



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

The Transformation That Evangelizes

Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



Pope Francis pointedly begins his message for Lent 2016 with the invocation of the Blessed Mother as “the image of a Church which evangelizes because she is evangelized.” Our Holy Father reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the fruitfulness which leads to evangelization — the generosity, faithfulness and compassionate goodness which have roots in the domestic church of marriage and family relationships.

In order to empower our brother Knights to better evangelize, let us assist them in seizing “the privileged moment” of Lent and help them “celebrate and experience God’s mercy,” as Pope Francis writes. This begins with a prayerful listening of

God’s prophetic word as a firsthand account of the Lord’s personal act of mercy in each of our lives. The invitation to return to the Lord and soften our hardened hearts occurs each time we encounter the Divine Mercy, who offers everyone “a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe.” Our Holy Father reminds us that slavery to sin often uses wealth and power to mask our true poverty: the proud illusion of relying on our own sense of omnipotence, and being bound to the ideologies of technoscience and consumerism.

It is imperative that each council give priority to the spiritual transformation of its members this Lent. Every council should strive to participate in some spiritual day of formation, a retreat or a parish mission. The supreme chaplain has asked that every brother Knight recommit to his weekly duty of Sunday Mass with his family. Can we also encourage every brother Knight to go to confession this Lenten season with his family? Chaplains and councils can do this by participating in the Vatican’s 24 Hours for the Lord initiative, which will occur March 4-5.

A useful resource for spiritual reflection is the apostolic exhortation *Into the Breach*, by Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix. The document, which is available at intothebreach.net, highlights three major rifts: the interior breach in every man’s spiritual and personal life, the breach of the devil attacking one’s family and parish community, and the breach in society and culture. Reading and discussing *Into the Breach* with our brother Knights, and then prayerfully reflecting on its call to respond, could make for a very fruitful Lent.

Vivat Jesus!



Pope Francis, seen here praying in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican, has expressed his wish that this year “will see us all firmly and confidently engaged, on different levels, in the pursuit of justice and peace.”

Monthly Reflection on Building the Domestic Church

A Synergy Between Parish and Family

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

Two months ago, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson announced a new Orderwide initiative called Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parish. At the heart of this proposal is the synergy between the family and the parish. Family and parish are two gifts of God that are deeply connected. The family is called to be a domestic church; the parish church is called to be a family of families. Both come from God and share the same goal: the transmission of the practice of the faith to our children and grandchildren.

Mary Eberstadt has found the best metaphor to explain this relationship, comparing it to the structure of DNA. Family and faith are the invisible double helix of society: two spirals that, when linked to one another, can effectively reproduce but whose strength and momentum depend on one another (*Why The West Really Lost God*). Thus, parish and family are entwined, and should grow together.

As a parish priest at St. Florian’s Church in Kraków, St. John Paul II understood this relationship well. In order to grow and flourish, young couples and families need an environment (what he called *środowisko*) of communion with other families. The parish is called to be this good soil where families can grow.

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A Time for Conversion

Excerpts from Pope Francis' 2016 Lenten Message

These works [the corporal and spiritual works of mercy] remind us that faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our neighbors in body and spirit: by feeding, visiting, comforting and instructing them. On such things will we be judged. For this reason, I expressed my hope that “the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; this will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty, and to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 15). For in the poor, the flesh of Christ “becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled ... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 15). It is the unprecedented and scandalous mystery of the extension in time of the suffering of the Innocent Lamb, the burning bush of gratuitous love. Before this love, we can, like Moses, take off our sandals (cf. *Ex* 3:5), especially when the poor are our brothers or sisters in Christ who are suffering for their faith.

For all of us, then, the season of Lent in this jubilee year is a favorable time to overcome our existential alienation by listening to God’s word and by practicing the works of mercy. In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy — counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer — we touch more directly our own sinfulness. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated. By touching the flesh of the crucified Jesus in the suffering, sinners can receive the gift of realizing that they too are poor and in need. By taking this path, the “proud,” the “powerful” and the “wealthy” spoken of in the Magnificat can also be embraced and undeservedly loved by the crucified Lord who died and rose for them. This love alone is the answer to that yearning for infinite happiness and love that we think we can satisfy with the idols of knowledge, power and riches. Yet the danger always remains that by a constant refusal to open the doors of their hearts to Christ who knocks on them in the poor, the proud, rich and powerful will end up condemning themselves and plunging into the eternal abyss of solitude which is hell. The pointed words of Abraham apply to them and to all of us: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk 16:29). Such attentive listening will best prepare us to celebrate the final victory over sin and death of the Bridegroom, now risen, who desires to purify his betrothed in expectation of his coming.

Let us not waste this season of Lent, so favorable a time for conversion!

Living the Year of Mercy: Action vs. Compassion



A homeless man holding a sign with a Scripture quote sits on a sidewalk in Philadelphia.

From Father Aquinas Guilbeau, OP, featured in Kathryn Jean Lopez’s “Expert Advice on Living in the Year of Mercy: A Jubilee Symposium,” Catholic Pulse, 31 Dec. 2015

As practically minded Americans, we’re quick to approach most problems with a cool plan of action. If someone approaches us with a need, for example, we strategize how best to alleviate the need quickly, effectively and efficiently, spending the minimum of energy and passion required. How many of us, when approaching the homeless veteran on the street, coordinate every movement of our bodies so as to drop a few coins into his jangling cup without either breaking stride or saying hello?

Mercy requires more of us. It demands not only a quick, efficient plan of action but also a change of heart. St. Thomas Aquinas defines the merciful person as one who is “affected with sorrow at the misery of another as though it were his own,” such that he “endeavors to dispel the misery of this other as if it were his own.” According to Aquinas, mercy is as much about compassion as it is about action. ...

Aquinas notes also that, at a deeper level, to show mercy to another is to acknowledge that we ourselves have been shown mercy, first of all by God, who in the very act of creating us — in drawing us out of nothing — acted mercifully on our behalf.

SYNERGY, FROM PAGE 1

Parishes and families share a common goal: the transmission of the practice of the faith. And — to some extent — both seem to be failing. If we look at the state of the Catholic faith in many countries, we realize that the faith is not being transmitted to the next generation. As author and co-founder Co-Director of the Catherine of Siena Institute Sherry Weddell puts it, “God has no grandchildren.” (*Making Intentional Disciples*). As a parish priest, I often think of this analogy when celebrating funeral Masses, particularly those of elderly widows. Although these widows had done their best to raise their children in the faith, most of their sons and daughters no longer seem to care. Only one-third still go to Mass and maybe 1 out of 10 grandchildren still considers himself to be Catholic.

God will have grandchildren, however, when the parish and the family work together in synergy. The new program announced by the supreme knight invites each parish family to develop a covenant between the parish and their home as a means of transmitting the practice of the faith. To some extent, the failure in the transmission of the faith is due to the fact that family and parish are doing alone what they should be doing together. We build the domestic church by strengthening the parish church. Our parish is called to be a “family of families,” an environment that strengthens the family. It is the mission of the parish priest to encourage spouses and parents in the loftiness of their vocation. When we, as priests, confirm and accompany the domestic church in its call to holiness, we help strengthen our parishes. Likewise, when families can find in our parishes a place to rest and be nourished, they are more likely to adore, to confess and to share the faith.

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 kofc.org/familyfullyalive. To order additional items mentioned in this newsletter, please visit knightsgear.com.

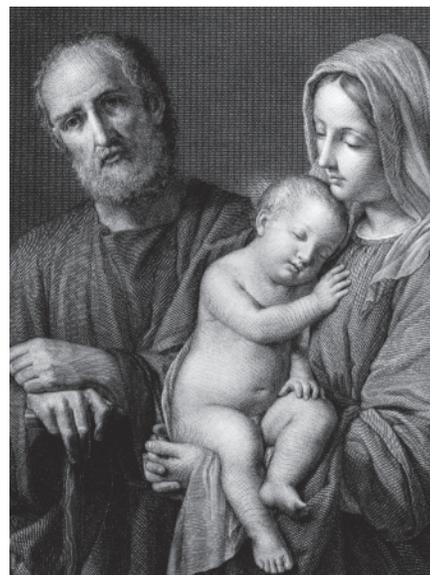
Strengthening Parishes: The Knights' Service of Ministry

Through the Building the Domestic Church initiative, the Knights of Columbus is working to revitalize parish and family life, and to help each family understand its role as a domestic church.

As an ongoing part of this initiative, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson is asking that a prayer to the Holy Family be offered at every state convention held this fraternal year. The prayer will be made available to all families, with the hope that each and every family will join together on the first Sunday after Christmas to offer this prayer of consecration.

The supreme knight also asks that Knights attend Mass together with their fellow council members and the members of their families on June 19, which marks the celebration of Father's Day in the United States. After Mass, Knights and their wives — along with all the married couples of the parish — should have an opportunity to renew their marriage vows.

Further information on these new aspects of the Domestic Church program may be found in the February issue of *Columbia*. Additional questions may be directed to the Corporate Communications Department by emailing knightline@kofc.org or calling 203-752-4264.



Share the Faith Through the Catholic Information Service



The Knights started Catholic Information Service (CIS) to educate non-Catholics about the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. Over time, this outreach has expanded to include publications for parishes, schools, retreat houses, military installations, correctional facilities, legislatures, the medical community and any individual who requests them.

In over 60 years, CIS has provided information on the topics of prayer, the sacraments, St. John Paul II's theology of the body, and other issues that are vitally important to each Knight as he seeks to live as a practical Catholic and strengthen his family as a domestic church.

We encourage all chaplains to share these materials with anyone seeking information about the Catholic faith and to keep them in your parish library. Visit kofc.org/CIS for more information.

Best Practices

An admirable practice is that of reaching out to the hungry in your community.

Work with your brother Knights to hold a food drive at your parish as part of the Food for Families initiative. Through this program, the Knights of Columbus has donated more than \$2.7 million and 3.8 million pounds of food to local food pantries, community food banks and soup kitchens.

As you reach out in mercy to meet physical needs, likewise assist with the spiritual needs of those in your community, particularly those who hunger for truth, peace or stability. Explain to them how they might find spiritual nourishment through the Eucharist and comfort through the sacrament of reconciliation.

If you or your council has established a similar practice that demonstrates a chaplain's role in enhancing the spiritual life of Knights and their families, evangelization and outreach, or membership growth and retention, please send the information to chaplains@kofc.org.

Monthly Suggested Activities

FEBRUARY

- Organize a "Day of Mercy" retreat for parishioners and members of your council during Lent. Plan time for confession and offer meditations on the role of mercy in our lives.
- Support local bishops in welcoming the Missionaries of Mercy, who serve as a living sign of God's welcome to all those in search of his forgiveness, to your local area.

MARCH

- Participate in Pope Francis' 24 Hours for the Lord initiative, March 4, by organizing a day of adoration and reconciliation for the members of your parish and council. Ask your council members if at least two members can remain present during adoration, so that the Blessed Sacrament will never be left unattended.
- Honor St. Joseph as patron of the Church through a novena, beginning on March 11 and ending on his feast day, March 19. Encourage your brother Knights and parishioners to have a deeper devotion to St. Joseph by distributing the Veritas Series booklet *Saint Joseph: Our Father in Faith* (#328).
- Celebrate Founder's Day on Tuesday, March 29, by planning events in honor of Father McGivney's legacy. For ideas on how to involve your parish in Founder's Day and Orderwide Outreach Week events, visit the "Council" section of kofc.org/service.

This Month's Jubilee Events

Feb. 2 — Jubilee for Consecrated Life

Feb. 6 — Jubilee for Padre Pio's prayer group

Feb. 10 — Sending forth of the Missionaries of Mercy

Feb. 22 — Jubilee for the Roman Curia, the governorate and other institutions connected with the Holy See



This Lent Sacrifice for Those Who Suffer

Respond to Pope Francis' Lenten message of mercy by standing in solidarity with persecuted Christians and other religious minorities.

Consider asking council members and parishioners to set aside at least a dollar a day during Lent. These funds may then be donated to the Christian Refugee Relief Fund, which allows the Knights of Columbus to support humanitarian assistance and raise awareness of the situation in the Middle East.

Learn more by searching the hashtag #ChristiansAtRisk online and visiting christiansatrisk.org.



A young Syrian refugee cries while waiting at the Turkish-border city of Şanlıurfa.

Prayer for Persecuted Christians

Composed by Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori

O God of all the nations,
the One God who is and was and always will be,
in your providence you willed that your Church
be united to the suffering of your Son.

Look with mercy on your servants
who are persecuted for their faith in you.

Grant them perseverance and courage
to be worthy imitators of Christ.

Bring your wisdom upon leaders of nations
to work for peace among all peoples.

May your Spirit open conversion
for those who contradict your will,
that we may live in harmony.

Give us the grace to be united in truth and freedom,
and to always seek your will in our lives.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us.