



CHAPLAIN'S *report*

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS *In service to One. In service to all.*

LEARNING THE FAITH, LIVING THE FAITH ♦ 1 COLUMBUS PLAZA, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-3326, USA

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Memento Mori

"Memento Mori." Remember Death. These are words every brother Knight is sure to recall. While the exemplary practice of being present to the grieving family of deceased brother Knights and of offering the rosary during the wake or funeral is widespread, knowledge of the Catholic practices surrounding death continues to wane. I was stunned recently when cousins announced that they would not have a funeral Mass

for my uncle — a devout, daily Mass-going Catholic — because the wake and funeral combined would be too much for the family to bear. November is an appropriate time to revisit the distinct teachings of the faith and Catholic practices on this vital subject with the men of your councils, and to invite them to inscribe their own wishes in their wills!

In *Benedictus Deus*, the Church teaches us that after death we are each judged, and then we immediately enter either into heaven, purgatory or hell. Heaven, the beatific vision of eternal life, is seeing God "face to face" while being in the fullness of relationship with God and those others that make up the Communion of the Saints. It is the fulfillment of all our longings, completion of our being, immersed and transformed by the Holy Spirit and the inner life of the Trinity. St. Paul describes it in 1 Cor. 2:9: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Those who die in a state of friendship with God, but who are not fully purified from selfishness and self-centeredness (whose hearts are not totally open to God) have to still undergo the suffering or personal purification from whatever keeps them from being in his presence. Why? The person may not have asked forgiveness for, or even acknowledged, less serious (venial) sins. He may have been forgiven more serious (mortal) sins, yet he may not have atoned for the consequences of such sin by repentance of some type. St. Catherine of Genoa explained it thus: "The soul that has the slightest imperfection would rather throw itself into a thousand hells than appear thus before the divine presence. ... The greatest suffering of the souls in purgatory, it seems to me, is their awareness that something in them displeases God, that they have deliberately gone against his great goodness."

Hell is the eternal damnation, loss and separation that results from the state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed, reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the ends of their lives (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1033). It is impossible to be united with God if we refuse to love him. Persistence in a state of serious sin reflects a choice to reject God's love and an intention to separate ourselves from him. Hell is the pain of isolation that comes from rejecting God's love. It results from total selfishness and the free-choice rejection of his love and goodness. As the *Catechism* states: "In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life" (1039).

The *Catechism* speaks of an "exchange of goods" between those still on pilgrimage on earth — we who are alive — and those who have gone beyond the lifted veil, as Isaiah says, and even now stand before God. In death, our love, history, memory and personality all continue in our immortal souls. Our souls are purified from any ways that were not in line with God's love and knowledge. They are purified from any possessiveness so that we love and know as God allows us to love and know. Hence, the continued importance of our works of charity for our deceased brother Knights and loved ones. Through prayers and Masses offered for their purification, they are made "ready" to behold him, and hear those joyful words: "Well done, my faithful servant, enter into your heavenly reward."

Vivat Jesus!

Building the Domestic Church: Believing in the Family

From Father Luis Granados, DCJM

Do we believe in the family? Every Sunday, during the creed, we proclaim that we believe in God the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ his Son and in the Holy Spirit. We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church... but the family is not mentioned among the articles of our faith. Do we believe in the family? Or better, do we really trust in the family, in its strength to accomplish its mission?

In 1981, St. John Paul II wrote in his diary that a "lack of confidence in the family is the first cause of the crisis of the family." When we see the weaknesses and struggles of the family today, we may lose our hope in the family. Like the Apostles who heard Jesus, we may say: "If that is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry" (Mt 19:10).

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A visitor to the Saint John Paul II National Shrine views a statue of the parents of St. John Paul II. The statue is part of the shrine's permanent exhibit "A Gift of Love: the Life of Saint John Paul II." The exhibit opened on Oct. 22, 2014, the feast day of St. John Paul II.

The Cross and the Hope of Eternal Life

From Supreme Chaplain Archbishop Lori's homily at the annual memorial Mass at the 130th Supreme Convention

Let's go back in time, to 1921. In Germany, a brilliant young philosopher named Edith Stein was wrestling with serious intellectual and spiritual questions. Gifted with a remarkably powerful mind, she admired her mother's deep faith, but as a teenager had drifted from the Jewish faith in which she was raised into a restless but persistent atheism.

One evening, around the age of 30, while staying with Lutheran friends, Dr. Stein pulled off their bookshelf the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. During the night, she read it cover to cover. In the morning, forever changed, she put the book down and declared, "This is the truth."

From that first encounter, she set about learning more about the Catholic faith, and within a matter of months she was baptized. She quickly discovered that, far from stifling her freedom and creativity, her newfound faith in Christ allowed her to be the person she was created to be. Indeed, "at the end of a long journey, she came to the surprising realization: only those who commit themselves to the love of Christ become truly free" (*Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein*).

About a decade later, she was professed as a Carmelite nun with the name Sister Teresia Benedicta a Cruce — literally, Sister Teresa, Blessed by the Cross. The shadow of the Cross was looming not far away.

During the Nazi occupation of Germany, her Carmelite superiors transferred her to their convent in Echt, in the Netherlands, in an effort to protect her. But unwilling to use her baptism to worldly advantage, even to save her life, she was arrested, subjected to the most inhumane conditions, and transported by a cattle car to Auschwitz.

Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross had long known that closeness to Christ means a share in his suffering — his redemptive suffering. So she knew in the depths of her being that this, her last and greatest trial, was nothing other than a share in the Cross of Christ. Thus she bore her sufferings not merely with resignation, but with love.

When the day of her martyrdom came and poison gas extinguished her earthly life, she left this valley of tears to go and be with her divine bridegroom. "The true message of suffering is a message of love," said St. John Paul II at her canonization. "The true message of suffering is a lesson of love. Love makes suffering fruitful and suffering deepens love."

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross shows us that there is only one place to go when approaching the mystery of death, and that is up the hill of Calvary and to the foot of the Cross.

And our embrace of the Cross, together with our steadfast Christian hope, is decidedly not the defiant denial of the stoics. It is no denial of reality, it is an embrace of reality — the reality that the

Son of God has descended to the depths of human suffering, and has conquered the terror of the grave, and has risen triumphant.

What Christ offers to us is much more than the nebulous "better place" which is often spoken of when people die. He offers us the gift of eternal salvation, a union of love with the living God, the fulfillment of every human desire, the very purpose for which we were created. And Christ made possible for us this gift of eternal

salvation at the price of his own blood, which he poured out on the Cross and which is made present in the Eucharist.

This is perennially true in every age and in every circumstance. *Dum volvitur orbis stat Crux*, the Carthusian motto proclaims: "While the world turns, the Cross stands still. Indeed, this was the source of Father McGivney's heroic pastoral love for the dying and for bereaved families. This is what brought him to numberless bedsides and gravesides — so he could bring the light and love of Christ there. It is what moved him to action to help Catholic men open themselves more fully to the grace of Christ through the active practice of the Catholic Faith, and

to help extend the Church's care for those who had been visited by tragedy.

This is what emboldened the 25 Mexican Martyrs, six of whom were priests and brother Knights. Their relics remind us of their faith in the conquering love of Christ crucified — a love which at length conquers every form of human tyranny.

All of this shows us that in life and in death, love and truth must always go together, because the truth is eternal and love is stronger than death. Indeed, as St. John Paul II proclaimed at the canonization of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross: "Do not accept anything as the truth if it lacks love. And do not accept anything as love which lacks truth! One without the other becomes a destructive lie."

When we think of deceased Knights and all the members of our family and friends who have died, we remember them with such emotion because we have loved them — and they have loved us.

Thus do we approach the altar on which the crucified and risen Christ, the source of life and truth, will be made present in the Eucharist.

We ask St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross to pray for all these sons and daughters of Father McGivney who have gone before us into eternity, that the Cross may be for them, and for us, as it was for her, the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Vivat Jesus!



Flowers sit on the railway tracks at the former Nazi death camp in Auschwitz, Poland, Jan. 27, the 66th anniversary of the camp's liberation. Hundreds of thousands of Jews and people of other faiths, including Catholics St. Edith Stein and St. Maximilian Kolbe, were killed at Auschwitz. (CNS photo/Kacper Pempel, Reuters)

The best way to recover our confidence in the family is to consider the ways of God. We trust in the family, because God trusts in the family. God has chosen to visit and remain among us through the family. God entrusted his only begotten Son to Mary and Joseph — to a family, the Holy Family. And God continues to entrust the dignity of every human being to the family. Therefore, we believe in the family as the “sanctuary of life.” God has chosen the family as the “human space of our encounter with God”; we are invited to rediscover the family as the icon of the Holy Trinity. The love of the family is called to reflect the love of God.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has also invited us to consider the great vocation of the family as the domestic church. “In the family, faith accompanies every age of life, beginning with childhood” (*Lumen Fidei*, 53). “Parents are called, not only to bring children into the world but also to bring them to God, so that through baptism they can be reborn as children of God and receive the gift of faith” (*Lumen Fidei*, 43). Through the family — a domestic church — the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church touches and transforms us.

The “Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive” initiative exists because we believe in the family. This program is not something we do *for* the family, but something built and organized by the family. To trust in families means that we ask them to become active subjects, not just consumers, of all these activities. Their strength and joy, the power of their witness, is the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Our confidence in the family is especially manifested in the *monthly home project*. We want to help parents to “encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith” (*Lumen Fidei*, 53). This month we will invite families to celebrate Sunday as “the day made by the Lord,” as the day of our Salvation. I hope that we will all experience the great creativity and power of the family when it comes to celebrating a feast of the Lord.

A “lack of confidence in the family is the first cause of the crisis of the family.” We could add that confidence in the family *on the part of pastors* will be one of the causes of growth and revival for the family in the new evangelization. When we as priests believe in the family, when we ask the family to become active and share its faith, the family grows. Faith grows “when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy” (*Porta Fidei*, 7). This also means that priests can grow and learn from the family. That was the experience of Karol Wojtyła, as a seminarian and later as a parish priest at St. Florian in Krakow, where he learned “to love human love.”

Do we believe in the family? God’s ways are inviting us, as shepherds of his sheep, to believe in the vocation of the family, the domestic church. The Glory of God is the family fully alive.

Monthly Suggested Activities

November:

Celebrate the feast of All Saints

- On the Solemnity of All Saints, a Holy Day of Obligation in most countries, encourage Knights in your council to attend Mass together, witnessing to the devotion and brotherhood that are an integral part of the Order.

Remember deceased Knights, family members and parishioners

- Sponsor a cemetery cleanup ending with a prayer service for the deceased.
- Celebrate a memorial Mass with intentions for the souls of departed Knights and their family members.

Work with your council to seek new ways of spiritual outreach to the poor

Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “Since this Exhortation is addressed to members of the Catholic Church, I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care.”

December:

Keeping Christ in Christmas

- Join brother Knights to spread the light of Christ by lighting a Nativity scene at your parish on Dec. 2 at 8 p.m. local time. Offer to bless the Nativity manger or tree before the lighting; see *The Book of Blessings* for the order of blessing a Nativity manger or Christmas scene.
- For additional ideas on Advent and Christmas for your parish, turn to the booklet *An Advent & Christmas Celebration* (#9898).

Advent Retreat

- Focus on the spiritual importance of Christmas in the midst of a world caught up in secular materialism by offering a retreat for Knights and parishioners.
- Begin with prayer and a passage from Scripture, particularly from the Nativity passages of the Gospels.
- Arrange the day with periods for personal reflection and individual spiritual direction, confession and the celebration of Mass.

Best Practice of the Month — Memorial Mass for Deceased Knights

In the State Chaplains meeting held immediately prior to the 132nd Supreme Convention, Knights of Columbus chaplains had the opportunity to share suggestions and practices implemented in the various councils they served. These practices demonstrated the chaplains’ role in enhancing the spiritual life of Knights and their families, evangelization and outreach, and membership growth and retention.

One of these admirable practices is the celebration of a Mass offered for deceased members of the Knights of Columbus. Masses of remembrance also provide an opportunity to encourage and support the family members of the deceased Knights.

Father William A. Elser, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church and member of the Hot Springs Village (Ark.) Assembly, celebrated a memorial Mass for recently deceased Knights from the Arkansas jurisdiction. During the Mass, the name of each Knight

was announced as flowers were placed before the altar in remembrance. A banquet was afterward held for the Knights’ widows and family members, during which they accepted awards on behalf of their husbands.

Throughout this month of commemoration of all souls, your council can likewise offer a memorial Mass. Encourage further prayers for the faithful departed by inviting parishioners and Knights to a prayer service at your nearest Catholic cemetery. You can also distribute rosaries and other devotionals to widows and family members of deceased Knights and parishioners.

We would like to produce a listing of other commendable practices that we can consider for possible publication each month. If you or your council has established an exemplar practice that you would like to share with other councils, please send the information to chaplains@kofc.org.



Prayer Service Blessing

To be said during the lighting of a Christmas tree or Nativity scene

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the light of creation; the sun, the moon and the stars of the night. We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the Prophets and the wisdom of the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ your Son, the true Light of the world, the Light which no darkness can overcome. He is Emmanuel who saved the world from darkness and brought humanity into the peace of everlasting Light.

We praise you for Mary, who held your Son in her loving arms, and who was given to us as a Mother at the foot of the Cross. She is the New Eve, leading all her children into the Light of her Son, Jesus. We praise you for the gift of faith, given to us at Baptism, which enlightens our minds to know and accept the Gospel of Truth and Life.

Lord, we ask that your blessing come down upon us as we illuminate this tree [Nativity scene]. May the light that it gives fill our hearts with hope that we may be freed from the darkness of sin and delivered into the light of your peace, and may all who look at this tree [Nativity scene] come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. Grant that we may always walk as sons and daughters of the Light, keeping the flame of Truth alive in our hearts, until we join you and the heavenly host in the Kingdom of everlasting Light.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



An Advent and Christmas Celebration

With the goal of introducing the faith in America, Franciscan missionaries developed celebrations in honor of Advent and Christmas. Known as “the Posada,” these celebrations continue to be popular throughout Latin America and the southwestern United States even today.

No matter where you’re located, your council and parish can take part in this celebration. For ideas on how to adapt this tradition for your own parish community or make this an annual parish program, turn to the booklet *An Advent & Christmas Celebration* (#9898). Through this booklet, the Order hopes to bring rich traditions to all Knights and their families through a sharing of cultural celebrations of the birth of our Savior.

This booklet provides all the information needed to conduct a Christmas celebration with your parish and Knights of Columbus council. Copies of the booklet can be ordered by mailing or faxing a *Requisition Form* (#1) to the Supply Department.