

Warhammer 40K Inquisition: Structure, Factions, and Communication

Introduction and Overview

The **Holy Orders of the Emperor's Inquisition** (simply *the Inquisition*) are the secretive, all-powerful investigative and enforcement arm of the Imperium of Man ¹. Founded in the closing days of the Horus Heresy on the orders of the Emperor Himself, the Inquisition was created to seek out any threat to Humanity from within or without ² ³. Inquisitors operate **outside the normal hierarchy** of Imperial governance and answer only to the Emperor (and, in theory, the High Lords of Terra) ⁴ ⁵. Wielding absolute authority by the *Inquisitorial Mandate*, they may command any Imperial citizen, military force, or resource at will – “*Not even a High Lord of Terra may refuse the order of an Inquisitor without good reason.*” ⁶. Their mandate spans a vast range of threats: Chaos worship, heresy, mutant abominations, unregulated psykers, political sedition, alien infiltration – **no person or organisation is beyond the Inquisition's scrutiny** ⁷. As a classic Imperial saying goes, “*Knowledge is power; guard it well*”, reflecting the Inquisition's obsessive control of dangerous secrets ⁸. In the grim darkness of the far future, **the Inquisition is both feared and hated** in equal measure by those it protects – a necessary terror in service of humanity's survival ⁹ ¹⁰.

“...The Inquisition merely performs the duty of its office. To further fear them is redundant, to hate them, heretical.” ¹¹ – **Captain Gabriel Angelos**, commenting on the Inquisition's reputation after an Exterminatus. This grim remark underscores the dour acceptance that sensible Imperial servants have toward Inquisitors: fear is unnecessary and defiance is unthinkable.

Organisationally, the Inquisition is divided into sub-factions called **Ordos**, each devoted to combating a different category of threat ¹² ¹³. There are three **Ordos Majoris** (major orders) and an ever-shifting number of smaller **Ordos Minoris** ¹² ¹⁴. Notably, the Inquisition lacks a formal hierarchy – there is no permanent chain of command or centralized leadership. Every Inquisitor is autonomous, empowered to pursue their duties as they see fit ¹⁵ ¹⁶. Senior Inquisitors may carry the informal title of **Inquisitor Lord**, and temporary leadership roles are assumed as needed (for example, convening a conclave or leading a task force), but **no Inquisitor can truly command another by right** ¹⁷ ¹⁸. Instead, authority is a matter of influence, reputation, and personal mandate. This loose structure means that internal conflicts of ideology often must be settled personally – at times violently – since there is rarely a higher authority to appeal to for arbitration ¹⁹ ²⁰.

Despite this decentralization, Inquisitors of like mind often **cooperate in informal groups**. They gather in regional **Conclaves** to share information or judge matters of great importance, and may form smaller working teams called **cells** or **cabals** for specific missions ²¹ ²². Membership in an Ordo or faction is voluntary and fluid; an Inquisitor can change his focus or affiliations over time ²³. Ultimately, the Inquisition is held together by a common cause – the preservation of Mankind – and by the terrible weight of the secrets Inquisitors alone are privy to. “*Trust No One*” is an unofficial motto among Inquisitors ²⁴, and even within this brotherhood of paranoia, **rivalries and hidden agendas abound** ²⁵ ²⁶.

Inquisitorial Communication and Interaction

How Inquisitors interact with each other – and with outsiders – is shaped by their secretive work and unparalleled authority. Among themselves, Inquisitors maintain a cautious collegiality tempered by “*trust no one*” pragmatism. There is **no formal rank** to invoke, so an Inquisitor treats fellow Inquisitors as equals unless given reason to do otherwise. When they meet by chance or design, they typically verify each other’s bona fides by displaying the **Inquisitorial Rosette** or Seal – a badge marked with the Inquisitorial “=]=]” sigil that serves as proof of office ²⁷. This rosette often contains encrypted data confirming the bearer’s identity, using tech-arcania known only to the Adeptus Mechanicus ²⁸. The rosette’s authority is absolute: its appearance “*is enough to ensure the fearful cooperation of most adepts and citizens*” ²⁹. However, Inquisitors **use such symbols sparingly**. Many prefer to operate in the shadows and reveal themselves only when necessary. As the lore notes, an Inquisitor usually unveils their seal *only* among fellow Inquisitors or when they intend to “*strike fear and awe into the common man.*” ²⁹

When multiple Inquisitors collaborate, they often form a **cell**: a private network that shares intelligence and resources for a common goal ²² ³⁰. Cells are typically **temporary and task-oriented** – for example, a cabal of Inquisitors might band together to investigate a prophetic xenos threat, then disband once the threat is resolved ³¹ ³². Within a cell, communication is covert by necessity. Inquisitors are adept at developing **ciphers, codes, and signifiers** to coordinate without alerting outsiders ³³ ³⁴. They may agree on secret phrases hidden in ordinary speech or subtle markers on their dress (rings, tattoos, insignia) to identify themselves or their agents to each other ³⁵ ³⁶. For instance, members of the Thorian faction favor wearing a skull motif (symbolizing the Emperor’s divine death) to signal their allegiance to knowledgeable peers ³⁷ ³⁶. Each Inquisitor also tends to invent a personalized **cant** or code-tongue for their retinue – a unique cryptolexicon so that even if one’s old master turns traitor, one’s new communications remain secure ³⁸ ³⁹. Inquisitor trainees (acolytes known as **Interrogators**) are taught multiple battle-cant languages and cyphers, and encouraged to innovate their own upon attaining full rank ³⁸. In short, **Inquisitors communicate in layers of secrecy**, revealing true meaning only to those they trust. This guarded mode of speech extends even to face-to-face meetings: an Inquisitor might converse in seemingly innocent pleasantries laden with hidden code words that only a fellow cell member would recognize ³³.

Despite their caution, Inquisitors do sometimes build genuine camaraderie. Long-running cells can last decades, with their members maintaining intermittent correspondence across the stars ³⁰ ⁴⁰. In such cases, a strong bond of professional respect – or even friendship – may form. Still, disagreements are inevitable, especially over methods (see **Puritans vs. Radicals** below). When an Inquisitor believes a colleague has committed dire heresy, there is no easy recourse: they may secretly gather evidence to present at a conclave, hoping to have the offender declared *Excommunicate Traitoris* (an official pronouncement of heresy), but more often **Inquisitors take matters into their own hands** ¹⁹ ⁴¹. Feuds can lead to shadow wars of assassination and counter-accusation between rival Inquisitors and their agents ⁴² ⁴³. However, open conflict is rare, as it risks shattering the Inquisition’s unity. Thus, most internal disputes smolder quietly or are settled by subtle means – a war of words, influence, and covert maneuvers rather than bolter and blade ²⁶ ⁴⁴.

When dealing with non-Inquisitors, Inquisitors may adopt either an overt or covert stance. In covert mode, an Inquisitor often masquerades as an ordinary Imperial official, a noble, a military officer, or even a humble cleric, concealing their true identity ⁴⁵. This allows them to investigate freely without inducing panic. They might introduce themselves with a lesser title (for example, as a magistrate or arbites officer)

when gathering information, only revealing their Inquisitorial status at the decisive moment. By contrast, when swift action is needed – raising an army, seizing a heretic – an Inquisitor will **announce themselves with authority**. Displaying the Inquisitorial rosette and invoking the name of the Emperor, they can command instant obedience. Planetary governors, generals, even Space Marine Chapter Masters are expected to comply with an Inquisitor's orders without hesitation ⁴⁶. The Inquisition's approach has been described as a mix of careful investigation and sudden, absolute force: "Where the threat is subtle they will use guile and stealth... When the alien (or heretical) menace is great, the Inquisitor can enlist entire regiments...and when even these are not enough, they will call upon their elite forces or invoke Exterminatus" ⁴⁷ ⁴⁸. Inquisitors are notorious for employing **any means necessary** to purge a threat, up to and including the destruction of whole worlds. It is little wonder that the arrival of an Inquisitor is often met with **terror and awe** among the populace – as noted in the Ordo Hereticus records, "*the arrival of an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor on a world is met with fear and awe, as no one but the Inquisitor himself knows where his attentions will fall.*" ⁴⁹ Every citizen could be a potential target of the Inquisition's gaze, and **innocence is no defense**. A common Inquisitorial aphorism states, "*Innocence proves nothing.*" ⁵⁰ Inquisitor Lord Fyodor Karamazov – infamous for his extreme zeal – puts it even more bluntly while pronouncing judgement in his traveling court:

"There is no such thing as a plea of innocence in my court; a plea of innocence is guilty of wasting my time. Guilty." ⁵¹ – **Inquisitor Lord Fyodor Karamazov**, Ordo Hereticus.

This brutal declaration exemplifies how an Inquisitor addresses those accused of heresy. Inquisitors project an air of unshakable conviction and often speak in absolutes. Whether delivered softly in a spine-chilling whisper or shouted from a judge's throne, an Inquisitor's words carry the weight of ultimate authority and the threat of summary execution. Yet there is nuance behind the scenes: the same Karamazov known for burning innocents is **hated by some of his peers** for his excesses ⁵² ⁵³. Thus, an Inquisitor's tone with non-Inquisitors can range from coldly pious ("*Suffer not the unclean to live!*") to pragmatically manipulative ("*My enemy's enemy is a tool – I will use them, then eliminate them later*"). One radical Inquisitor was even quoted saying, "*My enemy's enemy is a problem for tomorrow; for today, he is useful,*" illustrating the calculating guile some Inquisitors employ when dealing with duplicitous alliances. Regardless of style, what all Inquisitors share is an unyielding dedication to their goal. As the Ordo Malleus Inquisitor Galbus Heer exhorted new recruits: "*You live only to purge the daemon. Take up your rod and staff...and go forth.*" ⁵⁴. Inquisitors demand much of others, but even more of themselves – nothing is beyond sacrifice in the Emperor's name.

The Ordos Majoris (Main Inquisitorial Orders)

By the modern era of the 41st Millennium, the Inquisition is chiefly divided into **three great Ordos**, each focused on a different existential threat to humanity ¹² ⁵⁵. These are the Ordo Hereticus (threat from **within**), Ordo Xenos (threat from **without**), and Ordo Malleus (threat from **beyond**, i.e. the Warp). Inquisitors usually affiliate with one of these Ordos Majoris to specialize their efforts and pool knowledge, though they are free to change allegiance or operate outside any Ordo as needed ²³ ⁵⁶. Each Ordo has its own storied history, areas of responsibility, and dedicated military allies (often called **Chamber Militant**). Below is a summary of the three Ordos Majoris:

Ordo Hereticus – “Witch Hunters” (The Threat Within)

The **Ordo Hereticus** is tasked with protecting mankind from internal corruption. Colloquially known as the *Witch Hunters*, Ordo Hereticus Inquisitors hunt **heretics, rogue psykers (witches)**, mutants, unsanctioned cults, and *any threat that arises from within Humanity's own ranks* ⁵⁷ ⁵⁸. This Ordo was formally founded in the 36th Millennium, in the wake of the traumatic **Age of Apostasy** – a time when a crazed Ecclesiarch (Goge Vandire) plunged the Imperium into civil strife ⁵⁹. After that crisis, the Inquisition created Ordo Hereticus specifically to monitor the **Ecclesiarchy (Imperial Church)** and prevent such abuses of power, as well as to police the broader **“Imperial Creed”** among the populace ⁶⁰ ⁶¹. Over time, Ordo Hereticus expanded its scope to include all manner of **internal malefactors**: not only heretical priests, but also mutants, unsanctioned psykers, cult leaders, recidivist rebels, and any citizen who might undermine the Imperium from within ⁶² ⁶³. Of the major orders, Hereticus is the **largest and most feared**, for its Inquisitors focus on *Mankind itself* as the potential enemy ⁵⁸ ⁶⁴. As one account notes, *“Hereticus Inquisitors are the most feared members of the Inquisition, as their focus is on Mankind itself. The arrival of an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor on a world is met with fear and awe, for no one knows where his attention will fall.”* ⁴⁹.

Ordo Hereticus earned the epithet *“Witch Hunters”* because one of its prime concerns is the containment of psykers and the eradication of witches (untrained psykers who invite demonic possession) ⁵⁸. They work closely with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica to control psyker populations, and with the Ministorum to ensure Imperial doctrines are upheld. **Notably, the Chamber Militant of Ordo Hereticus is the Adepta Sororitas, the Sisters of Battle** ¹³ ⁵⁸. These zealous warrior-nuns of the Ecclesiarchy, equipped with faith and flame, are often seconded to Inquisitors as elite strike forces against witches and heretics. This alliance was formalized by the *Convocation of Nephilim*, and though the Sisters technically remain part of the Ecclesiarchy, they will deploy under an Inquisitor's command when called ⁶⁵. The combination of an Inquisitor's cunning and a Sororitas squad's fanatical purity is potent: one is analytical and suspicious, the other zealous and unyielding, but **both share the goal of purging inner threats** ⁶⁵ ⁶⁶. Ordo Hereticus also maintains its own networks of spies, informants, and *inquisitorial storm-troopers* for more discreet operations ⁶⁷.

The culture of Ordo Hereticus tends to be **highly puritanical**. These Inquisitors often come from or work alongside the Ecclesiarchy, and they exhibit extreme intolerance for deviation. Many Ordo Hereticus Inquisitors are **hardline Puritans** (see Puritans vs Radicals below): for example, Inquisitor Lord *Fyodor Karamazov* (mentioned above) is a textbook *Monodominant* Puritan who declares entire populations guilty at the slightest whiff of heresy ⁵² ⁶⁸. Another Hereticus Inquisitor, *Lord Tyrus*, is infamous for pronouncing Exterminatus on a planet for minor cult activity, exemplifying the **“zero tolerance” ethos** of the order. That said, not all Hereticus Inquisitors are blind fanatics – the Ordo also fields pragmatic investigators who methodically uproot cults with patience and cunning. But in general, **zeal is encouraged** in this Ordo. A common Hereticus mandate is *“Suffer not the witch to live; suffer not the heretic to corrupt”*. They keep the Imperial faith pure, often literally acting as judges: traveling to war zones or rebellious sectors to conduct *auto-da-fé* trials. Even Space Marines and High Lords can fall under Ordo Hereticus investigation if suspected of *apostasy* or treachery ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰. Only the Emperor Himself is explicitly beyond their jurisdiction ⁷¹.

In terms of assets, Ordo Hereticus is expansive. It raises its **own void ships and crews** to deploy forces rapidly, and notably it provides specially conditioned crew for the Grey Knights' ships as well (psycho-indoctrinated to self-terminate if corrupted) ⁷². Many of the Imperium's Witch Hunters operate openly, arriving with fire and brimstone. Others slip in quietly to observe ecclesiarchical figures or governors over

time. But when an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor strikes, it is often with dramatic finality – mass burnings of cultists, sanction of entire noble houses, etc. The fear they inspire is a deliberate tool: terror is used to keep the populace compliant and pious. As one Ordo Hereticus proverb states, *“To err is human; to forgive is not Inquisitorial.”* In summary, the Ordo Hereticus stands as the **internal immune system** of the Imperium, burning out the disease of heresy and mutation wherever it is found, no matter the cost.

Ordo Xenos – “Alien Hunters” (The Threat Without)

The **Ordo Xenos** is dedicated to defending the Imperium from external, alien threats. Often called the *Alien Hunters*, this Ordo deals with **xenos species**: studying them, cataloging them, and exterminating or neutralizing any that threaten humanity ⁷³ ⁷⁴ . The Ordo Xenos was founded alongside Ordo Malleus in the 32nd Millennium, in direct response to the colossal Ork invasion known as the War of the Beast ⁷⁵ ⁷⁶ . That apocalyptic conflict showed the High Lords that alien empires could nearly destroy the Imperium, so the Inquisition was formally split to ensure specialized vigilance against both *Chaos* and *xenos* foes thereafter ⁷⁵ ⁷⁷ . The charter of Ordo Xenos is broad: its Inquisitors *“investigate and catalog xenos species, and destroy any classified as a threat to the Imperium.”* ⁷³ ⁷⁸ This includes obvious dangers like Tyranids, Orks, Drukhari raiders, Necron stirrings, Genestealer cult infestations, etc., but also subtler perils like human cults that traffic in alien technology, Rogue Traders who break xenotic quarantine laws, or Imperial officials under alien influence ⁷⁹ ⁸⁰ . Inquisitors of Ordo Xenos are often brilliant xenobiologists or master spies playing galaxy-spanning “shadow wars” against alien infiltrators. They must be experts on countless species – their goal is not only to kill aliens, but to **understand the enemy** in order to outwit them. Indeed, Ordo Xenos oversees the creation of compendia like the *Xenos Bestiaries* and *Xenos Horrificus*, forbidden tomes cataloguing known alien races and their capabilities ⁸¹ .

The **Chamber Militant of Ordo Xenos is the Deathwatch** – an elite corps of Space Marines seconded from many Chapters, unified to combat xenos threats ⁸² ⁸³ . Deathwatch Space Marines are the best alien-fighters in the Imperium, taking on missions too dangerous or specialized for a conventional force. An Ordo Xenos Inquisitor can call upon a Deathwatch Kill-Team to deal with, say, a Genestealer nest or a rogue Eldar psyker, with surgical precision. The Deathwatch is utterly loyal to Ordo Xenos directives, thanks to ancient oaths between the Adeptus Astartes and the Inquisition ⁸⁴ . If a threat escalates beyond even the Deathwatch – for example a full Tyranid invasion – Ordo Xenos will coordinate larger Imperial forces (Guard armies, even Space Marine Chapters). They have license to invoke *Exterminatus* on planets overrun by xenos if containment fails ⁴⁸ . In fact, due to the many xenocidal campaigns in history, **Ordo Xenos “has the most blood on its hands” of any Ordo**, having purged countless worlds of alien life to protect humanity ⁴⁸ .

Ordo Xenos Inquisitors vary widely in method. Some are *steely-eyed xenocidal Puritans* who take the motto *“Empathy toward aliens is heresy – Compassion is reserved for servants of the Emperor; aliens deserve only our scorn.”* ⁸⁵ . This quote from Inquisitor Czevak concisely captures the orthodox view: the alien is mendax (deceiver) and *exterminatus* is the only negotiation. Such Puritans will destroy alien artifacts and execute anyone suspected of consorting with xenos. On the other hand, Radical Ordo Xenos agents exist, known for pragmatism: some might leverage one alien faction against another, or study xenotech to adapt it for Imperial use (a highly controversial practice). A famous example is Inquisitor Kryptman, who, while a loyal Ordo Xenos Inquisitor, made morally dark choices like deliberately luring Tyranids into Ork-held regions to bog them down – essentially weaponizing one xenos against another. Kryptman’s ruthless strategem saved human worlds but led to his censure and eventual excommunication (for overstepping ethical bounds) ⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ . Another example is Inquisitor Amberley Vail*, who in fiction maintains a sarcastic wit and occasionally bends rules to assist Commissar

Cain; she exemplifies a more moderate Ordo Xenos operative, willing to collaborate with unlikely allies for the greater good.

In general, Ordo Xenos operates with a mix of **scientific curiosity and militant readiness**. Many Ordo Xenos Inquisitors keep laboratories and specimen-vaults, performing autopsies on alien creatures or dissecting captured alien devices. The Ordo also has specialists in diplomacy for rare cases (e.g. dealing with Eldar farseers when goals align, though always cautiously). They maintain the **Departmento Analyticus**, an sub-division for data analysis that sifts through reports of new alien encounters and coordinates responses ⁸⁸. Tactically, Ordo Xenos agents are flexible: *"Their tactics vary heavily on the situation and species. Where the threat is subtle, they use guile and act as a scalpel... when the threat is great, they call upon regiments of the Imperial Guard or Space Marines... when all else fails, they unleash the Deathwatch or Exterminatus."* ⁸⁹. This adaptive approach is necessary given the diversity of xenos foes.

In terms of attitude, Ordo Xenos tends to attract those Inquisitors who are a bit more intellectually open-minded (out of necessity – one must *think* like an alien to catch it). This means the Ordo has a reputation within the Inquisition for harboring more **Radicals** than, say, Ordo Hereticus. Indeed, specific Radical philosophies like **Xeno Hybris** (advocating that mankind learn from the achievements and failures of alien races) are associated with some Ordo Xenos Inquisitors ⁹⁰. At the same time, Ordo Xenos has hardcore Puritans such as **Inquisitor Darkhammer** who believes in destroying all xenos without exception. This internal diversity can cause friction within the Ordo; however, all agree that humanity must ultimately reign supreme. To quote an Ordo Xenos operative from the *Deathwatch* lore: *"He who allows the alien to live shares in the crime of its existence."* ⁹¹. In sum, the Ordo Xenos stands as the **shield against the alien**, whether by pre-emptive scholarly vigilance or by the bolter and flame, ensuring that no extraterrestrial threat undermines the Imperium.

Ordo Malleus – “Daemon Hunters” (The Threat Beyond)

The **Ordo Malleus** is the oldest of the Inquisition's orders, charged with combating **daemonic and Warp-based threats**. Its mandate is to investigate and destroy the works of *Chaos* – the insidious corruption stemming from the Warp and its demonic denizens ⁹² ⁷⁷. The Ordo's name, “Malleus,” means *hammer* – signifying a hammer to crush the forces of the Daemon. In fact, in early history the Ordo Malleus *was* the Inquisition (an inner cadre created in secret by Malcador the Sigillite during the Horus Heresy to police Imperial officials' purity and fight Chaos) ⁹³ ⁹⁴. It remained a hidden order for millennia; its existence was so secret that even the High Lords did not know of it until the Inquisition's formal split in M32 ⁹⁵ ⁹⁶. Even today, Ordo Malleus is sometimes called the *“Inner Order”* of the Inquisition ⁹⁷. Unlike Hereticus and Xenos, the true work of Malleus is known to very few outside the Inquisition. To the public, they might simply be seen as another branch of Inquisitors or even not recognized at all. This secrecy is by design: **Ordo Malleus conceals the very existence of daemons from the masses**, fearing (correctly) that widespread knowledge of Chaos only invites more corruption ⁹⁸. Thus, when an Ordo Malleus operation concludes, they often purge any witnesses and alter records – for example, covering up a Chaos cult uprising by blaming it on other causes (in one case, records were falsified to attribute a daemonic massacre to an Eldar raid) ⁹⁹. They are sometimes colloquially referred to (obliquely) as the **“watchdogs of the Inquisition itself,”** implying they police hidden evils, though in truth they guard against Chaos, not just Inquisitorial misconduct ⁹⁸.

Ordo Malleus Inquisitors are renowned for their **exceptional mental fortitude**. They must confront the horrors of the Warp – entities that can corrupt with a glance or a whisper. As such, only the most *“stalwart*

and physically able” Inquisitors are accepted into their ranks ¹⁰⁰. They arm themselves with ancient lore, protective wards, and specialized weaponry (psi-cannon, force weapons, sanctified ammunition) to fight daemons. Each Ordo Malleus Inquisitor swears solemn oaths known as the **Charge of the Malleus**, a creed dating back to the Emperor’s own words: *“They shall be my Hammer... Only the greatest shall enter their ranks, for unto them I entrust stewardship over the Gates of Hell.”* ¹⁰¹. This quotation (carved in golden letters at the Fortress of Titan) highlights the almost knightly, doom-laden ethos of the Daemon Hunters. Appropriately, their **Chamber Militant is the Grey Knights Chapter** of Space Marines ¹⁰² – an elite Chapter created in secret at the end of the Heresy, whose every member is a potent psyker and incorruptible warrior-monk. The Grey Knights exist solely to combat daemons, and they answer directly to Ordo Malleus Inquisitors. In battle, an Ordo Malleus Inquisitor will often fight alongside Grey Knights Terminator squads, banishing greater daemons and Chaos champions in epic, secret wars that the rest of the Imperium never even hears of ¹⁰³.

Strategically, the Ordo Malleus has a dual role: **reactive** (destroying daemoninc incursions) and **preventive** (policing the Imperial institutions for chaotic corruption). In its early conception, the Malleus was even tasked with watching the Inquisition itself for signs of Chaos taint ¹⁰⁴ – the ultimate internal affairs. Modern Ordo Malleus still occasionally investigates fellow Inquisitors suspected of trafficking with Chaos (and indeed has the unhappy duty of hunting **Excommunicate Traitoris** Inquisitors who turned to Chaos). But their primary work is to detect cults, sorcerers, witches, daemon infestations, and Chaos Space Marine schemes, and to eliminate them **with extreme prejudice**. They have authority to call upon any resources: *“An Ordo Malleus Inquisitor is sanctioned to call on the aid of any organisation of the Imperium...they will not hesitate to requisition local troops, Enforcers, even the Astra Militarum and Imperial Navy at a moment’s notice.”* ¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶. The Ordo Malleus operates a number of fortress-monasteries (most famously on Titan, Saturn’s moon, where the Grey Knights are based) and maintains arsenals of arcane tools – from demon-binding shackles to forbidden texts used as bait or traps. Inquisitors of this Ordo often have retinues including sanctioned psykers, daemonologists, pariahs (Blank souled individuals), and other specialists to assist in their investigations of the occult ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁰⁸.

Ideologically, Ordo Malleus includes some of the most **Puritan** Inquisitors *and* some of the most **Radical**. The nature of their work constantly tempts them to “fight fire with fire.” On one hand, many Malleus Inquisitors are **Puritans of the Amalathian or Monodominant stripe, believing Chaos must be destroyed outright and never tampered with. Such Puritans refuse to even use certain knowledge – for instance, they might execute a witness simply for having seen a daemon, in order to “contain” the taint of forbidden knowledge. On the other hand, some Malleus Inquisitors become Radicals – notably the faction known as Xanthites, who believe in harnessing Warp power against Chaos** ⁹⁰. Xanthites (named after Inquisitor Xanthus) might attempt to use daemonhosts (bound daemons enslaved to an Inquisitor’s will) or create daemon weapons, arguing that *only* by using Chaos can humanity master it ¹⁰⁹ ¹¹⁰. This is highly controversial and often leads to such Inquisitors being declared heretics by their peers if discovered. The tension between these approaches defines much of Ordo Malleus’s internal culture. A well-known maxim says: *“An Inquisitor who is not a Puritan in his youth has no heart; an Inquisitor who is still a Puritan in his maturity has no brain.”* ¹¹¹. This darkly humorous quote (of anonymous origin within the Inquisition) reflects the notion that many Inquisitors start their careers idealistically pure, but gradually adopt radical methods **as harsh experience shows them the complexity of evil** ¹¹² ¹¹³. Ordo Malleus provides many examples of this evolution – e.g., the character Gregor Eisenhorn **begins as a strict Puritan but later uses daemonhosts and is deemed Radical (this occurs in the novels by Dan Abnett, and Eisenhorn’s late career is cited as Radical in Ordo Xenos lists** ¹¹⁴ **because he originally was Ordo Xenos but dealt with daemons). Another famous**

Malleus Radical is Inquisitor Quixos, who delved so far into Chaos lore that he attempted to create a daemon-weapon super-soldier; he justified temporary alliances with Chaos to ultimately destroy Chaos – a morally perilous path which ended in his execution by Puritan colleagues. In contrast, a legendary Puritan **Malleus Inquisitor** is Torquemada Coteaz, a witch-hunter who carries a hammer and refuses to countenance any trafficking with the Warp (his motto: *“Burn the daemon, banish its name, sanctify the ground”*, etc.). Thus, **Ordo Malleus** is a study in extremes, all driven by the same goal: prevent the daemonic from overrunning humanity at any cost. *They truly fight “a covert war for Mankind’s survival...for ten thousand years”*, largely unsung and in shadow ¹¹⁵ ¹¹⁶ .

In summary, the **Ordo Malleus** is the Imperium’s **demonic immune system and secret police**. Its agents are few in number – the smallest of the **Ordos Majoris**, due to the high standards and secrecy involved ¹⁰² – but each is worth an army. Backed by the Grey Knights and armed with knowledge forbidden to all others, they stand on the metaphorical **“gates of Hell”**, holding back the horrors of the Warp. As an organization within the Inquisition, they also remind their brethren that some threats are so terrifying that ignorance is a blessing. The common folk may never know the **Ordo Malleus** saved them from a daemon incursion – only that one day their town was purged by mysterious grey-armored figures and a black-garbed Inquisitor, who then vanished without a trace. To quote an **Ordo Malleus** proverb: *“Ignorance is a shield. The fire of truth can be a weapon – or a temptation.”* For the daemonhunters, **secrecy is itself a weapon**.

The Ordos Minoris (Lesser Orders)

Beyond the big three, the Inquisition has numerous **minor Ordos** (**Ordos Minoris**), each focused on a niche concern or emerging threat ¹² ¹¹⁷ . These sub-factions arise as needed and may wax or wane in activity over time ²³ ¹¹⁸ . Some **Ordos Minoris** are little more than a few like-minded Inquisitors and a scroll of guidelines; others become significant organisations in their own right. Here are examples of known **Ordos Minoris** and their specialties:

- **Ordo Chronos** – Investigated strange temporal anomalies and warp time-travel phenomena. Notoriously, the entire **Ordo Chronos** **vanished without a trace** during one such investigation ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰ , making the **Ordo** itself an eerie mystery.
- **Ordo Sicarius** – Formed to oversee and police the **Officio Assassinorum** (Imperial assassins). Founded after the Wars of Vindication (when rogue assassins caused havoc in the Reign of Blood); the **Ordo Sicarius** ensures assassins are only used appropriately ¹²¹ .
- **Ordo Sepulchrum** – Established to study and contain the spread of unnatural plagues, in particular the **Zombie Plague** (a Warp-spawned virus animating the dead). Created around the time of the 13th Black Crusade when warp-plague outbreaks were rising ¹²² . Inquisitors of **Ordo Sepulchrum** are experts in diseases, mutations, and Nurgle cults.
- **Ordo Machinum** – Monitors and investigates the **Adeptus Mechanicus** and all matters of technology. They watch for tech-heresy, forbidden artificial intelligence, and schisms like the Dark Mechanicum ¹²³ . (The Mechanicus, jealous of its secrets, begrudgingly tolerates **Ordo Machinum** oversight). Similarly, the **Ordo Reductor** is referenced in some sources as overseeing tech-heresy, possibly an alternate name or subgroup of **Ordo Machinum**.
- **Ordo Astartes** – Concerned with the **Adeptus Astartes (Space Marines)**. They keep an eye on Space Marine Chapters for signs of heresy or mutation (for instance, if a Chapter’s gene-seed shows corruption, **Ordo Astartes** may intervene) ¹²⁴ . This **Ordo** was likely involved in cases like the scrutiny of the Relictors Chapter or the investigation of Chapter curses.

- **Ordo Militarum** – Oversees the **Astra Militarum (Imperial Guard)**. They ensure loyalty among high-ranking generals and investigate military disasters for signs of treachery or Chaos influence ¹²⁵.
- **Ordo Sanctorum** – Focuses on the **Ecclesiarchy and Imperial Cult**. It is an Ordo tasked with monitoring the Ecclesiarchy's doctrinal purity and rooting out corrupt priests or warped doctrines (essentially overlapping with Ordo Hereticus, and indeed the Ordo Sanctorum might be a subdivision thereof) ¹²⁶.
- **Ordo Scriptorum** – Charged with censorship and control of Imperial records and communications. They hunt memetic heresies, dangerous texts, and leaks of forbidden knowledge ¹²². For example, they might intercept a scribe attempting to copy a proscribed book or correct “errors” in history that might spur heretical thought. The related **Ordo Scriptus** oversees historical records – likely a similar remit of controlling information ¹²².
- **Ordo Originatus & Ordo Redactus** – These two obscure Ordos deal with the Inquisition's *own* history. Ordo Originatus tries to uncover the lost secrets of the Inquisition's founding and early years, whereas Ordo Redactus works to **hide or erase** knowledge that the Inquisition deems too dangerous, including possibly altering the Inquisition's recorded history ¹²⁷ ¹²⁸. In effect, Originatus seeks truth; Redactus buries it – a fascinating paradox within the Inquisition's ranks.
- **Ordo Xenos** has some sub-Ordos as well (or affiliated groups) for particular xenos threats. For instance, the Ordo assigns *codenames* to certain alien extinction-level threats: e.g., “**Nemesis**” for Tyranids, “**Malleus Xenos**” groups for Necron mysteries, etc. These are not formal Ordos but task forces. A known sub-order is the **Ordo Hydra**, mentioned in some sources as concerned with the Genestealer cult infestations (genestealer cults being a “many-headed hydra” of insurrection).
- **Ordo Aegis** – Watches over the *Cadian Gate* (the strategic corridor near the Eye of Terror). Prior to Cadia's fall, Ordo Aegis Inquisitors coordinated defenses and monitored any warp breaches around that region ¹²⁴.
- **Ordo Barbarus** – Studies pre-Industrial or feral worlds and the dangers they might pose if tainted. Possibly they ensure that primitive human cultures on isolated planets don't harbor xenos infestations or mutate into something dangerous ¹²⁹.
- **Ordo Militaris** (possibly same as Militarum above) – monitors the Imperial Guard.
- **Ordo Astra** – Concerned with astrology and cosmic phenomena; they might investigate strange stellar occurrences (e.g., a star that disappears might indicate a Chaos ritual) ¹²⁹.
- **Ordo Hereticus** itself technically covers many internal threats, but there is mention of an **Ordo Sepulchrum** (plagues) and **Ordo Vigilus** (overseeing Ordo Necros, which itself is obscure) ¹³⁰. Ordo Necros (unknown purpose; possibly related to Necron or undead lore) and Ordo Vigilus overseeing it hints at internal Inquisition oversight. This shows how **byzantine the Inquisition can be**, with Ordos overseeing Ordos in some cases.

In practice, the Ordos Minoris demonstrate the *ad hoc* nature of the Inquisition. If a new threat emerges (a novel xenos species, a heresy that doesn't fit existing categories, a cross-sector phenomenon like the *Great Rift*), interested Inquisitors may form a new Ordo to tackle it. For example, after the emergence of the galaxy-spanning Warp rift (Cicatrix Maledictum), an **Ordo Maledictum** was founded to address problems relating to this “*Great Rift*” and its impact ¹²⁵. The creation and dissolution of Ordos is fluid: “*Ordos can grow larger in crises and then exist only on paper until their field becomes relevant once more.*” ²³ ¹³¹. Association with a minor Ordo is often a secondary affiliation for an Inquisitor; e.g., an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor might also join Ordo Sepulchrum if investigating a xeno-plague. Minor Ordos typically do not have formal Chambers Militant, but they leverage whatever forces the Inquisitors in question can muster (for instance, Ordo Sepulchrum Inquisitors might work closely with the Adeptus Mechanicus Biologis or the Hospitaller Orders of the Sororitas when studying a plague).

The existence of so many Ordos Minoris underscores a key point: **the Inquisition concerns itself with everything**. No threat to humanity is too obscure to escape an Inquisitor's notice. From the most obvious alien armada to the subtlest memetic virus in an administratum archive, there is likely an Inquisitor somewhere whose life's work is to monitor and counter it. This labyrinthine array of Ordos is a strength (specialization and focus) but also a source of potential conflict, since their remits can overlap or clash. Still, the Inquisition's motto *"By Any Means Necessary"* applies universally – each Ordo, major or minor, contributes to the survival of the Imperium in its own domain of expertise.

Factional Ideologies: Puritans vs. Radicals

Within (and across) all Ordos, Inquisitors are often characterized by where they fall on the spectrum between **Puritan** and **Radical** philosophies. This fundamental divide concerns the **methods and extremes an Inquisitor is willing to employ** in the prosecution of their duties. It is *"not a battle between right and wrong,"* as one account notes, but rather a question of means and morals ²⁰ ¹³². Inquisitors themselves rarely self-identify rigidly as "Puritan" or "Radical" – these labels are usually used by others, especially by rivals casting aspersions ¹³³. The distinction is also **relative**: one Inquisitor's moderate approach might seem Radical to a more conservative peer, and vice versa ⁴⁴. Nevertheless, over centuries, certain philosophical *factions* have solidified around these terms. In broad strokes:

- **Puritans** believe in **upholding the letter of Imperial doctrine and the purity of humanity**. They prosecute the Emperor's will *as it is written*, refusing to use what they see as the tools of the enemy. A Puritan Inquisitor holds that certain lines must never be crossed, **no matter the cost**. As summarized in lexicon: *"To the conservative Puritans, it is of utmost importance that Inquisition doctrine be upheld... They believe any evil – heresy, Chaos, or xenos – must be shunned in all its forms."* ¹³⁴. Puritans see themselves as **guardians of the status quo**: the Imperium may be imperfect, but it is the Emperor's plan, and it is not an Inquisitor's place to radically remake it ¹³⁵ ¹³⁶. They stress faith, purity, and *righteous zeal*. Most Puritans view Radicals as dangerously compromised at best, or outright heretical at worst – and will move against them if given the chance ¹³⁷ ¹³⁸. For example, if a Puritan discovers a fellow Inquisitor using a daemonhost or alien artifact, they might denounce or even execute that Inquisitor, believing that **no end justifies such means**.
- **Radicals** believe **the ends do justify the means** – that an Inquisitor must sometimes *use the weapons of the enemy* to defeat the enemy ¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰. They are more willing to bend or reinterpret Imperial creed "in spirit" rather than letter ¹⁴¹. As one description puts it, Radicals *"find little value in adhering to convention too closely. They often fight fire with fire, using Chaos or xenos weaponry, employing daemonhosts, or other acts that would be heretical to their conservative brethren."* ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴². Radicals maintain that they remain loyal to the Emperor's ultimate goal (the survival of humanity), but they will perform what orthodox doctrine considers unforgivable sins in service of that goal ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴³. A Radical might argue, for instance, that **studying a Chaos grimoire** to learn how to banish a powerful daemon is acceptable if it saves a billion lives – whereas a Puritan would rather burn the book and perhaps lose those lives than risk corruption. Radical Inquisitors frequently walk on the knife's edge of corruption; indeed, many *have* been lost to Chaos or declared heretics after delving too deep ¹⁴⁴. This only reinforces the Puritans' distrust of them. But Radicals counter that **without flexibility, the Inquisition would be predictable and fail** – that *"Radical methods can serve as salvation for millions, just as Puritan close-mindedness can doom them"* ²⁰ ¹³².

Importantly, **these are not formal sects** with membership rosters, but broad labels. Within each camp are multiple specific **factions or philosophies**, each with nuanced beliefs about how best to defend humanity ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶. Many of these factions cut across Ordos – an Inquisitor’s allegiance to, say, the Thorians or Xanthites is often more defining than whether they are Hereticus or Malleus ¹⁴⁷. Here are some of the **notable sub-factions** on each side:

Puritan Factions:

- **Amalathians:** A dominant Puritan philosophy advocating that the Imperium is the Emperor’s divine plan unfolding as it should, and thus one should avoid drastic upheaval. They seek to maintain stability and unity above all ¹⁴⁸. Amalathians oppose schemes that would “reset” or transform Imperial institutions; they favor gradual reform if any. (The name comes from Mount Amalath, where a conclave affirmed this creed.)

- **Monodominants:** The most extreme Puritans, Monodominants believe “*the Imperium, and only the Imperium, should be allowed to exist.*” ¹⁴⁹ ¹⁵⁰. This translates to an agenda of **total extermination** of all aliens, mutants, psykers, and heretics – essentially anyone not a baseline, devout human. They tolerate no deviancy. Inquisitor **Karamazov** is a prime example of a Monodominant; so was the infamous Inquisitor **Tyrus**. Monodominants often use the catchphrase that *mankind must stand alone, pure and uncorrupted*, and they are willing to burn worlds to achieve this.

- **Thorians:** Named after **Sebastian Thor** (the Ecclesiarch who ended the Age of Apostasy), Thorians hold a somewhat unusual belief for Puritans: they believe the Emperor’s spirit could someday be *reincarnated or manifest* in a new host or divine avatar ¹⁵¹. They remain Puritan in that they revere the Emperor utterly – their goal is effectively a miraculous resurrection to lead humanity. They study phenomena like saints, reincarnation, and miraculous occurrences. Some other Puritans view Thorians as borderline heretical for contemplating the Emperor’s incarnation (indeed, it edges into theological radicalism) ¹⁵² ¹⁵³, but officially Thorianism is accepted (it was born in the aftermath of Apostasy, offering hope of the Emperor’s guidance). Within Thorians are splinter views: e.g., the **Anomolian Beholders** who patiently watch for the Emperor Incarnate to appear, or the **Ardentites** who think the Emperor’s power might manifest through all of humanity collectively ¹⁵¹. Despite the lofty goal, Thorians *are* considered Puritan because they do not advocate using Chaos or deviating from Imperial faith – they simply have a millenarian expectation of the Emperor’s return.

*(There are other minor Puritan factions like the Istvaanians and Recongregators sometimes listed differently by sources. Notably, some sources classify Istvaanians and Recongregationists as Radicals because they desire change, but their ultimate motivations (strengthening humanity) can be interpreted in a Puritan or Radical light. For clarity: **Istvaanians** believe in fomenting conflict on purpose, reasoning that only through constant war and crisis does humanity stay strong (peace breeds complacency). This is arguably *Radical in method* but some classify it as Puritan-extreme because it doesn’t involve xenos or Chaos, just a harsh philosophy of life through war ¹⁵⁴. **Recongregationism** holds that the Imperium’s institutions must be periodically torn down and rebuilt to avoid stagnation ¹⁵⁵. That inherently opposes the status quo, so many call it Radical. These grey areas show that not every faction sits neatly on one side – but generally, anything that smells of *reform* is viewed with suspicion by strict Puritans.)**

Puritans of all stripes tend to cooperate against common foes despite philosophical differences. They are united by a shared disgust for corruption and a belief in *purity* as strength. A young acolyte is often encouraged to hold Puritan views initially (zeal and faith make a good backbone for an Inquisitor’s early career) ¹⁵⁶. As noted earlier, many Puritans may mellow or shift stance over time, but others become even more hardline. The most extreme Puritans (e.g. Monodominants) see even slight compromises as unforgivable. When they gain power, they sometimes turn on not just Radicals but more moderate Puritans

too. In Inquisitorial conclaves, debates between, say, an Amalathian and a Monodominant can be fierce – one side advocating no change, the other demanding immediate purges of anything deemed impure.

Radical Factions:

- **Xanthism:** One of the oldest Radical philosophies, Xanthites believe in using the power of Chaos *against* Chaos. They will employ Warp-tainted weaponry, bind daemons into service (*daemonhosts*), and seek out Chaos artifacts – all with the intent to turn the Dark Powers’ strength to the Emperor’s cause ⁹⁰. Named after Inquisitor Zaranchek Xanthus (who was executed for heresy in M34, though his ideas lived on), Xanthism is highly controversial. Xanthites argue that *denying* the power of the Warp leaves humanity at a disadvantage; better to control it. Their critics retort that Chaos cannot be controlled without it eventually controlling *you*. Many famous “fallen” Inquisitors started as Xanthites. Still, some Xanthites remain active and uncorrupted, walking that tightrope – often in Ordo Malleus.

- **Horusians:** This faction has a somewhat similar goal to Thorians but by darker means: Horusians think that the primordial Chaos energy that empowered the traitor Horus could be captured and repurposed to create a divine leader for Mankind ¹⁵⁷. In essence, *use the power of Chaos (Horus) to incarnate a new Emperor-like savior*. This is an extreme position, since it involves trafficking with what empowered the Arch-Traitor. Horusians are certainly Radicals; they actively seek ways to harness Chaos **and** Imperial faith together. Many other Inquisitors consider this **blasphemous** – indeed, the possibility of a “Chaos Emperor” horrifies both Puritans and even moderate Radicals.

- **Istvaanians:** (As mentioned above) They believe that strife and conflict are *desirable* states, because only through the crucible of war does humanity evolve and the Imperium avoid decay ¹⁵⁴. Istvaanian Inquisitors might secretly **foment wars or crises**, or ensure that existing conflicts don’t end too soon. The philosophy is named after the Istvan massacres (their view being that the Horus Heresy’s devastation ultimately weeded out weakness and forced the Imperium to become more militarized – a grim benefit). This is Radical because it gleefully tolerates human suffering and upheaval as a tool. Istvaanians can come from any Ordo and often clash with more peaceful colleagues.

- **Recongregationism:** These Radicals aim to *reconstruct* the Imperium’s corrupt institutions. They see the Imperium as stagnating and rotting under millennia of bureaucracy, so they work to tear down bloated organizations and encourage fresh leadership and innovation ¹⁵⁸. For example, a Recongregator Inquisitor might orchestrate the downfall of an entire Planetary Governor’s regime only to allow a more dynamic (but possibly unorthodox) leader to take over, all off the record. Other Inquisitors often mistake their actions as simple sedition or power games, but Recongregators believe they are ultimately saving the Imperium from fossilization. The Amalathian Puritans vehemently oppose this view (since Amalathians *love* the status quo) – in fact, Amalathians accuse Recongregators of being little different from the heretics who caused the Age of Apostasy.

- **Oblationists:** A grim faction of Radicals who have a paradoxical stance: they hold that using Warp or xenos taint is an **absolute damnation** of the soul *yet necessary* for victory ¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰. Essentially, an Oblationist willingly damns themselves – they’ll use a forbidden tool, fully believing it sentences them to spiritual doom, because they think sacrificing their own soul is worth it to save others. The name comes from “oblation” (sacrifice). These Inquisitors often undertake suicide missions of corruption: e.g., deliberately getting possessed by a daemon to learn its plans, then having their acolytes kill them (if all goes well). It’s an incredibly dangerous path and often a short one.

- **Ocularians:** Radicals obsessed with **divining the future** by arcane means ¹⁶⁰. They use tarot, scrying, possibly even Chaos rituals to try to predict major threats. Their risk is delving into forbidden psychic practices.

- **Libricars:** Interestingly, though their method is extreme, their goal sounds Puritan – Libricars want to **purge all Imperial institutions of even the smallest corruption** ¹⁶¹. This scorched-earth approach puts

them under Radical, because if literally applied it means upheaval and executing thousands of officials for minor infractions. They will happily bring down entire organisations to root out hidden heresy. Essentially, they are *reformists with a bolter*. Their name comes from “Libricar” (perhaps implying writing a new book of law with pure ink – speculative).

- **Polypsykana:** A fringe Radical belief that humanity should *evolve into an entirely psychic race* ¹⁶². They see psykers not as a threat but as the next step, and may encourage programs to awaken more psychic potential in the population – a very dangerous idea given how uncontrolled psykers invite daemons.

- **Seculos Attendous:** A Radical view that the **Ecclesiarchy (church) is holding humanity back** ¹⁶³. They seek to reduce the church's power, perhaps to return Imperial policy to a more rational or secular footing (recognizing the Emperor as a leader rather than a deity). This is heresy to orthodox faith, so any Inquisitor with this inclination must act carefully. It likely arose in sectors where church excess was observed.

- **Phaenonites:** An outlawed Radical sect (declared *Excommunicate Traitoris* eventually) that aimed to **seize power and remake the Imperium under their own rule** ¹⁶⁴. They were basically megalomaniacs among the Radicals – considering themselves better suited than the High Lords, they delved into all sorts of arcane lore to build personal power. They were purged when discovered.

- **Others:** There are always personal creeds that don't fit neatly. The Lexicanum notes an “Unnamed” ultra-radical group who think the Emperor's final ascension can only occur if He dies – an idea so dangerous that the Adeptus Custodes immediately eliminates anyone even whispering it ¹⁶⁵. Also, specific regional factions exist, like in the Calixis Sector (from the *Dark Heresy* RPG) there are groups such as the **Tyrantine Cabal** (concerned with a prophecy of a “Tyrant Star”) which mix members of different Ordos in a shared Radical-leaning mission ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷.

These factions often engage in vigorous debate and intrigue. The **ideological struggle** is described as the lattice that defines Inquisitorial politics ¹⁶⁸ ¹⁶⁹. **Conclaves** of Inquisitors sometimes fracture into cliques of like-minded Puritans and Radicals arguing over how to handle a crisis. For example, during a Chaos cult uprising, a Radical might propose using a bound daemon to interrogate a greater daemon for information, while a Puritan present nearly draws their pistol at the suggestion. Usually, they find a compromise or each just goes their own way and tries their method, occasionally coming into direct conflict. It has been noted that **open warfare between Inquisitorial factions is rare** because most Inquisitors recognize that internal strife can only weaken the Imperium ¹⁷⁰ ¹⁷¹. The preferred approach is subtle opposition: spreading word at a Conclave that “*Inquisitor X has trafficked with dark powers*” to ruin their support, or quietly warning one's acolytes to be on guard around that suspicious colleague. In extreme cases, however, Inquisitors *do* duel or assassinate each other. A famous historical incident is the case of Inquisitor **Lichtenstein**, a Radical who freed a daemon prince accidentally; the fanatical Witch Hunter **Tyrus** has a long-standing warrant to eliminate Lichtenstein, turning it into a personal manhunt ¹⁷² ¹⁷³. Such episodes are thankfully uncommon compared to the unity Inquisitors show against enemies of mankind.

It's crucial to note that **factional loyalties are fluid**. An Inquisitor may transition from Puritan to Radical over their career (or vice versa, though that is less common as Radical knowledge is a one-way street). Some Inquisitors reject both labels, claiming to be “moderates” who take each situation as it comes. Indeed, few proudly wave the Radical banner; they often justify themselves by saying “*we follow the Emperor's spirit if not the letter*.” Meanwhile, no Inquisitor considers themselves “evil” – even Radicals believe they serve the Emperor, just in unorthodox ways. The tension essentially boils down to **how much risk of corruption is acceptable**. Puritans answer: none – “*better to kill a hundred innocents than let one traitor live*” ¹⁷⁴. Radicals answer: whatever it takes – “*if sacrifice is needed for the greater good, so be it*.” The Inquisition's history has plenty of tragic examples to fuel both arguments: for instance, a Radical's deal with a xenos might save a sector, but later that xenos betrays and harms another sector, vindicating the Puritans' fears; or a Puritan's

refusal to use a Chaos tome might result in a daemon invasion that could have been averted, lending credence to the Radical view.

In the end, the **Puritan-Radical dichotomy** is the engine of the Inquisition's self-reflection. It ensures that there is always an Inquisitor willing to question another's methods. This internal check can be healthy (preventing excesses) but also dangerous (if it paralyzes action or causes infighting). One anonymous Inquisitorial teaching frames it thus: *"The ideological struggle... is not about absolute right or wrong. Radical methods can save millions just as Puritan rigidity can doom them; yet opening oneself to foul means can lead to corruption that destroys even more."* ²⁰ ¹⁷⁵. The **truth is often relative** in the Inquisition ¹⁴⁰. Successful Inquisitors, whether Puritan or Radical, tend to be those keen-minded enough to judge when to stay their hand and when to push the limit. Many quip that with age, all Inquisitors grow more Radical in practice even if they remain Puritan at heart ¹⁷⁶ – the weight of centuries of impossible choices teaches flexibility. Meanwhile, the firebrand young Inquisitors are usually ultra-Puritan, eager to prove themselves by vanquishing traditional foes in orthodox ways ¹⁷⁷. As they gain experience, some realize the universe is not black and white, leading them to nuanced positions or outright radicalism.

To illustrate Inquisitorial attitudes in their own words, it is fitting to close with a few direct quotes from Inquisitors on this matter. The contrast is stark:

- A **zealous Puritan** once declared, *"The Emperor's word is law. There can be no compromise with His enemies. To question is to doubt, and doubt is the seed of heresy. Only the Traitor, the Mutant, the Witch seek alternatives – and for them, extermination."* This encapsulates the unforgiving purity doctrine.
- Meanwhile, a **cynical Radical** like Inquisitor Quixos famously said, *"My enemy's enemy is a problem for later. For now, they might be useful."* ⁸⁷. This chillingly pragmatic line – essentially using one threat to fight another – shows the ends-focused mindset of a Radical willing to make morally gray alliances.
- Another anonymous quote wryly captures the journey many Inquisitors take: *"He who is not a Puritan in his youth has no heart; he who is still a Puritan in his maturity has no brain."* ¹¹¹. This is often cited within Inquisitorial circles to caution young acolytes that fanaticism must eventually be tempered with wisdom (lest one become a blind zealot or a pawn of evil in the guise of purity).

In the Warhammer 40K universe, these lore perspectives ensure that any portrayal of an Inquisitor – such as in the *InquisitorNet* project – remains complex and authentic. An Inquisitor is not just a witch-hunting tyrant or a scheming renegade; they are products of a harsh galaxy, making terrifying choices in the name of humanity's survival. They might speak in Biblical grandiloquence or in conspiratorial whispers; they might burn a heretic at the stake one day and secretly consult a xenos artifact the next. **Authenticity** to the source material means embracing this duality: the unwavering faith paired with moral ambiguity. As a final thought, remember the official Inquisitorial motto inscribed in many secret tomes: *"Innocence proves nothing."* ⁵⁰. That grim aphorism perhaps best summarizes the Inquisitor's ethos: **No one is above suspicion, no action is beyond justification, and only in ruthless vigilance can the Imperium be safeguarded.**

Sources: The information above is drawn primarily from official Warhammer 40,000 lore sources such as *Codex: Inquisition*, *Codex: Witch Hunters*, *Codex: Daemonhunters*, the *Eisenhorn* and *Ravenor* novel series by Dan Abnett, and the *Dark Heresy* RPG background, as well as compiled summaries from fan-maintained wikis (Warhammer 40k Wiki ¹ ⁴⁴, Lexicanum ¹³⁴ ¹⁴¹, etc.) which collate and cite the original publications. These citations (in square brackets) point to specific entries on those wikis for verification. All quotations from characters (e.g. Karamazov's courtroom pronouncement ⁵¹, Czevak's remark on aliens

⁸⁵ , Galbus Heer's exhortation ⁵⁴ , and the various mottoes and maxims ⁵⁰ ¹¹¹) are taken from officially published material as noted in those wiki entries. This academic-style overview should provide a comprehensive reference for capturing the tone and detail of the Inquisition – from its structure and methods of communication to the rich ideological conflicts that drive its narrative in Warhammer 40K lore.

¹ ² ⁴ ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹² ¹³ ¹⁹ ²⁰ ²² ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ ²⁷ ²⁸ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³² ³³ ³⁴ ³⁵ ³⁶ ³⁷ ³⁸ ³⁹ ⁴⁰ ⁴¹ ⁴²
⁴³ ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ ⁵⁵ ¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁰⁸ ¹¹¹ ¹¹² ¹¹³ ¹³² ¹³³ ¹³⁵ ¹³⁶ ¹³⁷ ¹³⁸ ¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ ¹⁵² ¹⁵³ ¹⁵⁶ ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷ ¹⁶⁸ ¹⁶⁹
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⁸ ⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ **Best of Warhammer 40k Quotes From Books and Games – The Random VibeZ**

<https://www.therandomvibez.com/warhammer-40k-quotes/>

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⁵⁰ ¹⁷⁴ **Thought for the day (I - P) - Warhammer 40k - Lexicanum**

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⁵¹ ⁵² ⁵³ ⁶⁸ **Fyodor Karamazov | Warhammer 40k Wiki | Fandom**

https://warhammer40k.fandom.com/wiki/Fyodor_Karamazov

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https://warhammer40k.fandom.com/wiki/Ordo_Malleus

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