note that you can take Additional Traits to grab Reactionary and Desperate Focus to get +2/+2. Yeah.

Weapon Finesse is an option if you're dexterity-based, but really it's just a prereq for...

Dervish Dance is just a really nice feat to have. It locks you into only using Scimitars, but having your dexterity to both attack and damage rolls is pretty great. If you plan on being dexterity-based, this is a must-have.

Weapon Focus nets you a +1 to attack rolls. Not much commentary to give, just an alright bonus.

Dazzling Display is a pretty alright option if you are the sort that invested in Charisma, and is very thematic and fitting for a knight in shining armor.

Crafting Feats are generally left to the party's Wizard, but as a Cleric or even Paladin you have access to your entire spell list. If you feel that it's worth the feat to get magical items cheaper, then go for it.

Metamagic feats are something that I'm going to have to recommend against, in general.

Between losing spell slots from multiclassing and from Holy Vindicator, and likely not prioritizing your casting stat as much as you could be, you likely just won't have enough higher level spell slots to make this particularly useful. However, two that I can certainly recommend are **Extend Spell**, which is useful for staying buffed, and **Quicken Spell**, which is a great way to spend swift actions that would otherwise go to waste every turn.

Teamwork Feats in general are a bit of a waste, as you and an ally need to both have it and even then you'll only sometimes be in a position to have it pay off. If you are a Cavalier or Inquisitor, however, and have a way to use the feat without an ally needing it, then some of these are quite viable to grab, particularly the flanking feats.

In addition to these, there are some feats which you may consider depending on what options you've made or what other classes you've multi-classed in.

Abundant Revelations is great, depending on your revelation. For the Life Oracle specifically, using this to grab another use of Combat Healer could be a great investment. For those dipping Oracle in another Mystery, there are several revelations that could benefit from this feat.

Antagonize is a very nice "tanking" feat if you're invested in Intimidate, and having Diplomacy too opens up more options for you.

Blind-Fight, Improved, Greater are of great utility if you often travel into dark places or have enemies that have other ways of having miss chances. Of note is that the Darkness domain grants Blind-Fight as a bonus feat.

Channel Smite, Greater has use at higher levels if you want to distribute your Channel Smite into multiple attacks. If you're using Channel Smite often, you may find this more useful. In general, though, easily an orange ability.

Guided Hand gets you Wisdom instead of strength on attack rolls, but only for your deity's favored weapon. If your deity has a good favored weapon, go for it. Make it Guided and dump strength. The usefulness varies depending on what your deity's favored weapon is. If anyone knows of a god that has the Falcata, that would be very useful to know.

Channeled Revival lets you revive on the fly without having a revival spell prepared or known. Really though, it's easy enough to either have a scroll of the spell laying around, or to just wait until the next day if you're a Cleric.

Channeled Shield Wall is a neat trick that you can use for some extra AC on yourself and any ally that uses a shield. Automatically green for being a swift action.

Channeling Scourge is either useless or mandatory, and therefore doesn't really get a rating. Take it if you have Inquisitor levels, ignore it if you don't.

Combat Expertise is an alternative to Power Attack if you'd rather than AC than more damage. You could also just use it as a stepping stone to qualify for combat maneuver feats, if that's the sort of Vindicator you'd like to play.

Combat Reflexes goes well with a reach weapon if you've got one, or if you have some other strategy that would allow you to take many attacks of opportunity. More importantly, however, it opens up other options in the next few feats.

Bodyguard uses an attack of opportunity to give an adjacent ally 2 AC. Given that this doesn't take up any actions at all, it's a great way to help out an ally in trouble without really going out of your way.

In Harm's Way is just beautiful in terms of mechanics and flavor. You can put yourself in the way of an ally to take an attack for them as a continuation of helping them through Bodyguard. A great way to act as a tank if that's your goal.

Stand Still is just great. If you've got a reach weapon and a narrow corridor (or properly placed control spells), nothing will get past you. Like the above, a great way to act as a tank.

Command Undead is for the potential Necromancers out there. You get full channeling progression, so if you're in an evil party (or one that will look the other way) then feel free to get yourself some minions.

Cornugon Smash lets you demoralize as a free action whenever you hit with a Power Attack, which should be a lot of the time. If you're maxing Intimidate, this is quite good.

Crane Style is the only style feat like that I can really recommend, and even then only for those with a monk dip, as you can get the required feats as bonus feats. Using a Buckler or Quick-Draw Shield, you can easily get the deflection and counter attacks each turn.

Deathless Initiate offers a fairly unique 'glass cannon' option for combat, but with the feat tax needed to get here and the innate dangers of this, I'd consider it with caution.

Divine Interference is an amazing way to help protect your allies and force rerolls, if you aren't using many of your higher level spell slots. Even if you only sacrifice lower level slots, just forcing a reroll can be the difference between life and death.

Glorious Heat is really broken if using the Un-errata'd version. Using only Spark, Create Water and Mending, you can heal all of your party to full should you have enough down time between encounters, with only a small scrap of flammable cloth. If errata'd, this is proportionally useful to how many fire spells you use.

Greater Mercy is a good way to get more benefit out of your Lay on Hands, as a lot of the time when you use it they likely won't have whichever of the conditions you're able to heal.

Ultimate Mercy is sadly really awful. At first glance it sounds good, but then you realize that the only way you'll ever be able to use it is if you have a few Extra Lay on Hands. And then, if you scroll up a bit, you'll see that you can do something similar by using 6 uses of Lay on Hands to use Channeled Revival. Please don't take this.

Improved Unarmed Strike should only be taken as a prerequisite for something like Crane Style. If you want this feat, consider taking a dip in monk instead.

Insightful Gaze gives you a reroll on Sense Motive checks when opposing a Bluff. Worth considering if you have Sense Motive and levels in Inquisitor.

Intimidating Gaze would be green or even blue if it were like the above, but it's only once per day. Alas, what could have been.

Intimidating Prowess is probably slightly better than Skill Focus (Intimidate) in the long run. If you want to be really, really scary to those that you intimidate, this is your friend.

Lunge is an option if you'd like to have even more reach on your weapon, or alternatively to cast and then deliver a touch spell safely without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Archery Feats are again, doable, but recommended against as a main fighting style. Taking the basics to act as a switch hitter will likely serve you much better.

Reward of Life is great if you mainly use Lay on Hands on other creatures, and would go well if you took the Oath of Charity. Other things are likely more useful, but this could still add up over the course of the day.

Saving Shield is an immediate action to give an ally some extra AC. It stacks with Bodyguard, so that's something to consider.

Turn Undead can be of some use if you need to escape from a horde of undead, but unless you fight them often this is pretty lackluster.

Two-Weapon Fighting is something that you should really have forgotten about by now. Can be done if you insist, but... why?

Versatile Channeler is a way for Neutral clerics to get the best of both worlds, as it gives you the other type of channeling one level lower than what you normally channel.

- Traits -

Given that there's already an [entire guide on traits](#) I'm going to avoid going into this in too much detail. However, there are a few I feel should be noted.

Exalted of the Society gives you one more use of Channel Energy per day

Cleansing Light lets you reroll any 1s when using Channel Energy to damage undead, but you have to worship Sarenrae. (Praise the sun!) Anywhere from orange to blue depending on how many undead you face.

Strength of the Sun is another Sarenrae trait. it boosts any charisma-based checks that you make during the day. This affects not only your skills, but arguably also your Channel Energy DC. The more things you have that are based on Charisma, the better this is.

Heirloom Weapon is a possibility if you are likely going to keep the same weapon throughout your campaign, as it can give you free access to a masterwork Falcata. However, if you lose that one specific one, you still don't have proficiency with any other Falcata. If nothing else, it would let you start the campaign with one and gain actual proficiency later.

Magical Knack is a no-brainer if you're going to use a lot of spells that rely on your casting level, as you're inevitably going to lose at least one from Holy Vindicator.

Other than these, there are quite a few other things you can do with your traits, some of the more common being increasing initiative, increasing one of your saves, or getting a specific skill to your class's skill list, the most likely of these for you being Perception or Use Magic Device. Most campaigns allow you to start with two traits, so pick wisely.

- Sample Build -

Sir Cass, the Insurmountable (20 pt buy)

Half-Elf Oracle (Ancient Lorekeeper) 7/Holy Vindicator 2

Life Mystery, Tongues Curse. Traits: Exalted of the Society, Magical Knack (Oracle)

Str: $15 + 2 \text{ racial} + 1 \text{ level} = 18$

Dex: 12

Con: 14

Int: 10

Wis: 7

Cha: $16 + 1 \text{ level} = 17$

Oracle 1: Fey Foundling, (racial) Exotic Weapon Prof (Falcata). Revelation: Life Link

Oracle 3: Power Attack. Revelation: Channel

Oracle 5: Extra Channeling

Oracle 7: Alignment Channel (Evil). Revelation: Combat Healer or Spirit Boost

Holy Vindicator 2: Step Up

A rather basic start to the class, but it gets the job done. Half-Elf gets him the Falcata, and the logic for all of the other choices can be found somewhere above. Going forward, I would probably put the rest of the ability scores into charisma, then two in strength. Pursuing the

Dimension Door feats would go until level 17, and for the last one I would likely just pick up a general feat or something based on the campaign.

- Closing Notes -

I hope that this guide has opened your eyes to one of the more fun and versatile prestige classes out there, or if nothing else provided you with a good read.

Any critique or suggestion is welcome, and you can reach me at msevere42@gmail.com with any questions or comments about the guide, or post in the discussion thread over at [Paizo](#).

9/16/13: Guide created. Class Overview, Class Role, Class Features, Weapon Styles added

9/17/13: Class options, Multiclassing options, Sample entry builds, Races added

9/18/13: Skills, Feats, Traits added

9/19/13: Sample Build added, Closing Notes added

10/1/13: Minor tweaks and guide released to public. Only major changes will be documented in the future