



# 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

## Message of Pope Francis for Lent 2017

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Jl 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, Jan. 8, 2016). ...

At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). ... Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. ... Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man. ...

The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. ...

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words:

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7). ...

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. ... Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

*"The Word is a gift.  
Other persons are a gift."*



## Plenary Indulgences for the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima

**I**n honor of the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, the faithful may receive a plenary indulgence throughout the anniversary year, which ends Nov. 26, 2017.

To obtain the plenary indulgence, the faithful must fulfill the ordinary conditions of an indulgence; make a pilgrimage to the Fatima shrine in Portugal or pray before any statue of Our Lady of Fatima anywhere in the world; and pray an Our Father, recite the Creed and invoke Our Lady of Fatima. The elderly and infirm who are unable to otherwise participate in the indulgence conditions may receive the indulgence if they pray in front of a statue of Our Lady of Fatima while offering prayers, sufferings or sacrifices and spiritually uniting themselves to the jubilee celebrations on the days of the apparitions.

## Resources for Lent

**N**eed simple ideas to engage parishioners this Lent? Visit [uscgb.org/lent](http://uscgb.org/lent) to find inspiration for preparing homilies that inspire people to go to confession. At the website, you can also find pamphlets and flyers advertising your parishes' participation in "The Light Is ON for You" Lenten confession campaign and so much more!



CNS photo/Octavio Duran

# My Daughter, Speak to Priests

## *The message of the merciful Jesus given to St. Faustina*

by Sister Donata Farbaniec, OLM

“O Jesus, give us fervent and holy priests! Oh, how great is the dignity of the priest, but at the same time, how great is his responsibility! Much has been given you, O priest, but much will also be demanded of you” (*Divine Mercy in My Soul*, 941).

Thus wrote St. Faustina, who is well-known today throughout the world as the apostle of Divine Mercy. As we know, this Polish religious sister was canonized in Rome in the Great Jubilee Year of 2000 and the first saint proclaimed for the new millennium. The mission entrusted to her by the merciful Jesus was a crucial one, for she was given the mission of preparing the world for his second coming (cf. 635).

She worked to prepare the world by reminding everyone of Jesus’ great mercy for every human soul and, in a special way, for great sinners. In her diary, which she wrote at the request of her spiritual director Blessed Michał Sopoćko and which is now considered a pearl of mystical literature, she speaks about God’s greatest desire: that mankind will turn with trust to his mercy.

According to St. Faustina’s diary, priests are the special instruments that have been appointed by the Lord to bring this message to the world. As Jesus said to St. Faustina, “I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of mine towards souls of sinners. Let the sinner not be afraid to approach me. The flames of mercy are burning me — clamoring to be spent; I want to pour them out upon these souls” (50).

There are many paragraphs in St. Faustina’s diary where Jesus emphasizes the key role of priests and their responsibility for sharing this message. He also regularly promises he will help priests in this mission, saying their work will yield abundant fruit. “Tell my priests that hardened sinners will repent on hearing their words when they speak about my unfathomable mercy, about the compassion I have for them in my heart. To priests who proclaim and extol my mercy, I will give wondrous power; I will anoint their words and touch the hearts of those to whom they will speak” (1521).

And what is the special responsibility of priests? To honor the Divine Mercy through the forms of devotion given to us by Jesus himself:

- The promotion of Divine Mercy Sunday: “No soul will be justified until it turns with confidence to my mercy, and this is why the first Sunday after Easter is to be the feast of Mercy. On that day, priests are to tell everyone about my great and unfathomable mercy” (570).
- The veneration of the image of the merciful Jesus: “Tell the confessor that the image is to be on view in the church. ... By means of this image I shall be granting many graces to souls; so let every soul have access to it” (570).
- The praying of the chaplet of Divine Mercy: “Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from my infinite mercy” (687).
- The observation of the “hour of mercy” every day at 3 p.m.
- The spreading of devotion to the Divine Mercy (cf. 1521).

It is easy to notice the irreplaceable role of priests in this message, namely in preparation of the world for the second coming of Jesus Christ: “Speak to the world about my mercy; let all mankind recognize my unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come the day of justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fount of my mercy; let them profit from the blood and water which gushed forth for them” (848).

Right now, our generation is experiencing those end times. We need to take seriously the words of our Savior, which are directed to each of us in person.



*Sister Gaudia Skass, a member of the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy, to which Sister Donata also belongs, points to an image of the Divine Mercy on display during World Youth Day 2016 in Kraków, Poland.*

## BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

### Father McGivney Healing Mass

When looking for ways to honor Father McGivney’s legacy and strengthen the faith of your parishioners, turn to this excellent practice incorporated by Msgr. Michael Mannion, associate state chaplain for New Jersey.

During his years serving in the Diocese of Camden, Msgr. Mannion has been involved in healing services and Masses for many years. In the past several years, however, with the leadership and assistance of a team of lay people and several Knights, Msgr. Mannion now regularly arranges to have a relic of Father McGivney present during his healing Masses and services.

During these services, Msgr. Mannion blesses the attendees with the relic and prays over them. He also encourages them to personally and quietly share their own prayers for physical, emotional or spiritual healing.

Many of the attendees of these services have been away from the regular practices of the faith, but this experience has served to reconnect them with the Church. Because the services and Masses are promoted by local members of the Order, they also serve to introduce attendees to the mission and ministries of the Knights.

If you have any questions on how to host similar healing Masses or services in your area, please contact the Office of Chaplains at 203-752-4115 or [chaplains@kofc.org](mailto:chaplains@kofc.org).

# Planning the Months Ahead

## MARCH

Encourage your brother Knights and parishioners to have a deeper devotion to St. Joseph by praying a novena from March 11 to March 19. While promoting this devotion, be sure to distribute *St. Joseph: Our Father in Faith* (#328). If you haven't yet ordered hard copies of this Domestic Church series booklet, a digital version is available online at [kofc.org/cis](http://kofc.org/cis). Be sure to share the link in your parish bulletin, inviting parishioners to check out the booklet as well as other CIS materials, such as *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* (#10162).

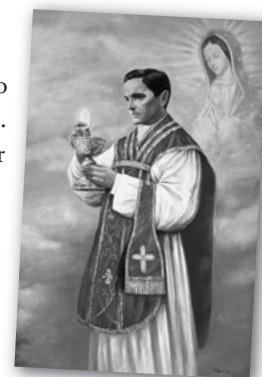
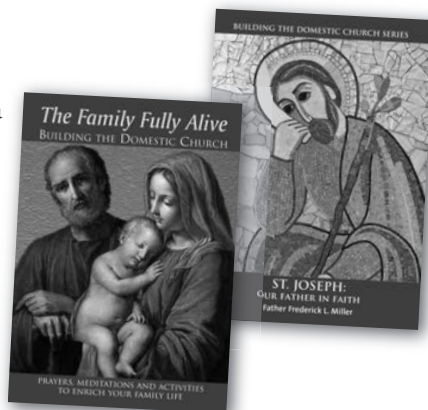


Invite your council and parish community to join brother Knights around the world in praying the Novena of Grace and Solidarity from Sunday, March 12, to Monday, March 20. See page 4 for details.

Celebrate a pro-life Mass or prayer service on Saturday, March 25, the feast of the Annunciation and the international Knights of Columbus Day of Prayer for the Unborn Child. If you haven't yet done so, be sure to ask your brother Knights to invite all members of the community, including public officials and health care workers, to the Mass.

Hold a Lenten retreat for parishioners and members of your council. If you don't have time to plan a full-scale retreat, invite parishioners and Knights to a one-hour "mini-retreat" on one of the Sundays of Lent. During the hour, offer to hear confessions while one of the Knights from your council leads the Stations of the Cross or publicly shares a meditation on the passion of our Lord.

Celebrate Founder's Day on March 29 in honor of Father McGivney's legacy. If you haven't yet made plans for the day, visit the "Council" section of [kofc.org/service](http://kofc.org/service) for some last-minute activities and events.

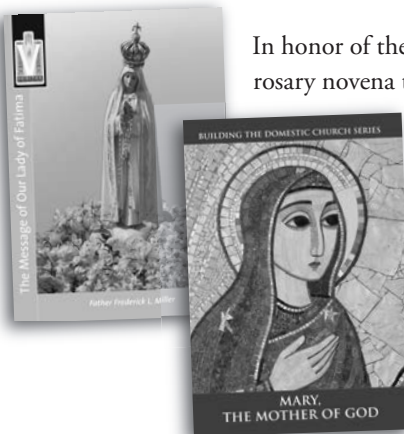


## APRIL

Celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 23, the second Sunday of Easter, by leading council members and parishioners in devotions in honor of the Divine Mercy. Encourage the Knights in your council to help you plan ways of celebrating the feast day through activities such as a special prayer Holy Hour or a series of talks on the importance of the Divine Mercy in today's world. *Chaplet of Divine Mercy* prayer cards (#9402, available in packs of 100 for \$3) and *Knights of Columbus rosaries* (Rose-1, available for \$3 each or for \$2.50 each when ordering 50 or more) can be ordered from [knightsgear@kofc.org](mailto:knightsgear@kofc.org) should you wish to distribute them during these events.

## MAY

Join Catholics throughout the world in celebrating the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on May 7, Good Shepherd Sunday. Lead prayers during your council and assembly meetings, asking the Lord to prompt men and women to respond to the call to a priestly or religious vocation, and encourage the members of your council to take part in the Order's Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP) to help seminarians and postulants with tuition assistance.



In honor of the 100-year anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, lead the parish in a rosary novena to conclude on the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13. Prior to the novena, be sure to share the details of the indulgences granted in honor of this anniversary year with your brother Knights and parishioners. You might also distribute *The Message of Our Lady of Fatima* (#341) or *Mary, The Mother of God* (#324). For information on these publications, visit [kofc.org/cis](http://kofc.org/cis).

Honor the mothers of your local community following weekend Masses on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14. Invite your brother Knights to support local mothers in need by donating supplies to women's shelters or pro-life pregnancy centers.



Jesus is depicted as the good shepherd in a stained-glass window at Blessed Sacrament Church in Bolton Landing, N.Y. Good Shepherd Sunday, which coincides with the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, is May 7 this year.

## Novena of Grace and Solidarity

*Today, we see throughout parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia the brutal persecution, torture and killing of Christians. To support those suffering for their faith, the Knights of Columbus is urging everyone around the world to pray the below prayer from Sunday, March 12, to Monday, March 20. The novena, which may also be prayed continuously throughout the year, is based off a prayer by Italian Jesuit Father Marcello Mastrilli, a missionary to Japan who was martyred for the faith.*

*For more details on how you can help these Christians, visit [christiansatrisk.org](http://christiansatrisk.org).*

God our Father, as St. Francis Xavier and countless of your missionaries traveled to the ends of the earth, impelled by the love of Jesus Christ, give me the grace to rely entirely on you, confident in the knowledge that you raise up the humble and the lowly. May I be united with your saints in offering you my humble tribute of thanksgiving and praise. I implore you to grant me, through your mercy, the blessing of living and dying in a state of grace. I also ask this same blessing for all those throughout the world who suffer persecution because of their faith in you. O God, you were pleased to gather to your Church the peoples of the world by the preaching and miracles of all your saints; mercifully grant that I may imitate their virtues and so bear witness to the Gospel of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

