



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

Teaching Children How to Pray

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As this issue of *Chaplain's Report* was going to press, joyful news of Pope Francis' approval of miracles for both Blessed Francesco Marto and Blessed Jacinta Marto — two of three shepherd children who received miraculous visions in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917 — was announced. The youngest non-martyrs to be canonized to date, the Marto siblings died when they were just 10 and 9 years old, victims of a pandemic flu that swept through their village. Their canonization fittingly will take place during the 100th anniversary celebration of their visions from Our Lady.

Among the many lenses through which one can view the apparitions at Fatima, perhaps the most important remains that of the family. Fatima is a school of prayer for the family. It is, of course, stunning that the Lord would choose three young children to reveal the messages of mercy amid the conflagrations of the 20th century. Even more amazing is the fact that an angel and the Blessed Mother would ask such young children to lead lives of intercessory prayer. To the astonishment of all who cared for them, Francesco and Jacinta offered their final sufferings to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Today, surveys of Catholic families reveal that the best indicator of whether or not children will practice the faith later in life is whether they witnessed their father praying and practicing the faith. Is it any wonder that the father of the Marto children is depicted as a wise and kind man of faith, inclined to believe in the goodness of his children?

As the Church marks the jubilee anniversary of the appearances at Fatima, may it be an occasion for our brother Knights and their families to return to the practice of family prayer and the rosary. How many children and grandchildren of our brother Knights could be inspired by the lives of Blesseds Francesco and Jacinta and seek to emulate their prayerful intercession? Let us encourage our brother Knights to nourish a spirit of prayer in their own families, so that all of us would one day enter the same glory of heaven.

Vivat Jesus!

Beseeching Our Lady of Fatima, the Mother of Mercy

Excerpts from a homily given by Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori, in Fatima, Portugal, March 2015

When I was a child, the story of Our Lady's appearance to three Portuguese children — Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco — and the three Fatima secrets captured my imagination.

On New Year's Day, 1960, at 5 a.m., my mother found my 9-year-old self outside, on our snow-covered front porch. "What on earth are you doing out here?" she wanted to know. I answered solemnly that I was looking for the newspaper. After all, my third grade teacher, Sister Mary Viator, had told us that the third Fatima secret would be revealed in 1960, and I wanted to be among the first to read all about it. At that point, my mother revealed to me that I had better come in and go back to bed!

My youthful enthusiasm for the Fatima apparitions was not misplaced. The appearances of Our Lady in 1916 and 1917 to the three young people tending sheep in a remote place that few had heard about were deeply prophetic. The messages that Our Lady confided to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco are no less relevant in our world and in our lives a century later.

What did she say to them and what does it mean to us as the family of the Knights of Columbus?

The first secret which the Blessed Mother shared with the children was, of all things, a vision of the fire, the pain and the despair of hell — a vision which Lucia vividly described in her memoirs. Suffice it to say that this vision of an eternity bereft of God was utterly frightening. Why did our Blessed Mother, so gentle and so mild, share such a harsh and frightening vision with these young people?

She did this, I believe, to warn us against taking God and our salvation for granted. Then, as now, many people had come to believe that no matter how they lived their lives, God owed them eternal happiness.

And today, so many, including life-long Catholics, continue to ignore the heart of Jesus' message: "Repent and believe." Many no longer see the need, let alone the urgency, of turning their lives around. Sadly, this is true of Catholics in all walks of life, including my own. Is it any wonder that Pope Francis speaks with such urgency about encountering Christ, about discipleship, about spreading Gospel and about helping those around us to rediscover the mercies of God?



SEE **MERCY**, PAGE 2

Help Support Genocide Survivors

Despite the State Department's declaration that ISIS' crimes constitute genocide, support programs for Middle Eastern religious minorities have received little to no funding from the U.S. government or international community.

The Knights of Columbus, however, has worked to fill this void, recently contributing more than \$1.9 million to various aid programs for Christians and other religious minorities. It also launched a 60-second commercial that aired nationally from March 13-17, advocating support for displaced Christians and others.

"A year ago, our country declared with one voice that genocide was occurring to Christians and other religious minority communities, but words are not enough," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson.

Calling for aid from the U.S. government and the international community, the supreme knight said 2017 may be "the decisive year in determining whether many Christian communities throughout the Middle East will continue to exist."

He also encouraged prayers for those who are being persecuted and killed for their faith, particularly recommending the Knights' Novena of Grace and Solidarity, which can be prayed throughout the year. The novena prayer was printed in the March 2017 issue of *Chaplain's Report* and can also be found at kofc.org/novena.

For details on how you, your council and your parish can contribute to this effort and help the genocide survivors, visit christiansatrisk.com.



A painting by renowned Mexican portrait artist Martha Orozco features six priests and members of the Knights of Columbus — among whom are Father Luis Bátis Sáinz and Father Miguel de la Mora de la Mora. All six were canonized by St. John Paul II on May 21, 2000.

The Martyred Knights of Mexico

On May 25, 2017, the Church celebrates the feast of the Ascension. Did you know this is also the feast day of two members of the Knights of Columbus who were martyred in Mexico in 1926 and 1927?

Father Luis Bátis Sáinz was a parish priest in the village of Chalchihuites, Zacatecas, and a member of Fray Diego de la Cadena Council 2367 in Durango. On Aug. 15, 1926, he and three laymen — David Roldán, Salvador Lara and Manuel Morales — were executed by a firing squad for having participated in meetings of different Catholic groups and for having violated Mexico's anti-Catholic legislation. Just prior to being shot, Father Luis Bátis asked for Manuel Morales' freedom, explaining that he had children. Manuel interrupted, saying, "I am dying for God, and God will care for my children." Smiling, Father Luis Bátis absolved him and said, "I'll see you in heaven."

Father Miguel de la Mora de la Mora, a member of Nuestra Señora del Patrocinio Council 2140 in Zacatecas, served as a priest at the Cathedral of Colima. After publicly signing a manifesto rejecting Mexico's anti-religious laws, he went underground in order to continue offering the sacraments. On Aug. 7, 1927, Father Miguel and his brother Regino were arrested, and the priest was ordered to be executed without trial. With his rosary in hand, Father Miguel was shot in front of his brother, who was then allowed to go free.

Excerpt adapted from Knights of Columbus; Martyrs of Mexico (#4668). We offer this excerpt for you to share with your council members that they might learn of the heroic actions of their brother Knights. For more information on the Mexican Martyrs, visit kofc.org/un/en/mexican-martyrs.

MERCY, FROM PAGE 1

The Church invites us — as Our Lady invited the three children — to do penance, to pray, to fast, to give alms and to go to confession precisely so that we won't fall into the trap of taking God for granted. God's mercy is deep and powerful, but we also have to be open to it. So let us beg Our Lady of Fatima for repentant hearts. We beseech Our Lady of Fatima, the Mother of Mercy, to pray with us and for us that united with her Son we may open our hearts to God, the Father of Mercies.

When Our Blessed Mother appeared to the three children, Europe was engulfed in the conflagration of world war. At the time it was thought to be the war to end all wars, but through these three youth, Our Lady of Fatima warned the world that another unimaginably violent war was in the offing. So also, through her, the world was warned of the dictatorships that would foment world-wide violence, most especially Stalinist Russia.

In response to these warnings, many faithful Catholics prayed the rosary daily, often as families; observed First Saturday devotions; and consecrated themselves and their families to Mary's Immaculate Heart. Pope Pius XII himself had a very deep devotion to Our Lady of Fatima and consecrated the world and Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart. How can we not see Our Lady of Fatima's intercession as providential in raising up Karol Wojtyła to become Pope John Paul II? ...

On May 13, 1981, an attempt was made to assassinate Pope John Paul II. This saintly pontiff believed that Our Lady of Fatima saved his life. He returned here to thank her and to place the bullet meant to kill him into her crown.

We need to ask for Our Lady's intercession for the world of today — a world that faces new and massive threats with the rise of radical Islamic jihadist groups like ISIS on the one hand, and the rise of anti-religious secularism on the other. In the Middle East, innocent people are being beheaded because they are Christians, while in the West, Christians are giving up on their faith and joining the ranks of those who deem religion as either irrelevant or dangerous. On one side of the world we see bloody persecution. On the other side, we see widespread apostasy and, in its wake, the steady loss of religious freedom. Let us earnestly beseech Our Lady of Fatima to intercede for us so that we might stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians by evangelizing, by spreading the Gospel of Jesus, in which the truth about human dignity and freedom is fully revealed. A good first step is for us to pray the rosary daily. ...

I pray that Our Lady of Fatima will open our eyes more widely to the glory of God shining on the face of Jesus, a light brighter than that of the sun, the light of truth and love for which we were created.

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!

Monthly Suggested Activities

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 a special 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 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 years since Our Lady of Fatima first appeared, lead the parish in a rosary novena to conclude on the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13. You could distribute Catholic Information Service's *The Message of Our Lady of Fatima* (#341) or *Mary, The Mother of God* (#324). For more information on these booklets, visit kofc.org/cis. Be sure to share with your brother Knights and parishioners the details of the indulgences granted in honor of the entire anniversary year.

Honor the mothers of your local community following weekend Masses on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14. Invite your council to organize a Mother's Day flower sale and encourage your brother Knights to support local mothers in need by donating supplies to women's shelters or crisis pregnancy centers.

Mark your calendars for K of C Family Week and begin discussing potential activities with your council's grand knight. Discuss the Family Week ideas found at kofc.org/domesticchurch.

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, finances, the domestic church, love and marriage. For more information, visit fathersforgood.org.

BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Help Affirm the Vocations of Fathers and Husbands

In the next few months, chaplains should begin planning ways to affirm the fathers and husbands in their parish and community. A simple way to do this is by planning a Father's Day Affirmation of Wedding Vows. The affirmation may take place during or immediately following all Masses celebrated the weekend of Father's Day, June 18.



CNS photo/Gregory A. Smetitz

A pair of wedding bands symbolizing the sacrament of marriage is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Patrick's Church in Smithtown, N.Y.

In referring to Father's Day and the affirmation of wedding vows, Supreme Chaplain William E. Lori shared: "As we celebrate Father's Day, let us celebrate the role of our dads in building the domestic church; in working hand in hand with their wives to make their homes places of prayer, learning, virtue and service; and in handing on the faith to the next generation. I hope many parishes will make Father's Day a time for the renewal of wedding vows and that every Knight of Columbus who has children will recommit himself to being an active, faith-filled father who loves his family with a love that is generous and strong."

By organizing a renewal of wedding vows, you offer the married couples of the parish an opportunity to affirm their commitment to their marriage vows and bear witness to the importance of Christian marriage as the building block for strong families and parishes.

When planning the event, consider providing a brief catechesis to the parish, through which you can explain the Catholic understanding of marriage and the strength of the sacramental bond. Also, ask your grand knight to make a pulpit announcement prior to the start of Mass, inviting all married couples to participate.

Resources for the event, including the *Affirmation of Wedding Vows booklet* (#30003), are available at kofc.org/domesticchurch. You might also distribute *The Gift of Fatherhood* (#10168), *Knights of Columbus rosaries* (Rose-1) or other CIS resources for families to use together.

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St. John Paul II's Prayer to Our Lady of Fatima

*Offered on the occasion of the Holy Father's second visit to Fatima, May 1991,
when he entrusted the new evangelization of the world into Mary's care.*

I am before you in this shrine to kiss your hands
because you stood so firmly near the cross of your Son
which is the cross of the whole history of humankind. ...

Always and now, you watch with the greatest motherly care,
defending with your powerful intercession the dawn
of Christ's light in the midst of peoples and nations.

Always and forever you remain, because the only Son of God,
your Son, entrusted all humanity to you when, dying on the cross,
he brought us into the new beginning of everything which exists.

Your universal motherhood, O virgin Mary,
is the sure anchor of salvation for the whole of humankind.



CNS photo/Paul Fearing

*Pope Francis touches a statue of Our Lady of Fatima
after praying in front of it during a general audience
in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. The statue is a
copy of the original in Fatima, Portugal.*