

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

ASSEMBLY 1818

Volume I Issue VI December 2025



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

My Esteemed Sir Knights,

As the days grow shorter and the festive lights begin to twinkle, we find ourselves on the threshold of December, a month brimming with both profound spiritual significance and the warmth of cherished traditions. This time of year, calls us to reflect on the very cornerstones of our Fourth Degree: our unwavering commitment to the Catholic faith and our steadfast dedication to patriotism.

In the coming weeks, as we prepare our hearts for the Nativity of our Lord, let us remember the true reason for the season and the bedrock of our beliefs. Simultaneously, let us continue to exemplify the spirit of active citizenship, honoring the freedoms and values that define our great nation. This newsletter aims to keep you informed of our upcoming events, initiatives, and opportunities to live out these essential tenets of our brotherhood.

May God bless you and your families.

Vivat Jesus!



SK George Barbiero



A Message from our Faithful Captain

Who are we?

We herald ourselves as Sir Knights and Members of Assembly 1818. But have you ever asked yourself who we, all of us as a body, really are?

We chose to be a 4th Degree Sir Knight! We know that the 4th Degree is the Patriot Degree, but maybe not sure of what that all means. We know that one has to be a 3rd Degree first and then go for the 4th, at least that is what we were told. We know that we meet monthly at least some of us. We meet on Substation Rd. Members are from San Pedro, Our Lady of Lourdes, Epiphany, Our Lady of Mt Carmel. Do we really have committees? We have a *Color Corp* but what is this *Knights on Bikes* thing? We have a V4V fundraiser and something about Football winnings and the Veteran Mass.

But the question remains ***Who are we?*** Why be a Sir Knight?

Let's slice and dice a little more ***Who we are***. First of all, we are Catholic; we go to Mass, we say prayers especially for those in need of a kind word, a prayer. We are known to give off our time and give financially. We are a Knight but also a Sir Knight. We took a pledge of: Charity, Fraternalism; and Unity as well as Patriotism in being a Sir Knight. We belong to an organization, in our case Assembly 1818. Some of us one up'ed that and joined the Color Corp and others went way out and ride around on Bikes ("rumblers" not a two-wheeler with training wheels).

So, we are a member of an organization, a Catholic organization. We profess to live the values of being a Knight of Columbus the pledge we took. We socialize together. We enjoy with each other our comradely our thoughts, our challenges, our fun and doing stuff together.

In essence, we belong to receive the HONOR of being a 4th and together to GIVE: our Charity, our Fraternizing, our Unity and our Patriotism the Share part.

In a nutshell this is **who we are**.

What do we really know about our Assembly 1818 organization? Did you know that our Assembly was formed in 1980 (April 18th to be exact)? How many Faithful Navigators can we name? In numbers, we are told that we are around 200 in numbers ever see the 200 all at one time? Where do we come from? Well approximately 44% of the membership is from OLL while SP and OLMC having around 10 to 15% each and Epiphany is ~ 28%. We also got this thing of calling the big shots “Faithful this or that” and do this funny salute...Tradition!

Almost 70% of our members are between the ages of 70 & 90 with a couple members over the age of 90. 16% of the membership is in the 60s and 6% below. So, most of us are living in the “Golden Years” of life... Or so we were told once upon a time. If we look at meeting attendance from May of '25 to May of '26, our average attendance was 15% of our 200 strong. If you think about it, isn't 15% low out of 200 members? How does this square with the pledge of Unity and Fraternalism? (25% would be approximately 50 Sir Knights per meeting.) Does this Giving maybe need a little “touching up”? How many attended the Veterans Mass; isn't this apart of the patriotism thing?

The Yeng and the Yang or to Receive the Honor and to Pledge the Give—the Sharing part.

What do you think? Can we improve? Comments? And what about the Patriotism stuff?

Sir Anthony H Hopfinger

Cell: 412.496.6776

Email: ahhopfinger@gmail.com

Dear Brothers, Families & Friends,

We're delighted to invite you to the Bishop Charles McLaughlin Assembly 1818's Annual Valentines for Veterans Dinner Dance, taking place on Saturday, February 14, 2026. The celebration begins at 6:00 PM at the San Pedro Parish Activity Center, located at 14380 Tamiami Drive in North Port.

This cherished event honors our veterans with an evening of fellowship, food, and festivity. Dinner will feature a delicious spread including salad, bread, baked ziti with meatballs, and dessert. Entertainment will be provided by BIG TIME ENTERTAINMENT, promising a lively and memorable night for all.

Tickets are \$35 per person and can be obtained through our ticket committee members, who will gladly assist you in securing yours. Please share their contact information with your family, friends, and neighbors. We'd love to see the community come together in support of this meaningful cause.

This is a BYOB affair, and we'll also have raffle baskets and a 50/50 drawing to add to the excitement.

We look forward to celebrating with you and showing our heartfelt appreciation for those who have served.



LOL 9924	Michael Milak	941-380-7248
	Marty Reis	209-480-6043
	Vinny Gelsomino	815-409-2355
OLMC 15821	Chuck Doneldson	561-353-8774
	Anthony Hopfinger	412-496-6776
	Lou Nagy	516-835-4273
San Pedro 7997	Tony Salvucci	617-320-1759
Epiphany 7052	Jim Lakatos	708-878-8158



VALENTINES FOR VETERANS DINNER DANCE

- ★ Saturday February 14, 2026
 - ★ Doors Open at 5:00 PM
 - ★ Dinner at 6:00 PM
 - ★ San Pedro Parish Activity Center
14380 Tamiami Trail, North Port
 - ★ DINNER INCLUDES BAKED PASTA WITH
MEATBALLS, SALAD, BREAD AND DESSERT BYOB
- Entertainment provided by
BIG TIME ENTERTAINMENT
Plus Basket Drawing, 50/50 Raffle, Silent Auction

Tickets \$35 Per Person

CONTACT: GEORGE BARBIERO 203-885-8238

For Tickets or Sponsorship Opportunities

PROCEEDS BENEFIT
LOCAL AND STATE
ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT
OUR VETERANS

**EVENT HOSTED BY
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**

**Bishop Charles
McLaughlin
Assembly 1818**



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.

DECEMBER 2025

- **Wed, Dec 10** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Tue, Dec 9** – Christmas Assembly Dinner Meeting

JANUARY 2026

- **Sat, Jan 3** – Removal of Wreaths @ SNC @ 8:00 AM
- **Tue, Jan 13** – Officers Meeting @ 9:00 AM (OLOL)
- **Wed, Jan 14** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Thurs, Jan 15** – Assembly Meeting @ 6:30 PM
 - Rosary @ 5:30 PM - Dinner @ 5:45 PM
 - *Renewal of Obligation*
 - *Guest Speaker Presentation, Sir William Newbrough*
- **Thurs, Jan 29** – Color Corps Drill Practice @ 2 PM (SP)

FEBRUARY 2026

- **Wed, Feb 11** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Sat, Feb 14** – Valentine for Vets Dinner/Dance
 - Starts at 5:30 PM San Pedro Social Hall

MARCH 2026

- **Wed, Mar 11** – SNC @ 8:30 AM
- **Thurs, Mar 19** – Assembly Meeting @ 6:30 PM
 - Rosary @ 5:30 PM - Dinner @ 5:45 PM
 - *Missing Man Table Remembrance*
- **Thurs, Mar 26** – Color Corps Drill Practice @ 2 PM (MC)

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)

Knights on Bikes Faith, Fellowship & the Open Road

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



[Knights on Bikes Venice Chapter](#)



Fourth Degree Exemplification – Wildwood, FL:

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church recently hosted a moving and memorable Fourth Degree Exemplification, where 83 candidates from across Florida were honored in a ceremony that radiated dignity, unity, and patriotic pride.

We were blessed to present the following candidates:

- Our Lady of Lourdes: Thomas Hankard & Michael Mauti
- Mt. Carmel: Thomas McDermitt
- Epiphany Cathedral: Brendan McCoy & Jorge Hidalgo (not pictured)

(Gerard Scannell was unable to attend and will be exemplified at a future ceremony.)

The event was a testament to the strength and spirit of our Order, with Knights, families, and clergy coming together to celebrate this milestone. As always, the ceremony was beautifully conducted rich in tradition and reverence.

Below are some snapshots capturing the joy, brotherhood, and solemnity of the day...







KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
**FOURTH
DEGREE
EXEMPLIFICATION**

Patriotic Degree of the Order



One Nation, Under God

Looking Ahead: January 31, 2026 – Tampa, FL:

We're blessed to announce that the following exemplification will be hosted at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Tampa, Florida on January 31, 2026. We encourage all eligible Third-Degree Knights to consider taking this next step in their journey. Marty Reis and I are 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:

- George Barbiero: 203-885-8238
- Marty Reis: 209-480-6043

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

Upcoming Events:

Assembly 1818 Christmas Party – Replaces December Monthly Meeting

Dear Sir Knights,

Please note that our regularly scheduled monthly meeting for December will be replaced by a festive gathering of fraternity and joy: Assembly 1818's Christmas Party!

We invite you to join us on Tuesday, December 9th, 2025, at Venetian River Club, Venice, Florida, for an evening of camaraderie, celebration, and brotherhood. All the details you need are included in the attached flyer.

This special event will take the place of our usual meeting format, so there will be no formal Assembly meeting in December. Instead, we'll come together in the spirit of the season to share food, laughter, and fellowship.

We hope to see you there bring your holiday excitement and help us make this a night to remember!

You're Invited
Assembly 1818 Christmas Party
TUESDAY 12.9.2025

Cocktails at 5:00 pm — Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Venetian River Club
502 Veneto Blvd, Venice 34275

Evening Casual Dress

Dinner Includes
One Entrée Below plus Broccolini and Dessert
(Price includes tax and gratuity)

Chicken Marsala w/Rice \$31

Penne Primavera \$23

Beef Tenderloin Medallion w/Brandy Cream Sauce & Mashed Potato \$44

Citrus Beurre Blanc Salmon w/Rice \$36

RSVP with Name of Attendees and Dinner Selection
by November 26th to Anthony Hopfinger
412.496.6776 or ahhopfinger@gmail.com

Dinner reservation payable by cash or check payable to *K of C Assembly 1818*
in advance (preferred) or at the door.

The Venetian River Club is a cashless facility.

Cocktails may be purchased at the bar using a credit card.

No Veteran Forgotten Ceremony

Due to the recent government shutdown, the No Veteran Forgotten Ceremony originally scheduled for Wednesday, November 12th, 2025, at Sarasota National Cemetery did not take place. We regret the disruption but remain steadfast in our commitment to honoring those who gave their lives for our freedom.

We are pleased to announce that the **No Veteran Forgotten Ceremony** will resume next month on **Wednesday, December 10th, 2025**.

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.



Let us gather with reverence, gratitude, and fraternity as we continue this sacred tradition.



Honoring Our Tradition: Veterans Day Mass at Sarasota National Cemetery

Dear Brothers and Friends,

As we reflect on the years past, the Veterans Day Mass at Sarasota National Cemetery remains a solemn and sacred tradition one that binds us in faith, patriotism, and remembrance. Each gathering has been a testament to our unity, honoring those who served with reverence and gratitude.

From the quiet procession to the stirring homilies and the echo of taps across the field, these moments have etched themselves into our Assembly's legacy. We remember not only the fallen, but the fellowship we've shared in their honor.

May we continue to uphold this tradition with dignity and devotion, ensuring that their sacrifice is never forgotten.





Dear Sir Knights,

We are pleased to share a recent message received by our Faithful Trustee, SK Kevin Szopinski, from Mr. William Newbrough, Donor Relations Officer for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

Mr. Newbrough has graciously accepted our invitation to serve as guest speaker at our January 2026 Assembly meeting. His presence will offer us a unique opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Archdiocese's mission and its vital support for our military chaplains and Catholic service members.

In his message, Mr. Newbrough also expressed heartfelt gratitude for our Assembly's generous donation earlier this year. Thanks to a gift matching program held in early July, our contribution helped the Archdiocese raise an impressive \$103,000—far surpassing their original goal of \$80,000!.....Please see his email below for additional details.

Worthy SK Kevin,

Presently, the AMS has approximately 370 full time priests including 155 active-duty chaplains to provide for the sacramental, spiritual and faith formation care of 1.8 million Catholic service members and their families. As you know, the AMS has all the pastoral challenges of a normal diocese. However, those challenges must be met on a global scale. My job is to help raise awareness of the pastoral mission of our military chaplains and work to ensure that our service members receive the sacramental and spiritual care that they deserve.

If you get a chance, please check out this video link – **Frontline Fathers**. It features our new Vocations Director Fr. Paul Anthony Halladay, a retired, decorated 20-year veteran U.S. Army chaplain. EWTN put the video together a few years ago but all the information is still relevant. Fr. Halladay is an amazing priest with tremendous enthusiasm who has a lot of great ideas to increase the number of active-duty chaplains currently serving our military families. I have attached the link below:

[FRONTLINE FATHERS](#)

I've also attached the flyer for the upcoming Veterans Appreciation Dinner and AMS Awareness event scheduled for January 9 – 10 in Ave Maria FL .

AVE MARIA VETERANS

Ball

A CELEBRATION FOR ALL

Saturday, January 10, 2026

6 PM - Cocktail Hour | 7 PM - Program, Dinner, & Dancing
Del Webb Grand Hall | Ave Maria, Florida

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!

Keynote

**Archbishop
Timothy P. Broglio**

*Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
President (2022-2025)
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*



Sponsored by



**Knights of
Columbus**

Tickets

\$125 per person



GET TICKETS

*Proceeds benefit veterans
programs in our Nation*

*Service Tables and
Sponsorships available*

Attire

Civilian: Black Tie Optional

Military: Dinner Dress or
Class A Uniform (Active Duty & Veterans)

AveMariaKOFc.org/Veterans-Ball



Honoring with Remembrance, Serving with Respect

This December, families and friends will gather in solemn reverence to place wreaths upon the gravestones of their loved ones, a gesture of remembrance, gratitude, and love. Each wreath is more than greenery; it is a symbol of honor for those who gave of themselves in life and service.

On **January 3rd, 2026, the Knights of Columbus Assembly 1818**, together with other dedicated groups, will humbly assist in removing and respectfully disposing of these wreaths. In doing so, we continue the tradition of service, ensuring that every act of remembrance is carried forward with dignity.

We invite you to tap the link below and enjoy a short presentation by Wreaths Across America.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_EW6a_VAs

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.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Name	Date	Age
Dennis O'Leary	1	78
Robert Keating	3	92
Louis Nagy	3	74
Derek Baiz	4	66
John Paul Chiumento	6	83
PFN Robert Burhoe	7	76
Kenneth Burroughs	8	77
James Martin	8	84
Frank Stroker	9	89
Frederick Englert	11	86
Timothy Gelinaz	11	74
James Schmidt	11	75
Armand Padula	14	96
Gregory Walsh	14	81
William Kovacs	16	65
John Meyer	21	78
Salvatore Fontana	23	81
George Counes	26	79
Thomas Davis	29	76

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Years
William Blanchard	3





Sir Rick Miller	Connie Smith
Kathy Lanza	Jerry Smith
Anita Hemsari	Pam Russell
Turk Hemsari	Jim Russell
Katie Greene	Sarah Kupcho (Frank M. Daughter)
Bob Broderdorf	David Mayle (Frank Mayle Brother)
Catherine Spinaso (Sister of Peter S.)	John Meyer's Wife
Olivia Wolak Russo	Nicole Szopinski
Linda Montemarano	Vincent Campbell (Passed)
George J. Barbiero Sr.	Keith Kandrashoff
Hurricane Victims of Jamica	Sir Peter Spagnuolo
	Ginny Spagnuolo

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 Vice Color Corps Commander	Martin Reis	209-480-6043
Cemetery Activity Coordinator	Rick Anderson	321-303-8172
Meeting Communications Coordinator	Michael Cleary	941-445-7580
Membership Chairmen	Martin Reis George Barbiero	209-480-6043 203-885-8238
Retention Chairman Bereavement /Birthdays Anniversaries	Charles Woodrum	304-282-8733
Valentines For Veterans	Tony Hopfinger Mike Milak Martin Reis	412-496-6776 941-380-7248 209-480-6043
Football Commissioner	Richard Kunzier	973-903-1226
Welfare	Vinny Gelsomino Deacon Rich	815-409-2385 914-388-4389
Admissions	TBD – Volunteers Requested	
Knights on Bikes	Bill Blanchard	732-841-6074

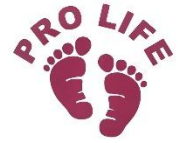
Gear Up, Brothers



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.