

# THE PATRIOT'S CALL: *United in Faith & Freedom*

## ASSEMBLY 1818

Volume I Issue X April 2026



**Faithful Navigator**  
Bernie Lanza 941-441-8892

**Comptroller**  
George Barbiero 203-885-8238

**Captain**  
Tony Hopfinger 412-496-6776

**Admiral**  
Tony Salvucci 617-320-1759

**Purser**  
Vinny Gelsomino 815-409-2385

**Pilot**  
Rick Anderson 321-303-8172

**Scribe**  
Vince Hagerty 609-805-7704

**Inner Sentinel**  
Chuck Woodrum 304-282-8733

**Outer Sentinel**  
Bill Blanchard 732-841-6074

**One Year Trustee**  
Ed Farrell 941-223-6321

**Two Year Trustee**  
Richard Kunzier 973-903-1226

**Three Year Trustee**  
Kevin Szopinski 630-277-1367

**Faithful Friar** Rev. Januszc

## Easter Reflection

My Brother Knights,

As we enter the joy of Easter, I'm reminded of how deeply the Resurrection shapes our lives as Catholic men. Christ's victory over sin and death is the promise that renewal is always possible both in our own hearts and in the work we do together as Knights.

Easter calls us to rise with Christ: to strengthen our faith, deepen our charity, and serve with the courage and conviction our Order is known for. As Fourth Degree Knights, our call to Patriotism is rooted in the Gospel itself standing for truth, defending human dignity, and bringing Christ's light into our communities and our nation.

I encourage each of you to stay connected to your parish family during this holy season. Please check your parish bulletins and websites for Holy Week and Easter Mass times, liturgies, and opportunities for prayer. Let us be present, supportive, and united in faith.

May the Risen Christ fill your homes with peace and your hearts with renewed purpose.

Vivat Jesus!



*SK George Barbiero*



## ***A Message from our Faithful Navigator***



### **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ASSEMBLY 1818**

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In the spirit of fraternity and service, let us continue to support one another and our communities. May the light of Christ inspire us in our mission to spread goodwill and faith, reminding us that we are stronger together.

As Knights, we embody compassion, charity and patriotism. Let us carry these virtues into the Easter Season, bringing hope to those in need and lifting up one another in prayer and action. Let us continue to pray for our Sir Knights who are ill and facing health challenges.

Thank you, Brothers, for your unwavering support and your generous spirit of service.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Easter filled with peace, love, and the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

In Unity and Charity

*SK Bernie Lanza*

Faithful Navigator  
Bishop Charles McLaughlin  
Knights of Columbus Assembly 1818  
941-441-8892  
[majlanza@icloud.com](mailto:majlanza@icloud.com)

**CALENDAR 2025-2026** Our Assembly is excited to present a calendar filled with opportunities for fellowship, spiritual growth, and service. We encourage all members to review the upcoming schedule and participate as actively as your time and talents allow. We look forward to seeing you there.

**APRIL 2026**

- **Wed, Apr 8** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Tue, Apr 14** – Officers Meeting @ 9:00 AM (OLOL)
- **Thurs, Apr 16** – Assembly Meeting @ 6:30 PM
  - Rosary @ 5:30 PM - Dinner @ 5:45 PM
  - *Presentation of Slate of Officers*
- **Thurs, Apr 30** – Color Corps Drill Practice @ 2 PM (OLOL)

**MAY 2026**

- **Sat, May 23** – Placement of Flags @ SNC @ 7:30 AM
- **Wed, May 13** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Thurs, May 21** – Assembly Meeting @ 6:30 PM
  - Rosary @ 5:30 PM - Dinner @ 5:45 PM
  - *Election of Officers*
- **Thurs, May 28** – Color Corps Drill Practice @ 2 PM (OLOL)
- **Sat, May 30** – Removal of Flags @ SNC @ 7:30 AM

**JUNE 2026**

- **Wed, June 10** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Thurs, June 18** – Award Presentation & Dinner @ 6:00 PM (OLOL)



**Brother Knights,**  
The Silver Rose is a symbol of prayer, sacrifice, and our unwavering respect for life. By participating in the Silver Rose Rally, we unite our hearts in faith and place our intentions before Our Blessed Mother. Let us come together as brothers, strengthen our spiritual bond, and be a visible witness of Christ's love in our community. Your presence matters. Ride, pray, and participate as one brotherhood.

The chairman of each diocese will share the schedule with you. The complete schedule will also be shared with everyone so we can organize ourselves and decide which Masses and events we will participate in during this time.



**IN GOD WE TRUST AND RIDE!**



# THE SILVER ROSE

The Silver Rose honors Our Lady of Guadalupe and reaffirms the Knights of Columbus' commitment to life and unity. This February, the Knights on Bikes of the Venice Diocese rode more than 1,000 miles, visiting four to five parishes a day to bring the Silver Rose to the faithful along Florida's west coast.

On Saturday, February 21, our riders Laz Miel, Chuck Gnarra, Mike Bouganurio, Derek Biaz, and Bill Blanchard began at dawn and carried the Rose to Masses at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, St. Martha, St. Thomas More, and finally Our Lady of Lourdes. Each parish welcomed the Rose with reverence, prayer, and gratitude. Special thanks to St. Martha's Council for their hospitality and to Our Lady of Lourdes for hosting a prayer service and rosary for the unborn.

The final day concluded with visits to three additional parishes before the Silver Rose was handed off in St. Petersburg to continue its journey through Florida. We also recognize Our Lady of Mount Carmel for hosting the Rose last year, with thanks to Tony Hopfinger and Terry Leary for their outstanding work.



[Knights on Bikes Venice Chapter](#)

## **Knights on Bikes Faith, Fellowship & the Open Road**

We encourage you to explore this link for the latest information about Knights on Bikes.

## Honoring Our Newly Exemplified Fourth Degree Brothers

At our March monthly meeting, we were blessed to honor our newest Fourth Degree brothers' men who have taken a profound step in their journey of faith, fraternity, and patriotic service.

Recently, St. Mark the Evangelist Church hosted a moving and memorable Fourth Degree Exemplification. Candidates from across Florida gathered for a ceremony that radiated dignity, unity, and the proud spirit of Catholic patriotism that defines our Order.

We were honored to present the following candidates from our Assembly's parishes:

### **Our Lady of Lourdes**

Robert Nowicki  
Joseph Macarelli

### **San Pedro**

Salvatore Fertitta

### **Epiphany Cathedral**

Lawrence Melocik

We also joyfully recognized **Gerard Scannell**, who was unable to attend his earlier exemplification but has now received his certificate and is fully welcomed by our Sir Knights.

## **A Special Moment of the Evening**

That same evening, we celebrated **SK Philip Omdahl**, Grand Knight of San Pedro Council 7997 and a newly inducted member of the Color Corps. His induction included the solemn blessing of his sword and baldric; twenty members of the Color Corps bore witness to Philip's comment to this powerful ceremony. It is a powerful reminder of the honor, discipline, and devotion expected of every Color Corpsman.

## **Congratulations to All**

We congratulate each of these men on achieving this blessed honor as members of Fourth Degree Assembly 1818 of the Knights of Columbus. Your commitment strengthens our brotherhood, enriches our parishes, and deepens the patriotic witness of our Order. May you continue to serve with courage, humility, and unwavering faith.









KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS  
**FOURTH  
DEGREE**  
EXEMPLIFICATION

*Patriotic Degree of the Order*



One Nation, Under God

**Looking Ahead: May 9, 2026 – Naples, FL**

We're blessed to announce that the following exemplification will be hosted at St. John the Evangelist Church in Naples, Florida on May 9, 2026. We encourage all eligible Third-Degree Knights to consider taking this next step in their journey. SK Steve Vacca the Membership Chairman for both Council 9924 of OLOL and the Assembly 1818, is available to assist with forms and guidance. Reach out when you're ready.

**Stay Connected:**

Reminders will be sent periodically to keep our Councils informed and engaged. Let's continue to grow our ranks and honor the legacy of the Fourth Degree.

For questions or to begin your application:

- SK Steve Vacca: 941-310-6061 – [stevac58@yahoo.com](mailto:stevac58@yahoo.com)

Together we will exemplify the values of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism.

---

Brothers,

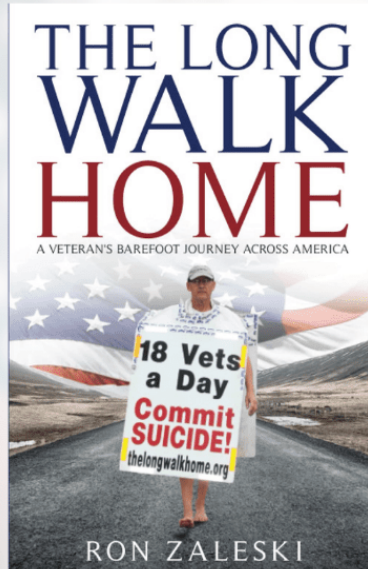
Your Faithful Comptroller is pleased to share that Bishop Charles McLaughlin Assembly 1818 now has its own website: [kocassembly1818.org](http://kocassembly1818.org). It's very much a work in progress still under construction, but it's already beginning to take shape.

I've been adding to it little by little each month, filling it with helpful Fourth Degree information, details about our Assembly, and updates on upcoming events. There's still plenty more to add.

If you have a moment, I invite you to visit the site and see what's there. Your early impressions are always appreciated, and more features and content will be added as I continue to develop it.

My hope is that this website becomes a strong tool for communication, keeping every Sir Knight connected, informed, and engaged in the life of our Assembly.

More updates will follow as the site grows.



## **A VETERAN'S BAREFOOT JOURNEY ACROSS AMERICA**

When Ron Zaleski returned home from his service to the Marine Corps in 1972, he was plagued by feelings of anger and guilt. As an act of penance, in 2006 he walked barefoot across the Appalachian Trail, where he learned self-forgiveness, empathy, and found a purpose greater than himself. In 2010, he upped the stakes and walked barefoot from Concord, MA to Santa Monica, CA. He traversed over 3,400 miles without shoes, all the while carrying a sign that read "18 Vets a Day Commit Suicide!" and a petition for military personnel to receive mandatory counseling.

At our March meeting, we reflected on the remarkable mission of Ron Zaleski a U.S. Marine whose life was reshaped by sacrifice and a vow he made more than fifty years ago. After learning that members of his squadron had been killed or injured, Ron committed himself to walking barefoot as a living tribute to those he lost and as a reminder of the unseen wounds carried home from war.

That vow grew into The Long Walk Home, the organization he founded to support Veterans, strengthen families, and prevent suicide. His barefoot journeys, 2,200 miles, along the Appalachian Trail and later 3,400 miles across the country—brought national attention to the struggles Veterans face and the urgent need for mental-health support.

Ron continues this work here in Venice, building programs that restore hope and change lives. Every Thursday he fulfills a standing commitment ministering within the prison system, bringing encouragement and healing to those seeking a second chance. Because of that obligation, he cannot be with us this evening.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, at our monthly meeting Ron sent his trusted associate, Bill Vanderstein who spoke about this amazing organization and shared the video *The Long Walk Home*. For those who missed this meeting, we encourage you to watch this moving presentation at the following link.

<https://youtu.be/x7xGTqD0bKo>

## No Veteran Forgotten Ceremony

We are pleased to announce that the ***No Veteran Forgotten Ceremony*** will be on **Wednesday, April 8th, 2026**.

We ask all participants to meet by 8:45 AM. We head to the Internment Shelter at Sarasota National Cemetery at 8:50 AM, with the service beginning at 9:00 AM. Please wear your assembly shirt, and invite your spouses, friends and neighbors to join us as we stand together to remember the legacy of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.



RANK	VETERANS NAME	BRANCH OF SERVICE
SN	Richard Cissell Jr.	US Navy - Korea
SP4	Jeffrey Young	US Army - Vietnam
CAPT	Barry James	US Air Force - Vietnam











**Milestones of our Brother Knights** This month, we extend our warmest wishes to those brothers observing a birthday, and we also recognize those who are celebrating an anniversary of their commitment to the Fourth Degree.

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

Name	Date	Age
Terrance Leary	1	71
Thomas Hankard	2	75
Larry Middendorf	5	73
Rev. Athony Armstrong	9	61
Kevin Szopinski	12	71
Robert O'Brien	15	78
Ricardo Sanvictores	16	88
Daniel Prickel	18	90
Roger Trottier	18	90
Warren Augenthaier	20	89
Amado Varona	23	86
Frank Bertoni	24	87
Thomas Festa	28	86

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

Name	Years
Frank Stroker Jr.	56
James Martin	53
Joseph Calderan	43
Michael Iacampo	41
Robert Burhoe	34
Dennis O'Leary	32
Dominick Ferraro	32
Mark Crews	31
Richard Maier	29
Jeffrey Drop	28
Martin Reis	27
Donald Maselli	27
John Cappel	26
Shawn Slattery	22
Daniel Phillips	21
Anthony de Nicola	21
Alan Kotlarski	20
Denny Mahle	17
Joseph Fogerty	15
Timothy Gelinas	14
Leo Vanderschuur	13
John F Meyer	11
Robert Mathiau	10
William Kovacs	9
Dennis Charles	9
Ronald Doorenbos	9
James La Mar	9
Bernard Lanza	9
Thomas Reno	9
William Srofe	9
Salvatore Vergona	9
Roger Boulanger	8
Pete Castillo	8
Rev. Saji Ellickal	8
Rick Anderson	4
James Rivers	3
Anthony Giardullo	1
Jerome Donovan	1
Raymond Benkosky	1
Brian Blanchfield	1
Mark Callahan	1
Donald Crandell	1
Joe Ferreira	1
Salvatore Filosa	1
John Kesich	1
Tim Marzano	1
George Moesch	1
Mark Piazza	1
Darwin Reeck	1
Wayne Smith	1



Prayer  
Request

Rick Miller	Joan Feornley
Armand Padula	Rosa Cimini
Paul Kely	Margaret Jagenow
Jim Lowery	Carol Samuel
Derek Baiz	Vicki Sliepen
Jim Martin	Richard Leutchan
Tim Kunzier	Donna Rylander
Kathleen McGuire	Mark Hanrahan
Linda Montemarano	Lynn Bisighini
George J. Barbiero Sr.	

This prayer list is a testament to our commitment to one another, a space where we can place the names of our fellow knights, cherished family members, and dear friends. Whether facing health issues or grappling with personal challenges, each person needs our heartfelt prayers.



### ASSEMBLY 1818 APPOINTED POSITIONS



Color Corps Commander	Martin Reis	209-480-6043
Vice Color Corps Commander	Darwin Reeck	941-451-9657
Cemetery Activity Coordinator	Rick Anderson	321-303-8172
Membership Chairmen	Steve Vacca	954-655-1110
Retention Chairman		
Bereavement /Birthdays	Charles Woodrum	304-282-8733
Anniversaries		
Valentines For Veterans	2026 Formal Closeout and Critique: Tony Hopfinger	412-496-6776
Football Commissioner	Richard Kunzier	973-903-1226
Welfare	Vinny Gelsomino	815-409-2385
	Deacon Rich	914-388-4389
Admissions	TBD – Volunteers Requested	
Knights on Bikes	Bill Blanchard	732-841-6074
Newsletter & Webmaster	George E. Barbiero	203-885-8238

### Gear Up, Brothers



Looking to show your Knights of Columbus pride? You may purchase shirts and caps at *Designer Tees* located at 565 Paul Morris Dr, Englewood. They may be reached at 941-272-8673. If you're looking for a wider selection of Knights of Columbus merchandise, including a variety of accessories and apparel, be sure to visit at [Knights Gear](#) online. They offer a range of items to help you display your dedication to the Order. Finally, for our esteemed Color Corps members, uniforms may be purchased directly at [Knights of Columbus | Supply Room](#) and [Home - Knights of Columbus Supplies](#)



## Council Updates & Family and Pro Life News



Below you will find the websites for each of the third-degree councils that contribute to our Assembly. Although each Council is unique, they all share the core values of charity, unity, and fraternity. We encourage you to explore each website as well as Deacon Rich's *Family and Pro Life News*.



[Click here](#) for Council 7997 San Pedro.



[Click here](#) for Council 15821 Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



[Click here](#) for Council 9924. Our Lady of Lourdes.



[Click here](#) for Council 7052 Epiphany Cathedral.



[Click here](#) for the monthly *Family and ProLife News Briefs* from Deacon Rich.