



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

Pope Francis Advises Against Coldness of Heart

From the Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2018



Pope Francis embraces a sick child during an audience in Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican, Nov. 14.

In his description of hell, Dante Alighieri pictures the devil seated on a throne of ice (*Inferno XXXIV*, 28-29), in frozen and loveless isolation. We might well ask ourselves how it happens that charity can turn cold within us. What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool? ...

In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I sought to describe the most evident signs of this lack of love: selfishness and spiritual sloth, sterile pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves and the worldly mentality that makes us concerned only for appearances. ...

Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves and all about us, the signs I have just described. But the Church, our mother and teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 33), and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. ... This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of his children. If through me God helps someone today, will he not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God (cf. *Fidei Donum*, 3).

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. ... Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbor. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger. ...

*"If through me
God helps someone today,
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This Good Friday, Transform Your Parish

Work with your brother Knights to combat declining attendance of the Good Friday liturgy!

A quick glance at the pews shows it: More and more people are shying away from going to church. During Lent, this emptiness feels multiplied, for between the Stations of the Cross and the Good Friday liturgy, our churches can seem emptier than ever.

But this doesn't have to be the case. In fact, the Knights of Columbus are committed to helping pastors welcome everyone to their pews this Paschal Triduum. Not only are we asking every single Knight of Columbus to attend his parish's liturgy on Good Friday, March 30, we are also asking each to bring his wife and kids and to extend the invitation to other families in the parish.

As a chaplain, you are in the perfect position to offer Knights a personal welcome to the liturgy. Speak to any who may feel uncomfortable bringing their kids to a service on Our Lord's death. After all, his death is central to our faith. Without it, we have no Resurrection, and looking at his Passion helps them make sense of our faith and everyday sufferings.

So welcome everyone, old and young, to attend this Good Friday liturgy with their families and transform your parish today!



Four Ways the K of C Can Help You Promote Your Good Friday Liturgy

1. Ask your council to help you advertise the event. An 8.5x11 “*By Your Holy Cross*” poster (#10573) can be downloaded at kofc.org/goodfriday. Be sure to fill in the time of your parish’s liturgy in the available space.
2. Have the council set up these posters in the church vestibule, in your parish bulletin, and at gathering spots around the parish.
3. Work with your council to organize the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday before or after the Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion and Death. If needed, your council can provide copies of *The Way of the Cross: Traditional and Modern Meditations* (#363).
4. Welcome Knights to share the Catholic Information Service booklets *Jesus Christ* (#105) and *Christ: Lord and Savior* (#358) with parishioners. These booklets may be ordered by visiting kofc.org/cis, or they may be downloaded as PDFs at no cost. *Jesus Christ* (#105) is also available as an MP3 audio file.



*“The way of perfection passes by way of the cross.
There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle.”*

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2015*

Bring Pope Francis’ Message of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving to Your Council and Parish This Lent

Prayer

“Prayer is the best weapon we possess.” — St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Welcome your council, parish, RCIA candidates and the greater community to participate in a Stations of the Cross for each Friday during Lent. During the stations, you might use *The Way of the Cross* (#363).

Fasting

“You were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness!” — Pope Benedict XVI

Invite the men of your parish and council to take part in the ancient Christian practice of fasting as a way to encounter Christ. Explain that one of the purposes of fasting is to offer it for a special intention, such as a renewal of strong, dynamic faith among parish families. If your council seeks guidance on fasting and praying as a group, turn to the men’s self-discipline programs listed in last month’s issue of *Chaplain’s Report*.

Almsgiving

“God has no need of your money, but the poor have.” — St. Augustine

Whether it’s by promoting a charitable activity such as a 40 Cans for Lent drive, a fundraising effort to support suffering brothers and sisters in the Middle East, or a project that assists “the least of my brethren” in local communities, we can help our parishioners and brother Knights realize that almsgiving is so much more than giving a few extra dollars or donating some old clothes — it’s the spirit, love and faith we express when sacrificing our time, talent and money. For details on these drives and fundraising efforts, visit kofc.org.

LENT, FROM PAGE 1

Above all, I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew. ...

During the Easter Vigil, we will celebrate once more the moving rite of the lighting of the Easter candle. Drawn from the “new fire,” this light will slowly overcome the darkness and illuminate the liturgical assembly. “May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds” (*Roman Missal Third Edition*, Easter Vigil, Office of Lucernarium) and enable all of us to relive the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. By listening to God’s word and drawing nourishment from the table of the Eucharist, may our hearts be ever more ardent in faith, hope and love.

CIS Booklet to Use This Lent

This upcoming Lent, help Catholics get over their discomfort, fear or misconceptions of sacramental confession by encouraging them to read the Luke E. Hart Series’ *Penance* (#115). Written by Peter Kreeft, it provides a simple but in-depth explanation of this important sacrament.

Catholic Information Service booklets are available to order. You can also download free PDF and MP3 versions in English, French or Spanish. Visit kofc.org/cis for details.

For more information, write:

CIS, PO Box 1971, New Haven, CT 06521-1971 or cis@kofc.org.

Planning the Months Ahead

APRIL



Celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 8, the second Sunday of Easter. Ask the Knights in your council to help you plan a 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 should you wish to distribute them during these events.

Mark the 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations on April 22, the fourth Sunday of Easter, by inviting your council's help in organizing a vocations awareness event or a Refund Support Vocations Program fundraiser. Also, invite your council to lead the Prayer for the Canonization of Michael McGivney before every Mass at the parish; as an apostle of Christian family life, Venerable Father McGivney might be a great intercessor for your parish family's discernment.

MAY

Honor the mothers of your local community following weekend Masses on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13. The day also marks the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima, making it the perfect opportunity to ask your council to lead the parish in a rosary for the intentions of all mothers of the parish. On the day, distribute *The Message of Our Lady of Fatima* (#341), available at kofc.org/cis.



Invite your brother Knights to lead the parish, especially students from confirmation classes or other youth programs, in supporting local mothers in need by donating supplies to women's shelters or pro-life pregnancy centers.

Celebrate Pentecost, May 20, with a celebration following the most popular parish Mass. Welcome your brother Knight and their families to run this event, and ask them to reach out in a special way to the men and women who joined your parish family at the Easter Vigil.

JUNE

Work with council officers to hold a Father's Day Affirmation of Wedding Vows during or following all Masses celebrated June 18-19. Be sure to preach on the Church's understanding of marriage and fatherhood on the days leading up to the event. For more information, visit kofc.org/domesticchurch.

Encourage fathers in your community by sharing the resources provided by Fathers for Good. Fathers for Good addresses the main concerns facing men: faith, family and finances. For more information, visit fathersforgood.org.

BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Plan Mission Days to Prepare for Pentecost

A best practice among Knights and chaplains is to help spark the seed of a missionary spirit in your parish and council. Do this by joining Knights and their families on a 10-day life-changing "Mission Day" program, from the Ascension to Pentecost. Each Mission Day focuses on different tasks that challenge parishes and families to live up to their full potential as missionary disciples.

For more information, visit stamforddio.org and check out the 2017 *Mission Days Guidebook*, available on the left sidebar. This guidebook provides a good overview of the program. We encourage you to prayerfully discern implementing the program, or a similar initiative, in your parish this coming Pentecost.

Change Parish Life in 24 Hours

With just 24 hours, you can renew your parish. The "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative invites the entire Church community to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation in the context of eucharistic adoration. This initiative takes place March 9-10. During this time, at least one church in your diocese will remain open for 24 consecutive hours, offering an opportunity for both eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession. Don't let your parish and council families miss out on this wonderful opportunity to spend time with the Lord. Check out your diocese's website to find out which church will be open, and then invite your brother Knights, parishioners and their families to attend as a group.



Gazing on the Merciful Jesus

A testimony about the power of Divine Mercy from Sister Gaudia Skass of the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy

"Many people nowadays think God is indifferent. He doesn't care. In the Divine Mercy image, we see Jesus moving towards us. My Jesus walks barefoot, which means that his feet remain wounded. This causes him pain, but still he keeps on moving, he keeps on choosing my direction.

Jesus said that his gaze from the image is like his gaze from the cross. And it's amazing when you look into his eyes and you don't feel any kind of condemnation."

Sister Gaudia Skass is a member of the same religious community as St. Faustina Kowalska, the visionary who received the message of Divine Mercy. Her testimony about the Divine Mercy image is among those highlighted in the Knights of Columbus' documentary film *The Face of Mercy*. To watch her full testimony, order the film from faceofmercyfilm.com. It's also available to watch for free via Amazon Prime Video!



Photo by Spirit Juice Studios



Painting by Helena Tebrzewska, ©1993 Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy



Good Friday Prayer for God's Mercy

The below prayer, taken from the diary of St. Faustina, is said on Good Friday to mark the start of a novena in preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday. For additional prayers of the novena, visit ewtn.com/devotionals/mercy.

Most Merciful Jesus, whose very nature it is to have compassion on us and to forgive us, do not look upon our sins but upon our trust which we place in your infinite goodness.

Receive us all into the abode of your most compassionate heart, and never let us escape from it. We beg this of you by your love which unites you to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Eternal Father, turn your merciful gaze upon all mankind and especially upon poor sinners, all enfolded in the most compassionate heart of Jesus.

For the sake of his sorrowful Passion, show us your mercy, that we may praise the omnipotence of your mercy for ever and ever.

Amen.

This painting, which was featured at the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska, depicts the saint with an image of Jesus as the Divine Mercy. The image of Jesus depicted here is based on a 1943 painting by Adolf Hyla that hangs in a chapel at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Kraków-Lagiewniki, Poland.