

# Color Corps Protocol



## Prior Coordination

[Note: The protocols set forth for the Color Corps in this manual are strongly recommended. It is understood that some directives may change based on event available space and/or the liturgical procedures as set forth by the Ordinary of the Diocese.]

In all ceremonies, whether within a church, other buildings, or out-of-doors and when acting in conjunction with a group of the clergy, altar servers, societies, military units, or others, it is very important that the M.F.D. consult with the Ordinary of an Archdiocese or Diocese to clarify all of the procedures that are acceptable within that jurisdiction. At the local level, it is imperative that the C.C.C. or M. consult with the **celebrant or with those in charge of the other complements and act in conformity with them**. If a Master of Ceremonies or M. is in charge, his instructions shall be followed although it may mean deviating from the suggested procedures outlined herein.

## Silent Commands

Reference is made in this section to “visual commands.” Due to the necessity for silence, particularly during a drill participation in church, silent “cues” must be used by the C.C.C. or M. to instruct members and to give commands. The simplest method for those visual commands is for the C.C.C. or M. to step to a position where he is visible to all of the Sir Knights participating and give the cue for the order he wishes carried out. For example raise both hands, palm up, from the sides to order the Honor Guard to ***Stand***; place right hand on the grip of the sword to order “***DRAW***,” place right hand on the grip of the sword to order ***absolutely essential*** that ***practice with silent commands*** be conducted so all members of the guard will be familiar with the “cues” and the required responses.

## Liturgical Processions

The Fourth Degree Color Corps precedes the liturgical procession of the ordinarily functioning as liturgical ministers. The role of the Fourth Degree Honor Guard, then is simple and straightforward; it is a ceremonial honor guard. The ultimate goal is to “add dignity to the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and to display pride for the religious freedom, a gift from God bestowed upon our Church and country.”

At **major liturgical events**, the following protocol is to be followed by Color Corps, unless determined otherwise by either the Ordinary for all cases or the celebrant of the Mass for that particular case.

1. The Honor Guard precedes the liturgical procession, followed by the Cross and Candles, both to and from the sanctuary (i.e., at the processional and recessional).
2. The liturgical procession has its own principle of ordering the ministers from “lowest to highest.” This is not, however, the ordering principle of the Honor Guard. Rather, the Honor Guard orders itself from “highest to lowest” after the Master of the District and Marshal, (if present) Assembly Faithful Navigator and the Color Corp Commander who directs the guard.
3. Upon processing to the sanctuary, the members of the Honor Guard—ordered from highest to lowest—take their positions at the ends of the pews in order for the liturgical procession to pass through.
4. Upon receiving the command, the members of the Honor Guard either take their seats at the end of each pew (one man per pew), or process across the front of the Church and circle to the back.
5. At the time of Holy Communion, the members of the Honor Guard approach in the manner determined in the Color Corps Drill Manual.
6. At the recessional, and upon the appropriate signal, the Honor Guard either steps aside from the pews or approaches from the back of the Church to line the aisle. Upon the signal of the leader, the Honor Guard recesses from the Church in the usual manner, preceding the liturgical procession.
7. Should it be determined by the Ordinary or the celebrant, or if particular circumstances demand, that the honor Guard will not precede the liturgical procession in the recessional, the norms of the Color Corps Drill Manual will be followed.

## Processions

### A. Color Guard

1. The Color Guard consists of the Flag Bearer(s) and Flag Guard(s). In all cases when a C.G. is used it will lead the H.G. during both the processional and recessional. Care must be taken that the National

Flag is always on the marching right. When posted, the National Flag goes to the right of the celebrant and all other flags to his left as he faces the congregation.

2. A Color Guard (C.G.) is not required, but if used, it should consist of four to six Sir Knights in Color Corps regalia. Two Sir Knights are to carry the National Colors and the Papal Flag and the other two Sir Knights will be guards for the flag. All marching done by the flag guards will be in the “**Carry Sword**” position. Some assemblies carry four flags in the Color Guard; the two additional Sir Knights would carry these flags. After the Flags are posted the Color Guard (C.G.) will proceed to their pre-designated pews.

## **B. Order of Procession**

1. Knights of Columbus dignitaries and their spouses proceed through the Fourth Degree Honor Guard from the lowest-ranking official to the top-ranking official.
2. For a Knights of Columbus procession the suggested order of procession would be as follows:
  1. Field Agent(s)
  2. District Warden
  3. Assembly Officer(s)
  4. Council Officer(s)
  5. Faithful Navigator(s)
  6. Marshal
  7. Grand Knight(s)
  8. Chapter President(s)
  9. General Agent(s)
  10. State Director(s)
  11. Former District Master(s)\*
  12. District Deputy(s)\*
  13. Former Vice Supreme Master(s)
  14. Past State Deputy(s)
  15. Master of the District\*
  16. State Officer(s)\*
  17. Vice Supreme Master(s)
  18. Former Supreme Officer(s) & Director(s)
  19. Supreme Director(s)
  20. Supreme Master
  21. Supreme Officer(s)
  22. State Deputy
  23. Supreme Knight
  24. Members of the Clergy

*(\*If a Fourth Degree function, the District Master and State Officers exchange positions, as do Former Masters and District Deputies.)*

### C. Honor Guard / With Swords

1. When leading a procession of dignitaries **with swords** being permitted:
  - a. The Honor Guard with swords at the “**Carry Sword**” position is led into the church by the C.C.C. or M.
  - b. The Honor Guard will then proceed in a column of twos by way of the center or main aisle from the rear to the front of the church at which point the C.C.C. or M. will “**Halt.**” The Honor Guard will “**Halt**” in their places.
  - c. The C.C.C. or M. shall immediately “**About Face**” which will be the signal for the Honor Guard to “**Face**” toward the center of the main aisle.
  - d. The C.C.C. or M. will move into line with one of the files. In unison with the C.C.C. or M., the Honor Guard will assume the “**Present Sword**” position.
  - e. This position is held while the procession from the rear of the church proceeds forward between their files.
  - f. After the celebrant passes his position, the C.C.C. or M. shall step forward to signal the Honor Guard to simultaneously come to the “**Carry Sword**” position, take One Pace forward, “**Face**” towards the altar and “**Fall In**” to the rear of the C.C.C. or M.

The columns shall follow the lead of the C.C.C. or M., processing to the front cross aisle. The two files of Sir Knights separate by turning at the front cross aisle toward their respective side aisles.

- g. The Honor Guard will proceed to the rear of the church, where the C.C.C. or M. gives the command to “**Return Sword.**” They will enter their designated pews from the side aisle and remain at “**Attention**” until all are in place.
    - h. Thereafter, they will follow the C.C.C. or M. to sit, stand, remove or replace the beret and swords, etc.

### D. Honor Guard / Without Swords

1. When leading a procession of dignitaries **without swords**. The Honor Guard is led to the rear of the church by the C.C.C. or M.
2. They will proceed in a column of twos by way of the center or main aisle from the rear to the front of the church, at which point the C.C.C. or M. shall “**Halt.**” The Honor Guard will “**Halt**” in their places.

3. The C.C.C. or M. shall immediately **“About Face”** which will be the signal for the Honor Guard to **“Face”** toward the center of the main aisle.
4. The C.C.C. or M. will stand at the center of the aisle and begin to render a **“Hand Salute.”** In unison with the C.C.C. or M., the Honor Guard will assume the **“Hand Salute”** position. This position is held while the procession at the rear of the church proceeds forward between their files.
5. After the celebrant passes his position, the C.C.C. or M. shall step forward to signal the Honor Guard to **“Return to Attention,”** take one **Pace** forward, **“Face”** towards the altar and **“Fall In”** behind the C.C.C. or M. The columns shall follow the lead of the C.C.C. or M., processing to the front cross aisle. The two files of Sir Knights separate by bowing to the altar and turning at the front cross aisle toward their respective side aisles.
6. The Honor Guard will proceed to the rear of the church. They will enter their designated pews from the side aisle and remain at **“Attention”** until all are in place.
7. Thereafter, they will follow the C.C.C. or M. in sitting, standing and removing the beret and tucking it under the belt, near the right hip over the right trouser pocket.

## Recessional

### A. Precede the Recessional

1. The C.C.C. or M. will signal the Honor Guard to **“Stand”** and file out of their pews to their agreed-upon positions in the center or main aisle of the church.
2. Upon reaching these positions, the C.C.C. or M. will signal the Honor Guard to **“Face”** the center of the aisle, and upon his command, assume the position of **“Draw Sword”** and **“Present Sword.”**
3. The C.C.C. or M. will **“Carry Sword,”** move to the center of the aisle, **“Face”** the rear of the church and march between the ranks. As the C.C.C. or M. passes each pair of Sir Knights, they (in pairs) will return to the **“Carry Sword”** position, Step forward, **“Halt,”** and **“Face”** towards the rear of the church.
4. They will then follow the C.C.C. or M. between the other remaining Honor Guard positions and **“March”** out of the church. As the Honor Guard passes through the next pair of Sir Knights will **“Fall In”** behind the last member passing him and all will march to the dismissal point.

5. When swords are not being used, the same procedure as described above will be followed, with the following exception. The “*Hand Salute*” will be used instead of “*Draw Sword*” and “*Present Sword.*”

## B. Follow the Recessional

1. If the Color Corps is to follow the recessional, the procedure to be followed is the same as the **Precede the Recessional**, with the Color Corps *Posted* on the sides of the center or main aisle at the “*Present Sword*” position (if permitted).
2. The C.C.C. or M. will follow the last member of the recessional; with the Honor Guard members following him in turn in the same procedures as explained in **Recede the Recessional**.

## Procedures during Mass

It is recommended that, after being seated, the Color Corps remain in their designated pews during Mass and follow the directions of the C.C.C. or M.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

## A. Removal of the Beret

1. Once in place, the C.C.C. or M. will issue a silent command to remove the beret; which shall be removed from the head, folded and tucked under the belt, near the right hip over the right trouser pocket. (See Figure 1, 2, & 3.) The beret will remain off until command is given to replace cover. The Honor Guard will participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass along with the faithful present.

2. When standing, seated or kneeling, the beret will remain tucked under the belt. (See Figure 26.)

## **B. During the Consecration**

1. The consecration of the Blessed Sacrament is the center of our faith. As such, at the time of the consecration during the Mass, all honor and praise should be given to God.
2. Other than these directives, **there shall be no movement of the Color Corps during the consecration of the Blessed Sacrament regardless of whether or not swords are permitted.**

## **C. Reception of Holy Communion**

1. The Color Corps should be the last to receive the Holy Eucharist.
2. After the “Great Amen” the C.C.C. or M. will give the silent command for the Color Corps to remove gloves. The gloves will be placed in the pocket until after the reception of the Holy Eucharist.
3. The C.C.C. or M. will give a silent command for them to step into the aisle and move forward to receive the Eucharist, in turn.
4. After the entire Color Corps has received Communion and returned to their pews, the C.C.C. or M. will give the silent command for the Color Corps to be seated, and await instructions.

## **D. Recessional from the Church**

1. To prepare for the recessional from the Church, on direction of the C.C.C. or M. the Color Corps shall glove their hands, and withdraw the beret from their belt, and return their beret to their proper position upon their head. (See Figures 3, 2 & 1.)
2. On command of the C.C.C. or M. the Color Corps will form themselves to be prepared for the recessional.

## **Eucharistic Adoration**

Eucharistic Adoration is a very solemn and prayerful occasion. Fourth Degree Honor Guards add dignity, but must keep movements or distractions to a minimum. Assembly of Honor Guard Members should be a place or location away from the worship space, and must keep noise to a minimum. The directions of the principle celebrant are paramount.

The C.C.C. or M. and the pair of Sir Knights will approach the Altar of Exposition. When swords are used, on command all three will “**Present Sword**” and then return to the “**Carry Sword**” position. If swords are not used then they will be left in the scabbard and one Sir Knight shall be posted at each end of the Altar of Exposition, outside the Sanctuary limits, **Facing** each other.

The Honor Guard watch, once posted shall immediately come to “**Parade Rest.**” The C.C.C. or M. will perform an “**About Face**” and “**Return**” to the assembly area.

The Honor Guard on post shall be relieved at regular intervals. The best interval is 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the number of Sir Knights in attendance. Excess movements could be distracting to the faithful attempting to worship. Reasonable accommodations should be made for Honor Guard members with disabilities.

At the designated time for the change of the watch, the C.C.C. or M. will **Lead** the relief (all at the “**Carry Sword**” position) to the Repository. When the relief will “**Halt**” before the altar, they will “**Move**” to the flanks to allow sufficient space for the old watch to stand between them and the C.C.C. or M.

The old watch will assume the position of “**Carry Sword,**” and will “**Move**” on line between the C.C.C. or M. and their relief. All will face the altar, assume the position of “**Present Sword**” and then return to “**Carry Sword.**” The relief will “**Post**” at the positions of the old watch at opposite ends of the altar, and will immediately assume the position of “**Parade Rest.**” The old watch and the C.C.C. or M. shall “**About Face,**” and the commander will lead them (still at “**Carry Sword**” position) to the assembly area.

## Laying of a Cornerstone

The Honor Guard will **march** in a column of twos, ahead of the clergy and dignitaries, from the assembly area to the place where the cornerstone is to be laid. The Honor Guard columns will **Split** and **March** so as to form two ranks at the area where the ceremony is to be performed.

If the Blessing of the Foundation precedes the Laying of the Cornerstone, the procession first circles the building. If the Blessing of the Foundation follows the ceremony, then the Honor Guard is re-formed into a column of twos and resumes its place in the procession around the building.

Honor Guard will remain at the “**Carry Sword**” position throughout this ceremony

## Dedication of a Church

The Honor Guard (all at the “*Carry Sword*” position) shall **March** in a column of twos, ahead of the clergy and dignitaries, from the assembly area to once around the outside of the new church. After circling the new church, the Honor Guard, upon arriving at the main entrance, will “**Halt**” and **Form** an aisle between the two files. The Honor Guard will “**Face**” the center of this aisle and assume the position of “**Present Sword.**” The Bishop will pass between their ranks and approach the main door of the church. When the Bishop has entered the church, the Honor Guard will come to “*Carry Sword*” position, “**Face**” the door, and remain until invited by the master of ceremonies to enter the building. The Honor Guard may then either continue in the procession around the inside of the church or move directly to their assigned seats as prearranged with the Master of Ceremonies.

## Wake – Funeral – Cremation Services

### Wake or Cremation Services

Without exception, honors by the Honor Guard shall be offered to deceased Sir Knights, their immediate family members, Council members and to their immediate family members provided a request is made.

It must be distinctly understood that the wishes of the family of the deceased member are paramount and will be given the fullest consideration as to the selection of elements of the Honor Guard involved, if any.

The ceremony at the wake (Rosary, prayers, etc.) or the Services for Cremation will be conducted in accordance with local customs, generally at the direction of the priest or deacon.

The C.C.C. or M. will request the funeral director to set aside a room for the Honor Guard to assemble and will inform him of the hours it is to be used. When assembled, the C.C.C. or M. will divide the Honor Guard into pairs for the watch. The C.C.C. or M. will lead the first pair of Sir Knights, with swords at the “*Carry Sword*” position, to the casket. When they arrive before the casket, they will “**Halt**” and, together with the commander, assume the “**Present Sword**” position and then return to the “*Carry Sword*” position. The C.C.C. or M. will post one guard at each end of the casket or urn, where they will “**Face**” toward each other. The guards left on watch will remain at the position of “*Carry Sword.*”

The C.C.C. or M. will “**About Face**” and return to the assembly room. The Honor Guards on watch should be relieved at regular intervals. Care must be taken that no guard relief is made during ceremonies for the deceased, such as saying the rosary. Able bodied Honor Guards need to be on watch during any ceremony with the physical ability to retain the “**Carry Sword**” position for a long period of time.

Immediately upon the completion of the ceremony for the deceased, the C.C.C. or M. will lead the new watch (all at the “**Carry Sword**” position) to the casket or urn. When the new watch arrives, they will “**Halt**” and “**Move**” to the flanks to allow sufficient space for the old watch to stand between them and the C.C.C. or M. The old watch will “**Move**” on line between the C.C.C. or M. and their relief. All will face the casket or urn, assume the position of “**Present Sword**” and then return to “**Carry Sword.**” The relief will “**Post**” at the positions of the old watch at opposite ends of the casket or urn. The old watch and the C.C.C. or M. shall “**About Face,**” and the C.C.C. or M. will lead them (still at the “**Carry Sword**” position) to the assembly area, in a silent and dignified manner.

When the deceased Sir Knight is a member of the clergy, four Honor Guard members should be posted to watch. If this deceased member is lying in state in church, the guards should be stationed two on each side on a line with the ends of the casket and two paces from it or from the candles which may be placed along the length of the casket, as permitted by space or other limitations, such as a receiving line. The Honor Guard will remain until the family departs or until directed by the family to leave.

## Funeral Escort

It is recommended that the Honor Guard assemble at the church in ample time before the hearse is to arrive. The Honor Guard should be formed into two files facing each other at extended intervals and distances. The formation should extend from the church door to the curb. The Honor Guard will be ordered to “**Attention**” and to “**Carry Sword**” position by the C.C.C. or M. when the hearse door is opened. The Honor Guard will assume the “**Present Sword**” position when the casket is removed fully from the hearse. “**Present Sword**” is held until the casket and the immediate family members have entered the church. The C.C.C. or M. will then command “**Carry Sword**” and “**Return Sword.**”

The Honor Guard will process into the church. They will be seated, or positioned, at the rear of the church, and participate in the normal manner.

It should be noted that there may not be any formal Honor Guard participation in the funeral Mass.

At the conclusion of the Prayers for the Dead by the priest, the Honor Guard will process from the church and proceed to their original position outside the entrance of the church, or near the hearse, as directed. Formed into two files, the Guard will assume “**Carry Sword**” and “**Present Sword**” and again render a salute to the casket and the immediate family members.

After the casket has been placed into the hearse and the door closed, the C.C.C. or M. will command “**Carry Sword**” and “**Return Sword.**” A march to a pre-staging area for the Honor Guard will be in order after the hearse door is closed. If there is a graveside service, the Honor Guard will need to be transported in the early stages to be prepared to assemble in order for the services.

## Graveside Honors

### A. Religious Ceremony

1. The Honor Guard should assemble at the hearse and march ahead of the casket with swords at the “**Carry Sword**” position to the gravesite. The Honor Guard will halt at a position designated by the funeral director and then will “**Present Sword**” as the casket is placed over the grave.
2. The Honor Guard will assume “**Carry Sword**” while the priest blesses the grave.
3. If this concludes the ceremony at the grave, the Honor Guard will “**Present Sword**” and then “**Carry Sword**” and make the required facing movement and march from the grave-site in a column of twos to the staging area for dismissal.

### B. With Military Honors

1. When the graveside ceremony includes military honors, the Honor Guard will *follow the commands* of the military Officer-In-Charge.
2. When the firing squad is called to “**Attention,**” the Honor Guard will assume the position of “**Carry Sword**” (if not already at the position) and will retain that position throughout the firing salute volleys.

3. On the military command of ***Present Arms*** to the firing squad, the honor guard will ***“Present Sword”*** if not already at the position and will retain this position throughout the playing of “*Taps*” by the bugler.
4. At the military command of ***“Order Arms”*** to the firing squad, the Honor Guard will return to ***“Carry Sword”*** and will remain in this position until the flag on the casket is folded and presented to the next of kin.
5. The Military Guard, followed by the Fourth Degree Honor Guard, will then ***“March”*** from the gravesite in a column of twos to an adjacent area for dismissal.

[**SPECIAL NOTE:** Extreme care must be taken that Honor Guard participation in burial ceremonies and services is presented in only the best of taste and with maximum decorum. Careful coordination must be made with the family, priest, funeral director and/or military commander to ensure that the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard does not interfere with the services and yet presents the honors to which a deceased Sir Knight is entitled.]

[**SPECIAL NOTE:** Procedures ***“During Mass”*** – A two-man Honor Guard may be formed for the ***“Presentation of Gifts”*** at the direction of the celebrant, to escort the family members. Any other activity shall be to follow the wishes of the pastor, celebrant or master of ceremonies.]