



The Catholic Patriot

Supreme Master
Michael McCusker

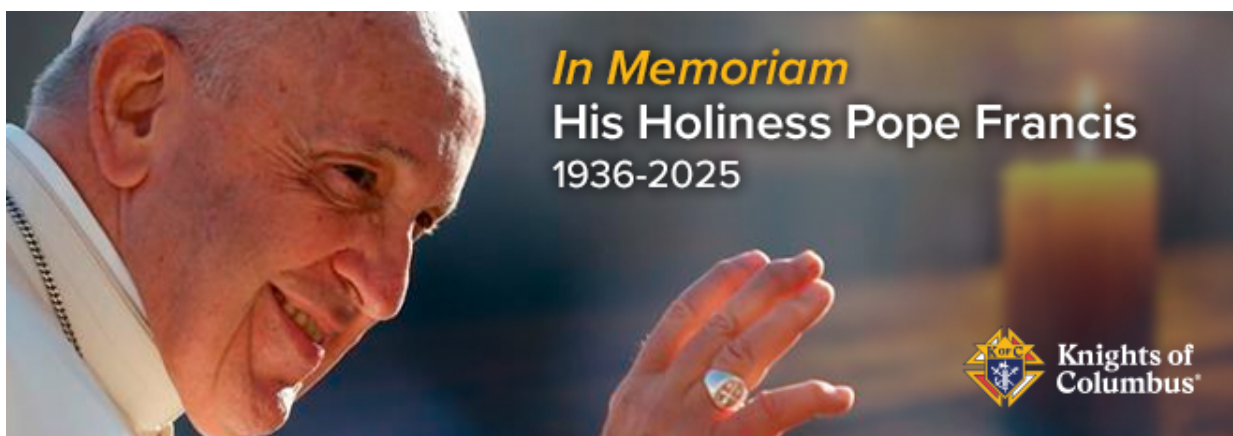
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Supporting our Country, Community, and Church
With Respect and Honor
Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree

April 2025

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Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly shared the following message with all Knights of Columbus on Monday, April 21: [In Memoriam](#).

View the [tribute video](#) in remembrance of the Holy Father. Learn more at kofc.org/francis.

Supreme Master's Message

Into the Valley of Death Armed with Faith Alone

This month, my thoughts drift back to my late friend Father Joe Brando who served with me in the Army. I often think of our time together as priest and penitent beneath the ubiquitous pines of Fort Stewart, Georgia, and fondly recall Mass with the hood of a jeep serving as the altar, where it was not uncommon for me to be the only soldier at Mass.

My mind also drifts to Captain Sayf Bowlin who heroically ran our Catholic community in northern Afghanistan, where, due to shortages, we saw a chaplain roughly every two months. In the absence of a priest, Sayf would lead us each week in a Eucharistic prayer service. When his tour ended, he asked me to lead our community, which met in a small wooden hut decorated with statues and artwork sent to Sayf from parishes back in the States.

When he asked, I remember telling him that I was not worthy to lead the community; that I was a sinner and too flawed. The next morning, I read in scripture how God chose Saul with all his imperfections to lead the Israelites. The footnote indicated that Saul was an example of how God uses the imperfect to achieve the perfect. It seemed that Sayf and the Lord had backed me into a corner, and I am glad they did!



Interestingly, our chapel did not have a tabernacle. While I knew that the Lord would go with me to Afghanistan, I never imagined that He would end up living in my footlocker for the next six months! He certainly works in mysterious ways!

Today, Sayf is Father John-Mary Bowlin of the Diocese of Tyler, Texas! Please pray for him and all priests!

April is also the month that we remember the birthday (April 20th) of [Venerable Father Emil Kapaun](#). Chaplain Kapaun ministered to troops in World War II and the Korean War, dying in Korea as a prisoner of war in 1951. Seventy years would pass before he was laid to rest in his beloved Kansas.

Let us dedicate ourselves this month to remembering and praying for our Catholic military chaplains who are far too few. Only 240 of 800 chaplain positions are currently filled in the U.S. Armed Forces. By comparison, most priests in the U.S. minister to 1,250 Catholics while each Catholic chaplain ministers to roughly 25,000 service members. Your continued support (as both Assemblies and individuals) to the [Blessed Michael McGivney Military Chaplain Scholarship Fund](#) can make the difference in turning the tide, ensuring that chaplains are always available to bring the sacraments to our service members, whether in a chapel or under a tree far away from home.

Vivat Jesus!

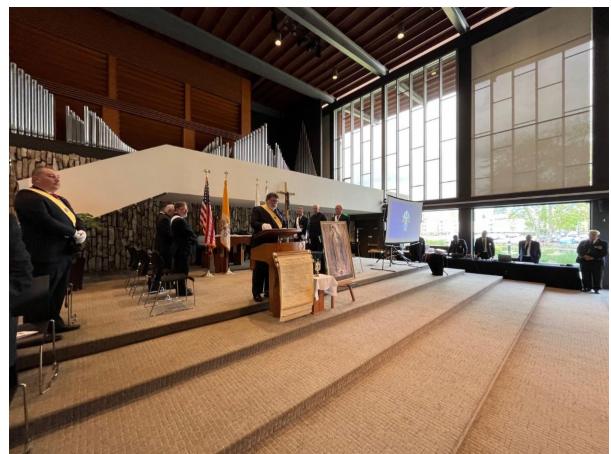
West Coast and Midwest Premieres Usher In Revised Exemplification of Patriotism

Following the February 22nd premiere of the Revised Exemplification of Patriotism at the 125th Anniversary of the Fourth Degree in New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral, where more than 3,000 attended to watch a class of 645 new Sir Knights, the task fell to the Southern District of California and the Indiana District to host the West Coast & Midwest premieres.

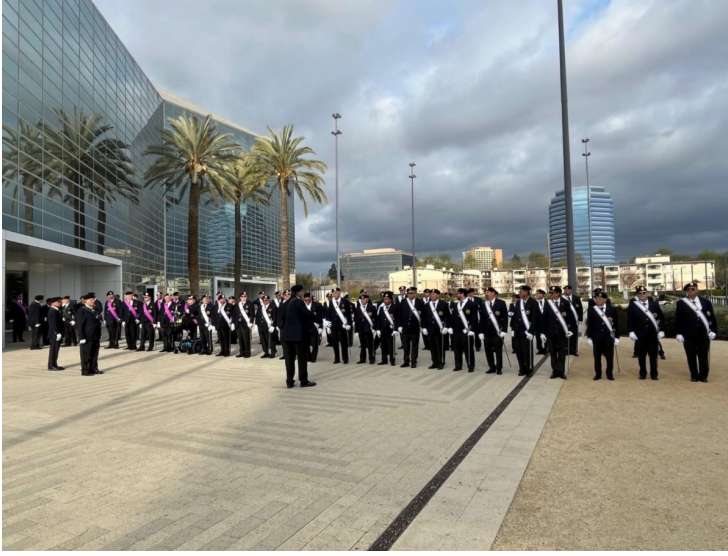
California took the lead on Saturday, March 1st at Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. A class of nearly 200 candidates participated in the district's 125-for-125 celebration, led by District Master Roark Galloway. Supreme Master and Mrs. Michael McCusker were on hand for this historic event. A banquet followed the event with more than 500 in attendance.



The California Class gathers in the Arboretum at Christ Cathedral for the West Coast Premiere.



District Master Roark Galloway presents the exemplification lesson to the candidates.



Final formation of the honor guard outside Christ Cathedral following the March 1st exemplification.



Supreme Master McCusker cuts the cake with sword in hand for California's celebration of the 125th Anniversary of the Fourth Degree.

Indiana was up next on March 22nd at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral where a class of approximately 100 candidates became new Sir Knights. The Midwest premiere was led by Indiana District Master Patrick Glavin. In attendance were Supreme Master Michael McCusker and Fourth Degree Chief of Staff Michael Porter. It was significant for the Supreme Master to be in the city of his birth on his birthday for the first time since he was born there in 1968. Porter, also a native of Indianapolis, was excited for a trip home to his roots, attending the exemplification and Mass in the cathedral where he once served as an altar boy.



The Indiana class assembles on March 22nd in the chapel of Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Pictured in center from left-to-right: Sompaul Vorapanich, Sorin Province VSM Michael McDougle, Supreme Master McCusker, and Indiana District Master Patrick Glavin.



The Indiana Class gathers in Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral for the Midwest Premiere.



Members of the Indiana Degree team watch the video of Catholic Exploration.



Sompaul Vorapanich (far left) receives a donation of \$6,000 from the Indiana State Council in support of the Warriors to Lourdes program that provides an annual pilgrimage to veterans and active duty members suffering from physical, emotional, and moral injury.



Left-to-right Sompaul Vorapanich, Supreme Master McCusker, and Indiana District Master stand by the Missing Man Table on display at the 125th Anniversary banquet in Indiana's historic Mater Dei Council 437.

The southern premiere of the revised exemplification will be Saturday, June 14th in Texas.

Message From Fourth Degree Membership Director

Membership Musings

Easter greetings to one and all.

The Fraternal finish line is nearing ever so quickly. The revised Exemplification of Patriotism has been released in the United States and development has begun in other countries comprising the Order. We should be expecting a huge second half bump. I pray that you have taken advantage of the unlimited opportunity you now have. I encourage every Fourth Degree Knight to attend the Exemplification of Patriotism with your family and share your Knights' history with them.



Did you know at the end of March there were 2,136,958 men in the Knights of Columbus. Of those Knights, there are 363,462 Sir Knights. The sky is the limit for Assemblies as every single Fourth Degree Sir Knight should know of at least one Knight that is not a member of the Fourth Degree. We are in the midst of the 125th Campaign, State Conventions and, quite possibly the greatest opportunity, the newest members of the Church, our OCIA brethren. All of these provide opportunities to meet and exceed our membership goals. We just need to ask the question, "Will you join me in being a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus?"

Let's look at our Provincial leaders, spanning all divisions, going into the last quarter of the year:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. Fr Michael J McGivney | 87.24% |
| 2. Our Lady of Guadalupe | 63.24% |
| 3. Ferdinand Magellan | 45.85% |

Congratulation to these Provinces as you are within striking distance for your goal. Will you be assisting your Assembly, District and Province in growing the Fourth Degree?

I certainly hope you will.

Vivat Jesus

Bret Ladenburger
PSD Wyoming
Membership Director Fourth Degree

**If you need a video to assist you with membership,
click this link to the 125th celebration at St. Patrick's below**

[125th Celebration of the Fourth Degree](#)

The DeSmet Province shows up strong for North Dakota State Convention



Bishop John T. Folda presided at the State Memorial Mass on Friday, April 4, 2025. Approximately seventy-four Sir Knights participated in the Honor Guard, carrying 270 candles in remembrance of recently deceased brothers and ladies.

Saturday and Sunday morning Masses had more than seventy Sir Knights in the Honor Guard.



On Saturday, a Eucharistic Procession was conducted around the entire block of the church with four relics following the Eucharist. An Exemplification of Patriotism followed the State Convention. Due to the strong presence of the Fourth Degree at the State Convention, a class of only four candidates grew to twenty-two by the time of the exemplification! Actions make a difference. Awesome weekend!

Message from Liaison, Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

Worthy Faithful Navigators and Fourth Degree Leadership, Greetings and Lenten blessings to you. The Lenten season has recently ended. I recall the feeling that I had as Lent transitioned to the Triduum. This time has a bittersweet feeling to it, as we have been preparing ourselves to mourn the loss of Christ on Good Friday, but then we look forward to the celebration of His resurrection. The moment we can proudly say, "He has risen, He has risen indeed!" The resurrection story is one that fills us with pride in our Faith. We know that if Christ can conquer death, we can conquer sin. Unfortunately, we have many who are still suffering from the sins of war. There are visible wounds of combat, but unfortunately, there are also the invisible wounds of war. Combat veterans who suffer from PTSD have a wound inflicted on their psyche. Those who suffer from Moral Injury have an injury to their soul. The annual Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage brings awareness and care for those who suffer from physical wounds, visible wounds and invisible wounds. Our pilgrimage is fully funded by the generosity of donors. The cost is currently \$3,000 per wounded warrior. I am proud to share the story of the Ave Maria Assembly in Ave Maria, Florida who generously donated \$12,000 to the Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage.



Here is a message from Captain and Faithful Navigator Domenick Micillo, USN-Retired, of the Ave Maria Assembly #3862:

"The purpose of the KofC Ave Maria Assembly #3862 Veterans Day Ball is to build Patriotism in Ave Maria, spread awareness of the incredible work of the Archdiocese of the Military Services (AMS) and our military chaplains throughout Southwest Florida, inspire future seminarians to the military chaplaincy, honor our Nation and her veterans, and raise funds to support our veterans...this year to send military members on the next AMS/KofC Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage. At our 2024 Ave Maria Assembly Veterans Day Ball, with Vice Admiral Willy Moore, USN (Ret.) as our Keynote

Speaker, we were proud to raise \$12,000 for this year's Warrior to Lourdes pilgrimage. At our inaugural Veterans Day Ball in 2023 with Bishop Joseph Coffey as our Keynote Speaker, we were able to raise \$10,000 for the AMS."



Let us applaud the selfless efforts of these brother Sir Knights and their patriotic cause. With this generous donation, we can change the lives of four deserving wounded warriors.

CAPT and FN Dom Micillo, USN Ret with two Sponsored Seminarists

Sompaul Voranpanich
Director of Military Councils and Warriors to Lourdes

Revised Exemplification of Patriotism Embraces a Family Experience

We had an Exemplification at the Iowa State Convention on Friday, April 4, 2025. The class was just shy of 125 candidates! I was touched to see families accompanying the new Sir Knights in their knighting. Sometimes a picture does speak a thousand words. The families are now totally engaged to support their new Sir Knights.

"O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you." (Ps 102:2)

**Antonio Bañuelos, Supreme Director
Knights of Columbus**



Message from Director of New Assembly Development

New Assembly Development

My brother Sir Knights,

Since the March newsletter, we have grown by four more new Assemblies for a total of forty-four with one more waiting approval.

As we said last month, there are thirteen new assemblies in the pipeline. That is good that we have a pipeline, but these are essentially the same ones we had a month ago, so we need more activity out there. Please let me know if you are working on one and whether I can help you in some way to put it together.



Worthy VSMS and DMs, time is running out to get assemblies put together and approved by the end of the fraternal year. Let's work together to reach our targets. I can assist in helping to supply and populate the forms for submission. Please also include me in your submission of the forms.

As I said last month, keep a look out for potential new Assemblies. DMs, examine your districts. You have a bird's eye view of your patch. Examine it carefully. Chat with your State Deputies, District Deputies and FNs for a potential new assembly. Remember, your target is just one new assembly this fraternal year. You can do it!

Thank you for your hard work on this.

God Bless,

Dale Hofer, PSD
Director of New Assembly Development

Message From Fourth Degree Director of Training

"New" Quarterly Training Includes Assembly Officers

The Fourth Degree is working on adding mirrored training for the Assembly like we do for the Councils.

We started this month with Assembly Financial Officer training that informed the Faithful Navigator, Faithful Comptroller, and Faithful Purser on the financial end of an assembly.

Our next quarterly training course will be a two-part training course in July to prepare the assembly officers for the new fraternal year.

July 21, 2025 will be "Faithful Navigator" training to help especially those new FNs to get a good, informed start to the fraternal year.

July 23, 2025 will be "Assembly Officer" training that will include all the officers of the assembly.

You will receive a registration email from Supreme. Please use that to register for the training, and you will receive a link to the training one week prior to the training dates.

All the training sessions will be available on demand to all who register after each of the training dates, so please make sure to register.

If you have any other questions on training your members, please email me at MJPKNIGHT9282@aol.com.

Fraternally,
Michael J. Porter
PSD,FM,FVSM
Fourth Degree Director of Training



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Thank you for your service to the Order. If you have any questions or suggestions during your term, please email suprememaster@kofc.org



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