



The Catholic Patriot

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

February 2025



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125th Anniversary of the Fourth Degree

As Communication Director, I would like to share this experience with you from the 125th Anniversary of the Fourth Degree. This was a power-packed day for those in attendance. Just a quick summary of events. We started with the unveiling of the new statue of Blessed Michael McGivney.



Following the unveiling, the revised Exemplification of the Patriotic Degree premiered to an overflowing St. Patrick's Cathedral.

After a 90 minute break, the Knights filled the Cathedral for the Vigil Mass. Filled would be an understatement. Every seat was filled. The overflowing crowd led to standing room only, making it necessary for the Supreme Officers and Board of Directors to sit on the altar in order to free up more pews. During Mass, Cardinal Dolan delivered a beautiful homily on how Christ's view of the world compels us to change our personal views for His greater glory.

Following the Exemplification and Mass, we then moved three blocks away to the Hilton Midtown Hotel for a banquet.



Nearly 1500 Knights and family members filled the banquet hall at the Hilton Midtown Manhattan. Just like the two previous events, this was also planned to the tee. One of the main events was the Presentation of Colors by Cadets from the United States Military Academy at West Point, and these were not just any cadets but brand new Fourth Degree Sir Knights!



In total, approximately forty cadets and midshipmen were knighted at the 125th Anniversary Exemplification.

It would not be called a banquet without a stunning dessert.

This was the perfect ending to a wonderful day and these few pictures do not do it justice. Before I share more pictures from Saturday, I want to highlight another event that was held on Sunday.



On Sunday morning the Vice Supreme Masters, Supreme Officers, Fourth Degree Directors, and staff members met for the 115th Supreme Assembly Meeting.





Supreme Master Michael McCusker gave what could only be described as a very candid report on the state of the Fourth Degree. During the meeting with all present, discussion took place on membership, programs, ceremonials, new assembly development, training, and communications.

Of course, some of the time was spent discussing the revised Exemplification and moving forward from here. Overall, more good things are to come. One should be very excited about the success of the revised Exemplification. The Supreme Master took this opportunity to thank those VSMs whose terms expire this year.

Now it is time to share more pictures on the New Exemplification of the Patriotic Degree. The event actually started with the unveiling of the statue of Blessed Michael McGivney that was paid for by the Knights. Family members of Blessed Michael McGivney were present at this special event.





Some comments from the different events and the new Exemplification:

“Kudos to all involved, starting with our Supreme Master on down to our great Honor Guard. It was a spectacular, once-in-a-lifetime event that spotlighted the revised Exemplification of Patriotism in an over-crowded St. Patrick’s Cathedral,” says Joseph F. Peluso VSM of St. Isaac Jogues Province.

“Wow! We now have the greatest Exemplification of the Fourth Degree in the Knights of Columbus’ History!” is the statement from Patrick Conway VSM of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.

“The new Exemplification made you proud to be a part of your Patriotic Degree. Awesome to see St. Patrick’s filled with all the 4th Degree men and their families,” says Brian Heger VSM of the DeSmet Province.

“A great lesson on Catholic American citizenship and patriotism important to all Americans yesterday, today, and tomorrow.” The opinion of Francis “Fritz” Leach VSM of the Calvert Province.

“I have always said joining The Fourth Degree is the best day you spend as a Knight of Columbus. Attending the 125th Anniversary Celebration reaffirmed that joining the Fourth Degree is the best day you can spend as a Knight of Columbus.” Says Gerry Mattix-Wand VSM of the Marquette Province.





How do you complete the knighting of almost 700 candidates in 20 minutes? Well...nothing short of teamwork! Our Supreme Master was accompanied by Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly, Past Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, and Supreme Master Emeritus Dennis Stoddard, along with all Vice Supreme Masters present, in 24 different stations within the church.



If you look at this single picture it tells a story about Catholic Patriots. At the same time, Supreme Knight Kelly is knighting a naval academy cadet, Supreme Master McCusker knights a sergeant with the police department, and Past Supreme Knight Anderson knights a military major. Now if that does not say who we are, I am not quite sure what does.





A special moment between father and son. Cadet Joseph McCusker is being knighted by his father, Supreme Master Michael McCusker. Joseph's first appearance on the Supreme stage was in 2021, when he and his sisters accompanied mom and dad on the Circle of Honor trip. The siblings quickly became "one of the family" to the Class of 2019 State Deputies. There was no way we were going to out dance that trio! During our class dinner in Nashville in 2022, Joseph was there as a proud new Knight just taking the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Last Saturday, many of the members of the Class of 2019 were present to see him come into the Fourth Degree of our Order. What a proud moment. Congratulations Sir Knight Joseph McCusker!

The Future Leaders of Our Military



11 Naval and 26 Army Cadets received the Honors as Fourth Degree Members of the Knights of Columbus. That is 37 future military leaders that are Catholic Patriots, a good day in any book.

Now it is time to start your district legacy in this 125th

anniversary year!

125 for the 125th

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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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