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KNIGHTLINE

NEWS FOR KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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Introducing the Knights of Columbus' new ceremonial

A new era has begun for the Knights of Columbus: A modern single, public exemplification ceremony can now be used to welcome men to our ranks as full members of the Order. The new ceremony combines the three ceremonies used in the past.

This issue takes an in-depth look at the new exemplification ceremony: what it is, why it's changed and how you can run one. Straightforward and easy to implement, the new exemplification ceremony gives Catholic men the opportunity to publicly commit to being Knights — ready to lead, serve, protect and defend.

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Into the Breach video series

Through a new 12-episode online video series, the K of C addresses what it means to be a man and how to live as a man in today's world. The web series — inspired by Bishop Thomas Olmsted's apostolic exhortation *Into the Breach* — covers topics including brotherhood, spiritual warfare, prayer, masculinity and leadership.

The series features theologian Scott Hahn, speaker Father Mike Schmitz, former NFL player Matt Birk, FOCUS founder Curtis Martin and others.

The video series will be available on www.kofc.org and K of C social media channels beginning Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26.

New K of C exemplification ceremony: Rooted in the past, tailored for the present

At the State Deputy meeting in November 2019, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson announced a historic moment for the Order — the introduction of a new and groundbreaking combined exemplification of the principles of charity, unity and fraternity. Here are excerpts from his speech.

A new generation of Knights

“We must forge a new generation of Knights — men who see in our principles of charity, unity and fraternity a path to leading a Catholic way of life that can strengthen their families, their parishes and their communities. We must reach a new generation of men by the witness of our charity, our brotherhood and our ceremonials.”

Inspire the men of our day

“Just as our forefathers rallied to meet the challenges of their day, we must inspire the men of our day. We must reach out to meet these men where they are. And when we do, we must show them that they are called to be men of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Because of this we are acting to make our Order more inviting and more accessible.”

New exemplification

“Early in the new year we will offer a new exemplification ceremony. ... This new ceremonial is rooted in our past and tailored to our present. It will inspire more men to join us. Most of all, it will empower the Knights of Columbus to advance our mission and grow in the years ahead.”

Why the change

“In recent decades, we have found it harder to bring men, especially young fathers, into the Order. When we ask them why, they tell us three ceremonies are too time-consuming and too difficult to attend. They tell us that secrecy is unnecessary.”
“Many local councils lack ceremonial teams or the manpower to organize degrees. This means many candidates wait far too long to fully join our ranks. Some give up. Too many never take their Second and Third Degrees. Last year, only little more than half of the men who took their First Degree also took their Third Degree.”



How the change came about

“Our most recent supreme convention adopted a resolution from Illinois to consider combining our current First, Second and Third Degree ceremonies into one and removing the condition of secrecy. ... We undertook an inclusive process with supreme directors, state officers and ceremonialists with many decades of experience in the exemplification of our degrees.”

What the new exemplification looks like

“Instead of having separate ceremonies, all three degrees can now be conferred in a single ceremony. The new exemplification focuses on the history and principles of our Order. It presents a fuller and richer understanding of who we are, what we stand for and what we are called to be. It harkens back to the simple ceremonies of Unity and Charity first approved by Father McGivney. Our new ceremony can be held in a council chamber or in the parish with families and friends seated in the pews. They will see firsthand, the organization that their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons and friends are joining — the principles and values they are committing to and why it matters.”

This is an excerpt from the supreme knight's address, which can be found in full in [Columbia magazine](#).

Eight steps for a successful exemplification

1. Meet with your council chaplain or local pastor.

Obtain your pastor's and chaplain's recommendations on conducting an Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Ideally, select a date when one of them can attend and lead the prayers during the ceremony. (If no priest is available, the presiding officer may lead the prayers.)

2. Select a date and secure a location.

Preferably, the exemplification will be held in a Catholic church following Mass.

3. Order materials.

Order *Candidate Kits* (#531) from Supplies Online, accessible [here](#).

4. Select an honoree.

Selecting an honoree is optional. If one is chosen, let the honoree know the date and time of the event.

5. Promote.

Build public interest in the upcoming exemplification in your parish and larger community via your parish's and council's bulletins, websites and social media pages. Include mention of the honoree(s).

6. Plan a reception.

Host a social event after the ceremony so that everyone can meet the council's newest members and their families.

7. Invite brother Knights to attend.

Invite all council members, their families, your district deputy and your field agent to attend.

8. Practice.

Conduct walk-throughs so that all exemplification personnel are comfortable in skillfully presenting their parts in a solemn and dignified manner.

Following each exemplification, financial secretaries should present a Membership Card to each of the newly advanced members. Councils should also complete the Ceremonial Report Form (#450). Submit the form to ceremonials@kofc.org.



Four items every council needs

To conduct the new exemplification ceremony, you'll need these supplies.



Ceremonial Baldrics

The presiding officer, three presenters, warden and the investing officer are required to wear baldrics during the exemplification.

Crucifix

A large, wooden crucifix is held up during the ceremony. A wooden crucifix is available from Knights Gear and similar crucifixes are available from [the English Company](#) or [Roger Sauvé](#), the Knights of Columbus' official ceremonial suppliers in the United States and Canada.



Cable and Fibers

Fibers (small strings) and a white cable, approximately 1 inch in diameter and 2 feet in length, are used to symbolically demonstrate the virtue of unity. Cables and fibers can be ordered from the Knights of Columbus' official ceremonial suppliers.

Candidate Kit (#531)

Each kit includes a rosary and emblem pin, both of which are presented during the exemplification. Councils should order one kit per candidate.



Frequently asked questions about the exemplification

Why have these changes been made?

The future of our Order depends upon growth, and we need a way to join that is inviting and accessible. The new combined ceremony removes the barriers of secrecy and commitment of time that inhibited many from joining our ranks. It also eliminates redundancies and presents the lessons of charity, unity and fraternity in a more clear and convincing way. *For more on the reason behind the changes, watch the supreme knight's speech [here](#).*

What is the difference between the new degree exemplification and the old ceremonies?

Instead of having separate closed-door ceremonies, all three degrees can now be conferred in a single ceremony held in the parish, or in a council chamber.

Who can attend the new degree exemplification?

The new ceremony is open to guests, including the family and friends of current and new Knights.

Can we conduct the old degree ceremonies?

State deputies will direct the implementation of the new ceremony and the phase out of the old ceremonies within their jurisdictions. The old ceremonies may still be conducted if your state deputy allows. A final date for complete termination of the old ceremonies will be determined by the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors.

The first combined, public exemplification took place at St. Mary's Church, the Order's birthplace, on Jan. 1, 2020. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson was on hand for the historic event and greeted Knights and their families afterward.

"I appreciated that I could invite my wife and daughter to come and see the process of becoming a Knight."

*Jason Gamsby
Our Lady of the Rosary Council 3300
East Haven, Conn.*

Should First and Second Degree members participate?

Encourage First and Second Degree members to participate in the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. These members should also be invested with a rosary and lapel pin, even though they received them at their First Degree ceremony. At the conclusion of the ceremony, they are Third Degree members.

Are online members allowed to participate?

Online members can participate and then transfer into your council. The transfer details can be handled afterwards. If an online member wishes to remain in the

Online Division (Council), his wishes should be respected.

There is no pledge of secrecy in this ceremony. How do members handle the promises they made during the original ceremonies?

Promises made in previous ceremonies should be honored.

Will knighting be conducted using a sword?

Knighting with a sword will be reserved for Exemplification of Patriotism, when the member becomes a "Sir Knight."

Do teams need to be certified?

With the simplicity of this ceremony, the decision was made that no certification would be required. The grand knight and district deputy are charged with making sure the ceremonial script is being adhered to. However, this would not prevent existing conferring officers and ceremonials directors from assisting as mentors and guides for the implementation of the new ceremony.

"I liked the inclusiveness and incorporating our families. It was very welcoming. As Knights, that's one of our key components: bettering ourselves, our families and parishes."

*Michael Shea
St. Francis de Sales Council 9
Bristol, Conn.*

Should councils continue to assess an Initiation Fee?

Since the *Candidate Kit* (#531) is now the only cost to councils, lowering or eliminating the initiation fee are both acceptable options. To do this, councils must vote to change their by-laws, afterwards updating them at "By Laws Online" accessed through [Officer's Online](#).

Have more questions? Other frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

Five questions with the new director of ceremonials

Thomas Hamling, the new director of ceremonials, is responsible for the development and maintenance of the ceremonies and protocols of the Order. Tom is actively involved in his parish and with day-to-day council life; he has served as grand knight, state retention director and financial secretary — a position he has held for more than 22 years.

How did you first get involved with the Knights of Columbus?

I started my volunteer career with the Knights of Columbus in high school, when I joined the Squires in Burnsville, Minn. I learned fraternity quickly and had the unique experience of being elected to serve as state chief squire.

I joined a college council — St. John's University Council 5136 in Collegeville, Minn. — in October of my freshman year, and have been an active grassroots volunteer ever since. Early on, I was involved in our First Degree team on campus. My college council also had a Second Degree team that would travel around to local areas, so my weekends were often spent traveling doing Second and Third Degree ceremonies.

How does being a Knights help you express the Catholic faith and engage in parish life?

I see my Knights of Columbus experience, my parish life and my faith journey as being very, very closely connected. I helped start a council at my home parish 11 years ago, and I marvel at the transformation of new Knights who recognize that they are on a faith journey and are not alone.

Like many Knights, service to my parish doesn't end with Knights of Columbus events. Aside from our involvement with our youth group, catechism classes and retreats, my wife and I have been volunteers in our parish Pre-Cana group for 20 years. For us, it's also a renewal of our own Pre-Cana every year, and it's fantastic.

What's your experience working at the Supreme Council home office?

Most of my career has been on the fraternal side of the business, working in the General Office. The work has allowed me to work closely with state and district level volunteers and create many close fraternal bonds.

What do you see as the chief benefits of this new ceremonial?

The most exciting thing for me is that our family and friends can witness the ceremony and the commitments that we're making. I think it's going to have a really big impact and give the public a better sense of what the Knights of Columbus is all about.

How does this new ceremonial enhance the membership experience?

The fact that we're respecting our members' and candidates time and effort is important.

Because I am so heavily involved on the local level, I have always been interested in reducing administrative time and increasing volunteer time. This ceremony says, "Candidate, I am respecting your time and effort." Do we still have important messages? Do we have important virtues and principles to convey? Yes. Our new ceremony will continue to deliver them, just more succinctly. We're going to continue to learn these principles through our interactions in our council meetings and in our Faith in Action programs.

With the new ceremony, we're respecting our members' time and we're introducing them to our principles. When a member completes the ceremony, that's when the fun starts — we get to help men along their faith journey.



Thomas Hamling and his wife, Suzanne, at the baptism of their grandson, Kolbe. With them are their sons Jack and Luke; their daughter, Emma, and her husband, Benjamin; and their son Timothy and his fiancée, Taylor. (Image courtesy Thomas Hamling)

Questions about the new ceremonials can be directed to ceremonials@kofc.org or 203-752-4739.



SHARPEN YOUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

A CHALLENGE AND MESSAGE FROM
SUPREME CHAPLAIN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM LORI

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

— Mt 5:13

Imagine that you're at a steakhouse, and your plate finally arrives. Then, just as you are looking for the salt, you learn that the restaurant has completely run out of it. It's easy to see that without salt, our food can be bland and tasteless. Turning to the words of our Lord, has your life of faith become bland and insipid? Jesus did not die for our sake in order that we might offer the world a mediocre reflection of his life. As we embark on our Lenten journey, may we strive to be men who season the world and our communities with the salt of an authentic and inspiring Christian life.

This month's challenge

This month, I challenge you to sharpen your Christian witness by saying grace before meals at home and in public. Second, as you begin your Lenten journey, I challenge you to develop your “saltiness” through spiritual reflection, either with the Faith in Action Spiritual Reflection program or on a more informal basis.

Questions for reflection:

When was the last time you intentionally brought up your faith in a conversation? How did saying grace in public differ from saying it in the home? Practically speaking, what would you need to do to take your Christian “saltiness” to the next level?

Grand Knight's checklist

Deadlines

- Submit the *Semiannual Council Audit Report* (#1295) by Feb. 15
- Submit payment for Per Capita Tax, Catholic Advertising Fund and Culture of Life Fund assessments by April 10. *NOTE: Failure to pay the assessments prior to April 10 will result in suspension of the council. A suspended council may not be seated at their state convention, nor are its members eligible to be delegates to the Supreme Convention.*

Planning

- Lent begins Feb. 26. Meet with your pastor to discuss ways the council can support the parish during Lent.
- Review your progress toward earning the Star Council Award, which lays a solid foundation for member retention and is a measurement of council health.
- Monitor your progress for the Columbian Award by submitting the *Fraternal Programs Report Form* (#10784).

Things to consider

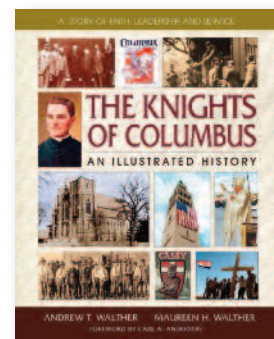
- Successful member engagement depends on effective communication. Keep your member contact information up to date.
- Coordinate a weekly *Into the Breach* (#340) reading group to support the men in your parish throughout Lent.
- Work with your district deputy and field agent on plans for a Spring membership drive.

K of C book remembers past, shows commitment to future

More than 135 years of faith, fraternity and charity are depicted in *The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History*, which highlights individual Knights and visionary K of C programs that continue to change lives.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson says “*The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History* is not simply a record of yesterday's harvest, but also contains within it the seeds of a future filled with promise.”

Order the full-color, hardcover, 296-page book for \$24.99 (including shipping) — almost 30% off the cover price — at knightsgear.com/history or at 855-432-7562.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS INSURANCE

A momentous day for the Knights of Columbus

By John Ruffo

John Ruffo is a past grand knight and a general agent serving members and their families in eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island. He attended the first combined, public exemplification held at St. Mary's Church, the Order's birthplace, in New Haven, Conn.

January 1, 2020, marked a momentous day in the history of the Knights of Columbus, one I am proud to have been there to witness with my family at my side.

That day, my wife, Joanna, myself and two of our daughters were present at Knight of Columbus' new Degree Exemplification Ceremony held for the very first time in our Order's history

To set the stage, we were all in the basement of St. Mary's Church where Father McGivney held the very first K of C meeting March 29, 1882. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson was in attendance, and he spoke proudly of the growth of our organization and how it would flourish in the future with this new structure. It is all part of a continued focus of building the domestic church; by having family there, the new ceremony strengthens the pledge a man makes to the Knights of Columbus and to God.

Though my wife and children have known the Knights for almost 12 years, this new exemplification brought new interest and questions, especially from my children. My family is no different from any other; welcoming families to witness the ceremony will encourage inclusiveness among the Knights and their families. It will also allow families to see the spiritual, fraternal and financial reasons behind why our founder, Father Michael J. McGivney, started this wonderful organization 138 years ago.



John and his wife, Joanna, with their daughters Megan, Madi, Emma and Kayla in Orlando, Fla. (Image courtesy John Ruffo)

I look forward to seeing our membership grow, putting more men and their families in a position to help our Order and our Church. In any organization, growth is vital for succession and the Knights are no different. We need more men to join our ranks and do the work that still needs to be done for our Church and our communities.

Vivat Jesus!

Live in Connecticut or Rhode Island and have questions about K of C insurance? John's team can help. Email john.ruffo@kofc.org.

Who's who at the exemplification?

Here is a guide to the roles in the new exemplification ceremony.

Presiding Officer

Acts as the Master of Ceremonies. The grand knight or highest-ranking officer in attendance fills this role.

Chaplain

Leads assembly in opening and closing prayers.

Warden

Guides the candidates.

Financial Secretary

Registers candidates and obtains their signature on the Constitutional Roll.

Investing Officer

Presents rosaries and emblem pins to the candidates. The grand knight or highest-ranking officer in attendance may fill this role and, depending on the number of candidates, multiple officers may assist.

Field Agent

Meets and greets candidates and assists the financial secretary.

Presenters on Charity, Unity and Fraternity

These three separate roles can be taken by any three council officers selected by the council. Each of them reads or "teaches" one of three lessons on charity, unity and fraternity. In addition, the presenter on charity reads a short discourse on the rosary.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS is open to men 18 years of age or older who are practical (that is, practicing) Catholics in union with the Holy See. This means that an applicant or member accepts the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, aspires to live in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church.

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