

Worthy Sir Knights,

As most of you have heard by now, a new uniform for the Fourth (Patriotic) Degree was unveiled at the 135th Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention that convened last week in St. Louis, Missouri (August 1 – 3). The testing and development of the new Fourth Degree uniform by Supreme representatives was kept close-hold (District Masters were not a part of the development effort) so the photos of the new uniform taken at the convention were the first I saw of our new outfit when I pulled up the Supreme Knight's email on my I-phone in Virginia last week. Carl Anderson's "all hands" message sent by email last Friday outlined the rationale for going to a new uniform (copied at the bottom of this email) – there is no debate on going back to our old Regalia/Full Regalia in whole or in part. The decision has been made and it's just a matter of transitioning over to the new uniform in a timely manner. For the near term, Sir Knights in the New Mexico District will continue wearing the current Regalia/Full Regalia to honor guard/color guard callouts and ceremonies while we build the ranks of SKs who are acquiring the new uniform. I had a lengthy conversation with our Provincial Vice-Supreme Master, Mike Kingman, who also provided Masters in his Province with an email outlining new uniform details. **The following guidance applies:**

The vehicle for implementing the uniform change will be the ***Laws and Rules Governing the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus*** via an amendment to Article XI, Official Dress and Regalia, Section 38:

The official dress for the Fourth Degree shall be (*this is the wording of the new, amended Section 38*):

- Navy Blue Blazer with Fourth Degree Emblem Blazer Crest
- Knights of Columbus Emblem of the order (PG113 only) – *this refers to a catalog item number*
- Official Fourth Degree Gray Trousers
- Official Fourth Degree Necktie
- Official Fourth Degree Beret with Fourth Degree metal badge
- Plain white shirt, button cuff (no French cuffs, no button-down collar shirts)
- Black socks and Plain Black shoes
- Official Fourth Degree Lapel Pin (#PG113)
- Incumbent Medal of Office
- Past and Former Miniature Medals above left pocket

The official dress for Exemplifications (*new wording of the amended Section 39 of Article XI*):

- (a) For a candidate: black or dark (blue or gray) business suit with black socks, black shoes, white dress shirt and tie (*color not specified*) and candidate identification.
- (b) For a candidate serving in the armed forces of his country, fulltime police and firefighters: Class A or dress uniform.
- (c) For honor guard Sir Knights: official dress as set forth in (new) Section 38.

Article XI, Section 40. Color Corps Regalia:

(a) The official regalia when serving in a Color Corps (Honor Guard or Color Guard) is the same as the official dress of a member (refer to new Section 38 above) **or** a black bow tie, plain white tuxedo shirt, black cummerbund, black socks, plain black shoes, black tuxedo and social baldric worn under the coat, from right shoulder to left hip, with the following additions (continue with current Section 40, (b) i-vii) – *in other words, the current Full Regalia (chapeau, cape, sword, gloves, service baldric, etc.) we are now using!* They will be retaining the ceremonial sword for the new uniform but it will not be authorized until they determine how it will be worn.

The new official Fourth Degree dress uniform can only be purchased through the **Knights Gear** Online Store at the KofC Supreme website (www.kofc.org). As of the date on this email, the online store is not yet set-up to process orders for the new uniform. I have been advised that the price for the new uniform (blazer, pants, emblem, necktie, beret and badge) will be \$512.00 - white shirt, shoes and socks are provided by the member.

Allow me to condense the above information into easy-to-understand terms:

Until now, once you decided to join the Patriotic Degree and were accepted into an assembly, you acquired (bought, borrowed, thrift store, "Tuxedo Junction", etc.) a black tuxedo, formal white tuxedo shirt, cummerbund, bow tie, studs and cuff links, plain black shoes and black socks. Your out-of-pocket costs could range anywhere from <\$100 up to \$500 to purchase these items. At the Patriotic Exemplification ceremony, you were issued a 4th Degree social baldric and 4th Degree pin. You were now dressed in **Regalia** and were officially a 4th Degree Sir Knight. If you voluntarily decided to join and become a color corps member, you would spend between \$500 and \$600 to purchase the chapeau, sword, cape, service baldric, gloves, carrying case, garment bag, etc. from either *The English Company Inc.* or *Lynch & Kelly Inc.* With your Regalia as a foundation garment, you were now a Sir Knight outfitted in **Full Regalia** and eligible to participate in honor guards and/or color guards. If you were elected to be a Faithful Navigator, you would purchase a cape with white lining and sword with white handle. If you volunteered or were chosen to become a color corps commander or District Marshal, your assembly or District Master would provide the purple cape and plume for the CCC or green cape and plume for the DM.

Effective immediately, a 3rd Degree Knight wanting to join our Patriotic Degree would be accepted into an assembly via a Form 4. He would then outfit himself in a black or gray business suit, white dress shirt, long tie (color not specified), black shoes and socks. Out of pocket costs for these items could range from \$0 to \$300-400 to purchase these items if they weren't already hanging in his closet. At the exemplification ceremony, he will receive a 4th Degree lapel pin – no more social baldric. He is now officially a 4th Degree Sir Knight and can wear this dress combination to Patriotic banquets, officer installation ceremonies, etc. If he then decides to become more engaged in Fourth Degree activities and accept more responsibilities, he would purchase the Patriotic uniform of the Fourth Degree, i.e., the blazer, slacks, tie, emblems and beret (\$512) and become a member of the color corps. He would then be eligible to participate in honor guards, color guards, banquets, Rosary rallies, etc. Our ceremonial swords will become part of the new uniform at a date TBD so hang on to them. No more colorful capes and chapeaus to designate the Patriotic office you hold, social baldrics or white gloves - do not order these items from the two companies offering these items for sale. It appears the terms **Regalia** and **Full Regalia** will gradually fade from our lexicon.

No doubt there will be updates and tweaks to this major change in our Fourth Degree. At our John H. Reddin Provincial meeting in Salt Lake City 15-16 September, I will undoubtedly learn more from our Vice Supreme Master and the three other District Masters in our Province. I will be using my monthly MFD newsletter as the primary vehicle to get the word out. As a District Master, I am expected to start wearing the new official uniform NLT September 1st. The Supreme Knight has given districts and assemblies the latitude to continue using the Full Regalia . . . but only for a time. We will do so in New Mexico but I will be encouraging the acquisition and wear of the new uniform by you Sir Knights who are active and engaged.

Faithful Navigators. I'm holding you responsible for getting the word out to your assembly members on this uniform issue so don't delay. I encourage you to forward this email, in whole or in part to assembly members on your email mailing list. Incorporate it in your newsletter or bulletin, print it out and pass it out at your upcoming assembly meeting. Please channel your questions/concerns about the new uniform up to me through your regional District Marshal (he is listed on the cover page of your monthly MFD newsletter).

More to come . . .

'Vivat Jesu!

Richard E. "Rich" Favela
Master of the Fourth Degree – District of New Mexico