



SAN LORENZO RUIZ ASSEMBLY 3103

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Patriotic Degree (Fourth degree) of the Knights of Columbus

The Fourth Degree is the highest degree of the order. It is an extension of the third degree. Members of this degree are addressed as "Sir Knight". The primary purpose of the Fourth Degree is to foster the spirit of patriotism and to encourage active Catholic citizenship. Fewer than 18% of Knights join the Fourth Degree of a total 1,703,307 Knights there were 292,289 Fourth Degree Knights. A Knight is eligible to join the Fourth Degree after six months from the date of his First Degree, providing he has completed the 2nd and 3rd degrees beforehand.

Only Fourth Degree Knights may optionally purchase and wear the full regalia and join the Assembly's Color Corps. The Color Corps is the most visible arm of the Knights, as they are often seen in parades and other local events wearing their colorful regalia. The need for a patriotic degree was first considered in 1886, and the first Fourth Degree exemplification followed in 1900 with 1,100 Knights participating. Today there are more than 2,500 Assemblies.

Emblem of the Patriotic Degree



The triad emblem of the Fourth Degree features the dove, the cross and the globe. The dove, classic symbol of the Holy Spirit and peace, is shown hovering over the orb of the Earth (globe). Both are mounted on a variation of the Crusader's cross, which was found on the tunics and capes of the Crusading knights who battled to regain the Holy Land from the pagans.

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:

- A blue globe with the land of the Western Hemisphere in white.
- A red cross with gold borders and gold knobs at the end of the points forming the ends of the arms of the cross, also known as the Isabella cross.
- A white dove.

Red, white and blue are the colors of the flag of the country in which the Knights originated. They are used to stress patriotism, the basic principle of the Fourth Degree.

Patriotism is, of course, more than waving the flag. It goes beyond expressing love of country and support of its values and institutions. In its best sense, Patriotism involves commitment and action. It requires us to live our lives in such a way that it will strengthen our society, and actively involve ourselves in whatever action may be necessary to remedy our weaknesses.

Since our founding, the members of the Knights of Columbus have been patriots. In all the countries where the Knights are active, its members have fought to turn back the rule of modern-day tyrants and terrorists, and to defend human dignity, freedom, and rights. We continue to express our love of country by being active in the political process, by our strong defense of innocent human life and the role of the family, by doing our daily work as well as we can for the sake of our homelands, and by seeking to rid our countries of all that departs from their most sacred values. Through the Fourth Degree of the Order, we highlight the commitment of the Knights of Columbus to love of God and country.

Our Order was born in a period of intense, even overt bigotry against the Catholic Church, a bigotry that persists in various forms today. Nonetheless, we are persistent in our patriotism not because we imagine our respective countries and the cultures they embody, to be perfect – but because we are confident that God’s truth and love, working through us and our fellow citizens can help mend our native lands, prompting the lands we call home to live up to their founding ideals, to embrace that which is coherent, true, good, and beautiful in our native cultures. Patriotism, my dear friends, is a virtue not for the faint of heart.

Vision & Goals

1) Standing Firm in Support of the Order

Knights of the Patriotic Degree are dedicated to the personal development and continued honor of brother Knights. We are always there to offer leadership, guidance, and encouragement.

2) Proudly Serving the Country

Knights of the Patriotic Degree glorify God by serving our communities and nations as though Christ were the one being served.

3) Unwavering Support of the Faith

Knights of the Patriotic Degree hold unwaveringly to what is right and honorable, working to keep God in the civic arena, serving the life of the Church, and defending laws that recognize the sanctity of life and true religious liberty.

4) Honoring the Legacy of Knighthood

The Color Corps is an elective division of the Patriotic Degree that presents a visible reminder of our service to the community.

Collated by Sir Knight Ray Foz, Navigator of the San Lorenzo Ruiz Assembly – September 23, 2012