



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

An Anniversary of Grace

Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



April 2 marks the 10th anniversary of the final pilgrimage of Saint John Paul II — his journey to “the Father’s house.” We all remember his great witness to life as he persevered under the cross of suffering to his final days.

No longer able to speak from his window overlooking St. Peter’s Square, our beloved saint simply made the sign of the cross. He would later tell his secretary, “Thy will be done ... *Totus tuus.*”

On that afternoon, he would again confirm his trust in the Lord in words that were to be his last: “Let me go home to the Lord.” Around 8 p.m., the closest friends of the pope began to celebrate the vigil Mass for the feast of Divine Mercy at his bedside. As crowds of young people gathered in the square below, the serenading chants could be heard on the fourth floor of the papal apartments: “*Giovanni Paolo! Viva il Papa!*” His secretary gave him a few drops of the Precious Blood of Christ at Communion as Viaticum.

At 9:37 p.m., his great heart finally stopped beating. All in the room immediately started to sing the *Te Deum* to thank God for the gift of the life of Karol Wojtyła.

At the time of Pope John Paul II’s death, I served as a college chaplain in New England. The days before and after his death were ones of great grace and mercy. Many students — aware of no other pope in their lifetime — returned to the practice of the faith. Inspired by the example of an extraordinary life lived with such attraction to the very end, the students sought out confession and new ways to live their faith.

The 10th anniversary of John Paul II’s death significantly falls on Holy Thursday, the beginning of the great Easter Triduum, and the day on which he always wrote his spiritual *Letter to Priests*. Writing his final letter from a hospital bed, this great promoter of vocations reminded priests to “cultivate a constant sense of gratitude” for the many gifts they have received. The Vicar of Christ, who had imitated the Good Shepherd throughout his 27-year pontificate and 59 years of priestly service, pointed out: “We have our crosses to bear — and we are certainly not the only ones! — but the gifts we have received are so great that we cannot fail to sing from the depths of our hearts our own *Magnificat.*”

St. John Paul II’s last formally written words were those of the *Regina Caeli* message that he had prepared to deliver the next day, Divine Mercy Sunday, April 3, 2005: “Jesus, I trust in You, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.” These concluding words are a summary of St. John Paul II’s life: entrustment to Divine Mercy.

As we mark this milestone anniversary of St. John Paul II’s death, let us rejoice with gratitude to God that we have lived during this momentous papacy; that we have witnessed one of the greatest teaching pontificates of all time; and that so many have listened to his call to set out into the deep and follow Christ with a sincere gift of self through holy marriages, religious life and evangelical priesthood. May we encourage our brother Knights to ask St. John Paul’s intercession, especially for those family and friends who have fallen away from the practice of the faith and for the vocations of young people they know.

Happy Easter!

Monthly Reflection on Building the Domestic Church

The Family — School of True Love

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

“It is not good for man to be alone.” God has not called the human being to loneliness, but to build a communion of persons, a family. It is not good for our parishioners to be alone. They are called to become spouses and parents. But at the same time, it is not easy. Marriage and parenthood are beautiful, but difficult, vocations. As priests, we are called to help families explore their own vocation.

How can we help our parishioners in their path of love? First of all, we need to love their vocation. As a young priest working with families, Karol Wojtyła “learned to love human love.” We are called to minister something really beautiful: the divine project regarding human love. Secondly, we need to help the family as the primordial school of love. As the same St. John Paul II wrote in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, “Love is not something that is learned, and yet, there is nothing else as important to learn!” Love seems to be a spontaneous feeling, but in order for it to endure, it requires a great deal of work and skill.

SEE **FAMILY**, PAGE 2



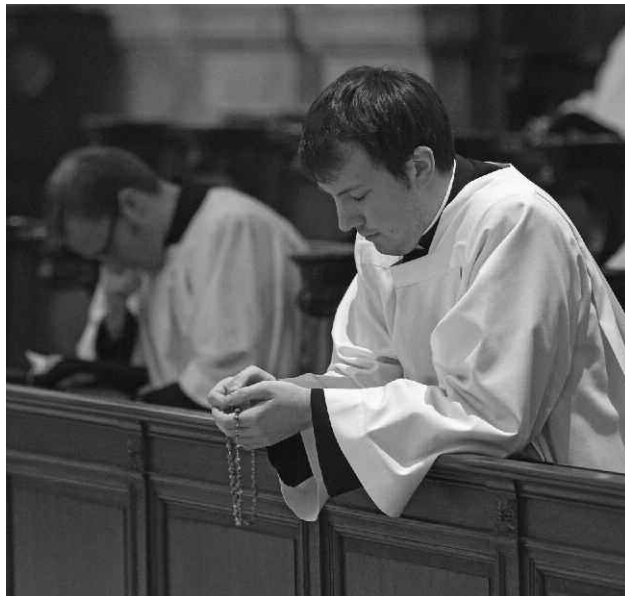
Jesse Straight, a member of Father Herman J. Veger Council 5561 in Warrington, Va., is pictured with his family on his Virginia farm.

Visit www.kofc.org/chaplain to sign up to receive future issues of this newsletter via email. Previous issues are also archived at this site.

Vocations: A Witness to the Truth

*Excerpts from Pope Francis' address given
on the 51st World Day of Prayer for Vocations*

The Gospel says that “Jesus went about all the cities and villages. ... When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:35-38). These words surprise us, because we all know that it is necessary first to plow, sow and cultivate to then, in due time, reap an abundant harvest. Jesus says instead that “the harvest is plentiful.” But who did the work to bring about these results? There is only one answer: God. Clearly the field of which Jesus is speaking is humanity, us. And the efficacious action which has borne “much fruit” is the grace of God, that is, communion with him (cf. Jn 15:5). The prayer which Jesus asks of the Church therefore concerns the need to increase the number of those who serve his Kingdom.



impulse of grace contained in the seed of the word, which must grow in us and be transformed into concrete service to our neighbor. We need not be afraid: God follows the work of his hands with passion and skill in every phase of life. He never abandons us! He has the fulfillment of his plan for us at heart, and yet he wishes to achieve it with our consent and cooperation.

No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love. ... I ask you bishops, priests, religious, Christian communities and families to orient vocational pastoral planning in this direction, by accompanying young people on pathways of holiness which, because they are personal, “call for a genuine ‘training in holiness’ capable of being adapted to every person’s need. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31).

Let us dispose our hearts therefore to being “good soil,” by listening, receiving and living out the word, and thus bearing fruit. The more we unite ourselves to Jesus through prayer, sacred Scripture, the Eucharist, the sacraments celebrated and lived in the Church and in fraternity, the more there will grow in us the joy of cooperating with God in the service of the kingdom of mercy and truth, of justice and peace.

(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

... Every vocation, even within the variety of paths, always requires an exodus from oneself in order to center one’s life on Christ and on his Gospel. Both in married life and in the forms of religious consecration, as well as in priestly life, we must surmount the ways of thinking and acting that do not conform to the will of God. It is an “exodus that leads us on a journey of adoration of the Lord and of service to him in our brothers and sisters” (Address to the International Union of Superiors General, May 8, 2013). Therefore, we are all called to adore Christ in our hearts (1 Pet 3:15) in order to allow ourselves to be touched by the

FAMILY, FROM PAGE 1

The first place where love is taught and matured is in the family. Every parish has its way of dealing with marriage preparation. We all experience the struggles of this immediate preparation, as it is too short to prepare for such a great promise. Providentially, the engaged couple’s preparation for the greatest promise of their life started the very day of their conception — or even earlier, when their parents were married. As children, they learned that love is not just a feeling, but a great decision which is renewed daily.

This broad way of looking at marriage preparation gives a new light to the mission of our parish. Whether we are involved with sacramental preparation, the youth group or the Catholic school, we are dealing with children of God called to become spouses and parents. In our activities with those already married, the poor, the elderly, the separated and the widowed, we are called to help people remember and keep their promise.

Because our children may be called to become spouses and parents, we want to help them explore the vocation to marriage and family life. The Domestic Church program dedicates the month of April to helping families become true schools of love. As a concrete practice, we should invite our families to plan a special meal together and speak with their children about their first date. Parents, and also grandparents, can tell their children and grandchildren about their marriage (the pictures of the ceremony, making the adjustment from being single to being a couple, having children, etc.). Through this dialogue, we hope children will learn the beauty of faithful love. At the same time, as they remember their wedding day, parents will hopefully grow in gratitude. In this way, the family will shine as the first and permanent school of love.

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’ “Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive” initiative. Copies of the *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* booklet (#10162) can be obtained by contacting the Supply Department at 203-752-4320. An online copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at kofc.org/familyfullyalive.

Monthly Suggested Activities

April

- Celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 12, the Second Sunday of Easter, by leading council members and parishioners in devotions in honor of the novena to the Divine Mercy.
 - ✦ Encourage Knights to assist with any last minute planning or promotion of the feast day and distribute *Chaplet of Divine Mercy* prayer cards (#9402) and *Knights of Columbus rosaries* (Rose-1) for use during the services.
 - ✦ Share with your council members and parishioners the words of St. John Paul II on the importance of the Divine Mercy in the third millennium: “This miracle of mercy has radically changed humanity’s destiny. It is a miracle in which is unfolded the fullness of the love of the Father who, for our redemption, does not even draw back before the sacrifice of his Only-begotten Son. ... Through the mystery of this wounded heart, the restorative tide of God’s merciful love continues to spread over the men and women of our time. Here alone can those who long for true and lasting happiness find its secret” (*Homily on the First Universal Celebration for Divine Mercy*, April 22, 2001).
- Join Catholics throughout the world in celebrating the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, April 26.
 - ✦ Organize a Holy Hours for Vocations, or 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.
 - ✦ Encourage the members of your council to take part in the Order’s Refund Support Vocation Program (RSVP) to help seminarians and postulants with tuition assistance and money for personal expenses and/or emergencies.
 - ✦ Invite a seminarian or religious sponsored through the RSVP to address your parish and council community following Mass, asking him or her to speak about this year’s day of prayer.

May

- During May, the month traditionally dedicated to Our Lady, consider organizing Marian devotions or offering a series of lectures on Marian theology.
 - ✦ Lead the parish in a rosary novena to conclude on May 13, the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima. As the memorial is closely followed by the feast of Ascension on Thursday, May 14 — or in some dioceses, the following Sunday — consider explaining the importance of Our Lady’s presence in the early Church and her patient watchfulness for the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, celebrated this year on Sunday, May 24.
 - ✦ Organize Marian talks based upon the material in the Catholic Information booklet *Mary, Mother of God* (#324), which addresses several questions common among those who have little understanding of Mary’s role in salvation history. For more information on this booklet and others in the Veritas Series, please visit www.kofc.org/cis.
 - ✦ If parish scheduling does not allow for a full series of talks, consider asking members of the councils to help distribute rosaries or other Marian devotionals to all families of the parish following Sunday Masses throughout the month.
- Support your local council members in honoring the mothers of your local community on Mothers’ Day, Sunday, May 10. Allow councils or Squire circles to present flowers to mothers of your parish following weekend Masses, or join your brother Knights in preparing meals or supplies for local mothers in need at women’s shelters or crisis pregnancy centers. Offer to bless the items before they are distributed.

Best Practice of the Month

An admirable practice among Knights of Columbus chaplains and councils is that of regularly inviting local priests to council meetings or sponsoring members of local religious communities to speak at their parish. The members of St. Oliver Plunkett Council 13440 in Snellville, Ga., exemplified this by inviting the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to speak about vocations to students attending the religious education classes of the parish. The two visiting sisters, one of whom received Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP) assistance from the Knights, also spoke to parishioners following Sunday Mass, answering various questions about their vocation experiences.

Join the efforts made by Knights and Catholics throughout the world by likewise raising awareness of the vocation to the priesthood or religious life in your local community.

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 a 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.



Seminarian Desmond Drummer, right, participates in a panel discussion on vocations with Abbot Francis Michael Stiteler of the Trappist Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, Ga. Three years later, Drummer was ordained in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. (CNS photo/Michael Alexander, Georgia Bulletin)

A Prayer for Vocations

Heavenly Father, bless your Church with an abundance of holy and zealous priests, deacons, brothers and sisters.

Give those you have called to the married state and those you have chosen to live as single persons in the world the special graces that their lives require.

Form us all in the likeness of your Son so that in him, with him and through him we may love you more deeply and serve you more faithfully, always and everywhere.

With Mary we ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS**

CHAPLAIN'S
report

1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510-3326

Documentary on St. John Paul II Debuts on National TV

A new Knights of Columbus-produced documentary on St. John Paul II and his relationship with North and South America will screen this month on national television networks.

John Paul II in America: Uniting a Continent explores how the papacy of St. John Paul II left an indelible mark on the American continent. Driven by his singular conviction of a “United American Continent” under the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe, John Paul II’s papal travels from Argentina to Alaska generated massive crowds, shaped an entire generation and ultimately changed the course of history.

The film, soon to be released on DVD, is narrated by actor Andy Garcia. It features rare archival footage and insightful analysis from leading figures, including Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley of Boston, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, John Paul II biographer George Weigel and former Vatican spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls. Viewers will be both intrigued and moved by the documentary’s unprecedented framework for understanding one of the giant figures of our times.

Through the Words of St. John Paul II

This month marks the 10th anniversary of the death of St. John Paul II. As we celebrate our participation in the Resurrection of Christ this Easter season, let us recall the late Holy Father’s words in *The Gospel of Life: On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*: “Death itself is anything but an event without hope. It is the door which opens wide on eternity and, for those who live in Christ, an experience of participation in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection.”



(CNS photo/Michael Okoniewski)