

# PROTOCOL HANDBOOK



**KNIGHTS**  
**OF COLUMBUS**  
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## **PROTOCOL**

By definition, protocol is the rigid code setting forth the degree of obedience, the order of precedence, and the rules of official and social behavior. We can add further that it covers anything that is proper and in good taste.

It would be impossible to cite every rule governing every situation. The following suggestions are rather common and basic. Always apply formal courtesy and you will never go wrong in those situations not covered in this booklet.

We should always display proper consideration for the office represented by the person. In no way should we let dislike for a person influence our respect for the office he holds.

## **COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY MEETINGS**

The grand knight and faithful navigator must conduct their meetings in strict accordance with the Charter, Constitution and Laws of the Knights of Columbus, supplemented by the council or assembly by-laws and according to parliamentary procedure. The standard reference on the subject of procedure is "*Robert's Rules of Order*," available from a local library or bookstore and from the Supreme Supply Department. The order of business for conducting a council or assembly meeting is outlined in the "The Method of Conduct of a Council Meeting" (#1937) and "Ceremonial for Conducting an Assembly Meeting" (#2066), available from the Supreme Council Supply Department. In addition to learning these rules and following them scrupulously, the presiding officer must control the meeting politely but firmly, so that it does not get out of hand through unnecessary arguments or unpleasant wrangling. The presiding officer should prevent any sidebar discussions which cause the meeting to wander from the business of the day.

When a member wishes to speak, he does so by rising from his seat, addressing the chair by saying "Worthy Grand Knight" or "Worthy Faithful Navigator" and saluting at the same time. The presiding officer will return the salute and acknowledge the member.

The presiding officer should at all times refer to and address his officers by their proper title. He is thus setting a good example for all

members to follow.

All members who are not officers should be recognized by name as “Brother . . . . .” or “Sir Knight . . . . .” All questions or comments must be directed to the chair (the presiding officer), for example: “Worthy Grand Knight or Worthy Faithful Navigator may I ask the previous speaker to explain. . . .”

The presiding officer always speaks in the third person such as “The chair rules that . . . .” or “Your Grand Knight or Faithful Navigator reports that . . . .”

Members should speak of the chair in the third person: “Worthy Grand Knight or Faithful Navigator will the chair please explain the effect of the pending motion?”

### **DIGNITARIES AT MEETINGS**

When state officers, district masters, district deputies, priests or special guests are present at a meeting they should be accorded due recognition for the office or position they hold. They should always be seated in a place of honor.

If a state officer, district master, district deputy, priest or special guest should arrive while a meeting is in progress; the presiding officer raps the gavel three times for all to stand and instructs the warden to escort the guest to the station of the presiding officer. He will then occupy a seat of honor.

However, a state officer, vice supreme master or district master or district deputy, when present at his home council or assembly, need not be specifically recognized unless he has been invited to attend in his official capacity or requests to be so recognized. This will allow the officer to engage in the regular business of his home council without involving the position he holds.

When a general agent or field agent of the Order’s insurance program is present at a meeting he should be treated as a guest. He should be seated and introduced with the dignitaries.

# COUNCIL MEETING CHAMBER SETUP

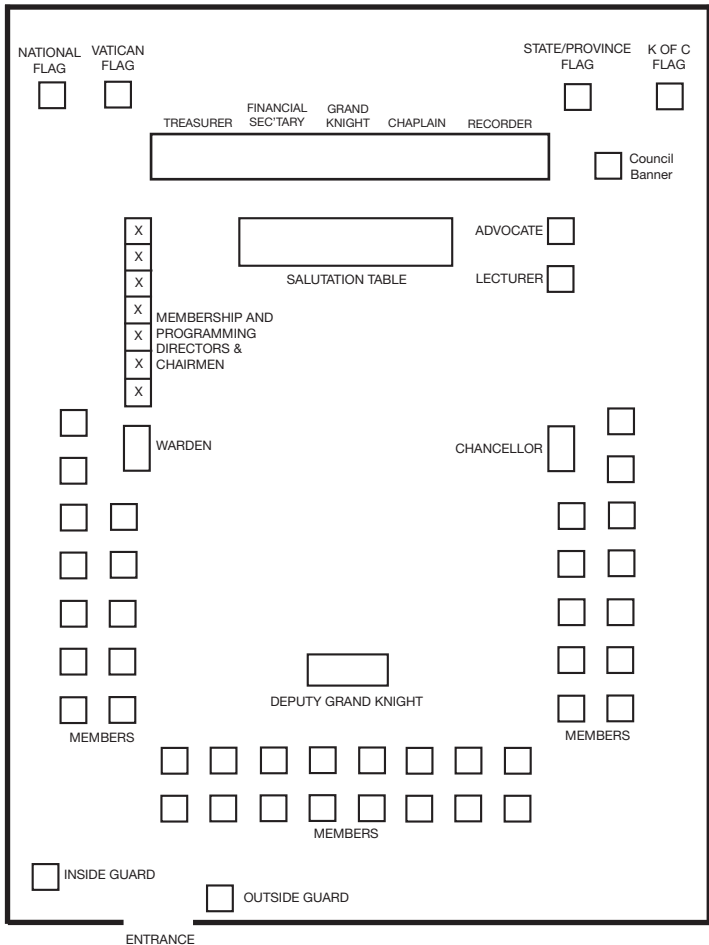


Figure 1

## ASSEMBLY MEETING CHAMBER SETUP

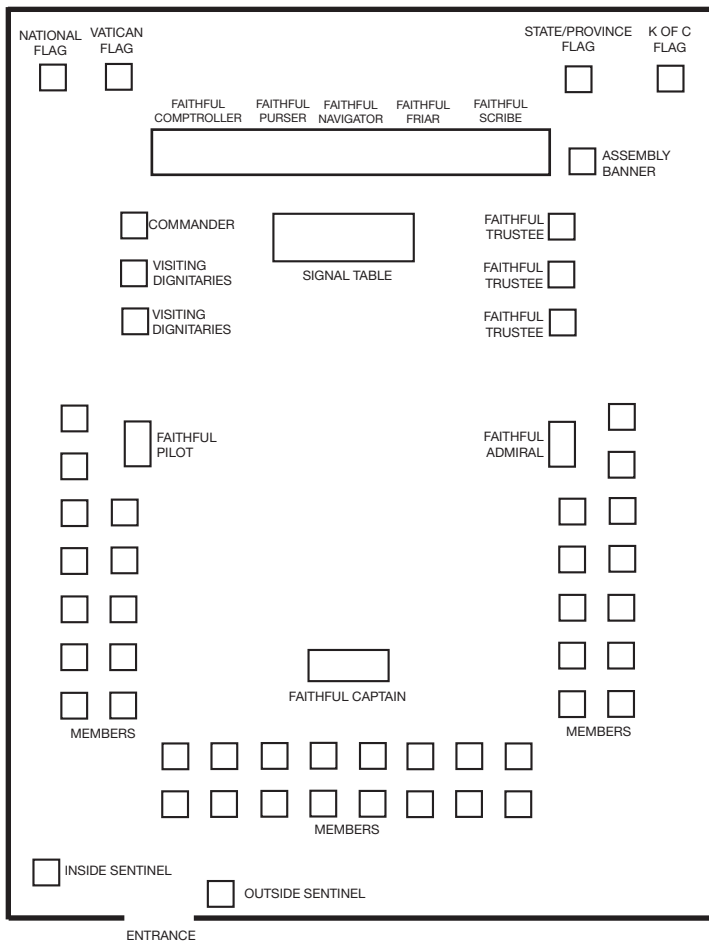


Figure 2

## **DRESS FOR MEETINGS**

The presiding officer, in keeping with the dignity of his office, should be neatly and properly dressed. He should request that his officers do likewise to set the proper dress code for the membership to follow.

## **AFTER THE MEETING**

All council or assembly officers should avail themselves of some form of identifying tag or name plate. The officers should mingle with the members before and after the meeting. Every effort should be made to visit with those who have not attended meetings for some time. In addition, new members and those who seem to feel uneasy should be approached by the officers and made to feel at home and welcomed. The membership will then follow the leaders' example.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DISTRICT DEPUTY AND THE GRAND KNIGHT**

District deputies are the personal representatives of the supreme knight and the state deputy, and as such, the grand knights and council officers should familiarize themselves with the respect due to the important position the district deputy holds. District deputies should be neatly and properly dressed when attending meetings or functions. When a district deputy visits a council or attends a function in his district, he should always be seated in front, near the grand knight.

The district deputy should notify the grand knights of his councils in writing and in advance (one week to ten days) when making an official visit so that all officers will be present with their books and records.

District deputies should instruct the grand knight and warden, if necessary, on proper chamber setup for council meetings. The district deputy may also need to advise officers on the proper protocol for members during meetings.

The district deputy should always be called upon to speak and all members should rise when he is introduced.



## CORRESPONDENCE

There are several types of correspondence today: letters, memorandums, e-mails and bulletins or newsletters.

Letters should be typed, when possible, on letterhead stationery. Official correspondence should include the council name, address, with the proper zip or postal code. The council name, number and location and telephone number should be shown in the heading.

If the writer of the letter wishes to present several different subjects, he should deal with them in a general manner in a covering letter and provide full details on separate enclosures. The council's full name and address as well as that of the correspondent should appear on each enclosure. This procedure permits the recipient of the letter to forward the enclosures to the different departments or individuals who handle details of the topics under discussion.

Memos should be typed whenever possible. If handwritten, care should be taken that they are legible to the reader. A memo should deal with only one subject. It should be short, specific and informal.

E-mails need to be handled with care. Officers need to make certain that their e-mail address is appropriate along with the content contained within the e-mail. Sending an e-mail does not ensure delivery to the intended recipient. E-mail is cost effective and can be an easy way for councils or assemblies to communicate, but it is not a guarantee of participation at an event. E-mails, as with letters, need to be clearly stated and have the main points separated. Make certain that e-mails that contain confidential information are not broadcast to a large group. E-mails, though cost effective, cannot replace the personal contact of a phone call or personal conversation.

Modern means of social communications provide members of the Knights of Columbus with powerful tools that can build up the Order by promoting its charitable mission and by encouraging members to live out their Catholic faith. The term "social communications" refers to, among other things, the internet, the World Wide Web, and social media. The term "social media" includes blogs and microblogs, social networking sites, and picture and video sharing sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube.

Social communications should be used in a manner consistent with Catholic values and principles of the Order. Members who use social communications should carefully review and at all times observe the Order's Social Communications Guidelines and Policy, which can be found under the Social Communications tab on the Officer's Desk Reference located at Officer's Online at [www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org). The Guidelines and Policy apply to members and subordinate units of the Order when they choose to identify themselves as members of the Knights of Columbus or to discuss the work of the Knights of Columbus using social communications. Members should be aware that the Laws and official policies of the Knights of Columbus apply to fraternal social communications as they would in any other setting. The reputation of the Order depends upon how members conduct themselves, both online and in person. Accordingly, members using social communications should remember that they are expected to conduct themselves as Catholic gentlemen, which at a minimum requires that any material posted online respects human dignity and maintains a culture of respectful dialogue and friendship.

Bulletins deal with many subjects. Each subject should be separated into a paragraph. Enclosures are used when the specific matter referred to is sufficiently important to warrant additional explanation.

Correspondence should be addressed to the individual, using his full, proper name (not his nickname), followed by his proper title, whether he be a Knight of Columbus, a priest or a businessman. If an individual has more than one title, the highest ranking title is always used. Names of civic and religious individuals are prefixed by such forms as: *His Excellency*, *The Honorable*, *Reverend Father*, etc. Prefix titles of Mr., and Mrs. or Ms. are omitted when the individual has another official title. If he has no title, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Ms.* should always be used as a prefix to his or her name. When addressing an individual as an official of an organization, the name of the organization should always be shown on the next line. For example:

*His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl*

*Archbishop of Washington*

*PO Box 29260*

*Washington, DC 20017-0260*

The salutation in this case would be “Your Eminence.”

If writing to an archbishop or bishop then the letter would be addressed to:

*Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair*

*Archbishop of Hartford*

The salutation would then be “Your Excellency.”

Still another example of addressing correspondence in the proper manner is:

*Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight*

*Knights of Columbus*

*1 Columbus Plaza*

*New Haven, Connecticut 06510-3326*

The salutation in this case would be “Worthy Supreme Knight.”

In the event that you have a close working relationship with any officer, your letter need not be so formal. However you first must acknowledge the office he holds. The salutation would then be “Worthy Grand Knight and dear Brother Bill.”

The individual’s full proper name and title are always shown on both the letter and the envelope.

## **INVITATIONS**

Guests should be sent proper invitations in writing well in advance. Invitations should be mailed at least six weeks before an event. This will afford him ample time to respond to the invitation.

All invitations should be sent in the name of and signed by the grand knight or faithful navigator, although he may request that replies be directed to a chairman or committee member. The district deputy, as the special representative of the supreme knight and the state deputy, should be invited to special council or assembly functions. It should be understood that his schedule may not permit him to attend every affair, in which case he would respond in ample time.

Never give a blanket invitation to anyone. Always send each guest a personal invitation. If tickets are being used for a function, they should be forwarded, suitably marked, along with the invitation.

Invitations should be in the form of a letter when addressed to a specific person. Printed cards or general invitation notices may be used if the occasion warrants. A bulletin or flyer may be enclosed with the invitation if it gives more detailed information. It should not be used in lieu of an invitation. Such bulletins should never show the name of the person invited unless he has agreed to be present.

When an invitation is extended to anyone it should contain all details such as dress, extent of participation, etc. It is embarrassing for a guest to appear and find that he is the only one at the head table not in a tuxedo, or the only one present wearing one.

### **STATE DEPUTY OR HIGH RANKING OFFICER VISIT**

When the state deputy, district master or other high ranking officer is scheduled to attend a council or assembly function, always be sure that he is advised of the date, time, place, purpose, type of affair, and other individuals on the program — including their function, and other pertinent data.

If women are to be present, the state deputy's wife should be invited. Advise her of the appropriate dress for the occasion and arrange for a ladies' committee to greet and welcome her.

Always advise the state deputy and head table guests of the proper dress for the affair.

Offer to arrange hotel facilities for the state deputy or inform the State Deputy or guest of most convenient hotel accommodations. Determine his time of arrival and arrange to greet him. If the affair is not a banquet, arrange for someone to offer to take the state deputy or high-ranking officer to dinner. Arrangements also should be made for travel to the site of the affair and return to the hotel.

On arrival at the site of the affair, the grand knight or faithful navigator and his committee should again greet the high-ranking officer. He should be properly introduced to the other dignitaries in

attendance. The committee should attend to all of the state deputy's needs and comforts.

In recognition of his high office, special appreciation should always be expressed to him thanking him for his visit to the function.

Arrange proper speaking facilities, including podium, podium light and microphone.

The state deputy is the highest elected official in the jurisdiction and proper attention must be given to seating arrangements. Other high ranking officers need to be seated according to protocol.

If there is additional entertainment after the banquet, a special table for the high-ranking officers should be arranged so that they will be with the grand knight or faithful navigator and other dignitaries.

The master of ceremonies should be provided with a resume of the state deputy and other head table guests so that he can make proper introductions. If glossy photographs are required for publicity purposes, they should be requested directly from the guest.

If some other high-ranking official, not a Knights of Columbus member or member of a different council, is invited to attend a council or assembly function, the sponsoring organization should extend the same courtesies as those suggested for use with the state deputy and high-ranking officers of the Order.

## **GREETING YOUR GUESTS**

All guests should be greeted by the grand knight or faithful navigator. The grand knight or faithful navigator should be assisted by a committee whose function would be to care for the guests' coats, to introduce them to others in attendance and to answer any questions they may have.

Guests should not be left talking among themselves. They usually do not know many of your council members, and therefore should not be left alone for any period of time. Various persons should be alerted to converse with and keep company with guests during their visit (*not necessarily the same person or persons for the entire visit*).

## INTRODUCTIONS

Many if not most introductions involve people of unequal or different status or position. They can differ in rank, in age or in sex, but the result is the same: an introduction usually consists of presenting one person of lesser importance or status to another of greater importance or status.

In introducing a group of people to an individual, avoid running through all the names without a break. It is better to introduce two or three people at a time, so that names can register properly. This is where use of name tags is most effective.

A form of acknowledgement used chiefly when meeting a group is repeating the name of the person to whom you have just been introduced.

Before introducing dignitaries at the head table, be certain names are spelled correctly and proper titles are used. It is a good idea to check the pronunciation of any names to be announced. The order of rank should be observed meticulously. A person who has been elected but has not yet taken office is called by the title of that office with — “elect” after the title. A monsignor is not addressed as “Father” and a state officer is not addressed as “Brother.” Remember, if you don’t announce the name and title to the gathering, how can they be expected to know who the person is?

## SPEAKERS AND SPEECHES

Whoever sets up the program should decide in advance who he wants as speakers and the length of the speech desired. He should give ample notice to those selected that they are expected to speak. He should never ask an invited guest to speak unless the person has been forewarned. Nor should he ever ask a guest at an affair if he wants to speak. So many times a grand knight or master of ceremonies will approach a guest during the program and ask if he wants to speak, giving the impression that they would prefer he did not. There should be only one main speaker — normally the last speaker on the program. Remarks from others should be limited to two minutes each.

The state deputy or his official representative whether a current state officer, past state deputy or district deputy should always be given

an opportunity to speak whenever he appears in an official capacity at a function or meeting. The same scenario applies in the Fourth Degree for the district master, but in all cases the state deputy is accorded the use of the floor. When several are present it might be necessary to call on the senior ranking officer to speak. In any case, all should be recognized and accorded proper respect.

A general agent or field agent also should be accorded the opportunity to speak, particularly when he is present at official meetings of the state or a local council. If several general agents are present, one should be invited to speak for the group.

The main etiquette problem posed by councils is that of handling speakers and speeches. When the speaker is not a member of the Knights of Columbus or a personal friend, the chairman owes it to him to:

1. Give complete information about his audience so he will not produce boredom and embarrassment all around with an inappropriate speech.
2. Give him a definite time limit well ahead of the occasion so he can prepare the speech accordingly. Just before he begins to speak, arrange a mutually agreeable signal to tell him he has, for example, three minutes left to talk.
3. Provide adequate acoustical facilities and, if possible, give the speaker the choice of whether or not he wishes to use a microphone.
4. Show interest in the speaker before and after the speech-making. Bring members to him for introductions instead of circulating the speaker around the room. Center the conversation on the guest, not around council affairs he has little interest in. Help to reassure both the best and worst speaker alike as to the effectiveness of his speech. Introduce a speaker briefly, with only enough biographical material to establish him as an authority on his subject. Elaborate introductions deny their content. Remember: it takes only one line to introduce the President of the United States.
5. If the speaker is a woman or if the main speaker's wife attends, she usually is presented with flowers.

6. Thank the speaker at least three times:
  - a. In public from the podium.
  - b. In private before his departure.
  - c. In a letter from the council the following day.
7. Presiding officers and masters of ceremonies should familiarize themselves with Knights of Columbus titles and protocol.
8. Appropriate salutation to those present should always be used before speaking.
9. Jokes or comments that relate to ethnic groups must never be used.

### **HEAD TABLE**

At any gathering of the Knights of Columbus, the cardinals, bishops, priests, religious brothers, supreme officers, supreme directors, state officers, state directors and chairmen, district deputies, general agents, vice supreme masters, masters, faithful navigators and visiting grand knights always are honored guests and as such should occupy a seat of honor. *(Sometimes because of the large number of dignitaries in attendance it is impossible to seat everyone at the head table. In cases such as this, only the top ranking officials should be seated at the head table. Other dignitaries should sit at designated seats in the audience and should be introduced at an appropriate time by the master of ceremonies.)*

Seating is arranged by rank from the middle out to either end — with the highest ranking official seated at the middle of the head table. Guests are introduced from the master of ceremonies right toward the middle, then from left toward the middle, excluding speaking members of the head table. All should rise when said members enter and remain standing until they are seated.

### **PROCESSION**

In general, in all cases the wishes of the celebrant are to be followed. Knights of Columbus are first to enter the church in a liturgical celebration, and follow the celebrant out of the church. The



order of precedence for Knights of Columbus processional into the church is from lowest rank to highest. The highest ranking would be first to follow the celebrant out of church and would follow the “Order of Precedence” listed on the following page. The color corps when used at the celebration of Mass or a Knights of Columbus function is to be lead into the church by the district marshal or color corps commander and followed by the highest ranking in colors.

### **COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY DEGREE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE**

Below is the priority seating arrangement for the head table at a Third Degree or Fourth Degree function, not attired in Fourth Degree color corps regalia. (See Figure 3.)

#### **COUNCIL**

1. SUPREME KNIGHT
2. STATE DEPUTY
3. SUPREME OFFICERS
4. SUPREME MASTER
5. SUPREME DIRECTORS
6. FORMER SUPREME OFFICERS & DIRECTORS
7. VICE-SUPREME MASTER
8. **STATE OFFICERS\***
9. **DISTRICT MASTER\***
10. PAST STATE DEPUTIES
11. FORMER VICE SUPREME MASTERS
12. **DISTRICT DEPUTIES\***
13. **FORMER MASTERS\***
14. STATE DIRECTORS
15. GENERAL AGENTS
16. CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

17. GRAND KNIGHTS
18. DISTRICT MARSHAL
19. FAITHFUL NAVIGATORS
20. COUNCIL OFFICERS
21. ASSEMBLY OFFICERS
22. DISTRICT WARDEN
23. FIELD AGENT

### **ASSEMBLY**

1. SUPREME KNIGHT
2. STATE DEPUTY
3. SUPREME OFFICERS
4. SUPREME MASTER
5. SUPREME DIRECTORS
6. FORMER SUPREME OFFICERS & DIRECTORS
7. VICE-SUPREME MASTER
8. **DISTRICT MASTER\***
9. **STATE OFFICERS\***
10. PAST STATE DEPUTIES
11. FORMER VICE SUPREME MASTERS
12. **FORMER MASTERS\***
13. **DISTRICT DEPUTIES\***
14. STATE DIRECTORS
15. GENERAL AGENTS
16. CHAPTER PRESIDENTS
17. GRAND KNIGHTS
18. DISTRICT MARSHAL
19. FAITHFUL NAVIGATORS

20. COUNCIL OFFICERS
21. ASSEMBLY OFFICERS
22. DISTRICT WARDEN
23. FIELD AGENT

*(\* At a Fourth Degree function, the district master and state officers, former masters and district deputies exchange positions.)*

For speaking programs, guests are introduced from lowest rank up to the main speaker of the occasion. A person of junior rank should never speak after someone with a higher office unless he has been selected specifically as the speaker for the occasion. Persons introduced from the audience should be ranked from top down as opposed to speakers who appear from the lowest up.

When more than one priest is present and a speaker does not wish to mention each by name he should say: "Reverend Monsignors and Fathers." One should never use "Reverend Clergy" unless clergymen from other faiths are present. At cooperative affairs, officers of other organizations should be seated by Knights of Columbus officers of equal rank and introduced at the same time.

### **PROTOCOL FOR HEAD TABLE SEATING**

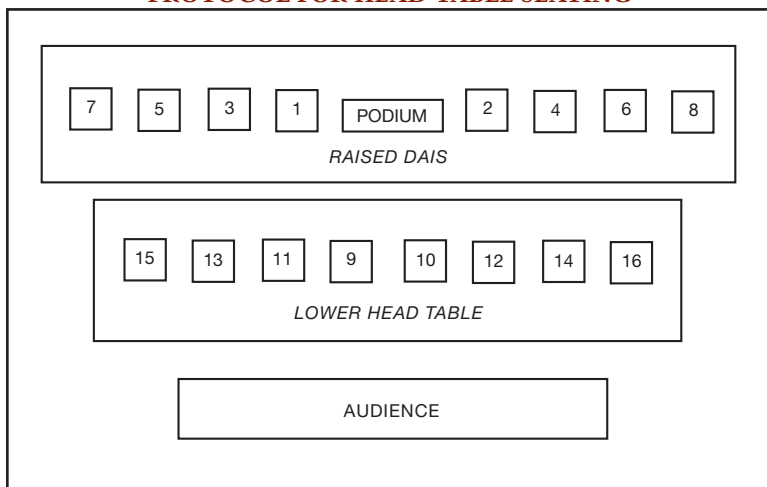


Figure 3

The principal speaker or ranking person present should be seated in position #1. The master of ceremonies, if he is the presiding officer, is seated at position #2. If the presiding officer is not the master of ceremonies he is then seated in position #3. Seating should then continue with the next ranking person down through the order of rank. Wives should always be seated with their husbands where possible.

The same scenario is applied to the lower head table beginning with position #9 and so on. Never place a lady or a priest on the end of the head table!!

## **FLAGS**

For all questions regarding the use of the national flag or for flag etiquette refer to the "Knights of Columbus United States Flag Manual," (#4686) which will serve as a uniform guide, and is available from the Supreme Supply Department. This information is based on the United State Flag Manual and is thought to be the generally accepted custom in our countries of operation. If not, proper flag protocol and etiquette of that particular country is to be observed.

All council and assembly officers and especially the council warden and the assembly faithful pilot are charged with the responsibility of being well versed on flag protocol and etiquette.

Your country's flag may be displayed flat, above and behind the speaker. When the flag is displayed on a staff it should always be at the right side of the speaker as he faces the audience. Other flags should be at the speaker's left. (See Figure 4). The flag should not cover a speaker's desk nor be draped in front of a platform.

The correct placement of the colors is as listed below. Please note: the flags may be on the raised dais or on the ground level. In all cases the national flag is on the speaker's right as he faces the audience. One, two, three, four or more flags may be used. The order is always the same with the national flag on the right as it faces the audience.

## HEAD TABLE FLAG ARRANGEMENT

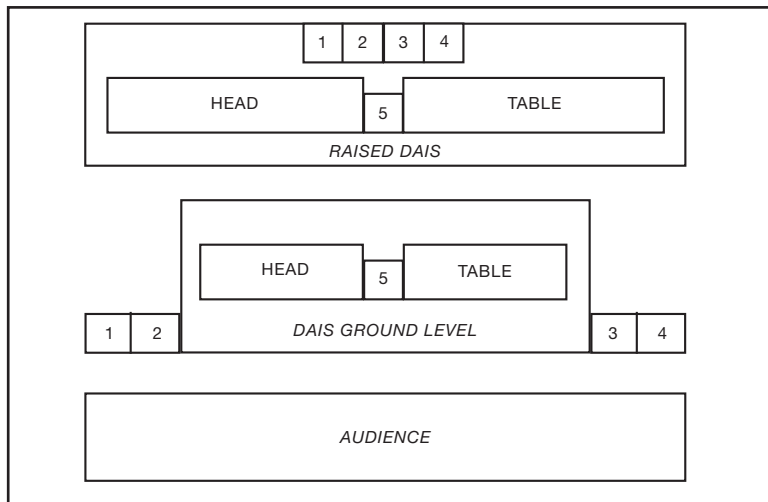


Figure 4

1. National Flag
2. Vatican (or Papal) Flag
3. State or Provincial Flag
4. Knights of Columbus Flag
5. Podium

## JEWELS OF OFFICE

Official Jewels of Office are available from the Supreme Council Supply Department and shown each year in the "Promotional and Gift Items" catalog (#1427). All council and assembly officers should wear their current jewel of office at all meetings and official functions of the Order. At council functions and socials, it is proper and fitting that Third and Fourth degree officers wear their jewel of office.

When a Fourth Degree member attends an official function of

the Order where Fourth Degree dress is requested, he may wear the jewel of his current office around his neck, be it an assembly or council jewel, together with the social baldric.

### **MINIATURE PAST AND FORMER JEWELS**

A past state deputy, former supreme director, former vice supreme master, former district master, and former district deputy, past grand knight, or past faithful navigator is authorized to wear the miniature jewel of these previously held offices above the left breast pocket of his jacket.

The miniature jewels are to be worn so that the bottom of the jewel is just above the name badge when in the pocket. The miniature jewel is not to be worn on the jacket lapel.

The miniature jewels were approved by the board of directors on April 19, 1993 to allow those who have served the Knights of Columbus in a position of authority to wear the jewel that acknowledges their contribution, while at the same time giving due and proper respect to the current officers. The jewel representing the highest ranking office is positioned nearest the heart of the wearer. Any neck jewel from any source for past state deputy, former district deputy, past grand knight, past faithful navigator color corps commander or color corps is not authorized. Members entitled to wear more than one miniature jewel should purchase and utilize the ribbon bars listed in the Promotional and Gift Catalog (#1427).

The following are examples of the order of precedence of the miniature jewels, which always has the highest ranking jewel closest to the heart of the wearer.

PAST AND FORMER MINIATURE JEWELS  
THIRD AND FOURTH DEGREE COMBINATIONS



The priority of the past and former miniature jewels from highest to lowest is:

Former Supreme Director (not shown)

Past State Deputy

Former Vice Supreme Master

Former District Master

Former District Deputy

Past Grand Knight

Past Faithful Navigator

Orders of Papal Knighthood are permitted for wear due to their religious nature and the Order's solidarity with the Church. Papal medals permitted include but are not limited to Knight of the Holy Sepulcher, Knight of St. Gregory, Knight of St. Stephen.

Military medals, diocesan medals or awards, state council medals or medals of any other group, society or association are not permitted on Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree member or color corps regalia attire, unless expressly permitted in the Charter Constitution and By-Laws and the Laws of the Fourth Degree.

Past and former miniature jewels are listed in the Supply Catalog (#1264) and are available from the Supreme Council Supply Department, and also from the Official Suppliers. No other miniature jewels are allowed.

## **CONCLUSION**

As has been mentioned earlier, it is impossible to cite a rule for every situation. No doubt there will be times when the grand knight will encounter some rather difficult and even unique situations. Under those circumstances the grand knight must use his judgment and simply apply common courtesy.

Mark Twain summed up the situation when he said: "Always do right. You will please some people and astonish the rest."









