



# 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

# June Is Mission Planning Time

**Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP**

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



From the very beginning — when Father Michael McGivney sought to found a fraternal group that would attract young men not regularly engaged in the faith — the heart of the pastoral mission of the Knights of Columbus has been to make all men better Catholic husbands, fathers, brothers and sons, aflame with the Holy Spirit in living out their vocations in the Church.

The summer months present a great moment to assist brother Knights in planning for the new fraternal year and in aligning their priorities with the pastoral needs of the parish and the Order's Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parish initiative. Often, council activities are chosen out of habit or tradition, although greater pastoral needs exist in the parish. The Knights are aptly equipped to initiate outreach to men and their families, and yet this opportunity is passed over or ignored. Councils, however, can no longer ignore their missionary call to serve families, which must be at the heart of every K of C activity or event. As Pope Francis said, "Given the pace of life today, most couples cannot attend frequent meetings; still we cannot restrict our pastoral outreach to small and select groups. Nowadays, pastoral care for families has to be fundamentally missionary, going out to where people are" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 230).

The months of June and July should be the time when every council re-examines their meeting and activity structure for the coming year and puts the mission of evangelizing men and their families at its core. Not every council gathering needs to be a business meeting or closed to members only. Our brother Knights need to be spiritually and pastorally nourished by their time at Knights activities. We should not begrudge them family or work time. Nor should any member feel that he is a "bad" Knight if he chooses to spend time with his family. Instead, the time that they are able to spend with their brother Knights should nourish them spiritually so that they can return as better husbands and fathers to their families.

During the past year, two key documents — Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and Bishop Thomas Olmsted's pastoral letter *Into the Breach* — have highlighted the challenges and evangelization opportunities facing families and men. Councils should read these documents as a guide on how Knights can best serve the pastoral needs of the local parish and diocese.

As chaplains, we know how proud our brother Knights are to serve the Church. Let us remember that the time we invest in their spiritual formation and pastoral planning will make the "strong right arm" of the Church that much more invigorated and mission-driven.

*Vivat Jesus!*

## Christians in the Middle East: "We Need You"

**Editor's note:** *The following are excerpts from a homily given by Melkite Catholic Archbishop Jean-Clément Jeanbart of Aleppo, Syria, during the Divine Liturgy offered at the Supreme Council headquarters, 2 May 2016.*

*During his visit to New Haven, Archbishop Jeanbart spoke of the Christians living in Syria, who — despite their 2,000-year history of living in Syria — now face extinction. Christians have a right to live there, Archbishop Jeanbart said, explaining that they are called to share their faith in Jesus Christ with their Muslim neighbors.*

Nobody would know — nobody knows — better than we know how to talk to this people. ...We have been living with them hundreds of years because we are in good terms with many of them. We have the same story, the same language, the same culture, the same interest, the same cities, the same nation.

We are missionaries born to bear witness toward Islam. ... And I think the Lord expects that from us. To be able to do it we have to remain in the country. We have to keep our health (our spiritual health, but also our physical health) in good shape to be able to realize our mission of sharing the apostles' testimony of Christ in the Muslim world.

I ask you and pray you to help us in there and ask you to find a way to support us for this mission. If you support us, you save the first church in the world, the church who had been baptized on the day of Pentecost by the Apostles.

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*The day before visiting the Supreme Council, Archbishop Jeanbart spoke at St. Mary's Church, where Father McGivney founded the Knights in 1882. There, he explained that the Christians in Syria are at risk of "nonexistence." The archbishop has estimated that thousands of Christians living in Syria have been targeted and killed by ISIS and its affiliates.*

# Centered on the Marriage Bond — Contemplate What You Are

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

In his most recent apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis has invited the Church to develop the family ministry and pastoral care of couples “centered on the marriage bond” (211). Among the many questions discussed in this long document, the Holy Father encourages us to focus on the marriage bond — that is, on God’s action, on what he has joined together. He is inviting families and priests to contemplate what families already are: a permanent reminder of what happened on the cross and of God’s faithfulness to us.

What does it mean to develop the pastoral care centered on the marriage bond? Our world tends to reject any kind of bonds and promises. We prefer a liquid love, with fluid relationships. Instead of promising yes forever, we just announce that we will be together as long as we like each other or as long as we feel like staying together. In his exhortation *Into the Breach*, Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix pointed out the irony of the fictional British spy James Bond. His name is the height of irony because he is a man with no bonds, and therefore, with no true freedom and no identity.

A family ministry centered on the marriage bond invites dating and engaged couples, as well as all the families of the parish, to contemplate that they are joined together by God in an indissoluble union. The marriage bond is not the chain of a prisoner, but a cord that keeps the mountaineers safe during a dangerous hike. It is not a threat against our independence, but the possibility of being truly free. It is a gift from God that must be cultivated so that it can flourish and bear fruit. The wedding ceremony is not the end of the road, but the beginning of a

lifelong adventure. It is not just a point of arrival after a long path of preparation, but rather a point of departure.

The Holy Father is inviting us to work toward building up the culture of the family. Here we are not dealing just with special programs or new explanations of the marriage bond. What is at stake is something much deeper: developing a “culture of the family” or a “culture of the sacramental bond” in our parishes. How can we consider vows as the deepest act of freedom, a bond as a gift to cultivate, faithfulness as something praiseworthy, and reconciliation — and never divorce — as the solution? Our culture needs to be evangelized. Our hearts need to recover the vision of the baby as a gift, not as a product or a threat; the vision of the elderly as a treasure of wisdom, not as a burden; the vision of a promise as a blessing, not as slavery.

Family ministry in the Catholic Church will be transformed when we priests contemplate the wedding as the point of divine departure, like the launching of a rocket. In this way we must realize we need to accompany every couple during the first years of marriage, helping them to keep safe and cultivate God’s gift, that which he has joined together.

Priests and families need to contemplate the marriage bond. When spouses remember the words of their vows or spend time looking at their wedding album, they recall the divine promise: I will be with you always. The memory of this origin helps us to embrace the challenges of our family and to wait patiently for the best wine of Cana. Let us strive to build up the culture of the family, shedding Christ’s light on the marriage bond.



New spouses exchange rings as Pope Francis celebrates the marriage rite for 20 couples during a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.

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’ Family Fully Alive program. *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. A copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at [www.kofc.org/familyfullyalive](http://www.kofc.org/familyfullyalive). To order additional items mentioned in this newsletter, please visit [www.knightsgear.com](http://www.knightsgear.com).

## A Guide on the Domestic Church — Written by Pope Francis

Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* is the result of the Holy Father’s reflections following the synods of bishops held Oct. 2014 and Oct. 2015 on marriage and the family. Central to the synods’ discussions was the question of how the Church should address the complex issues that families and couples frequently face in today’s world.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis shares with the Church his teaching and encouragement regarding pastoral ministry to married couples and families and their vocation of living as domestic churches. Chaplains are encouraged to share this document not only with Knights in their councils, but with all their parish families, to guide them through the real sacrifices and struggles they face and to encourage them to build their lives together as a domestic church. For more information on the exhortation, visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

## On the Way to Kraków

*A message from Pope Francis addressing the youth preparing to attend World Day 2016 in Kraków.*

Thirty years ago St. John Paul II instituted World Youth Days in the Church. This pilgrimage of young people from every continent under the guidance of the successor of Peter has truly been a providential and prophetic initiative. ... How many amazing discoveries have been made, especially the discovery that Christ is the way, the truth and the life! How many people have realized that the Church is a big and welcoming family! How many conversions, how many vocations have these gatherings produced! May the saintly pope, the patron of World Youth Day, intercede on behalf of our pilgrimage toward his beloved Kraków. And may the maternal gaze of the Blessed Virgin Mary, full of grace, all-beautiful and all-pure, accompany us at every step along the way.





*Rubble is scattered across what remains of Holy Spirit Church in Homs, Syria. It is one of several churches in Syria that have suffered severe damage from the ISIS bombings.*

If you help us, you help poor people who need your help. ... It is a way you express to the world your love for mankind. Also, if you help us, you help the Church follow this mission to communicate and give Christ to the world.

I pray for all of you, every single one, and ask the Lord to give power and strength to the Knights of Columbus — power and strength not to destroy but to build. ... We need you to be Knights who'll help people to live and not to die.

Help now, today. ... The Lord asks you — invites you — to take your part in this.



*Two young children experience a happy moment at one of the refugee camps in Iraq. With help and aid from other countries, they may one day be able to rebuild their homes in Syria. Many Syrian children are already exhibiting the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, brought on by the shock of the displacement and the horrors they have witnessed.*

## Monthly Suggested Activities

### JUNE

- Work with council officers to plan an affirmation of marriage pro-gram, to be held in your parish on Father's Day, June 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 [www.kofc.org/domesticchurch](http://www.kofc.org/domesticchurch).
- Encourage fathers in your community by sharing with them 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 [www.fathersforgood.org](http://www.fathersforgood.org).

### JULY

- Celebrate the upcoming holidays of Canada Day and Independence Day with Masses of thanksgiving. During your homily, reflect on the importance of religious freedom, including topics such as:
  - ❖ The importance of praying for national leaders and political candidates, especially that they follow political practices that protect all human life, uphold religious freedom and safeguard families.
  - ❖ The gift that the Catholic Faith is to our countries and the entire world. Reflect on the lives of the saints and holy people who have lived on North American soil, such as Kateri Tekakwitha and Junípero Serra, whose feast days we celebrate in July. For details on their lives, please visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).
- Offer support to the young people of your parish and diocese preparing to attend the 2016 World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland.
- Support brother Knights as they prepare for special events in the new fraternal year, including Knights of Columbus Family Week (Aug. 8-14).

### Upcoming Jubilee Events

**June 10** — Jubilee for the sick and persons with disabilities at St. Peter's Square

**July 26-31** — World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland

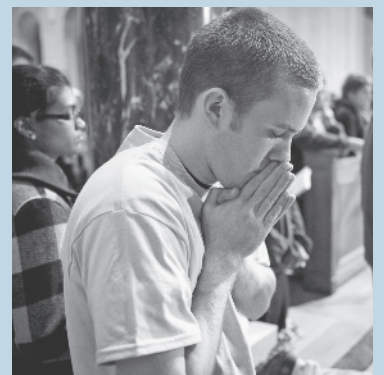
## Evangelization on the Front Lines

An excellent practice among Knights of Columbus chaplains is to help develop Knights into a frontline evangelizing force in society. To do this, each chaplain must equip his brother Knights with the tools of evangelization: the teachings of the Catholic Church on God, the Eucharist, marriage and family life.

Offer these tools through simple catechesis during your council meetings, where you should share straightforward explanations of Catholic teaching on sacramental marriage, fatherhood and family life. Consider utilizing some of the materials available through the Catholic Information Service (CIS).

Talk about the hard topics: divorce, remarriage, NFP, chastity, etc. Talk about praying as a family — encourage them to commit to attending Mass with their family each Sunday. Share how this simple commitment can change their lives. "Suppose it could be said that every Knight of Columbus and his family went to Mass every week? What a difference that would make" (Archbishop William E. Lori, 133rd Supreme Convention, 6 Aug. 2015).

Continue this encouragement outside of council meetings: Let them know you missed them when they weren't at Mass, and personally welcome them to attend Mass the following week.



*A young man kneels during an all-night vigil in prayer at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.*



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## We Are Vigilant: Standing for Religious Freedom

**I**n 2012, as a response to the many threats to religious liberty in the United States, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops asked citizens across the nation to participate in a period of prayer, fasting and advocacy from June 21 to July 4.

This year, during the fourth annual Fortnight for Freedom, share with your council members and parishioners the importance of praying for our country during the days of the fortnight. Remind them that one of the Order's core principles, patriotism, teaches us to "love our country so much that we want it to embrace what is true and good. We want our country to be a place where human dignity is recognized and respected from conception until natural death, a place where religious freedom is robustly fostered, not just tolerated. Out of love for country we are vigilant, lest our freedoms be unduly curtailed for political reasons" (Archbishop William E. Lori, *The Meaning of Patriotism*, 7 Jan. 2013).

For more information, visit [www.fortnight4freedom.org](http://www.fortnight4freedom.org).

## Prayer for Religious Liberty

O God our Creator,  
from your provident hand we have received  
our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.  
You have called us as your people  
and given us the right and the duty to worship you,  
the only true God, and your Son, Jesus Christ. ...

We ask you to bless us in our vigilance  
for the gift of religious liberty.  
Give us the strength of mind and heart  
to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened;  
give us courage in making our voices heard  
on behalf of the rights of your Church  
and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith. ...

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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