



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 2026

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Supreme Master's Message

Mark Twain is credited with saying *“the coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.”* However, researchers have debated if Twain ever actually made this quip.

Like Mark Twain, I moved from the south to Connecticut and recently survived my first full winter here. So, I have concluded that not even Mark Twain could have ever told such a lie about San Francisco because Connecticut winters are just too relentless, and now, with its recent arrival, I have concluded that a Connecticut spring is nothing more than a Tennessee winter.

But I digress.

Thankfully, there have been a few rare days of sunshine to allow me to dig a garden. I know it is necessary to wait until after the last frost to plant, and according to my Farmer's Almanac, here in Connecticut, that will be sometime in late July.

Meanwhile, I have been learning a lot about gardening courtesy of YouTube. Did you know that marigolds are a great border for deterring critters? Or that they are a cucumber's best friend, often thwarting destructive insects while attracting beneficial ones? I have also learned best practices for starting seedlings inside, how to thin them, and then how to properly place them to conserve space while maximizing growth in the garden. I have also discovered which plants should never be near each other.

Like gardening, now is the time to plan for the next fraternal year. Just as Mark Twain blended reality with exaggeration to produce tremendous humor, so, too, can we appreciate the reality of our assemblies and find ways to blend them with untapped potential to increase success. This is only possible by identifying who best to serve as leaders, by understanding which programs will most benefit your parish and communities, through assessing the potential for continued success or the options for resurrecting a struggling assembly, and by demonstrating a willingness to learn from other successful assemblies in your area.

Summer draws near! Happy fraternal gardening! May your assemblies grow and prosper!

And one last piece of Twain's wisdom perfectly suited for the Fourth Degree:



"Loyalty to country ALWAYS. Loyalty to government, when it deserves it."

Michael McCusker
Supreme Master

Message from Fourth Degree Director of Programs

"Patriot 250" District Master's Challenge

As we approach the historic 250th Anniversary of the United States, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate our Order's unwavering commitment to Patriotism. To mark these milestones, I am officially announcing the "**Patriot 250" District Master's Challenge**.

This competition is designed to invigorate our Assemblies through a dual focus on membership growth and high-impact patriotic programming. Districts will be evaluated on the following two pillars:

Pillar I: Patriotic Growth (Membership)

Growth is the lifeblood of our Order. We will recognize excellence in two distinct membership categories:

- **Total Intake for each Division:** The District with the greatest number of new Sir Knights initiated between June 1st and August 31st in their division.
- **Highest Percentage:** The District with the highest percentage of total intake relative to their membership base during the same period.

Pillar II: 250th Theme Program Event

Each District is invited to submit the single best patriotic event held by their Assemblies from June 1st to August 31st. All entries will be heavily weighted toward events that embrace the 250th Anniversary theme, specifically focusing on:

- **Historical Connection:** How the event links local history to the founding of our nation in 1776.
- **Civic Visibility:** Engagement with the public, local government, and veterans' organizations.
- **Legacy:** The event's impact on youth and its potential to inspire future generations of patriots.

Important Deadlines & Submissions

- **Competition Period:** June 1, 2026 to August 31, 2026.
- **Membership Submissions:** District Masters must send a copy of their **Form 1291** to **Bret Ladenburger**, Director of Membership, at ladenburgerkofc@gmail.com, and to your Vice Supreme Master.
- **Program Submissions:** District Masters must send the entry for their District's best "Patriot 250" theme program to **Ron Boyce**, Director of Programs, at rboyce4539@aol.com, and to their Vice Supreme Master.
- **Final Deadline:** All Form 1291's and Program submissions must be received by **September 11, 2026**.

I encourage you to collaborate closely with your Faithful Navigators to ensure every Assembly is participating. Let us make this 250th anniversary a defining moment for the Fourth Degree in our Districts and Provinces.



With Pope Leo IV declaring 2026 as the year of St. Francis of Assisi, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate our Order's unwavering commitment to Civic Duty and Patriotism. To mark these milestones, I am officially announcing the "**St. Francis of Assisi**" **District Master Challenge** for those Districts outside the United States of America.

This competition is designed to invigorate our Assemblies through a dual focus on membership growth and high-impact patriotic programming. Districts will be evaluated on the following two pillars:

Pillar I: Patriotic Growth (Membership)

Growth is the lifeblood of our Order. We will recognize excellence in two distinct membership categories:

- **Total Intake for each Division:** The District with the greatest number of new Sir Knights initiated between June 1st and August 31st in their division.
- **Highest Percentage:** The District with the highest percentage of total intake relative to their membership base during the same period.

Pillar II: Civic Theme Program Event

Each District is invited to submit the single best patriotic event held by their Assemblies from June 1st to August 31st. All entries will be heavily weighted toward events that embrace the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi and the Order's 125th Anniversary, specifically focusing on:

- **Service to Humanity:** How the event demonstrates the Franciscan charism of caring for the poor, the marginalized, or the environment within your nation.
- **National Identity & Faith:** Engagement with local civic leaders or public commemorations that highlight the role of the Catholic faith in your country's history.
- **Peace & Unity:** Programs that foster community reconciliation or support for veterans and those affected by conflict, reflecting St. Francis's role as a man of peace.

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I encourage you to collaborate closely with your Faithful Navigators to ensure every Assembly is participating. Let us make this 250th anniversary a defining moment for the Fourth Degree in our Districts and Provinces.

Ron Boyce, PSD
Fourth Degree Director of Programs

Message From Fourth Degree Director of Training

The Challenges of a Large Honor Guard

At the March 31 Chrism Mass in my Diocese, we had 44 sir Knights attend the mass for the Honor Guard. This was the first Chrism Mass for about ¼ of these Sir Knights. Also, our District Master was home with his wife who had surgery recently.

We also faced challenges with the pews, an open section where there were 4 pews with no pews opposite, a narrow aisle, and more Knights than pews on one side of the church.

What do you do?

The first remedy is to conduct regular training in your assembly so there is not a lot of wasted time going through basic movements (we did it anyway to be sure).

Secondly the Former Masters (2), Marshals in attendance (3), and Color Corps Commanders (4) were all used to anchor the honor guard. We spread out so we could control the entire body of Sir Knights.

Our former Masters and lead Marshal surveyed the situation and formed a plan. The balance of the Marshals and Color corps commanders were sent to the center and rear to maintain order in the ranks and solve any situation that came up.

We did a training session that included reminding everyone to step into the pew so there was room for the clergy, when to remove our Berets, deglove, entrance, and exit from the mass, all the basics that benefitted everyone especially those who have never done a large honor guard before.

Our anchors in the middle and back were key, and made everyone in the honor guard act in as much unison as we could with a 10-minute procession in.



Again, practice in our assemblies on a regular basis for situations like this is very important and should be planned in every assembly in the order.

Fraternally,

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

Message from the Director of Ceremonials

Remember, In the area of ceremonials, a new printing of the Drill Manual is happening! The latest version has a date on the back cover of 12/25. Anyone who needs it, can find it [HERE](#). VSMs should encourage all color corps members to read the Drill Manual

and comply with it. That is the only way that we can work to be standardized in our ceremonial execution! Any questions, work through your VSMS.

I continue to work to make the Fourth Degree Exemplification Schedule spreadsheet a very useful tool for our Supreme Master. But we are not doing very well in making sure that all scheduled exemplifications are contained in it. I am asking all VSMS and DMs to identify what from your districts and provinces has not been reported and send them to me so that I can add them to the spreadsheet.

Recently, I had a DM send me his entire list of scheduled exemplifications. This allowed me to look through the spreadsheet and verify that all were reflected there. This is one way that will work to make sure that I have all scheduled exemplifications.

Going forward, please send me the information on all Exemplifications that you are planning. Additionally, I need to know the results of each exemplification shortly after it is held, most importantly the number of new sir knights and if there were any Priests in the class. Just cc'ing me when the report of exemplification is sent to supreme will do the trick, too! If you can do these things for me, then we will provide the Supreme Master with that needed useful tool! Thank you!

Fraternally and Patriotically,

Mike Thumm, FVSM
Fourth Degree Director of Ceremonials



Message from the Director of New Assembly Development

Worthy Sirs,

From April 10-12, I had the pleasure of attending the North Dakota State Convention. They were many highlights to the weekend, but one in particular stood out to me. It was the amount of Forth Degree at the meeting. At one point on the weekend, when the District Master was giving his report, he asked all Forth Degree members to stand up. There were approximately 120 people in the room and only about 10 did not stand up. That is an amazing statistic in itself. Maybe even better was the amount of honor guard at the masses and grand entrance to the banquet. A number I heard was 70.



Pictured here is the Honor Guard preparing for the Necrology Mass.



You might think, what does this have to do with New Assemblies? Well, let me tell you. During the weekend, while I was chatting with the District Master and telling him how impressed I was by the number of Fourth Degree attendees, he mentioned that he had an opportunity to create another assembly. BINGO.

This happens to me every time go to an Fourth Degree event or an event like I described above. It appears there is potential for new assemblies out there. Worthy Sirs, let's bring them to fruition. Get me involved. Let's make it happen. Sometimes we must think outside the box to make it happen.

Worthy DM's, have a look at your district. Look for opportunities. Talk to your FN's. Let's create some Fourth Degree excitement. Give me a call.

Thank you and God Bless,

Dale Hofer, PSD
Director of New Assembly Development

Message from the Director of Ceremonials

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness...”

With 1,337 words, the Declaration of Independence marked the decisive act by which 56 assembled delegates dissolved the political union between Great Britain and the united Colonies. Today, as we approach the 250th anniversary of this momentous occasion, we prepare not for a time of nostalgia alone, but for a renewal—a recommitment to the authentic principles of Christian politics.

Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore recently published “[In Charity & Truth-Toward a Renewed Political Culture](#)”. I highly encourage everyone to read it. The principles articulated therein apply not only to those living in America, but also provide a guide to living politically as a Catholic in the modern world.



It is undeniable that the West, the lands of Christendom, are today in a spiritual crisis. As Archbishop Lori says, “We live in an age marked by distraction, cynicism, fear, and a sense of isolation that corrodes our capacity for communion. Many no longer share a common moral

vocabulary; many struggle to articulate the meaning and purpose of their lives. These wounds inevitably manifest themselves in the public square.”

This is not a time for withdrawal, but for renewal of soul. “This begins with prayer—opening our hearts to the God who heals and reorders our desires. It continues in the sacraments, where grace strengthens us to love as God loves. It takes shape in works of charity and justice, where faith becomes incarnate. And it is sustained in communities of faith where trust, forgiveness, and authentic belonging are learned and lived.”

By building up the City of God within ourselves, we can outwardly shape and manifest renewal in the City of Man.

Archbishop Lori offers the following practical commitments we can make to further the cause of justice and peace in our political life as Catholics:

A Path Forward – Practical Commitments for a Renewed Political Culture

1. Renew Your Prayer for the Nation – Pray for those in authority. Pray for those with whom you disagree. Pray for peace.
2. Practice Civil Dialogue – Listen before speaking. Seek to understand before responding. Assume good will.
3. Reject Hatred and Violence—Refuse to participate in rhetoric or actions that dehumanize.
4. Serve the Common Good – Volunteer. Build community. Support families. Work for justice.
5. Form Your Conscience – Study Catholic social teaching. Discern your media intake. Develop your capacity for moral clarity.
6. Encounter Those Who Differ from You – Build friendships that challenge your assumptions.
7. Foster Hope – Speak of possibilities, not just problems. Remind others that God is at work. Witness to a different way to live.

By committing ourselves to these principles, we can shape the culture around us. No matter where we live, we are called to be witnesses to the Gospel. With this in mind, let me leave you with the words of our Supreme Chaplain:

“Hope is not optimism; it is fidelity. Hope is the quiet, steady conviction that God is at work even when we cannot see the path ahead.

As disciples of Christ and citizens of this great nation, we are called to that same hope. We are called to participate in the renewal of our political culture not out of fear, but out of love—love for God, love for neighbor, and love for the country that has been entrusted to us. We are called to be saints for our time. May the next 250 years of our nation be marked by greater justice, deeper solidarity, renewed trust, and a profound respect for the dignity of every human person. May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America.”

God Bless the Knights of Columbus. Vivat Jesus!

Sterling C. Roatch
Director of Fourth Degree Communications

Fourth Degree History

Once described as the “Knight of Knights,” Timothy P. Galvin succeeded John H. Reddin as the second Supreme Master of the Fourth Degree following Reddin’s death in December 1940.

Galvin was born on August 7, 1894, in Pierceton, Indiana, the son of Patrick and Mary Galvin, farmers of possible Irish immigrant

heritage. After graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1916, Galvin began a law career in Valparaiso before relocating his practice to Hammond in 1923.

In 1934, Galvin married Mary Graziella Chevigny, who passed away in 1947. Their union would bring five children, including twin girls who died when they were only two days old. Their three other children—Timothy Jr., Patrick, and Mary Anne—lived to adulthood.



Galvin first joined the Knights as a member of the Notre Dame Council 1477 in 1915 and later served as Grand Knight of Valparaiso Council 738. During the First World War, he worked as one of the first secretaries in the War Activities program at Camp Greene in North Carolina before serving as an ordnance sergeant with the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe. He was elected State Deputy of Indiana in 1925 and joined the Order’s Board of Directors in 1933.

By the early 1940s, Galvin had risen to become the Supreme Master of the Fourth Degree, to which he was elected on January 4, 1941. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he mobilized the Fourth Degree through the national program “America Fights for God-Given Rights,” which framed U.S. involvement in the Second World War as a defense of God-given liberties and human equality, and sponsored a radio program promoting Catholic and American values.

In recognition of his service, Galvin was named a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Pius XII. He served as the fourteenth Deputy Supreme Knight from 1945 to 1949, stepping away after his wife’s death to raise his children. He remained active in civic and Catholic causes until his death on January 27, 1993.

Membership Minutes

Please view the District Quotas as of March 31st.

Keep up the good work!

Click the image to view at full size.

District	6% Quota	Intake 2/28	Intake 3/31	Monthly Growth	YTD%
Providence	3811	1518	2151	617	56.02%
Wilmann	2464	850	1196	398	48.62%
Flagler	1853	613	836	29	40.96%
Calvert	1509	434	550	86	34.46%
Jagers	1322	337	374	37	28.79%
Granddupe	1232	530	613	82	40.60%
Padilla	1218	291	356	65	29.23%
Horsquell	1177	401	430	29	26.53%
Sera	1080	274	325	51	30.00%
Hennepin	1043	361	375	14	35.95%
Healy	840	307	335	48	43.01%
Brenville	840	312	390	78	46.43%
Reddin	790	235	257	22	36.71%
McCrigan	569	296	293	27	31.69%
Sorin	452	79	81	2	17.92%
Campbell	415	70	81	8	19.52%
Blanchet	371	192	198	6	29.11%
Fraser	341	141	195	54	37.18%
Delmet	289	113	122	9	43.57%
Kelly	298	79	72	2	31.44%
McGinney	203	66	72	6	35.96%
De Jesus	148	23	23	0	15.54%

Featured Assemblies

Oregon Biennial Meeting



On Saturday March 28th, Oregon held their Biennial Meeting for the 2026 Calendar Year at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Hillsboro, OR. However, this meeting was also jam packed with other meaningful events in conjunction with the 4th Degree business conducted every other year. In an effort to offer distant travelers an opportunity to socialize and meet and greet with other Fourth Degree members throughout the Fourth Degree District (covering all of Oregon) the evening prior, the District held a "Faith and Fraternity" event. This included the regular Parish scheduled Mass and Stations of the Cross. A soup supper was offered afterwards, with the menu featuring a Vice Supreme Master special. The social also commemorated the Medal of Honor Day, where a display was set up honoring the Catholic military chaplains who received the Medal of Honor. The morning of the Biennial Meeting, Mass was held honoring Blessed McGivney in honor of Founder's Day, which would be the following day. Parishioners were invited to write prayer petitions through his intercession and the Fourth Degree Knights all prayed for those petitions. The new Master of the Oregon Fourth Degree District was also officially installed. This was truly an impactful event that encompassed multiple important dates of significance.

Sacred Heart Holy Hour in New Jersey



Fourth Degree Knights organized a Sacred Heart Holy Hour and stood as honor guards during Adoration.

Vietnam Veterans Parade in Waikiki



Idaho State Convention



In conjunction with their Biannual District Meeting, 26th Color Corps Members participated in the 119th Idaho State Convention Memorial Mass.

20 Knights of the Bienville Province participated in a Solemn Pontifical Mass, along with the knights of the Papal Order of St. Gregory the Great.

Would you like to see your Assembly featured here?

Email photos and a brief write up of events to CatholicPatriot@kofc.org!

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Thank you for your service to the Order. If you have any story or event you might like to see featured, please email catholicpatriot@kofc.org

For any questions or suggestions during your term, please email suprememaster@kofc.org



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