



# Knights of Columbus

Fr. Hennepin Province

Michigan District 1

Gene Suchyta

District Master

## Minutes from the November 4, 2023 Fall Harvest District Meeting

### Opening Ceremonies

- Meeting was called to order at 9:32 AM at St Jane Frances De Chantal, 38750 Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights, MI 48310.
- Opening prayer was led by District Marshall Dale Miller.
- District Sr. Marshal George Roumaya led the Assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Dignitaries that were present were introduced (see the list at the end of the minutes).
- The roll call of attending Assemblies was taken (see table at end of minutes).
- The meeting minutes from the 2023 Spring District meeting were approved as corrected.

### Master's Report (Gene Suchyta)

#### Opening Remarks/Introductions

- Thanks to Sir Knights of 1839 Blessed Virgin Mary - FN Joseph White and the other Sir Knights for hosting this event!

#### Exemplification Topics

- Most recent
  1. 61 new sir knights in 21 assemblies
  2. 20 baskets donated from 11 assemblies and 7 Sir Knights and Ladies and 1 from the State Board
  3. 1 large donation made to defer the cost of the Exemplification
  4. Funniest moment: Close to the end, Msgr. Kosanke sneezed, and eighty Sir Knights in the church all said "God Bless You!"
  5. 2nd Funniest moment: District Secretary Mark Palmer stepped out a few minutes before he was needed in the role of Inside Sentinel, so I pressed Marshal Emeritus Herb Stacer into service, to which he responded: I'm not sure I remember the words!
- Future Exemplifications
  1. 2024 Spring
  2. Location and date (Likely April 20th or April 27th)
  3. 2024 Fall
    - a. Knights of Columbus Hall (0488 Raisin River), Monroe
  4. 2025 Spring
    - a. TBD
  5. 2025 Fall
    - a. St Edith, Livonia (A-1536 Pope John XXIII and C-13645 St Edith)

- Paperwork Deadlines
  1. This is generally driven by the caterer, that is, when they need a final count
  2. The VSM needs to know if there are going to be 25 or more candidates at least two weeks prior to the event
  3. Thoughts on how we might be able to do this without creating too much work for any of us?
  
- New Exemplification
  1. No further word on secrecy for the current exemplification, despite the masters and the VSM pushing hard
  2. The VSM Ed Ponder, Lady Mary Ann and the rest of the VSM's saw the work in progress, though they were sworn to secrecy and will not talk about what they saw
  3. The new exemplification is anticipated to be rolled out in 2025, the 125 anniversary of the 4th Degree
  4. This means our next Exemplification will be similar to those we have done, although...
  
- Mini-Exemplification
  1. For the district to meet the membership quota, we would need to have three exemplifications of roughly the same size as the one we just did
  2. This is a lot of work do the staff and me, including Lady Kathy
  3. Other districts do what is called a mini-exemplification
  4. All the music and much of the pomp is removed
  5. The meat of the exemplification is still there
  6. There are fewer people involved, the setting is smaller, and the time commitment is shorter
  7. I am considering this... The dates I am considering are mid-December and mid-June, so I will need to make a decision soon
  8. If it did happen, I am thinking a weekday, and probably a Monday (there are fewer assembly and council meetings on Mondays)
  9. Ultimately, the question will be, would we have candidates?
    - There was a general discussion about the mini-exemplification by Andrew Young, Greg Brunson, and Alex Doninique.
  
- Dress code
  1. One person showed up in an MSU t-shirt
  2. The dress code doesn't require a tux, but it does require a dark suit, white shirt and tie
  3. You are the first line of defense when it comes to how people dress for this event
  4. No t-shirts
  5. I will instruct my team to turn them away
  
- Refund Policy
  1. Once the cutoff has occurred, the only refunds that will be issued will be for candidates (including any additional money like a spouse meal, photo, etc.). This has a lot to do with the accounting and paperwork I need to send to supreme.
  2. There will be NO REFUNDS for no-shows for dinner or the Ladies program, as commitments have already been made for meals and items that cannot be undone

- Form 4's
  1. The assemblies are responsible for getting most of the Form 4 filled out completely
  2. The box in the lower right, that has amount paid, location, two dates and room for the district master's signature is my box, and while I appreciate the willingness of some assemblies to help me fill that out I would prefer if you didn't
  3. If you are printing the online Form 4, or making a copy of a Form 4, colored paper isn't necessary. All the Form 4's are special to Norm and me, and printing them on yellow or blue might get you the wrong kind of notice
  4. Please be mindful of how the Form 4 you are turning in looks. Someone took a picture of the Form 4 and turned that in, and it looks very odd. Supreme has not challenged us on how the Form 4 looks, especially the online version, and I would like to keep it that way.
  
- Sword Raffle
  1. Fortunately, the last two swords that have been given away in the raffle have gone to people intent on buying the uniform
  2. While other districts do something similar, there is also at least one that gives the sword to the first person in an Exemplification class that shows proof of uniform purchase
  3. Thoughts on that?
    - There were general questions and discussion about the sword raffle from Danny Champine, Tom Schmidt, Dale Miller, John Schnellenbacher, Dan Nowokowski and Ken Brusate.
  
- Exemplification Needs (This was in my last email)
  1. One person to run the music
    - a. SK Bill Gorney has been doing both slides and sound; he and I spoke, and he agreed splitting those two jobs would help him focus on the slides, which is important
    - b. We have a device that has the music on it, and Ron Rabine can show that person how the device works
  2. One person to run the "teleprompter"
    - a. Supreme requests that the exemplification team memorize their parts
    - b. Not only is it difficult, but we have also had last minute substitutes that make it difficult for the person to memorize the part in time
    - c. We've usually co-opted a SK to do this, but I would like to make it more formal so we have some consistency on the team
  3. Photographer
    - a. I've had to get a photographer for the last two Exemplifications, as Emery, the person we had for quite a few years, is no longer available
    - b. Unfortunately, they can be very expensive
    - c. I'd ask my wife to take the photo, though she tends to be very busy
    - d. If anyone knows a photographer, or a Sir Knight with some experience, I would appreciate if the name could be passed along
  4. Baskets for Basket Raffle
    - a. Lady Kathy and I appreciate those assemblies and individuals that donated baskets
    - b. 20 is a great number - the most I have seen at one of our exemplifications
    - c. I've mentioned in the past that I do keep track of who donates - and I really do
    - d. 6 assemblies have donated twice; 9 assemblies have donates once
    - e. One couple has donated three times, one twice, 8 couples once

- f. This really helps to defray the cost of the exemplification, and Lady Kathy and I do what we can to keep the cost of the exemplification down
  - Tom Schmidt – asked a question about adding music directly to the slides. They can't because of timing and restrictions of being able to edit the presentation.
  - Dan Nowokowski volunteered to run the teleprompter.
  - Tom Parsch – Tom asked if assemblies can make donations for baskets in lieu of donating an actual basket. The Master's response was that they already do a lot for the exemplification and have to transport a lot, so it would be prohibitive.
  - Dan Champine asked about form 4 signatures – Digital signatures can be used, or it can be printed signed and scanned in and sent.

### Color Corps

- Color Corps
  1. We are the face of the Knights of Columbus
  2. The Supreme Master is grateful for those proudly wearing the uniform
  3. He is also grateful for those assemblies that have programs to help build the color corps
  4. I try to regularly attend events, even those that are not in my backyard, and I have seen encouraging signs of increasing numbers of Color Corps at events
  5. I understand there are still some people that are not happy about the change and how it was done
  6. There have been many regalia retirements in the past, and I expect there will be more in the future
  7. We need to move on
  8. New members ought not be discouraged from joining, and should be encouraged
  9. The Greatest Generation, those who fought in WW2, Korea, and Vietnam are passing away
  10. We are those that need to rise up and take their place to honor them as well as the rest of our brothers
  11. What can you do to Grow the Corps?
  12. We have assemblies that have programs to help people by the uniform
  13. We have some councils that are helping people buy the uniform, as well
    - General discussion about color corps from Greg Brunson, Henry Testa, and Andrew Young.
- Name Badges
  - On Monday, October 23, the Supreme Master informed district masters and VSM's that wearing a name badge with the 4th Degree uniform is acceptable IN SOCIAL SETTINGS
  - A name tag is NOT to be worn with the full uniform (when we are using the baldric, etc.)
  - A suggestion was made that Michigan district masters create a standard to make us somewhat uniform
  - Until we come to a decision, I am OK if Sir Knights wear a current name badge, preferably 4th Degree
    - General Discussion about Name Badges, and 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Pin (PG 113) on the uniform by Tom Schmidt and Curt Best, on the Top Coat

- Dany Champaign asked for clarification about which pin can be worn without the uniform – If not wearing the uniform, you can wear any pin you wish
  - PG113 is THE ONLY 4<sup>th</sup> Degree pin that can be worn with the uniform.
- Assignments
  1. Every assignment we do is important
  2. While I understand not all the funerals hit the district calendar, everything else should
  3. The marshals review each request, especially for assemblies involved, to make sure we can appropriately cover the event
  4. I like to get out to events as well, and if the event isn't on the calendar I am robbed of an opportunity to come visit and participate

### Assembly Topics

- Rosary or mass before meeting
- District Master Visits
  1. Preferred talking time is just before Report of the FN
  2. It's taken me a while to figure this out, so I really haven't said much lately unless I have been asked
- Relations with Councils
  1. Patriotic Activities
  2. The Fourth Degree is known for their patriotic activities - its what we do
  3. The Supreme Master would like Assemblies to be more involved in any Council activities that are related to Patriotism
  4. Let councils know about your patriotic activities, especially things like flag retirements and Blue Masses at which council participation can be encouraged
  5. Keep your membership engaged with activities in which they can participate
    - a. Flag retirements
    - b. Serving lunches to first responders or veterans
    - c. Visiting the VA Hospital
    - d. Collecting items of the VA Hospital or other veteran groups
- Recruiting
  1. While a new member to the order can be recruited from almost anywhere, only 3rd Degree Knights can be recruited to become 4th Degree Sir Knights
  2. This is where relationships mean a lot, and where council visits pay dividends
  3. I'm convinced many council members will not join an assembly unless they know what's in it for them, so those visits and the Report of the Fourth Degree are key
  4. Recruiting tips
  5. FN's should have business cards
  6. FN's should have an elevator speech on why someone should join their assembly
  7. FN's should be regularly visiting councils assigned to their assembly
    - a. Don't need to visit every month
    - b. Should have someone giving the report of the Fourth Degree at council meetings
    - c. Make sure you have Form 4's

- General discussion about recruiting topics by Dale Miller, Henry Testa, Andrew Young, Bob Krysz, Dan Nowokowski, John Schnellenbacher, and Guy Azell.
- Other actions to consider
  1. If your assembly does a flag retirement, consider bringing a box to a couple of council meetings and asking council member to bring flags that should be retired
  2. Consider bringing an engraved chalice to a council meeting and explain your assembly's chalice program to them
  3. Talk about the Color Corps being the visible face of the Knights of Columbus, and suggest that maybe they might want to create a program to help some of the Sir Knights in their assembly buy the new uniform
- Baldrics
  1. The service baldric is worn ONLY with the uniform
  2. The social baldric is NEVER worn with the uniform
  3. The social baldric can be worn with a suit or a tux
- Other (from the VSM)
  1. Perhaps have some KC bears to pass on to small children at wake services
  2. Perhaps consider sponsoring a Patriotic Essay contest
    - John Hundiak and Dale Miller offer suggestions about ordering and distribution KC Bears.

### **District**

- Provincial Meeting
  1. The VSM let us know that he is not planning a provincial meeting, as there does not seem to be a lot of support for such an event
  2. Is giving some thought to training, as are the people at Supreme, especially for audits
- Biennial Meeting
  - Delegates
    1. Section 14, paragraph (b): Be composed of the Faithful Navigator of each Assembly in the District and one delegate for each one hundred members or major fraction thereof of each Assembly which delegates shall be elected by ballot at the February meeting in the year in which such district assembly is convened and after prior notice of the holding of such election has been given to the members by notice or publication. Assemblies shall have the right to elect alternates for the Faithful Navigator and for any delegates to which they may be entitled.
    2. In short, In February, assemblies should vote on who their delegate(s) will be to the biennial meeting
    3. We do two three important things at the Biennial
    4. Nominate and approve an auditing committee of three members (trustees) to audit and approve the March 1 and September 1 financial reports of the Master;
    5. Three nominees for district master that will be forwarded to the VSM and thence to the Supreme Master
    6. Consider and vote upon any resolutions that may then be forwarded to the VSM and thence to the Supreme Master
- 186 Report (Report of Officers Chosen)

1. Many assemblies use Membership Management Online, and that is a great thing!
  2. Many assemblies send me a copy of the 186 Report, and that is a great thing!
  3. Since I do not have online access to the 186 reports, I need each assembly to send me a copy, and cc the VSM
  4. Otherwise, I have no idea who the assembly officers are
- Officer Installations
    1. 23 of 31 Officer Installations where completed
    2. Special thanks to assembly 2136 for hosting an installation 9 assemblies, with proceeds donated to Fisher House
    3. Would like to get all done next year
    4. Again, two per marshal (which is on average 4 assemblies per event) I feel works well, though I am also OK with doing more if the assembly feels they can handle the group
    5. If you feel your group is somewhat unwilling to travel, perhaps your assembly might consider hosting the event
  - Membership and Assembly goals
    1. Please Stand and Be Recognized
      - a. 100% of quota
        - i. 2599 Sacred Heart
        - ii. 2696 St. Paul on the Lake
      - b. Need 1 more to make quota
        - i. 2804 St. Mary of the Lake
        - ii. 3057 Bishop Schoehnerr
        - iii. 3408 St. George Chaldean
      - c. Need 3 more to make quota
        - i. 0521 Father Solanus Casey
        - ii. 1795 Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke
        - iii. 2032 Edward Cardinal Mooney
    2. Where we currently are
      - a. Started the year with 3,132, 188 quota, +61 YTD, 127 to go
      - b. All the people that were exemplified in September are all in Member Management
    3. New members
      - a. Increasing membership of the Fourth Degree is important to the new Supreme Master
      - b. He would like all the districts to meet their quota
      - c. For Michigan District 1 that means 188 new members, which means three exemplifications the size of the last one (maybe a little larger)
      - d. From the fall 2023 exemplification
        - i. 21 assemblies recruited new members from 33 councils
        - ii. We have about 130 councils in District 1, which means we received no new members from about 100 councils
        - iii. If we were able to recruit 1 1/2 new members from those 100 councils, with the 61 from the last exemplification, that would put us with 10 members of quota
        - iv. One of your assembly goals should be to recruit 1 1/2 new members from each council for which you are responsible
      - e. Some of the other district do what they call mini-exemplifications - all the words and slides but less music and less pomp (and a lot fewer dignitaries)
      - f. Although I'm looking at this, timing is a big consideration

- Tom Parsch asked about online exemplifications – Those have to be approved by Supreme.
- Cost
  1. Supreme continues to offer free membership to the Knights of Columbus
  2. Supreme also appears to be reluctant to raise the amount Exemplification candidates can be charged, probably for this reason
  3. While each assembly is different, my ask is that assemblies look at their finances and consider if perhaps they can help with the Exemplification cost
- New Assemblies
  1. The Supreme Master set a goal of one new assembly for each district
    - a. For current assemblies
    - b. Resolve the inactive member situation
    - c. Make sure all of our current assemblies are on sound footing (there are a few assemblies with which I am concerned and am working with)
  2. Supreme training session gave some tips on how to create new assemblies
    - a. At least 30 Sir Knights are needed to form a new assembly
    - b. I'm not interested in "busting up" large assemblies
    - c. Even so, the hard reality is that to create a new assembly, some assembly members need to move to the new assembly to provide a core group that understands how to run an assembly and get it going
    - d. Supreme feels single council assemblies can be successful - we have but one in our district
    - e. What I am looking at is councils that appear to have a large number of 4th degree Sir Knights spread over a number of assemblies that might be interested in bringing them all together to form a new assembly, with adversely impacting the other assemblies involved
  3. Nothing happens without working with FN's, Grand Knights and District Deputies
    - General questions and discussion about new assemblies by Dale Miller and Henry Testa.
- Inactive Assembly Sir Knights
  1. Last year I mentioned we had 66 Sir Knights in inactive assemblies
  2. We are down to 63
  3. My goal of dealing with by the start of this fraternal year went down in flames
  4. I am still working the issue with my insurance rep, the VSM and Supreme
  5. I've included a sample DRAFT letter that I am working to send out by the middle of November
  6. I would prefer not to leave any Sir Knight behind, and am trying to reach out as best I can to make sure they stay with us
- Assembly/Council Alignment and Assembly Location Updates
  1. I am still working these issues with the VSM and Supreme
- District Website
  1. Most (not all) of the questions I receive have the answer on the district website
  2. There is a wealth of information there, and I like to think it is easy to find
  3. Please check there first before contacting me



- District Master Award
  1. Some confusion about the Knight of the Month Award, caused by me, and I want to clear that up
    - a. The requirement is to name 3 Sir Knights of the month and 1 Sir Knight of the Year
    - b. I think I originally said quarterly, as I anticipated the Sir Knights would be names Quarterly
    - c. At the end of the day, it is the fact that you did the recognition that counts, be it quarterly or monthly
- Lunch Signup
  1. SEE HOW THIS GOES
  2. Do we need to do something else?

### Supreme Topics

- Help and support
  1. The Supreme Master is naming five (maybe six) directors to have more direct involvement in goal setting for provinces and districts as well as provide help and support
    - a. Areas are:
    - b. Communications
    - c. Training
    - d. Ceremonials
    - e. Membership
    - f. Programs
- 4th Degree Newsletter
  1. The Supreme Master is planning to publish a 4th Degree Newsletter via email with items of interest and recognition
  2. If you have something you think might be worthwhile, please send it to me (all the masters have been asked to be the gatekeeper for articles as this is getting off the ground)
- Youth Protection
  1. There is active consideration regarding youth protection and the role of the FN
  2. I expect more to come on this, though I don't have an issue with it and I have taken both the KofC and AOD youth protection training
  3. While I would agree that it would be great if they were the same, they are not, and it is a situation with which we have to live
- Chain of Command
  1. Both the Supreme Master and the VSM ask that members follow the chain of command - FN, District Master, VSM, Supreme Master
  2. There are questions and issues that are being raised up to the Supreme Master that can and should be taken care of at a lower level
  3. I would further ask that members consult their FN (or commander), as well as the District website
  4. Many of the questions I get asked, even by FN's, have the answer on the district website
- Patriotic Charities of Importance to Supreme
  1. Father McGivney Military Chaplain Scholarship Fund (Knights of Columbus Charities)
  2. This one is especially important to the Supreme Master

3. Funds are low, and he asks that assemblies consider making a contribution this fraternal year
4. Warriors to Lourdes (Knights of Columbus Charities)
5. Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA
  - Dan Champine has a question about funds going to Holy Cross Children's Services and their use – State Advocate Vern Miron assures the Assembly that as far as the state knows, the funds are being used for their intended purpose.

### **Veteran and First Responder Support**

1. Veteran related asks from the Supreme Master and VSM
  - a. VAVS
    - i. Dennis Lipski is our representative
    - ii. Supreme has asked that we have a deputy representative
    - iii. [If Dennis is in the room, ask him how much time this takes, and what is involved]
2. Assembly veterans
  - a. Please identify those members of year assemblies that are veterans (WW2, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf, etc.)
  - b. Create and execute programs to help them
  - c. Suggest asking them what they feel might be helpful
3. John Dingall VA Medical Center
  - a. We need to get back into the VA Medical Center in Detroit, despite the issues they are having
  - b. All I can ask is that assemblies that used to do this regularly push to see what they can do
  - c. I also ask our VAVS representative to help push this as much as they can
    - Andrew Young asks a general question about casket watches and assemblies being notified of a death. – The District Master suggests that assemblies form a relationship with Funeral Homes in the area so that they can be informed.

### **Old Business**

- No Old Business

### **New Business**

- Cliff Wasmund FVSM 2599 – In regards to casket watches, Assemblies need to support each other for Casket Watches.

### **Dignitary Remarks and Comments**

- State Advocate Former District Master Vern Miron
  - Brings Greeting from the State Board
  - Make sure that the information being discussed here today is brought back to your assembly.
  - It is very important that as people are learning new things we show them.
  - It is easy to bring a new member as an E-Member
  - Help each other, and do it in a timely manner
- Immediate Past State Deputy Former Master of the Fourth Degree Walter Winkle.
  - He asks that you check with DD or GK that is running a Degree to see if you can make a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Presentation and keep your presentation short.
- Former Master of the Fourth Degree Mark Brezenski

- Remarks about the timeliness of name badges and that there has been a lot of discussion over the years about the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Exemplification revamp.
- Please be aware of the Master's time when bringing new ideas to him, 10 minutes before an Exemplification is starting is not the correct time.
- Location of Exemplifications, think about in other districts, some have a 5 or 6-hour drive, so an hour here shouldn't be considered a major inconvenience.
- Former Master of the Fourth Degree John Hundiak
  - Veterans – 2 types 1. Those who are not with us any more (Wreaths Across America, have councils work with parishes, work with seniors groups)., 2. Those who are still with us, we need to keep in contact with them. (WWII Veterans are getting scarce. Have a youth group write down their story. Volunteer to bring them to a meeting to keep them involved.)

### **Open Floor Questions**

No additional questions

### **Good of the Order**

- Comments from Gene
  - No further comments
- Prayer Requests
  1. Lt. Cdr. Tomek Maka, Bishop Michael Gallagher Assembly 482 11/14/2023
  2. SK Gary Martin, Holy Cross Assembly 1622 11/14/2023
  3. State Executive Secretary SK Larry Grabowski, Sacred Heart Assembly 2599 11/14/2023
  4. Fr. Stan Ulman, pastor, St. Mary of the Hills 11/14/2023
  5. SK Greg and Lady Suzanne Brunson, Richmond Assembly 480 11/14/2023
  6. Repose of the soul of SK Robert Olejniczak, PFN of Msgr. Van Dyke Assembly 483 and PGK 11/13/2023
  7. Mary Anne Gargaro 10/11/2024
  8. Repose of the soul of SK Christopher Nitz, Sr., Richard Cardinal Cushing Assembly 484 11/14/2023
  9. Repose of the soul of SK Frank Wojtal, Bishop Kelley Assembly 0490 11/14/2023

### **Closing Ceremonies**

- Marshal Bob Greening led the district in a closing Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:48 am

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Palmer, District Secretary

**Dignitaries in Attendance**

District Master Gene Suchyta  
Sr. Marshal George Roumaya  
Marshal Curt Best  
Marshal Bob Greening  
Marshal Dale Miller  
District Comptroller Norm Pranger  
Marshal Emeritus Tom Schmidt  
Former Vice Supreme Master Cliff Wasmund  
Former Master Mark Brezenski  
Former Master John Hundiak  
Immediate Past State Deputy Walter Winkle  
State Advocate Vern Miron

Assembly #	Assembly Name	Sir Knights
0470	Detroit Cardinal Mercier	1
0475	Msgr. Francis F. Van Antwerp	4
0477	A.X.M. Sharpe	3
0478	St. John Neumann	Not Present
0480	Richmond	3
0482	Bishop Michael Gallagher	4
0483	Msgr. Van Dyke	1
0484	Richard Cardinal Cushing	4
0488	Raisin River	Not Present
0490	Bishop Kelley	6
0492	Msgr. Schulte	4
0520	Monsignor Hunt	Not Present
0521	Father Solanus Casey	1
1536	Pope John XXIII	4
1622	Holy Cross	1
1795	Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke	Not Present
1839	Blessed Virgin Mary	7
1963	Msgr. Clement H. Kern	Not Present
2032	Edward Cardinal Mooney	1
2136	St. Francis of Assisi	3
2149	St. Michael the Archangel	4
2521	Father John R. Hogan	1
2599	Sacred Heart	5
2696	St. Paul on the Lake	3
2804	St. Mary of the Lake	1
2942	Pope John Paul II	Not Present
3057	Bishop Schoehnerr	Not Present
3082	Divine Mercy	4
3099	Father John A. Hardon, S.J.	3
3392	Father Vincent Capodanno	4
3408	St. George Chaldean	Not Present