

## **My Final Faithful Navigator's Report – June 2021**

Worthy Sir Knights,

While attempting to write my final Faithful Navigator's report the last few weeks, innumerable thoughts crossed my mind which led to what I hope is a complete and informative summary.

First, and in the short-term, most important, is that Thursday night's Assembly Meeting will take place at **McGivney Hall at All Saints Catholic Church, 2443 Mt. Vernon Road, Dunwoody**. This is a change from what was originally expected (St. Andrew in Roswell). With the loosening of some Covid restrictions, we will hold our first meeting at All Saints since January 2020, before we knew much about the disease at all. We will also have our first dinner meeting since March 2020. A few "long awaited" presentations will be made to some of our members!

The rosary will be said at 6:30 PM, a **pre-packaged** dinner will be served at 6:45 PM (please bring a donation to help us cover the dinner cost), and the business meeting will take place at 7:30PM. The highlight of the meeting will be the election of the Assembly Officers who will lead this wonderful Assembly starting on July 1<sup>st</sup> for the 2021-2022 Fraternal Year. The Nominating Committee has presented an excellent slate of candidates for election. Nominations will be accepted should anyone else choose to self-nominate for a position or should someone be nominated from the floor. While I encourage you to come in person, this meeting will also be available online, thanks to the efforts of SK Steve Strong, who will send out login instructions separately.

In addition, the meeting will provide an opportunity to bring your checks for our upcoming Social event, at the August 7<sup>th</sup> Gwinnett Stripers baseball game, arranged by SK Bob Santos. The \$22 (half-price) ticket cost includes a 2-hour buffet dinner (with some free and some paid beverages) prior to the game, a ticket to the game with access to our own private suite, and a parking pass. Those who attended games in 2019 and prior years had a wonderful experience. Tickets are limited, so sign-up (and pay) at the meeting on Thursday.

If you have anything for the Good of the Order, please email that information to me in advance. Officers – please confirm whether or not you plan to attend.

An in-person Fourth Degree will take place at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church on Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. Councils have been notified of this event, but few have signed-up to take part. If you have Third Degree Council Brothers who would like to attend the first post-Covid Fourth Degree here in Georgia, please contact Faithful Comptroller Dave Lemcoe or me immediately to sign up. The cost is \$80 for those being exemplified and \$10 for observers. If you took one of the virtual degrees offered during the peak of Covid lockdowns, you are welcome to attend the in-person event and be fully Knighted in our order. For these men, the only cost is \$10 for lunch, but reservations are required in advance.

Due to the extraordinary efforts of Trustee Chuck Langgood and Faithful Captain Nick Mattera, seven of us took part in a special wreath-laying ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial Walk,

located at Newtown Park in Johns Creek on Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, just two days before Memorial Day. Below are photos of the ceremony to lay a wreath in the newly-added “Never Forget” rose garden and fenced enclosure surrounding the “Fallen Soldier Battle Cross” donated by Past Faithful Navigator Bill Camden and the Father Charles J. Watters Assembly in 2017.



Mike Mizell, the President of the Johns Creek Veterans Association (JCVA), erected the fence and planted the roses himself, and he was kind enough to take part in our ceremony. Those in attendance discussed making this a semi-annual or annual event, whether laying a wreath, making a donation, or taking other actions.

Please indulge me a little bit with some reflections on the last two years as I humbly served as your Faithful Navigator.

When I was installed as Faithful Navigator, it was immediately after the “retirement” of our beloved regalia. In large-part due to Supreme’s edict, and without obtaining input from the Fourth Degree as a whole, this one decision caused many sir Knights to walk away...some from the Fourth Degree, and others from the Knights of Columbus altogether. Keeping the Assembly viable was about all we were able to accomplish. Fortunately, most Sir Knight’s hung in with the changes, while grumbling all the way! Thank you for sharing your views! More importantly, thank you for not throwing in the proverbial towel and leaving us altogether!

At the close of our March 2020 meeting, who would have guessed that Covid would effectively “cancel” the rest of 2020 for many of us. We did not hold an April meeting, because there wasn’t anything important enough to ask Sir Knights to venture out or to join in a zoom call. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Sir Knight Steve Strong, we have held zoom-type meetings every month since May 2020. We were able to return to combined in-person and virtual meetings in October, and have done so every month since, albeit without dinner, until now. We have had a quorum for every meeting, when taking into account the in-person and virtual headcounts. Your dedication is allowing us to return to in-person dinner meetings this month.

In 2018-2019, before I became Faithful Navigator, 290 Sir Knights took part in 39 Honor Guard opportunities. In my first year as your FN, only 11 events took place before Covid shut everything down (six of the 11 were funerals or memorial masses), and just over 100 people took part in these eleven events. Since no one in the Assembly chose to purchase the new uniform, we were limited to a tuxedo, baldric, and white gloves “uniform”. Once Covid shut down most events, especially at our parishes (and except for a Veterans Day mass at St, Andrew), not a single Honoring Guard (our new name, without regalia) was held from early March of 2020 until four back-to-back funerals/memorial masses for Sir Knights between January and March of this year. Barely 60 people took part in Honoring Guards this entire Fraternal Year.

These last two years, the Assembly was severely limited in terms of its Patriotic mission. We made a few monetary donations each year and took part in a few Honoring Guards, but little else “Patriotic” was accomplished. As your Faithful Navigator, it was my responsibility to “do more”. I’m sorry I was unable to do much more than keep this Assembly afloat. I do know that some local Assemblies haven’t held elections or even had ANY type of meeting in nearly a year-and-a half. I hope these Assemblies survive in the long run. With the great group of officers about to take over, I know that 2688 will do so!

In my report last month, I stated that I am confident that our Assembly is poised to boldly move forward into the 2022 Fraternal Year. I thanked the current officers and the new additions to the slate for their support and commitment to keeping our Assembly strong! I wish each officer, whether returning or new, all the best for a very successful Fraternal Year, which starts in just a few short weeks!

In conclusion, I want to single out a few individuals. First, our Past (and future) Faithful Navigator, our current Faithful Captain Nick Mattera, has been a constant friend, supporter, sounding board, and advisor. I could not have undertaken these last two years without him!

Saying 'Thank you' is simply inadequate! PGK/PFN/FDD and longtime friend Ernie Spencer has provided wise counsel during difficult times. This is in spite of the fact that Covid and other issues kept him isolated at home for many, many months. SK Bob Santos has kept my inbox full with social activity updates, as well as Good-of-the-Order information on himself and others. Thank you, Bob, and good luck with your continued recovery! In spite of limited cooperation from the Archdiocese, SK Ed Pierson has attempted to find recipients for our chalices that contain the names of our deceased Brother Sir Knights. While two were donated in the last two years, we still have several to donate, but no one who needs one at this time.

I need to repeat how important SK Steve Strong has been to me and to our entire Assembly. In addition to doing all the things mentioned previously, he has served as my technical advisor and tester of new ways to keep the members of our Assembly involved with our meetings. Our Assembly couldn't have made it through the last year-and-a-half without him as "Zoom Master Extraordinaire".

Finally, please continue to keep all of our Assembly Brothers and their families in your prayers. SK's Mike Baylot, Bob Santos, Joe Kane, and Joe Inglima were recently, or are currently, hospitalized for various reasons. Many of us have had, or are scheduled to have, surgeries of various types. We have lost too many to death these last few years, and many others have suffered disease, injury, or required treatment for various physical, mental, and/or emotional issues. Whether Covid-related or not, the last few years have taken their toll on many of us. We ALL, our friends, and our loved ones, can benefit from the power of prayer! May God bless you and your loved ones!

Thank you for the trust you placed in me these last two years!

Vivat Jesus,

S.K. Bob Mitchell  
Faithful Navigator  
Father Charles J. Watters Assembly 2688