



# 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

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

# Liberality, Mercy and Life

**Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP**

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



As we guide our brother Knights along the path of mercy during this Jubilee Year, it is worth reflecting upon the virtues attendant to the pursuit of becoming “merciful like the Father.” The virtue of liberality is the good and just stewardship

proper to organized mercy in the kingdom of God.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that immoderate and selfish love of riches is incompatible with love for the poor. “St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: ‘Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.’ ‘The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.’ When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice” (#2446).

The vice of avarice gives primacy to the getting and keeping of material things, and in turn blinds one to the true needs of others. St. Thomas Aquinas sees avarice as the foundational sin of self-love, and warns of its ability to set the will against human rights and dignity.

This attachment to wealth and material goods causes mercy to limp, as the daughters of avarice include treachery, fraud, falsehood, perjury, restlessness, violence and callousness.

The restlessness that stems from avarice engenders anxiety and undue worry to such an extent that one is preoccupied with the pursuit of earthly goods and ignorant of the providence of God. “The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods. ‘Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.’ Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow. Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God” (#2547).

The Jubilee of Mercy invites us again to proclaim the closeness of the kingdom of God — especially to the poor — and to remind our brother Knights and their families of the imperative to check their inclinations to accumulate more than is necessary; they should instead view their wealth as a treasure owed to others. How many of our brother Knights engage in contraception out of an avarice that chokes trust in the providence of God? How many have participated in abortions because the time and money was not right to have a child? This Jubilee Year, we are called to help our brothers seek conversion and God’s mercy for their sins.

## Indulgences: The Church’s Expression of Mercy

*The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us.*

*Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. – Pope Francis*

### **What are the specific acts required to receive the Year of Mercy Indulgence?**

Those who perform the works of mercy may obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. The indulgence may also be obtained by the faithful who pilgrimage to the Holy Doors or the designated Doors of Mercy, and who accompany this pilgrimage with a profession of faith.

Those unable to go on pilgrimage or perform the works of mercy because of illness may also obtain the indulgence, provided they participate in Mass and community prayer in some form (i.e., a televised Mass). Those who are in prison may also receive the indulgence in prison chapels and cells: “May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom” (Pope Francis, *Letter to Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization*).

### **What kinds of works of mercy are there?**

There are two kinds: those that offer physical aid and those that offer spiritual support. The corporal works of mercy are: to give food to the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit the imprisoned, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

### **For whom does one receive an indulgence? How many times can one receive an indulgence?**

A person may receive an indulgence either for themselves or on behalf of one who is deceased, with the intent that he or she may be free from any remnants of sin and experience the fullness of the Beatific Vision. Only one indulgence may be obtained per day.

# The Family: The Antidote for Indifference

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

God is not indifferent. The celebration of Christmas reveals to us his compassion. As St. Bernard of Clairvaux puts it, “God cannot suffer but he can suffer with us” (Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* 39).

God is not indifferent to human suffering, but the world is. In his recent *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, Pope Francis has denounced today’s “globalization of indifference.” In every period of history we find selfish people. There have always been people who close their hearts and pay attention only to their own interests and worries. However, in our century, indifference is not just a personal problem but a “plague pandemic.”

Our world makes us indifferent. We live as islands, as isolated individuals who only desire “comfort.” And this makes us insensible to God and to our neighbor. The root of this indifference is a lack of interest and belonging. I don’t care about my lonely neighbor or the homeless, because I see him as a stranger whose life and destiny are not connected to mine. He is not interesting to me; his things are not among my things (*interesse*). This absence of interest comes from our independence; he and I have nothing in common. He doesn’t belong to me, and I don’t belong to him. In other words, he doesn’t make any difference in my life.

Indifference is the consequence of forgetting God and the family. When Cain rejected his creator and his brother, God asked him, “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain answered with cynicism and with indifference: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gn 4:9). The “globalization of indifference” is a result of the absence of God and the weakness of the family in our world.

For example, when two young children become angry over toys, they fight. When they grow older, such anger might lead a young man to

ignore his friend, living as if he doesn’t exist and not worthy of any attention. Indifference prevents him from seeing that the other person has any importance.

Jesus Christ, however, was never indifferent. The Gospels speak abundantly about the many passions of his heart. He feels joy and sadness, at Zacchaeus’ conversion and at Lazarus’ death. He experiences meekness and anger, facing the cross like a lamb and purifying the Temple like a lion. He experiences love and hatred, loving the sinner and hating the sin.

He experiences many human emotions, but never indifference.

The Christian family overcomes such indifference because it is the school of “we.” In his family, a child learns the joy of belonging. He learns to pay attention to the others, to share and to forgive. Through his family, a child learns and then chooses that the words “I” and “you” should be replaced by “we.” Later, the “we” of the family becomes the “we” of the school, society and the whole world. When we learn this vocabulary, we understand the meaning of the works of mercy. To feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to teach the ignorant and to admonish the sinner ... all this makes sense because I am my brother’s keeper. His good is my good, his suffering is my suffering.

As the father helps his children to overcome indifference and anger, so we as priests are called to cultivate true mercy in the heart of all the faithful. Our parishes are called to support and challenge families in their fight against indifference.

God is not indifferent to our sin or to our suffering. He has given us the family so that we may overcome indifference and become like him. “Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). That is, “Be merciful just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).

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A member of Dr. Earl C. Bach Council 3340, Father Granados helped establish the Toward a Family Friendly Parish program at St. Mary Catholic Parish in Littleton, Colo. The 12-month program, whose focus is to draw families closer to each other and to their parish family, was the model of the Knights of Columbus’ Domestic Church initiative. *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* booklets (#10162, available free of cost, only shipping charges apply) can be obtained by contacting the Supply Department at 203-752-4214. An online copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at [kocf.org/familyfullyalive](http://kocf.org/familyfullyalive). To order additional items mentioned in this newsletter, please visit [knightsgear.com](http://knightsgear.com).

## Overcome Indifference

*Pope Francis’ message for the  
49th World Day of Peace, celebrated 1 Jan. 2016*

God is not indifferent! God cares about mankind! God does not abandon us! At the beginning of the new year, I would like to share not only this profound conviction but also my cordial good wishes for prosperity, peace and the fulfilment of the hopes of every man and every woman, every family, people and nation throughout the world, including all heads of state and government and all religious leaders. We continue to trust that 2016 will see us all firmly and confidently engaged, on different levels, in the pursuit of justice and peace. Peace is both God’s gift and a human achievement. As a gift of God, it is entrusted to all men and women, who are called to attain it. ...

I entrust these reflections, together with my best wishes for the new year, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother, who cares for the needs of our human family, that she may obtain from her son Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the granting of our prayers and the blessing of our daily efforts for a fraternal and united world.

## Best Practices

An admirable practice is sharing God’s mercy with those you encounter each day. Make your New Year’s resolution one of mercy: To promote the message of God’s mercy with your brother Knights, their families and your parishioners.

Although the Church’s call to mercy may seem to be a pretentious way of telling us to “be nice” or “say sorry,” the experience of true mercy is profound and life changing. Resolve to do all that you can in extending mercy to those in your parish and council by offering more frequent opportunities for confession or counseling. Reach out to those who bear the weight of past sins, particularly women who have had an abortion, and encourage them to seek the Father’s mercy through the sacraments and to find peace through support groups. Likewise, reach out to men — particularly those in your council — who carry the burden of having once encouraged a woman to have an abortion or those who carry the guilt of not offering encouragement to women in need. Help them find peace in the knowledge that God does not abandon us because of sin, but reaches out in love to those who seek forgiveness.



# The Saints of Mercy: St. Gianna Beretta Molla

*By Kevin T. Smith, Chaplaincy Program and Events Coordinator*

*During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has asked that each of us become open to the mercy of God in our lives.*

*We offer this new “Saints of Mercy” series for you to share with your brother Knights, that they might realize the heroic aspect of mercy and the beauty of sharing it with others.*

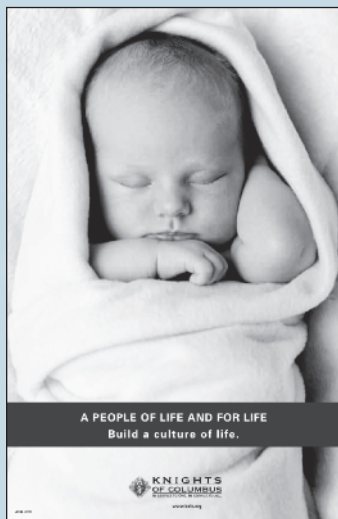
The Judeo-Christian concept of mercy includes the loving affection a mother has for the child she carries in her womb. There is no better example of this affection than St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962).

St. Gianna was a wife, a mother and a doctor who had to make a decision between her own life and her unborn child's. Just two months into her fourth pregnancy, Gianna was diagnosed with uterine cancer.

Gianna knew she would die if her cancer went untreated. Treating the cancer, however, would surely result in the death of her unborn child. It was a decision between her own life and her child's, yet Gianna did not

hesitate. Convinced that the tiny infant in her womb had a right to life, she told her husband, “Save the child, not me.”

On Good Friday, 1962, Gianna Beretta Molla climbed the steps to the hospital to begin her labor, exclaiming, “Here I am, I am here to die.” On Holy Saturday, her daughter was born. One week later, Gianna died. Her death is an example of the merciful fidelity that is spoken about by the prophet Isaiah; St. Gianna chose to forget herself rather than forget “the child of her womb” (Is 49:15), the child that only she had the ability to save.



## A Prayer for Every Life

Heavenly Father, thank you for the most precious gift of life.

Help us to cherish and protect this gift, even in the midst of fear, pain, and suffering.

Give us love for all people, especially the most vulnerable,  
and help us bear witness to the truth that every life is worth living.

Grant us the humility to accept help when we are in need, and teach us to be merciful to all.  
Through our words and actions, may others encounter the outstretched hands of your mercy.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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## Monthly Suggested Activities

### January

- Lead your brother Knights in observing the World Day of Peace, celebrated Jan. 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Ask your brother Knights to join you in praying that people throughout the world may work together to overcome aggression and cruelty. Determine how you, as a council, might help peacefully combat indifference toward the marginalized victims of violence, particularly the persecuted religious minorities in the Middle East.
- Lead council members and parishioners in participating in the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' 9 Days for Life campaign, Jan. 16-24. During the campaign, preach on the sanctity of life as outlined in the *Study Guide to Evangelium Vitae* (#2914, available for 25 cents each). Prayer cards (#2072, available free of cost, only shipping charges apply) or materials from the USCCB may also be distributed. For more information, visit [9daysforlife.com](http://9daysforlife.com).
- Travel to Washington, D.C., for the March for Life on Thursday, Jan. 22, the 43rd anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.
- Offer your council's support to your diocese in helping promote Pope Francis' call to mercy by hosting similar events to those held in Rome, such as the ecumenical prayer service on Jan. 25, or by serving as guides to pilgrims visiting the designated Door of Mercy in your local diocese.

### February

- Organize a “Day of Mercy” retreat for parishioners and members of your council during Lent. Plan time for prayer, faith sharing and confession to offer greater opportunities for spiritual enrichment, contemplation and meditation on the passion of our Lord and on the role of mercy in our lives.
- In honor of the Year of Consecrated Life, which concludes Feb. 1, invite parishioners and members of your council to a holy hour or rosary service offered for all priests and religious, that they may faithfully live out their vocations to the consecrated life.
- Support local bishops in welcoming the Missionaries of Mercy, who will serve as a living sign of God's welcome to all those in search of his forgiveness, to your local area.

### Upcoming Jubilee Events

- Jan. 19** — International gathering of parish priests, shrine/sanctuary rectors and personnel, and all those involved with pilgrimages, parishes and shrines
- Jan. 25** — Ecumenical Celebration in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul



## Why Celebrate Mercy?

*Excerpts from an audience of Pope Francis,  
9 Dec. 2015*

The Church is in need of this extraordinary occasion. ... In this era of profound changes, the Church is called to offer her particular contribution, rendering visible the signs of the presence and closeness of God. The jubilee is a favorable time for all of us, because by contemplating Divine Mercy, which overcomes all human limitations and shines in the darkness of sin, we are able to become more certain and effective witnesses. ...

Celebrating a Jubilee of Mercy is equivalent to placing once again the specific nature of the Christian faith, namely Jesus Christ, the merciful God, at the center of our personal life and that of our communities.

It is a holy year, therefore, so as to live mercy. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, this holy year is offered to us so that we may experience in our lives the sweet and gratifying touch of God's forgiveness, his presence beside us and his closeness especially in the moments of greatest need.

This jubilee, in other words, is a privileged moment for the Church. ... Only a merciful Church shines!



*Pope Francis presents a rose at an icon of Mary and the child Jesus as he begins his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Dec. 9.*