



A GUIDE TO THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

For Wives, Families and Friends of **New Knights**
Msgr William S. Bevington Council 9132



Join Us

A Guide to the Knights of Columbus

- Husband:** Honey, I've been asked to join the Knights of Columbus.
- Wife:** What are the Knights of Columbus?
- Husband:** Well all I really know is that it's a men's group that helps the Church and Community, I'll be taking my Admission Degree next Monday.
- Wife:** What's a Admission Degree?
- Husband:** Well, frankly I don't know. But when I find out, I won't be able to tell you.
- Wife:** Whoa, you're joining a group of men that supposedly does good things and you can't tell me anything about it? Well, please don't forget that you have a wife and family.
- Husband:** Well, I'm told that it is a **FAMILY** oriented organization!
- Wife:** And how does your wife and kids get involved and what kinds of family activities do the Knights put on?
- Husband:** Well, I'm not sure, but I'll find out
3 months later.....
- Young Child:** Mommy, where's Daddy going again tonight?
- Wife:** He's at another Knight's meeting Sweetie.
- Young Child:** Mommy, what does he do at a Knight's meeting?
- Wife:** Well, Honey, I'm not really sure. Why don't you and I ask him tomorrow night!

When your husband, father or maybe your older brother joins the Knights of Columbus, he is joining the largest Catholic, Family, Service, Fraternal organization in the World. What does all that mean? Simply put, he's doing a good thing! This organization is Catholic and supports our Church. This group of men believes in the Family and needs their family's involvement and support. The Knights is a Service organization that also supports the community. With these as its high ideals, it is the responsibility of the local council that he will join to run programs and activities that support Church, Community, Family, Youth and the needs of their local Council.

But let's get back to the sample dialogue above. It could represent what happens to many new knights and their families. Unfortunately and often unintentionally, many families are kept in the dark about the Knights. Councils are encouraged to provide the ladies and families of new knights with orientation sessions at the time he joins. And thus, the intent of this brief guide is to further help make you more knowledgeable about the organization that he and your family are joining.

First of all let's clarify an incorrect belief about the Knights of Columbus. While Knights keep secret their degree ceremonies, it is **NOT a Secret Organization!** If your Knight isn't sharing with you everything else, then **ASK HIM!** Make him explain to you and his family about his Knights involvement. What happened at the last business meeting, what activities, events and programs are being planned by the council; how the council is meeting the needs of the pastor and parish community where you go to church; what family and youth events are coming up and what the officers and directors are responsible for in his council. And for any other question you may have, simply **ASK HIM!** He should welcome your interest and involvement!

Secondly, it is a **FAMILY** oriented organization. A Knight's wife and family should always be involved in the programs and activities of his local council. If the local council is not sponsoring enough Family and Youth events/activities, your knight has the right and responsibility to step forward and initiate them. **Your involvement is critical** to the success of his local council the needs of its Church and Community!

Finally, the more his family knows about the Knights, the more likely they will share and support his involvement. So with this in mind, below you will find a number of terms, titles and expressions that will hopefully make it easier for you and your kids to talk about and understand what your new Knight is involved in:

1. The Knights are a **FAMILY oriented**, Catholic, Service fraternal organization.
2. Nothing is secret about the Knights, except their degree ceremonials.

A man enters the Knights of Columbus when he takes his **Admission Degree** as a Page of Old. As he learns more about the Knights of Columbus, he takes his Formation Degree just as a Squire of Old. Finally he takes his Knighthood Degree and becomes a **full Knight** just like a Knight of Old.

Admission and Formation Degree Knights can not hold a Council Officer position but can serve as a Council Director or Chairman to a Council Activity.

A Knighthood Degree member can hold a local Council Officer position or a State Officer position and can serve as a District Deputy.

Councils are expected to run Church, Community, Family, Youth and Council Activities and Programs. Any Knight, whether a Admission Degree, Formation or Knighthood Degree can chair and run an event or activity with the support of his council.

3. Knights may also sponsor a Ladies Auxiliary or Columbiettes (Both Women's organizations) and Squires (boys 10-18 organization).
4. Like many organizations, the Knights have a hierarchical structure. The major leadership positions are:

- A. Grand Knight – Head of local council within a town or parish.
- B. District Deputy – Supports 2 to 6 councils, working with their Grand Knights.
- C. State Deputy – Head of a State Jurisdiction (ex. Jay Nothstine, Colorado)
- D. Supreme Knight – Head of the entire Worldwide Knights of Columbus organization. Supreme Headquarters are located in New Haven, Connecticut.

5. **Council Officer Positions**

- A. Grand Knight – (GK) Head of a Local Council
- B. Deputy Grand Knight – (DGK) 2nd in Charge, fills in for Grand Knight
- C. Chancellor – Gets members active in council activities
- D. Recorder – Takes the minutes of a Business Meeting
- E. Advocate – Legal Advisor to the Grand Knight
- F. Financial Secretary – Appointed by the Supreme Knight and collects dues, handles all membership and council paperwork
- G. Treasurer – Responsible for all Council Funds
- H. Warden – Responsible for all Council property and for the setting up for all Council Meetings
- I. Guards (Inside & Outside)–Assists Warden in checking membership cards
- J. Trustees – Audits the Council Books on a semi-annual basis
- K. Lecturer – Provides entertaining and educational talks to the Council at Business Meetings

6. **Council Director Positions**

- A. Service Directors – Coordinates programs and activities in one of the 5 service areas; Church, Community, Family, Youth and Council.
- B. Membership Director – Directs all Council membership programming
- C. Recruitment Director – Coordinates the council's efforts to recruit new members into the council. Works for the Membership Director

- D. Retention Director – Coordinates the council’s efforts to win back and reactivate existing inactive members. Works for the Membership Director
- E. Other Types of Council Directors/Committees – Pro-Life Chair couple, Investment Committee, Nominating Committee, Squires Counsellor, etc.

Degree Teams – One of the primary purposes of the degree ceremonials is to exemplify the principles and lessons of the Order, Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Accomplishing this purpose requires that Admission Degree Teams are formed in a Council with the aid of the Grand Knight; for a Formation Degree Team by the District Deputy of the district that may consist of 4 or 5 Councils and by the State Ceremonials Director in a State jurisdiction, i.e. Colorado, for a Knighthood Degree Team. After completing any of the degrees, your new Knight is eligible to learn one of the parts of that degree and encouraged to join that degree team. Degree Ceremonials are the **only** part of the Knights that is secret to non-members.

A quick glance at the emblem indicates a shield mounted upon the Formee Cross. The shield is that which is associated with a medieval Knight. The Formee Cross is the representation of a traditionally artistic design of the Cross of Christ, through which all graces of redemption were procured for mankind. This then represents the Catholic spirit of the Order. Mounted on the shield are three objects: a fasces that stands vertical and behind it is crossed an anchor and dagger or short sword. The fasces is derived from the Roman days and is symbolic of authority which must exist in any tightly-bound organization. The anchor is the mariner’s symbol for Columbus, the patron of the Order, while the short sword or dagger was the weapon of the Knight when engaged upon an errand of mercy. Thus, the shield expresses Catholic Knighthood in organized merciful action, and with the letters, K of C, it proclaims this specific form of activity.

The Colors of the Knights of Columbus Emblem

Red is the Symbol of faith, of a belief in Christ, in the Redemption and in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. White is the color of the Eucharistic host, a pledge of God’s Eucharistic presence among men and of the infinite love God has for each individual. White is then the symbol of Christ-like Charity. Blue is the color of Our Lady’s mantle in which she wrapped her beloved Son, through whom came salvation to a sinful world. Blue is then the symbol of Hope.

Jewels of Office

Each Council Officer position has a medallion that is suspended on a colored ribbon that symbolizes the responsibilities of their office. Here is each Officer’s Medallion and Ribbon Color:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Medallion</u>	<u>Ribbon Color</u>
Grand Knight	Anchor	Purple
Chaplain	Isabella Cross	Black
Deputy Grand Knight	Compass	Purple
Chancellor	Isabella Cross with Skull and Crossbones	White and Black
Recorder	Crossed Quills	White and Yellow
Financial Secretary	Crossed Key and Quill	White and Yellow
Treasurer	Crossed Keys	Blue
Lecturer	Lyre and Scroll	White and Blue
Advocate	Scroll	Yellow
Warden	Axe bound with rods	Red and Black

Guards	Crossed Axes and Key	White
Trustee	Anchor on Axe bound with rods over Crossed Swords	Green
District Deputy	Sextant	Red

Patriotic Degree of the Order

Once a Knight of Columbus has been in the Order for 1 year and has attained his Knighthood Degree, he is eligible to become a member of the Patriotic Degree of the Order. A member of the Patriotic Degree of the Order is the most visible degree of the Order as they are seen at many functions in the regalia worn by the members of the Patriotic Degree Color Corps.



A quick glance at the Patriotic Degree emblem indicates the Dove, the Cross and the Globe. The Dove, the classic symbol of the Holy Spirit and Peace, is shown hovering over the orb of the Earth or Globe. Both are mounted on a variation of the Crusader's cross, that which was found on the tunics and capes of the Crusading Knights who battled to regain the Holy Land.

Our Honored Order cherishes as its patron, Christopher (Christ Bearer) Columbus (Dove of Peace), symbolizing the Paraclete. Spiritually, the sacred symbols on the emblem typify the Union of the Three Divine Persons in one Godhead, the most blessed Trinity.

- The Globe** - God the Father, Creator of the Universe
- The Cross** - God the Son, Redeemer of Mankind
- The Dove** - God the Holy Spirit, Sanctifier of Humanity

The colors of the symbols are also significant and described as follows:

- Blue Globe** - with the lands of the Western Hemisphere in White
- Red Cross** - with gold borders, and gold knobs at the ends of the Cross
- White Dove**

Red, White and Blue are the colors of the flag of the country in which our Order originated and are used to stress the basic principle of the Patriotic Degree, **PATRIOTISM**.

The Patriotic Degree members are part of an Assembly that may be attached to one or more councils. They, as the knighthood Degree Councils have a hierarchical structure. Each Assembly Officer position also wears a medallion suspended on a red, white and blue ribbon. Each medallion is representative of the emblem of the Patriotic Degree. The officer positions of the Patriotic Degree are as follows:

<u>Patriotic Degree Officer</u>	<u>Knighthood Degree Officer Equivalent</u>
Faithful Navigator	Grand Knight
Faithful Friar	Chaplain
Faithful Captain	Deputy Grand Knight
Faithful Admiral	Chancellor
Faithful Scribe	Recorder
Faithful Comptroller	Financial Secretary
Faithful Purser	Treasurer
Faithful Pilot	Warden
Faithful Inner/Outer Sentinel	Guards
Faithful Trustees	Trustees

The Color Corps, the most visible of the Patriotic Degree members, wear regalia that includes a cape whose color signifies a person's position. The color of each cape is as follows:

Color of Cape

Red

White

Purple

Green

Gold

Blue

Position

Rank and File member

Faithful Navigator or Past Faithful Navigator

Color Corps Commander

District Marshall

District Master

Vice Supreme Master

Want to know more about the Knights? Start by sharing with your new Knight the information contained in this brief guide. Next, **ASK HIM** questions **OFTEN**, and get involved with him! And finally, we wish to express to you and your family

A Warm Welcome to the Family of the Knights of Columbus!