

Worthy Sir Knights:

As you well know, the Vice-Supreme Master has recently made a policy statement regarding the proper uniform for Fourth Degree events throughout the Calvert Province. I know this policy has caused a great deal of concern among our Assembly membership. Many of us do not agree with the policy as it is currently stated. Let me just say, that I too share this concern. However, during every one of our degree ceremonies we all have taken and repeatedly reaffirmed an oath of obedience to our superior officers. I, like you, take those oaths very seriously!

We find ourselves in a difficult quandary. As patriots, we feel strongly about the American Flag and we resist anyone telling us that we cannot wear it. On the other hand, we are loyal Sir Knights sworn to obey the instructions of those chosen to lead us. What are we to do?

First, allow me to share some background on this decision. In years past, various jurisdictions have taken the liberty to modify the official uniform within their jurisdiction. Some, added patches to their capes. Some wore non-standard colored capes or chapeaux. Others wore unapproved pins on their lapels and non-standard medals on their tuxedo jackets. This led to a distinct lack of being a uniformed honor guard. The matter came to the attention of the Supreme Knight at the Supreme Convention several years back. Comments were made that we didn't even look like we were one order!

The Supreme Master, after much consultation and discussion of the matter, issued a directive clarifying the wearing a lapel pins on the Fourth Degree uniform at Supreme events. That directive stated that at Supreme Assembly events, such as the Supreme convention, the emblem of the Fourth Degree and only the emblem of the Fourth Degree are to be worn. The purpose behind this decision is to reinforce our core virtue of unity. We are one Fourth Degree! Regardless of which nation we come from, we are one Color Corps! Later this directive was extended by our Vice-Supreme Master. He has clarified that within the Calvert Province this "One uniform for all," directive will be enforced. That means that at all Provincial, District and Assembly events, only the Fourth Degree pin is approved for use on the Fourth Degree uniform. As Master of the Maryland District, I am obliged to enforce this uniform directive.

To be clear, this is not an attack on the American Flag! Rather this is intended to address a previous lack of uniformity in our dress.

Again, I know how this decision strikes the emotional core of many Sir Knights here in the Maryland District. I fully understand the strong sentiments that have been shared with me. At our Biennial Meeting, we will have a chance to vote on a resolution that will give a united voice to this feeling and, if approved, call on the Supreme Assembly to clarify this uniform change and allow each nation to combine their national flag with the emblem of the order. This is the appropriate response to a decision with which we disagree. But, let's be clear, it is the Supreme Master's right and responsibility to make decisions such as these. It is further the right and responsibility of the delegated authorities, such as our Vice-Supreme Master to interpret and enforce these directives as he sees fit to do.

I want to caution every Sir Knight within the Maryland jurisdiction to remember our oaths, and our honor as Catholic gentlemen. We must remember that all Knights are our brothers and deserving of being treated with respect. Let us keep our discourse civil, our response lawful and our love universal.

I know I can count on each and every one of you, Worthy Sir Knights.

Vivat Jesus!

Tom Greul

Master, Maryland District.