

**Exemplification of Charity,
Unity, and Fraternity**

Conducting the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity

Council Checklist

- 1. Meet with your council Chaplain or local Pastor.** Working with your Chaplain/Pastor, obtain his recommendations on conducting an Exemplification of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. Ideally, select a date when he can attend and lead the prayers during the ceremony. (If no priest is available, the Presiding Officer may lead the prayers.)
- 2. Select a date and secure a location.** Preferably, the exemplification will be held in a Catholic church following Mass.
- 3. Order materials.** Order a sufficient supply of *Candidate Kits* from Supplies Online, the supply ordering portal available on Officers Online.
- 4. Select an Honoree.** Inform the Honoree if applicable.
- 5. Promote.** Build public interest in the upcoming exemplification in your parish and larger community. Include mention of the Honoree. Use multiple methods of communication.
 - Bulletin announcements
 - Pulpit announcements
 - Posting on your council and parish website/social media pages
- 6. Plan a reception.** Strongly consider hosting a social event after the ceremony so that everyone can meet the council's newest members and their families.
- 7. Invite brother Knights to attend.** Invite all council members, their families, your District Deputy and your Field Agent to attend. Encourage First and Second Degree members to participate in the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity, so that they may advance to Third Degree.
- 8. Practice.** Conduct walk-throughs so that all Exemplification Personnel are comfortable in skillfully presenting their parts in a solemn and dignified manner.
- 9. Afterwards, distribute Membership Cards.** Following the exemplification, the Financial Secretary should present a *Membership Card* to each of the newly advanced members.

Exemplification Personnel

- 1. Presiding Officer** (*Serves as Master of Ceremonies*)
- 2. Chaplain** (*Leads assembly in Opening and Closing Prayers*)
- 3. Presenter on Charity** (*Teaches the Lesson on Charity and delivers the discourse on the rosary*)
- 4. Presenter on Unity** (*Teaches the Lesson on Unity*)
- 5. Presenter on Fraternity** (*Teaches the Lesson on Fraternity*)
- 6. Warden** (*Guides the Candidates*)
- 7. Investing Officer** (*Presents rosaries and lapel pins to the Candidates. The Grand Knight or highest-ranking officer in attendance may fill this role and, depending on the number of Candidates, multiple officers may assist*)
- 8. Financial Secretary** (*Registers Candidates and obtains their signature on the Constitutional Roll*)
- 9. Field Agent** (*Meets and greets Candidates, assists the Financial Secretary and should be given the opportunity to address members at any function following the ceremony*)

Ceremonial Materials

Ceremonial Baldrics – Baldrics for Presiding Officer, three Presenters, Warden and the Investing Officer to wear during the exemplification.

Crucifix – A crucifix large enough for demonstration purposes. It is preferred that the crucifix be wooden and large enough for all to clearly see the corpus – the body of Jesus Christ. A wooden crucifix is available from Knights Gear and similar crucifixes are available from the Official Ceremonial Suppliers.

Cable and Fibers – The fibers (small strings) and cable are available from the Official Ceremonial Suppliers. The cable should be white in color, approximately 1 inch in diameter and 2 feet in length.

Candidate Kit – One per Candidate. Includes rosary and lapel pin presented during the exemplification.

Official Ceremonial Suppliers: USA & Canada – The English Company

Team Instructions

First Impressions:

This Ceremony will introduce the Knights of Columbus, and its principles, to Candidates, their families, and other observers. It is imperative that all aspects be conducted in a highly professional manner, and with the utmost decorum. First impressions are lasting ones. A poorly conducted ceremony will tarnish the reputation of our Order.

Impact of team performances:

This Ceremony was designed for a church setting with a large audience. Particular attention should be given to how the performance will be perceived by, and its impact upon, candidates and all in attendance. Although presentation from memory is ideal, team members may read the script. All presenters must be skilled readers and speakers, fully comfortable with the wording, pronunciation, transitions and tone. The ceremony must be conducted with theatrical flair and passion. Teams should view the online video and practice numerous times before conducting any exemplifications. Team certification is not required.

Ceremony Venues and modifications:

The script was designed for exemplifications in a church. It also may be done in less formal venues like parish halls and council chambers. Since some priests prefer the sacred space be reserved for liturgical purposes, please consult with your pastor or chaplain regarding holding the ceremonial in a church and accept their wishes. Sensible modifications, like using additional men to present rosaries and lapel pins for large groups, may be made as needed. Also, if candidates are not seated in church pews, they may remain at their chairs for the investment of rosaries and lapel pins. Make sure, in that case, to allow enough room between rows for the team members to pass through.

Video:

The online video is meant to raise awareness of the new ceremony and train presenters. However, when necessary, councils may show the video on a limited basis to Candidates who cannot attend a scheduled ceremony. In such cases, the Grand Knight and two other members should preside over the ceremony, dressed in dark suits with ceremonial baldrics. The location should be formally set up with all ceremonial materials on hand.

Grand Knight and District Deputy responsibilities:

The Host Grand Knight is responsible for conducting exemplifications in a manner like that shown in the video. No additions, omissions or innovations are allowed for ceremonial elements.

District Deputies shall correct any deviations from the approved script with the Grand Knight and Team.

Setup and Preparations:

1. Extend the professional courtesy to Candidates and guests of starting on time.
2. Candidates should be greeted by the Financial Secretary and Field Agent and assembled in an area that will be conducive to reviewing the pledges and signing the Constitutional Roll. Conduct the registration and signing of the Constitutional Roll as expeditiously as possible. This is the candidates' first exposure to the Order. It should be highly professional. Do not waste a single moment of their valuable time.
3. While administering to the Candidates, arrange for the comfort and entertainment of their families and guests in the ceremonial chambers.
4. A common challenge when exemplifying a large group is the entanglement of rosaries. The subsequent efforts to disentangle can significantly detract from the desired decorum. Teams should devise methods to prevent entanglement.
5. Another common challenge is the placement of Candidate chairs too close together such that Candidates are uncomfortably squeezed. Space the chairs with adequate room between them.
6. Give Blessed Michael McGivney Canonization Prayer cards to all guests and Candidates upon their arrival so they can all participate in the closing prayer.

Candidate Preparations:

1. *Review with the Candidates the Promises that they will make.*
2. *Have each Candidate examine and sign the Constitutional Roll.*
3. *Do not allow Candidates to sit idle in the preparation area. When their processing is complete, take them to their assigned seats or to the families / guests / council members until you are ready to begin the ceremony.*

Immediately before the ceremony begins:

The Warden escorts those to be exemplified to their reserved seats in front of the assembly. For small classes, they may be escorted as a group. For large classes, they may be escorted in small groups as they finish signing the Constitutional Roll.

When all Candidates are in their assigned places, the Presiding Officer and Presenters take their places.

The ceremony then begins.

Opening Prayer

Presiding Officer – Reverend Father, my Brother Knights, ladies, and friends. Welcome to this Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Let us stand and begin with prayer.

Chaplain – In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray. God, our Father, you so loved the world that you sent us your only Son to suffer, die, and rise for us, and for our salvation. Give us the grace to daily encounter Our Lord Jesus Christ with a living faith and so come to know in our lives the power of His love. Let us find in His Cross the strength to rise above our sins and to be confirmed in virtue, so that we may live our vocations faithfully and accomplish our work with integrity. Unite us, Lord, in the fraternity of the Knights of Columbus as we bear witness to Christ, serving the needs of others in charity, and

keeping the commandments in the spirit of the Beatitudes. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Presiding Officer – Please be seated. By founding the Knights of Columbus in 1882, Father Michael McGivney sought to establish a fraternal Order whose members live the Christian virtues by means of the principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. He sought to unite members in their Catholic identity as practical Catholics, that is, as Catholics who accept the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, who aspire to live in accordance with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and who are in good standing in the Catholic Church.

By your presence here today, you pledge that this is your understanding and intention in joining the Knights of Columbus.

At the time of our founding, Catholics in America faced discrimination and bigotry. Many immigrants were challenged by a hostile society that considered them outsiders and incapable of full citizenship. Often these Catholics were tempted to abandon their faith and the Sacraments.

The father was the family's primary wage earner and, with no social support network available, frequently his untimely death was a catastrophic event. His widow and children faced financial ruin and the breakup of their family. Removed from their family's home, children often found themselves removed from their family's faith.

Yet in the face of these challenges, Father McGivney was determined to find a way to strengthen the faith and families of his fellow Catholics.

Father McGivney's vision established our organization of local councils whose members sought to strengthen their faith, to serve the needs of others, and to protect their families through our insurance program.

The first members of our Order chose the name Columbus to emphasize that from the earliest days of the European exploration of America, Catholics had played an essential role. Christopher Columbus was a revered hero in the 19th century who inspired the names of cities throughout the United States, including the nation's capital, as well as a province in Canada and a nation in Latin America.

Those early Knights recognized Christopher Columbus, not only as an explorer of extraordinary skill and daring, but as a layman committed to bringing the Good News of the Gospel to a New World.

Our founding members chose to be called knights in recognition of the historic mission of Christian knights — men who led lives of virtue, defended the Faith, and served those in need.

In medieval times, when Christian knights took up arms and put on their armor, they understood that they were putting on the armor of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in order to serve a higher calling. A knight was committed to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. He was willing to sacrifice himself for others, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

Although times have changed, this higher calling has not. Today, we do not put on armor made by fire and forge, but we are still called to put on the armor of Christ.

We are called, as St. Paul tells us, to stand firm, with integrity as a breastplate, carrying the shield of faith, wearing salvation as a helmet, and carrying the Word of God as a sword.

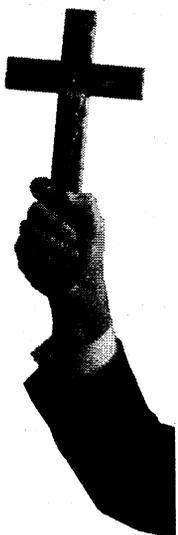
Our Church is still in need of men dedicated to this mission, men willing to be the strong right arm of the Church.

The Knights of Columbus is a brotherhood in service to the Catholic Church, bound together by our principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. For Knights of Columbus, these principles find their origin and meaning in the Holy Eucharist. United to Christ in the Eucharist, we go forth seeing Christ in each other and in those we serve.

Listen now to the lesson on Charity.

The Presiding Officer is seated and the Presenter on Charity assumes the podium.

Lesson on Charity



Presenter on Charity – Gentlemen, the first and foremost principle of our Order is Charity, the greatest of all virtues and the crowning glory of a Christian life.

But the true meaning of charity is often lost today. It is not merely a feeling, nor is it solely a gift of time, talent or treasure. It is more than almsgiving. It is more than good works.

Presenter on Charity raises a crucifix while reading these lines:

The greatest act of charity the world has ever known is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who freely and willingly offered Himself for us on the Cross. Christ's redeeming love is the true measure of charity. Charity is a heart

that sees Christ in our neighbor. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can, like Christ, make a sincere gift of ourselves to others.

Presenter on Charity lowers crucifix.

Charity is the virtue that gave rise to chivalry. It is the essence of knighthood. A Christian knight without charity was regarded as unworthy of his high calling.

Charity is that priceless gift placed by God in the human soul to measure man's allegiance to his Creator. Charity is a duty, not a courtesy. It is an obligation imposed by Heaven upon rich and poor alike.

Charity moves the heart to comfort and console, advise and instruct, bear and forgive. In God and with God, we love even those we do not know. This is the charity that evangelizes. This is the charity that gladdens the heart.

The Presenter on Charity is seated and the Presiding Officer assumes the podium.

Presiding Officer – Charity is our authentic witness to God through our good works. Charity is stronger and a greater service to the community when we are united.

Listen now to the lesson on Unity.

The Presiding Officer is seated and the Presenter on Unity assumes the podium.

Lesson on Unity

Presenter on Unity – Gentlemen, to be a Knight of Columbus means that you possess unity in purpose and unity in action, which come from our shared Catholic faith and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

It is appropriate that Unity follow our first principle of Charity, as charity binds together everything in perfect harmony.

The unity of our Order is founded in the sacred unity of our Church, which arises from the unity of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our unity expresses our belief in one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, and one God and Father of us all.

The principle of Unity is first experienced at home. Marriage is a unique and irreplaceable sign of God's love for His Church. The faithfulness and fruitfulness of married love is the foundation of the family. And the Christian family is an icon of the loving communion within the Blessed Trinity.

Brother Knights and their families encourage one another to establish loving homes that cultivate virtue and holiness. In a divided world, where many find it difficult to truly encounter God, Knights of Columbus families live their faith, fulfill their mission, and evangelize the world.

History offers countless examples of small groups of men who surmounted overwhelming odds because they were joined together by a common purpose. It is not on the size of the army that victory depends, since our strength comes from Heaven.

Christ calls us to unity with Him and with each other. To increase unity in our Church and our families is one of the great missions of the Knights of Columbus. Our Order prays and works to bring about the unity Our Lord wills for his Church and for our families.

When we stand united, our Order is a force for the defense of our faith, our families, and one another.

Jesus told his disciples: "Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. ... Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."¹

¹ Jn 15:4-5

Now, we will impress upon you the strength men possess when united in pursuit of a common purpose.

Candidates, please stand.

Warden, distribute the fibers to the candidates.

The Warden gives each candidate a piece of fiber (string).

Please turn and face the audience.

The candidates turn to face the audience.

Gentlemen, break the fiber.

The candidates break the fibers.

Please be seated.

The candidates are seated.

Now observe: when individual fibers are bound together, they become a strong cable.

The Warden pulls on the cable thrice to demonstrate its strength.

As the fibers are to the cable, so are you to our Order. The strength of any cable depends upon the quality of the fibers, and their perfect union.

Dedicated to the principle of Unity, we pray with Our Lord that his followers “may all be one.”

The Presenter on Unity is seated and the Presiding Officer assumes the podium.

Presiding Officer – Long ago, Father McGivney proposed an ideal model of unity for the Catholic men of his parish. He envisioned a fraternal brotherhood — Catholic men supporting each other and their families, united in Christ and building up His body. His vision continues today as his Order works to strengthen Catholic families and parishes.

Listen now to the lesson on Fraternity.

The Presiding Officer is seated and the Presenter on Fraternity assumes the podium.

Lesson on Fraternity

Presenter on Fraternity – Gentlemen, a Knight of Columbus is a man of integrity. He takes responsibility for his actions. He is also a man for others. He guards and protects those under his care. He stands united with his brothers and with them he puts his faith into action.

A Knight of Columbus is called to fraternal charity with his brother Knights. And he is called to a fraternal unity with them. Psalm 133 proclaims, “How good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together as one!”²

United by Baptism and the Eucharist, Knights of Columbus stand ready as brothers to bear one another’s burdens. Where there is a spiritual or material need, we assist one another by prayer, counsel and practical support.

Our Lord calls us to live in fraternal communion, and to encourage one another.

We follow the counsel of St. John the Evangelist, who told us: “Whoever does not love a brother whom **he has seen** cannot love God whom **he has not seen**. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”³

Our bond of Fraternity is not merely a lofty principle. It is the way of life of a steadfast Knight of Columbus strengthened by the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of every Knights of Columbus council to be an exemplary model of Catholic fraternity.

In times past, a candidate for knighthood spent the eve of his knighting in a church, upon his knees, placing his sword and shield before the altar of the King of Kings, his Lord and God.

Today, Knights of Columbus continue to serve this same king — Christ the King, truly present in the Eucharist.

While founded as an organization of Catholic laymen, our Order has always had a special relationship with our priests. We owe our very existence to the vision and determination of one parish priest, Blessed Michael McGivney, whose heroic virtue continues to inspire us today.

² Psalm 133:1

³ 1 Jn 4:20-21

The Knights of Columbus was, is, and always shall be a brotherhood in solidarity with our priests whose ministry makes Christ present to us in the Eucharist.

The Presenter on Fraternity is seated and the Presiding Officer assumes the podium.

Presiding Officer – You have heard that the virtue of Charity is the guiding principle of our Order. You have heard that there is strength when men work in Unity for a common cause. You have heard that Fraternity is an abiding fellowship with Christ and with your brother Knights.

As Catholics, we know that death does not have the final word! Our fraternal greeting is “*Vivat Jesus!*” which means “May Jesus Live!” With this greeting we recognize one another as brother Knights and we profess the hope by which we are saved.

Pause.

Presiding Officer – The perpetual watchword of our Order is “*Tempus Fugit. Memento Mori.*” which means “Time flies. Remember death.” We must remain vigilant, for we know not the day, nor the hour, when we will be called to give an account of our life. We must prepare for our death spiritually. And it is our duty to protect those who have been entrusted to our care by God — to be good stewards and to safeguard their future. The financial protection of our families remains fundamental to Father McGivney’s vision and the mission of the Knights of Columbus.

Promises

Presiding Officer – To profess your commitment to our principles, I now ask our candidates and all the brother Knights here present to rise.

Candidates and all brother Knights stand.

Candidates and brother Knights, raise your right hand and respond “I do” to the following questions.

Candidates and all brother Knights raise their right hands.

Presiding Officer – Do you promise to conduct yourself as a Catholic gentleman, and to live your life guided by the principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity?

Gentlemen – I do.

Presiding Officer – As a practical Catholic, do you promise to continue to form yourself in the Catholic Faith, to live in accord with the Precepts of the Catholic Church, and to participate in its sacramental life, especially through attendance at Sunday Mass?

Gentlemen – I do.

Presiding Officer – Do you promise to promote the well-being of your brother Knights, and to support the mission and activities of your council?

Gentlemen – I do.

Presiding Officer – Having reviewed and signed the Constitutional Roll, do you promise to obey the laws, rules and lawful authority of the Order?

Gentlemen – I do.

Presiding Officer – Gentlemen, your promises are hereby accepted. Please lower your hand and be seated.

Let us now invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Presiding Officer is seated and the Presenter on Charity assumes the podium.

Discourse on the Rosary

Presenter on Charity – As Knights of Columbus, we turn always to the gentle and glorious Virgin Mary, our Queen and our Mother. The Order is entrusted to the protection of the Blessed Mother under her title: Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Mary's love encircles us, drawing us closer to her Divine Son. Under the mantle of her protection, we take up her Holy Rosary.

Presenter raises aloft a rosary and holds it through the following invocations.

Mary, Mother of God, with her Knights,
for the sanctity of human life in all stages.
Mary, heart of the Holy Family, with her Knights,
for faithful marriages and joyful families.
Mary, the Immaculate Conception, with her Knights,
for decency and purity in our world.
Mary, to whom her Son would refuse nothing, with her Knights,
for justice and compassion for the downtrodden
and all those who suffer.
Her Holy Rosary in our hands going where we go.
The salutation "Hail Mary" on our lips.
What challenge can we not face?
What victories can we not achieve?

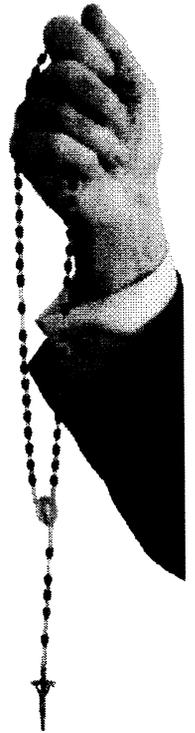
Presenter on Charity lowers the rosary and returns to his seat. The Presiding Officer assumes the podium.

Presiding Officer – I invite our *[Investing Officer(s)]* forward to invest you with a Rosary and the Emblem of the Order.

The Investing Officer(s) enters the sanctuary, bows to the altar and steps to a side table where the rosaries and lapel pins are placed.

The Warden will now escort the candidates forward.

The Warden brings the candidates forward and arranges them around the perimeter of the Sanctuary. The Investing Officer(s) and candidates bow to the altar.



Presiding Officer – Gentlemen, please present your hands [*he demonstrates*] joined as if in prayer, and turn to face the audience to receive the Rosary of Mary our Queen.

The candidates turn to receive the rosaries and lapel pins.

Invest each candidate with a rosary, using these words.

Investing Officer(s) – *Carry it always and pray it as often as you can.*

Presiding Officer – Gentlemen, you will now receive the Emblem of the Order.

Present each candidate with a lapel pin, using these words.

Investing Officer(s) – *Wear it always with pride, dignity, and honor.*

Presiding Officer – My Brother Knights: we welcome you as Third Degree members of our Order, with all the responsibilities, rights and privileges accruing thereto.

You may place your rosary in your pocket and return to your seat.

The Warden leads the newly invested Knights back to their places.

Presiding Officer – Brother Knights, remember that the saints did not conquer nations by the sword but by prayer and good works. Members of our Order have been raised to the honors of the altar as saints and blessed. The world continues to need saints.

And the Knights of Columbus offers each of us, today, the opportunity to live a life of heroic virtue, through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Presiding Officer – We have witnessed the promises you have made here today. Let them challenge you to live your life from this day forward holding fast to our principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity, so that on the last day your souls, filled with happiness, may enjoy the reward of a life well spent – an eternity in the presence of God Himself.

Everyone please stand for the Closing Prayer.

The Presiding Officer invites the Council Chaplain or another priest to lead the prayer, if present, otherwise the Presiding Officer leads the prayer himself.

Closing Prayer

Chaplain – The prayer for the canonization of Blessed Michael McGivney speaks to our mission as Knights of Columbus.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Blessed Michael McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor.

Through the example of his life and virtue, may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church.

Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify Blessed Michael McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will.

Through his intercession, grant the favor I now present [*here make your request*]. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

If a priest is present, he gives a final blessing:

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

In the absence of a priest, the Presiding Officer concludes:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Presiding Officer – Please join me in congratulating our newly invested Third Degree Knights of Columbus with a round of applause.

Leads applause.

Presiding Officer refers to next page for instructions on closing remarks.

Closing Remarks

At this point the ceremony is complete. Guests and members should be excited about the lessons learned and the significant commitments made by the new Knights. You should quickly enhance their new fraternal spirit by socializing with them and their families. So, keep the closing remarks brief and limited to the following key points:

- 1. The Presiding Officer should introduce the host Grand Knight.**
- 2. The host Grand Knight should:**
 - Congratulate the new members.

- Thank the team members and Chaplain / Pastor.
- Encourage the new members and their families to get involved in council activities at every opportunity.
- Mention the Honoree for the Exemplification.
- Invite everyone to the dinner or reception or other post ceremony event.
- Introduce the highest-ranking Officer present. If no one is present, cover their talking points.

3. The highest-ranking officer should:

- Congratulate the new members.
- Encourage the new members and their families to evangelize the faith through actions of service with their councils.
- Stress the importance for Knights of Columbus to be parish leaders in the support of our Church, particularly in efforts to evangelize our faith.
- Encourage the new members to advance to the Fourth Degree.

4. The Grand Knight should introduce the Chaplain or Pastor.

- Ask him for closing comments and to bless the meal, if applicable.

5. The Grand Knight should conclude the event.

- Announce that the formal ceremony is concluded. Then invite members and guests to personally congratulate the new Knights and enjoy the reception.