

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

Assembly 1818



Special Edition June 18, 2026



Worthy Brothers

I am proud to share that our Assembly held a successful and memorable Awards Ceremony on Thursday, June 18th, at the Hotel Venezia. The evening opened with our Master of Ceremonies, SK Tony Hopfinger, who warmly welcomed all in attendance especially the representatives from the organizations we proudly support. Tony reminded everyone that the fruits of our labor from the *Valentines for Veterans Dinner Dance* were now being placed directly into the hands of three remarkable groups: the **Archdiocese for the Military Services**, **Southwest Florida Honor Flight**, and **Canines for Heroes**.

The festivities began with the Posting of the Colors by our Assembly Color Corps, led with precision and dignity by Commander SK Marty Reis. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by SK Richard Anderson, with all present reciting in unison a powerful moment of shared patriotism.

We then paused for a solemn and meaningful reflection as SK Darwin Reeck delivered the *Remembrance of the Missing Man Table*. His words were heartfelt, and the room listened with deep respect.

Before dinner, Father Saji offered a beautiful and heartfelt blessing one that perfectly captured the meaning and significance of the evening. The meal that followed was prepared and served with exceptional professionalism. The servers were attentive, each course was timely, and the entire dining experience reflected the care and hospitality of the venue.

After dinner, we moved into the presentation of donation gifts to our honored recipients. Before each organization's representatives came forward to receive their donation check, SK Terry Leary read a brief biography of each group, offering everyone a clear understanding of their mission, their impact, and the lives they touch. His thoughtful introductions added depth and meaning to the presentations that followed.

Representing **Canines for Heroes**, Sandra and Mark LaFlame accepted their donation with gratitude. Next, Naomi Horton Copeland and Lee Hale received the donation on behalf of **Southwest Florida Honor Flight**.

Although the **Archdiocese for the Military Services** could not attend, our Faithful Navigator SK Bernie Lanza read a gracious letter from Bill Newbrough, Donor Relations Officer, expressing deep appreciation for our generosity and sharing the wonderful news that our donation was *matched in full*, doubling its impact.

The gratitude expressed by all three organizations was heartfelt and sincere. It was clear that the efforts of Assembly 1818 will make a meaningful difference.

Following the presentations, Father Saji led us in the **Prayer of the Sacred Heart**, with all joining together in unison from the projection screen. He concluded with a blessing for everyone present.

SK Tony then returned to the podium, asking if everyone enjoyed the meal and overwhelming applause answered for him. He also asked whether we should continue using this format of partnering with different venues for preparation, décor, serving, and cleanup so that all attending can simply relax and enjoy the evening. Once again, the response was a resounding yes.

A joyful moment followed as we joined together to sing Happy Birthday to SK Anthony Giardullo, filling the room with good cheer.

The evening concluded with SK Bill Jagenow leading us in the closing ode, *God Bless America*, bringing the night to a dignified and patriotic close.

Closing Message to Our Knights

To all the Sir Knights, wives, and guests who attended: **thank you**. Your presence, your spirit of fraternity, and your commitment to our mission made this evening extraordinary. If you enjoyed the ceremony and we hope you truly did please share your kind words with fellow members. Your enthusiasm and encouragement will help us grow attendance even more next year, ensuring that our good work continues to flourish and our impact grows stronger.

Together, united in patriotism, charity, and fraternity, we continue to honor our veterans, support our community, and strengthen the bonds that make Assembly 1818 a family.

“A heartfelt thank you to SK Mike Mauti for stepping in and capturing some wonderful photos for all of us to enjoy. His help added so much to the spirit of the day, and we truly appreciate it.”



























