

THE ORDER OF THE PROTECTIVE FIRE OF SAINT PETRONELLA

Unofficial Fan Dossier · Anvil of War

„I am the Bride of the Emperor. My mercy is His judgement. My deeds forgive what my faith forbids.“

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CORE IDENTITY

Progenitor Legion	Order of the Blue Robe, dem Convent Sanctorum zugeordnet; Octarius, Chalnath Expanse
Founding	c. 883.M41 (before the Great Rift)
Homeworld (name)	Ostravane
Chapter strength	A Mission (a few squads, no more)

Further core facts

Fact	Value
Order Rank	Preceptory
Mother Order or Lineage	Order of the Blue Robe, Convent Sanctorum
Convent	Convent Salinarum, Ostravane
Patron Saint	Petronella the Pious, Abbess
Founding	M41.3
Nominal Strength	980 Sisters
Actual Strength	342 Sisters
Battle Cry	"Mercy through fire, redemption through duty"
Holy Relic	The skull of Saint Petronella, set in ivory
Ecclesiarchy Designation	SPF-41.3-PS/ConvSanct

ON THE CORE DATA

The Order was raised in M41.3 from a company of the Order of the Blue Robe to reclaim an abandoned mission territory on the Chalnath Fringe. What began as a Preceptory under Canoness Superior Judith Thorne became, through her mercy, an independent mission order—but that mercy has been dearly bought. The Order has been declared destroyed four times: once on Cadian, once on the Flor Complex, once in the Shieldbreak at Vigilus, and once, in the year 889 of the 41st millennium, on the mere suspicion that its networks were riddled with heresy. Each time a new wave of novices arrived from the Schola Progenium—orphaned girls bearing the names of Sisters they had never known—and the Order was restored. What becomes of an Order Militant that has repeated its own extinction four times? It learns to be very quiet as it strides forward.

LORE & HISTORY

Founding history

The Order of the Protective Fire of Saint Petronella did not arise from theological intent. In the year 889 of the 41st millennium, after the Fall of Cadia and the tearing open of the Great Rift, the Ecclesiarchy on Ostravane recognised that its mission posts in the outer Chalnath zones were being lost—not to enemy armies, but to indolence, to silence and to creeping apostasy. Canoness Superior Judith Thorne of the Order of the Blue Robe led a company of two hundred Sisters into this territory to repair the damage. She found not only devastation, but something worse: a population that had stopped praying.

Thorn requested the elevation of her company to a Preceptory—an act scarcely provided for in the codex of such a procedure. The request was approved in M41.3, not because the Church was convinced, but because approval seemed simpler than refusal. The Order was born of a lost wager with the bureaucracy.

What It Took and What It Left Behind

The Order carried the *Vow of Silence* of the Blue Robe with it—not the vow itself, but its inner logic. The Blue Robe keep silent because words can damage the beauty of the Emperor's work. The Order, however, understood silence differently: not as stillness, but as *mercy* that needs no announcement. It took the holy texts with it and left the ceremonial hymns behind. Canoness Superior Thorne suppressed the formal invocations and instead introduced a private litany for each Sister—the *Personal Vow*, still practised today, still regarded today by older Sisters of the Blue Robe as a form of heresy.

The mother order never protested formally. It could have done so, but there was something in Thorne's way of wielding mercy that silenced the abbesses of the Blue Robe.

Homeworld description

The Convent Salinarum sits on Ostravane, upon a mountain of black basalt at the edge of a salt settlement older than the Imperial calendar. The citadel is no classical convent; it was built on the foundations of an ancient lighthouse from the Dark Age of Technology, whose drive had stood still for ten millennia. The Sisters of Battle did not restore the ruins—they built around them. The result is a structure of two epochs: below, plasteel and the broken network of the Ancienitas; above, ceramite and Imperial Gothic, all grown together, as though the new did not displace the old but simply breathed beside it.

The air in the convent smells of salt and burning. Four furnaces run constantly: the chapel furnaces, the workshop furnaces, the crematorium furnace and a fourth that no one but the Hospitallers can account for. The Sisters of the Order speak of the fourth furnace as of an elder member of the community. It has never been given a name. It does what it does.

What the Order Guards

The Order guards neither a relic nor a tomb. It guards a **prisoner**: a man found in M41.3 beneath a decaying mission chapel on the Chalnath Fringe, in iron chains, with a parchment in his hand bearing only a single line: *"Do not open me until I fall silent."* The man is not old. He does not age. He never speaks. He barely breathes. The Ordo Malleus claims that he may be a cursed artefact. The Order has

neither revealed nor denied anything to the Ordo Malleus.

The prisoner sits in a chamber beneath the fourth furnace. The heat down there is relentless. A Sister of the Hospitallers watches over him every night. She replaces the parchment every seven years, although it has not changed. She does not know who this man is. She does not know what the parchment says when it does not say *"Do not open me until I fall silent."*

Should the Ordo Malleus ever demand that he be handed over, the Order will not open the chamber. A cannon will have to force its way in—or nothing will.

Chapter cult

The Vow

"I am the Bride of the Emperor. My mercy is His judgement. My deeds forgive what my faith forbids."

The Observance

The Order performs the *Vigil at the Sarcophagus*—a nocturnal devotion in armour and under arms, during which the skull of Saint Petronella is carried from the reliquary into the field camp. The reliquary itself is open; the Sisters do not pray to the bones, but *beside* them, as though speaking with a living Abbess. The Vigil lasts three hours, from midnight until the third hour. No division, no relief—each Sister stands the full time in full armour, keeps silent, and holds her bolter across her lap, as though keeping watch over a still-living abbess.

A Sister who does not endure is a Sister who has lost her mercy. She is not punished. She is simply no longer called to the Vigils until she has been hardened anew. The Order forgives, but it also forgets—or so it seems from outside. In truth it remembers every Sister who could not bear the Vigil. These Sisters later receive the most dangerous posts. They receive the chance to prove their mercy.

Acts of Faith

The Fire of Petronella comes rarely. In one thousand three hundred and eighteen years the Order has documented fifteen confirmed manifestations of the Fire of Mercy. The oldest and most telling occurred in M41.5, on the moon Cheldar Primus, while a Synod of the Sisters of Battle under Canoness Superior Thorne was trapped against an overwhelming force of Drukhari warriors.

The night before the battle, Thorne ordered the Vigil. In the early morning, while darkness still lay over the moon, something happened that the Imperial archives record only as "a fire without source that burned only the unbelievers." The Drukhari withdrew. Five Sisters were dead. One hundred and twenty-eight Drukhari could no longer be found. The Imperial field report notes simply: "Acts of Faith manifest. Victory won under mercy."

Later theological investigations could identify no psychic sources. The Order had no psykers in its ranks in the entire sector. The fire had simply come. The Canoness knew that it would come.

COMPANIES

Companies

Ember Prayer
Role: Battle Sisters

Hero name: Florencienne Martyria

Hero title/epithet: Sister Superior

Veiled Countenance
Role: Dominion

Hero name: Anthelia Immaculata

Hero title/epithet: Sister Superior

STRUCTURE

The Order is a *Mission* under Canoness Preceptor Lorenzia Cinerea. This is an anomaly in the Imperial records: a Canoness Preceptor typically commands an entire Preceptory of up to a thousand Sisters. The Order has forty-three. The official explanation is loss—four official annihilations, four refoundings, a cohort too weak ever to be reconstituted as a full Preceptory. The unofficial truth is more complicated. Lorenzia Cinerea was appointed Canoness Preceptor because no one else could bear the rank and at the same time believe what this Order believes. She was not promoted to rule. She was promoted to forgive.

The Mission structure consists of two battle squads of roughly ten to fifteen Sisters each, three specialists and a varying number of attached personnel—typically two or three. The nominal strength is nine hundred and eighty. The actual strength is three hundred and forty-one. The gap is not filled. The Sisters know that they carry gaps.

Specialists

Role	Number	Notes
Celestian	0	—
Seraphim	0	—
Zephyrim	0	—
Dominion	5	Veiled Countenance, under Sister Superior Anthelia Immaculata
Retributor	0	—
Repentia	8	Active; under Repentia Superior Tertia
Novice	4	Intake weak; training extended
Imagifier	1	The standard-bearer Constancia

Attached Personnel

The Order often works alongside a Confessor of the Ecclesiarchy—currently Confessor Gerhalt, a man so old that no one knows for certain how old. On two occasions the Ordo Hereticus has dispatched an Interrogator to examine the prisoner beneath the convent, but the Order does not like working with the Ordo, and the Ordo knows this. There is an *agreement* that is written down nowhere: the Order will not free or convert the prisoner itself, and the Ordo will not demand to see him. This agreement creates a constant tension, a kind of silent reproach that weaves itself into every conversation between Canoness Cinerea and the Inquisitors. The Order at least prefers to work with Crusader detachments and local Priest-students. These alliances are clearer, less burdened with unspoken threats.

COMMAND

Canoness Preceptor Lorenzia Cinerea is a woman without scars and without a smile. Her face is narrow, her voice as deep as the sound of a bolter with a spent magazine—not loud, but present. She carries a power sword with an inscription in High Gothic: *"I do not know what I forgive."* This is not a battle motto. It is a statement. She has led the Order in peace for forty-three years, not through expansion, but through the erasure of traces. Her only great decision was to leave the prisoner beneath the convent where he was, rather than hand him to the Ordo Malleus. The Ordo has never forgotten this. Nor has she.

Another Sister once asked her whether she feared the prisoner would one day awaken. Cinerea answered: *"No. I would be afraid if he stopped sleeping."*

Sister Superior Florencienne Martyria, leader of the battle squad *"Ember Prayer"*, is a woman who laughs—which is frowned upon in most orders, but among the Sisters of Battle is unheard of. She carries a broken sword with only six centimetres of blade left, and fondly calls it *"The Short"*. She has not survived explosions; she has lived in them. Her armour bears burn marks that she does not intend to grind away. Florencienne leads ten Battle Sisters under the banner *"Ember Prayer"*—the most smouldering, most furious name in the Order—and they are exactly present in every battle: they attack when others plan. They hold when others withdraw. They have had a casualty rate of thirty-eight per cent since M41.2, and Florencienne regards this not as failure, but as a child slowly growing up.

She once said: *"Mercy is not the opposite of wrath. Mercy is wrath that knows whom it should strike."*

Hospitaller Grethe, the oldest living Sister of the Order, came to the Order as a Novice in M41.1, older than most new Sisters should be—she was already forty years old even then, at that time a sin for Schola Progenium admissions. She was accepted because no one had a better choice. She was taken on personally by Canoness Thorne. She now keeps watch over the prisoner beneath the fourth furnace, every night, for eighteen years. She still wears her original armour, although it should long since have been renewed. A small plaque on her breastplate bears a name that is not her name.

When asked whom she guarded, she said: *"I guard someone who has been silent long enough to become holy."*

The Holy Standard

The Order's standard does not bear the hair of a saint—Petronella is too new, too little canonised, to be permitted such miracles. Instead it bears three things: a piece of grey cloth from the original robe of Canoness Thorne, a small bone from the reliquary of Saint Petronella, and an ash. The ash is not labelled. No one but the Imagifier Constancia knows whose it is. There are three theories—a dead Sister, a dead child, a dead vow. The standard was very nearly lost in M41.8 on the moon Cheldar during a raid by Ork clan groups. Sister Superior Anthelia Immaculata threw herself into a blast wave to save the standard from the falling debris. She woke three days later. No one could explain how she had survived. The Ecclesiarchy recorded this as a miraculous intervention of Saint Petronella. Anthelia herself said nothing about it.

WEAPONS, RELICS AND VEHICLES

The Order uses the standard bolter patterns of the Order of the Blue Robe—Mark IV, built on Ceremie, older than the Order itself. The engravings are not laden with prayers, but with names: every bolter bears the name of a dead Sister, engraved in tiny letters along the barrel. A Sister fires not only with her weapon, but with the names of those who came before her.

The Order emphasises two specialist weapons: the Eviscerator sabres of the Repentia and the plasma meltaguns of the Dominion. The Repentia carry their shields and weapons with the ceremonial grace of a pilgrim who still marvels at his own path of survival. The Dominion are lethally precise with modern loads, but the Order deliberately keeps their ammunition limited—a Sister with unlimited power forgets too quickly who forbids her to be proud.

The **Holy Relic** is the skull of Saint Petronella, bound in a silver-mounted ivory reliquary that is carried into every battle—borne beneath the standard, open and visible to every enemy, as though the Order were saying: *This is all I possess. Come and take it from me.* The skull itself is not supernatural, but it has a peculiar nature—the bone structure is too thin, as though Petronella herself had been made of empty air. Autopsy is unthinkable. Every Sister wears a miniature bone pendant as a Purity Seal, blessed by the great reliquary.

The Order operates **two Immolator vehicles**, both old, both under constant repair. A third was left behind on Vheld in M41.7 and recorded there in the Imperial register as a total loss. They also keep an old Incarcerator, should the prisoner beneath the convent ever need to be transported—which has not yet happened. The Incarcerator sits in a locked hall at the top of the convent, waiting, waiting for decades.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Characters

Lorenzia Cinerea
Title/role: Palatine

CAMPAIGNS

M41.5, Cheldar Primus. Drukhari raiding fleet, eight weeks.

Canoness Superior Thorne led two hundred and fifty Sisters of the newly founded Order against a Drukhari incursion on the moon of Cheldar Primus, where an Imperial survey station lay under siege. The enemy was numerically superior, faster, and operated in a tunnel complex the Sisters did not know. The Imperial Astra Militarum garrison under Colonel Halvarius Kaine had been reduced to a third of its strength by the time of their arrival. Thorne did not rebuild the defence, but changed the manner of war itself—she ordered a withdrawal to surface positions and ignited all of the tunnels' pressure-equalisation systems. The Drukhari, who had been swift and deadly underground, abruptly slowed. The fighting shifted into an open engagement beneath the moonlight. On the eighth day, as Thorne's ammunition ran out, the manifestation of the Acts of Faith occurred—the fire without source that burned only the faithless. The Drukhari withdrew. One hundred and twenty-eight were recorded as destroyed. Kaine survived; he later wrote a report in which he described Thorne's tactics as "inhumanly merciful"—which might be praise or an accusation.

Losses: One thousand two hundred and eighty-two Sisters from the Astra Militarum, sixty-five Sisters of the Order.

Martyrs recognised: Seven. Decision: Canoness Thorne, confirmed by the Convent Salinarum.

M41.7, Vheld Prime. Ork invasion, two months.

A great Waaagh under a Warboss named Knaggrut overran the world of Vheld Prime and threatened to destroy a subterranean forge complex that was vital to the armament production of the entire sector. The Order was dispatched under Canoness Preceptor Lorenzia Cinerea, supported by a Titan of the Adeptus Titanicus. The campaign concentrated on tactical recovery—not on the annihilation of the Waaagh, but on securing the forges. Cinerea worked alongside the Princeps of the Warlord Titan, which was an unusual alliance; the Sisters of Battle do not ordinarily work closely with Titan crews. The alliance was effective, but costly. The Titan was damaged in the final phase. The repairs burdened the entire sector for the next four years. After Vheld Prime, the Adeptus Titanicus resolved to work with the Order—but only in cases where a Titan could be "sacrificed."

Losses: One thousand seven hundred and eighty-four Sisters from the Astra Militarum, ninety-nine Sisters of the Order.

Martyrs recognised: One hundred and thirty-five. Decision: A joint council of Canoness Cinerea and the surviving officers of the Titan Legion.

M41.9, Ostravane Sector (Chalnath Fringe). Genestealer cults, four months.

A genestealer cult infiltration was discovered on five worlds in the Chalnath Fringe—not an invasive infection, but a quiet, long-established colonisation in the deepest levels of the population. The Ordo Hereticus engaged the Order as an "independent arm" (which means: the Order was legally separate from the Inquisition and could operate without the Inquisition bearing responsibility). The Order spent four months examining, testing and purging the populations. The cleansing was not military but medical—there were no great battles, only a quiet, systematic identification and removal. The result was a sector "cleansed," but its living population reduced by twenty-seven per cent.

Afterwards, the Ordo Hereticus decided that the Order was too effective to be trusted in future. The suspicion against the Order was classified as "without proof, but suspicious" and archived there.

Losses: No formal military losses. Six thousand one hundred and fifteen hundred and forty-eight civilian deaths under "medically necessary cleansing."

Martyrs recognised: Zero.

THE TAINT / THE FILE

In the year 156 of the 41st millennium, a Sister named Veridia Sorn was documented in the records of the Order "for acting on her own authority and for the unauthorised exploration of a sealed crypt." She had understood orders that were never given. She had penetrated the lower levels of the convent. She had attempted to speak to the prisoner beneath the fourth furnace. She had never finished. She had been found dead, in the ghost chamber, a dagger in her hand, the cut drawn against her own throat.

That same day, the Ordo Malleus received a report: *"Suspected possession among the active Sisters. Suspected daemonic influence. Suspected attempt to free or to activate the sealed prisoner."* The request was not signed. Nor had the request been made.

The Imperial report recorded Veridia's death as "voluntary sacrifice, the breaking of the vow in order to protect the Order." The official history was complete three days after the body was found. What was not said: Veridia was one of the sharpest theological minds of the Order. She asked questions that no one was meant to ask. She had written an internal memo in which she asked whether the prisoner was a person at all or merely a vessel for something better kept sealed. This memo was never published. But the Ordo Malleus knew of it.

The Procedure

The Order did not follow canonical procedure. A Sister who fell under suspicion was not hunted down and quietly killed. Instead, Canoness Preceptor Lorenzia Cinerea decided that Veridia Sorn would go on living. A younger Sister named Magdalia Keen was chosen. Surgical training at another convent. A face that was carved anew—not into a duplicate, but into a family resemblance, close enough that the records blur. A new identity as Veridia Sorn, who "had gained new convictions in field service" and now "served in penance under another name."

Magdalia lived for seven years as a dead woman. Then, in M41.8, a Sister named Magdalia Keen was found aboard an Imperial transport—the real one, the original, alive, but with no memories of the seven years she had not lived. She was, according to the testimony of every medicae, about three days old.

She was taken into the Order without anyone asking where she had come from.

The archive today records: Two Sisters, two identities, two names. The Ordo Malleus records: One suspicion, unresolved. One suspicion, waiting patiently until one of the names makes a mistake and yet has nothing left to hide.